

Published : <https://www.nlscongress2019.com/speeches/interpretation-from-truth-to-event-argument-of-the-2020-nls-congress-in-ghent-by-ric-laurent>

Circulated : **From:** NLS-Messenger [New Lacanian School of Psychoanalysis' Messenger]

**Subject:** [nls-messenger] 3168.en/ Argument of the 2020 NLS Congress by Éric Laurent - "Interpretation: From Truth to Event"

**Date:** 13 June 2019 at 20:12:42 BST

There follows Julia Evans' notes giving fuller references.

***Interpretation: From Truth to Event***

**by Éric Laurent**

**Speech delivered in Tel Aviv, 2 June 2019**

[Interpretation: From Truth to Event](#)

[Argument for the 2020 NLS Congress in Ghent \(Cancelled due to coronavirus\)](#)

[Éric Laurent](#)

Interpretation: From Truth to Event

by Éric Laurent

Speech delivered in Tel Aviv, 2 June 2019

As soon as one evokes interpretation a misunderstanding arises. The binary between the text and its interpretation misleads us. We immediately fall into the illusion that the language of the unconscious exists and that it calls for a metalanguage: interpretation. Lacan did not stop hammering home that the experience of psychoanalysis allowed him not only to affirm that there was no such thing as a metalanguage, but that saying so gave him the only chance of orienting himself correctly in this experience. Two fundamental propositions follow from this. Desire is not the metalinguistic interpretation of a previous indistinct drive. Desire is its interpretation. Both things are situated at the same level. A second proposition must be added to this: "Psychoanalysts are part and parcel of the concept of the unconscious, as they constitute that to which the unconscious is addressed."<sup>[1]</sup> The psychoanalyst can only hit the target if he aligns himself with the interpretation performed by the unconscious, already structured like a language. Still, we must not reduce this language to the mechanical conception that linguistics can have of it. We must add to that the topology of poetics. The poetic function reveals that language is not information, but resonance, and emphasizes the matter that links sound and meaning. It reveals what Lacan called materialism, which in its center closes around a void.

The void and the subject

The Seminars begin with the question of interpretation as a practice of bringing the central void of language to light. As the first lines of the first Seminar indicate: "The master breaks the silence with anything [n'importe quoi] – with a sarcastic remark, with a kick-start. That is how a Buddhist master conducts his search for meaning, according to the technique of zen. It behoves the students to find out for themselves the answer to their own questions. The master

does not teach ex cathedra a ready-made science; he supplies an answer when the students are on the verge of finding it.”[\[ii\]](#)

Make no mistake, these lines not only concern the form to be taken by teaching in general, they aim at the practice of analytic interpretation most profoundly anchored in the experience of the cure. We will see this later. Let’s accept this link between interpretation and this “n’importe quoi,” the “anything whatever,”[\[iii\]](#) in the broadest sense, the heterogeneous. It will then be easier for us to follow the development of Lacan’s reflection on interpretation from his initial teaching to what he was led to by his last teaching in “passing to the other side” of interpretation, according to the problematic brought out by Jacques-Alain Miller.

On the most radical horizon of this new perspective, Lacan will be led to base the very possibility of interpretation on a new dit-mansion, a heterogeneous mixture of signifier and letter. It is this new dimension (as a specific contribution of psychoanalysis that adds to language functions unperceived by linguistics, even by Jacobson, who was so sensible to the poetic function) that links interpretation to the definition of the symptom as a body event. Interpretation thereby becomes an event of saying, which can be raised to the dignity of the symptom or, according to Lacan’s cryptic expression, extinguish it. It is this line of development that I will be exploring in this article. I will first consider the heterogeneity of interpretation. I will then go on to expose the passage to the other side of interpretation. We will then consider interpretation as jaculation, between the oral and the written. I will end by considering some aspects of the practice of the new di-mansion thus revealed, and how it allows us to move between the different levels of interpretation that are mobilized in the course of the psychoanalytic experience itself.

### Interpretation as heterogeneous

When Lacan isolates this anything from the Zen master, [\[iv\]](#) Lacan is not speaking about Zen technique in general, but in particular that of Linji, one of the founders of a school whose influence was central in the transmission of Chan Buddhism to Japan. This author was dear to the person Lacan used to refer to as his “good mentor,” [\[v\]](#) Paul Demiéville, who in 1947 published an important study, *The Spiritual Mirror*, which he used as reference. The sinologist, reading Sanskrit and a specialist in Buddhism, established the difference between Indian and Chinese Buddhism, contrasting Indian gradualism with Chinese subitism. [\[vi\]](#) The emphasis placed by Linji on the sudden production of emptiness by means of rupture is the very example of this subitism. In this sense, Lacan’s references to lightning are indebted as much to the lightning of Linji's emptiness as Heidegger's Heraclitan lightning. Jacques-Alain Miller has insisted on this side of Lacan's teaching, namely: “allowing oneself to be led in this way by the letter of Freud's work, up to the spark [the lightning] that it necessitates, without selecting a destination in advance—and by not backing away from the residue, found anew at the end, of its enigmatic point of departure, and even by not considering that he had accounted, at the end of the proceedings, for the astonishment by which he entered into the proceedings...” [\[vii\]](#)

We are authorized to relate the intervention of the Zen master to deliver the practitioner from his mental habits with the analytical interpretation brought about by Lacan’s saying [le dit de Lacan], according to which interpretation must aim at the object, especially in the guise of the void. “Everyone knows that a Zen exercise has something to do, though one doesn’t know what it means, with the subjective realization of a void.” [\[viii\]](#)

The emphasis on the flash of lightning emphasizes that our relationship to temporality is more profound than the description of the relationship to time, whether it be the number of sessions or their duration. Along with this Zen version of the lightning strike [point d'éclair], the other most developed version is that of Heideggerian lightning based on Heraclitus's aphorism: [ix] "Lightning governs all" – this is one of the translations of this aphorism. Let's at least mention this: lightning is not part of the "all". Lightning is not a being [étant]. It is not counted among being(s) and does not add to it. It is light that allows it to be distinguished. On the horizon of the analysis, it is what makes it possible to discern each thing in its singularity.

Analytic interpretation takes this heterogeneous into account by not only focusing on the word [parole] or the statement [énoncé]. Beyond its variety of support, it must be guided by the search for a truth effect conceived as a rupture. Its 'n'importe quoi' is thus not equivalent to any intervention by the psychoanalyst, it must also want to produce an effect of rupture of truth – which is neither simply adequatio, nor the production of any meaning whatever – and take account of the aporias of this aim.

This is why, in the 1950s, Lacan became interested in the contribution of the heterodox English psychoanalyst Edward Glover, from the 1930s, referring to his comments on the effect of inaccurate interpretation as follows:

"An article that I advise you to read on the matter is one by Glover called "Therapeutic Effects of Inexact Interpretation,"... It's a very interesting question, and it leads Glover to draw up a general situation about all the positions taken by whoever finds himself in the position of consultant in relation to every kind of disorder. Having done this, he generalizes and extends the notion of interpretation to every formulated position taken by whomever one consults and draws up a scale of the different positions of the doctor in relation to the patient." [x]

Glover is sensitive to the aporias inherent in interpretation but does not take account of the operative value of the place of the truth as such. The phlogistic fluid in question is in fact meaning as it appears as escaping the relationship between human beings spontaneously without any basis or principle.

"This importance of the signifier in the localization of analytic truth appears implicitly when an author holds firmly to the internal coherence of analytic experience in defining aporias. One should read Edward Glover to gauge the price he pays for not having the term 'signifier' at his disposal. In articulating the most relevant views, he finds interpretation everywhere, even in the banality of a medical prescription [...] Conceived of in this way, interpretation becomes a sort of phlogiston: it is manifest in everything that is understood rightly or wrongly..." [xi]

Because of the proliferation of meaning, Glover had the insight to grasp that the binary of the true and the false is not suited to psychoanalysis:

"When Mr. Glover speaks about correct or incorrect interpretation, he can only do so by avoiding this dimension of the truth [...] it is very difficult to speak about a 'false' interpretation [...] of incorrect interpretation [...] [for] sometimes it is not wide of the mark for all that. [...] Because truth rebels! And that however inexact it might be one has all the same tickled something." [xii]

But what Lacan is highlighting is that the level of opposition between the true and the false, insufficient to qualify what is involved in the analytic experience is the place in reserve of truth as that which can make a hole, make a hole in discourse, and that this place is occupied by the psychoanalyst who has authorized the discourse of 'free association', which Lacan clears of the historically connoted term of association, to qualify it simply as free speech [discours libre].

"In this analytic discourse designed to capture truth, it is the interpretative interpretation-response that represents the truth, the interpretation [...] as being possible there [...] the discourse that we have specified as free discourse has for its function to make room for it. It tends towards nothing else than to establish a locus of reserve in order that this interpretation maybe inscribed there as a locus reserved for the truth. This place is the one that the analyst occupies. I point out to you that he occupies it, but that it is not where the patient puts him! This is the interest of the definition that I give of transference [...] He is placed in the position of the subject supposed to know."[\[xiii\]](#)

The analytic interpretation is thus taken between the knowledge supposed about the mysterious link between the unconscious and jouissance and the actual emptiness which it is a question of producing: "In other words, he is between two stools, between the false position of being the subject supposed to know (which he knows he is not), and that of having to rectify the effects of this supposition on the part of the subject, and this in the name of truth. This is why the transference is the source of what is called resistance."[\[xiv\]](#)

To the interpretation that produces meaning that can be understood, without any limit, Lacan opposes the truth effect of interpretation in so far as it refers to a fundamental void, a first absence. Interpretation thus finds its foundation as the resumption of the insertion in the signifier of what he calls, in a remarkable way, life.

"... signification no more emanates from life than phlogiston escapes from bodies in combustion. We should speak of signification rather as of the combination of life with the O atom of the sign [Lacan clarifies in a footnote: the "O" must be read as zero], the sign insofar as it first of all connotes presence or absence, by essentially introducing the and that links them, since in connoting presence or absence, it institutes presence against a background of absence, just as it constitutes absence in presence."[\[xv\]](#)

And Lacan gives as the figure of this inaugural moment of conjunction, between the place of the Zero position of the subject included in the signifier with life, in the game of the Fort-Da: "This is the point of insemination for a symbolic order that pre-exists the infantile subject and in accordance with which he has to structure himself."[\[xvi\]](#)

Lacan concludes his development on the fact that the heterogeneous of interpretation does not for all that leave it without rules. It is not everything and anything [tout et n'importe quoi]. It is an anything which must aim at the void of the first absence of the lost object. It is accompanied by a particular mark drawn from life and marks the place of a non-object which he will soon name object a. "I will spare myself the task of providing the rules of interpretation. It is not that they cannot be formulated, but their formalizations presuppose developments that I cannot presume to be known."[\[xvii\]](#) The developments that he leaves to one side in the "Direction of the Treatment" are those of the relationship between the heterogeneous of interpretation and its precise aim, namely subjective emptiness, the memorial of the trace of jouissance left by the initial lost object, by the impossibility of repeating the

contingent encounter with *jouissance* exactly as it was. It can but be repeated with its failure of missed encounter. Here is the psychoanalyst version of the Buddhist void and the emptiness that it is a question of producing in the experience.

From translation interpretation to cut interpretation

It is in the link between the heterogeneous interpretation and the inaugural void that the passage, in Lacan's teaching, between interpretation that gives meaning and its other side is situated. Jacques-Alain Miller has defined the problematic in an important article that opposes translation interpretation to asemantic interpretation, which aims only at the opacity of *jouissance*. The empty place is no longer "in reserve", it is brought to the fore: "The question is not to know whether the session is long or short, silent or chatty. Either the session is a semantic unity, in which S2 comes to punctuate the elaboration – delusion in the service of the Name of the Father – (many sessions are like that), or the analytic session is an a-semantic unity bringing the subject back to the opacity of his *jouissance*. This supposes that it be cut before it closes on itself."[\[xviii\]](#) The fundamental polarity is no longer between meaning and truth as a hole, but between the two sides of *jouissance*: that which is an empty place in discourse and makes a hole in it, but which imposes itself in its fullness of opacity.

This new polarity is grasped in its full development only by breaking with illusions not only of intersubjectivity, but also of dialogue. This is what Jacques-Alain Miller brings to light with his invention of the concept of *l'apparole* which reconfigures the developments of the last period of Lacan's teaching. "Now, *l'apparole* is a monologue. This theme of monologue haunts the Lacan of the 70's – the reminder that speech is above all monologue. Here, I'm proposing *l'apparole* as the concept which responds to what comes to light in the Seminar *Encore*, when Lacan asks in a rhetorical way, does *lalangue* serve, first and foremost, to dialogue? Nothing is less certain."[\[xix\]](#)

If, for *lalangue*, being useful is not a requirement, it is because it is linked, in part, with *jouissance*: "which answers to the formula that Lacan gives in *Encore* – "There, where it speaks, it enjoys." That means, in this context, it enjoys by speaking."[\[xx\]](#)

While semantic interpretation wanted to revive something, interpretation which confronts *jouissance* aims, on the contrary, at a non-revival. "There must be a limit to the autistic monologue of *jouissance*. And I find it very illuminating to say: Analytic interpretation establishes a limit. Interpretation, by contrast, has an infinite potentiality."[\[xxi\]](#) The infinite potentiality of free speech [*discours libre*] poses no other limit to *jouissance* than the pleasure principle. The limit of interpretation aims at something else. "Saying anything [*Dire n'importe quoi*] always leads to the pleasure principle, to the *Lustprinzip*. That is to say: "There, where it speaks, it enjoys. It is the commentary of the Id. Especially because we put prohibitions, inhibitions, prejudices, etc. in parentheses once it really begins to run at this level, there is a satisfaction of speech."[\[xxii\]](#) Jacques-Alain Miller thus gives interpretation a new aim. Instead of recourse to the pleasure principle and its indefinite possibilities, it is a matter of introducing the modality of the impossible as a limit. "This indicates what the place of analytic interpretation could be, since it would intervene on the opposite slope of the pleasure principle. We would need to formulate, along the lines of what Lacan suggests (...) that analytic interpretation introduces the impossible."[\[xxiii\]](#) Through the introduction of this modality which breaks with the free association of speech, by setting in place a "certain it doesn't mean anything,"[\[xxiv\]](#) interpretation, which passes through speech, passes from the side of the written, alone capable of taking charge of the hole of meaning and the

impossible.<sup>[xxv]</sup> “Like formalization, interpretation... is more on the side of writing than speech. In any case, it must be constructed from the written [l’écrit] at every opportunity, insofar as formalization supposes the written.”<sup>[xxvi]</sup>

The problematic of a-semantic interpretation introduces a hybrid dimension between the signifier and the letter, while a large part of Lacan’s teaching opposes them. This reflects the fact that Lacan comes to oppose interpretation and speech. “Analytic interpretation [...] is brought to bear in a way that goes much further than speech. Speech is an object of elaboration for the analysand, but what does it bear of the effects of what the analyst says – for he does say. It is not nothing to formulate that the transference plays a role there, but that does not clarify anything. It would be a question of explaining how interpretation is brought to bear and that it does not necessarily involve an enunciation.”<sup>[xxvii]</sup>

The a-semantic and the “it was written”

The Freudian unconscious, J.-A. Miller says, “this unconscious that Lacan translated with the term subject supposed to know [is] a structural illusion: the illusion that the past, in so far as contains everything that used to be the present [...] was there before the very experience of the present.”<sup>[xxviii]</sup>

The subject supposed to know is the illusion according to which what is said refers back to past, to what has taken place, as if it was already there before the experience of the analytic session, before speaking. Let’s take this idea in its fullest force, as does J.-A. Miller. In our interpretation it is a matter of transforming the illusion, linked to the signifying chain, of the subject supposed to know, by showing that this illusion is founded on an unprecedented, new regime, that of the instance of the letter: the “it was written.”

In Lacan’s first teaching, interpretation has for effect to give access to chapters that have been erased from my history, to what has been written in the chapters of history. In the second, Lacan uncouples himself from this reference to history and keeps only the reference to the “it was written.” The effect of supposed knowledge, its generalization must be maintained on the basis of the “it was written.” A new conception of interpretation emerges from it: interpretation, the essence of which is homophonic wordplay, is the return of speech to writing, that is to say, the return of each present statement to its inscription, to its enunciation by the subject supposed to know.”<sup>[xxix]</sup>

The relation to enunciation in the regime of the subject supposed to know passes to that of the “it was written in the equivoque” thanks to the new conception of interpretation in Lacan’s second teaching. Interpretation as homophony (the first teaching) is taken in the generalization of the equivoque which supposes a return to it is written, it calls to the very complex relation between speech and writing. In Seminar XXIII, Lacan conceptualizes writing as the support of speech, refusing to follow Jacques Derrida on his idea of writing as imprinting, weft, trace. Lacan makes use of writing and defines it departing from the analytic experience, which brings back speech to writing, to the generalized structural illusion of the it was written. He constructs a literality, a relation to the instance of the letter on the basis of the experience. “An interpretation is always to say ‘you have read what is written badly.’ In this sense, interpretation is a rectification of the subject supposed to know’s reading. Interpretation supposes that speech itself is a reading, that it leads speech back to an ‘original text.’”<sup>[xxx]</sup>

In Seminar XXII, Lacan shows how signifiers come to be linked to the RSI knot – this letter in three dimensions. They rely on this writing. His construction of the Joyce case is the writing of the slipping [lapsus] of the knot. In the same way, we put this writing into play as support each time we make the subject hear an equivoque which makes the gap between speech and writing emerge. It is no longer solely a question of the S1 and S2, the support of the S2 giving sense to the S1 (which we make use of when it is possible to use the power of the interpretative chain, S1–S2). It is also a question of this writing-support that brings the extremely diverse registers of the equivoque to light, which broadens the scope of possible interpretations and the sense of our action.

The barred subject, identified with time's arrow, “the one that supports all the paradoxes of the now,” does not know how to situate himself and wants to plug the holes of the want-of-being with the passions of being: love and hatred. And there are the passions of the soul, in other words the passions of the object a, of the body affected by jouissance. The interpretation of “it was written” intervenes in the register of the “pathos of the soul: [...] the fluctuation of states of the soul, with their duration, with their substitutions, with the margin that is left to the subject to make them last or try to reduce them.”[\[xxxii\]](#) To interpret means to read on this margin, to intervene on this margin.

In this sense, the production of interpretative lightning must be said in the plural. The lightnings of the unconscious, the lightning of the parlêtre, does not only include the lightning that depends on the signifying chain. The lightning governs all, the lightning flash governs all the signifiers in a compact chain. At the end of analysis, these detach themselves as “spare parts” [pièces détachées] – as J.-A. Miller indicates – S1, S1, S1, a swarm [essaim] which is no longer bound, compacted in a chain, but returned to fundamental chance. The lightning is also an event of the body which comes to mark LOM, who has a body and who suffers from it. The event of jouissance which comes to mark the body with its branding iron is also a lightning strike, but different from the previous one. As Lacan brought to light in Seminar XXIII, the lightning of the body event introduces an equivoque, a fissure in the body, sometimes in an instantaneous way. Concerning the phenomenon of belief and of radicalization, for example, one speaks of rapid radicalization: the moment before, he was not radicalized, the moment after, he is – a little more and the bomb will explode. When it is a question of belief, the subject holds himself on a thread: belief is linked, on the one hand, to the signifying chain and the Ideal and, on the other, to the register of the body event. These two orders of interpretation, with its infinitely varied registers, constitute a touchstone which guides our practice.

### Interpretation as jaculation

Lacan was able to call the analyst's act of saying [dire] which responds to the saying [dire] of the unconscious become hybrid, jaculation. “What we establish with the Borromean knot already goes against the image of concatenation. The discourse that it concerns does not make a chain [...] Consequently, the question arises as to whether the effect of meaning in its real is due to the use of words or to their jaculation... we used to believe it was the words that counted. Whereas if we take the trouble to isolate the category of the signifier, we can see that the jaculation has a sense that can be isolated.”[\[xxxiii\]](#) To retain this link of an effect of meaning that continues to exist, without believing in the significance [portée] of an enunciation, Lacan comes to posit the existence of a real effect of meaning. “The effect of meaning required of the analytic discourse is not imaginary. It is not symbolic either. It must be real. What I'm busy doing this year is thinking what the real of an effect of meaning could

be.”[\[xxxiii\]](#) This interpretation is not of the order of a translation by addition of a signifier two, S2, in relation to an S1, a signifier One. It does not aim at concatenation or the production of a signifying chain. It responds to the new aim of tightening the knot around the body event and the inscription that can be noted (a) in a renewed use: “The famous concept of the letter, which was made to overcome the dichotomy of the signifier and the object.”[\[xxxiv\]](#)

Lacan had already used this term ‘jaculation’ to account for the power of the poetic text, whether with reference to Pindare[\[xxxv\]](#) or Angelus Silesius and his mystic jaculations.[\[xxxvi\]](#) Or again, of Serge Leclaire’s Poordjeli – an expression outside meaning of different elements of the fantasy, he made “a secrete jaculation, a jubilatory expression, an onomatopoeia,”[\[xxxvii\]](#) as he made a jaculation out of the “Fort-Da”. In the seminar on The Object of Psychoanalysis, he took up the first sentences from his first Seminar on the action of the Zen master: “Everyone knows, though one does not know what it means, that a Zen exercise has something to do with the subjective realization of a void [...] the mental void that it is a matter of obtaining and which would be obtained, this singular moment, in an abruptness following a period of waiting, sometimes provoked by a word, a sentence, a jaculation, even a rude remark, a snub, a kick in the ass. It is quite certain that these kinds of slapstick moments or clownish behaviour have meaning only in the light of a long subjective preparation [...]”[\[xxxviii\]](#) We can now add that, in Zen Buddhism, Linji was the inventor, and also the one who best knew how to put it into practice, of what Demiéville translated as eructation: “An eructation, the inimitable way of conducting the Chan maieutic; Lin-tsi was regarded as being its most consummate virtuoso, if not its inventor.”[\[xxxix\]](#)

Jacques-Alain Miller has given an updated version of this jaculation that gives it its full scope. He considers that Lacan goes beyond the Saussurean atom that links sound and meaning by using the voice. “An utterance is [...] subject to the binary matrix of statement and enunciation, which makes two. I would say today that vociferation – which I take as a third term after those of proposition and statement – overcomes the division of statement and enunciation. The vociferation is statement-enunciation as indivisible. [...] It does not take a distance from he who vociferates. And when there is no who, it is said all together. In other words, vociferation includes its point of emission.”[\[xl\]](#)

What was called jaculation in Seminar XXII, as designating a real effect of meaning becomes, in Seminar XXIV, the new signifier. “When he appeals to a new signifier, in fact, it concerns a signifier that could have another use [...] a signifier that would be new, not simply because with it there would be one more signifier but because, instead of being contaminated by sleep, this new signifier would trigger an awakening.”[\[xli\]](#)

This awakening is connected to the production of a real effect of meaning as the production of a subjective void. Thus, in his latest teaching, Lacan draws, in the fullest sense, with the knot, a modality of the treatment of the disruption of jouissance by the One blunder [Une bévue]. For this, he revises the classical terms of the instruments of the psychoanalytic operation: the unconscious, transference, and interpretation, to propose new ones: the parlêtre, the act, and jaculation subject to the logic of the “There’s something of the One” [Yad’l’Un],” a jaculation that is central in Lacan’s last teaching.

From truth to writing



At the end of analysis there comes a moment when it is no longer interpreted [ça ne s'interprète plus]. The accounts of the pass testify to this and one can refer to the recent testimony of Clotilde Leguil. It is equivalent to an axiom in formal logic, except that an axiom is there from the start, as the saying that cannot be interpreted. This saying will be outside the universe of discourse that one will build. On the basis of a certain number of axioms about which nothing will be said, one then constructs a universe of discourse which generates propositions that are deduced from axioms. After this, everything is interpreted [tout s'interprète], everything is deduced, and it becomes possible to refer the propositions generated to the true or the false. At the end of the love affair with truth, one has, as an axiom, something which is written about which there is not very much to say. That says it all. It is this "that says it all" effect that is like an axiom. Clotilde Leguil's account of the pass [xlii] ends with a dream which takes up different stories about bad water, les mauvaises eaux, that can cause death. These different significations condense in the letter O. But in a supplementary dream, the dead father returns to write a telephone number which he tries to give to his daughter. Of this mobile phone number only two numbers remain, 0 and 1. The O, to which the effects of meaning from the account about death come to be reduced, is reduced still further. It is no longer the O of a letter, it is the 0 of a number. Here we place our finger on the atom of signification evoked by Lacan in relation to Glover. One passes from the O of a letter, which [in French] can equivocate with the water [eaux] that you don't drink, the O of the blood group, which comes to mark the filiation reduced to a letter. And the letter O can make the subject pass from a sense of destitution [dénouement] to the moment where she separates from the analyst and to the urgency of a denouement [dénouement]. A letter makes meaning topple over. More profoundly, in the dream, in which the dead father leaves a number to call him on, the message is reduced to 0#1. It is the fundamental opposition between nothing and something. It writes, in the most concise form, everything that plays around the fact of having been the first child, transformed into a superegoic requirement to be first – here reduced to a writing. Then, the 0 comes to mark the minimum alternation of what can come to being [à l'être]. This highlights the fact that, for Lacan, it is the number, the mathematical letter, much more than the grapheme, that falls under the name of the letter and its instance.

Behind the mathematical letter, the opposition between 0 and 1 is fundamental in coming to mark the inscription of what of jouissance comes to be knotted around 0#1. The whole topology of the winding of signifiers around this writing is then introduced. To say that all the significations traversed in analysis finally hook up to 0#1, allows us to understand what Lacan says in Seminar XXIII, when all the signifiers come to articulate themselves around a writing. The writing is no longer at all what comes to transcribe speech, as a grapheme, in so far as it transcribes what is articulated in speech. It is the writing of the Borromean knots, the writing of RSI, which comes to border the holes of trauma in the body around which all the signifying accounts [récits] come to link up in a chain, in its most generalized sense. This unconscious that binds itself is really the unconscious in so far as it is closest to the trauma, to the traumatic emergence. It is in relation to this first writing on the body that everything else will come to be tied. We see how in the course of an analysis we must pass through the different equivoques of subjective myths. This on the basis of formations of the unconscious, which from time to time, as Freud says, come to reveal themselves in the dream as a rebus. This mode of writing allows one to attain the point at which one passes from a world of still imaginized writing to a fundamental 'navel'. It is the link to a trauma which cannot be imaginized in the writing of the dream and which comes to mark the order of 0#1, which comes to emerge, to mark itself as a hole in the body. This cyphering refers to writing in the most fundamental sense, the topological writing which for Lacan becomes the excellence of

the mathematical letter, in so far as he develops it and forges a topology of his own as he had done for his linguistics. His topology is the mode of writing that he manages to use, which draws upon a certain number of properties of non-oriented surfaces and of knots to write all the signifiers in the field of *jouissance* and not simply in the linguistic field. He can then show that what comes to take hold [s'accrocher] is always imbued with a traumatic mark of *jouissance* in the profoundest sense. The different onion layers that enclose the kernel of the subject, are peeled away to the point of bringing to light this new love for the unconscious which links, which at the same time, and it is here that we can take up the contingency Lacan speaks about when he says: "I incarnated contingency in the expression 'stops not being written'. For here there is nothing but encounter, the encounter in the partner of symptoms and affects, of everything that marks in each of us the trace of his exile – not as subject but as speaking – from the sexual relationship." [xliv]

### Interpretation as event

Jacques-Alain Miller has linked the question of interpretation in Lacan's last teaching to that of the symptom in a decisive way: "This definition of the symptom as a body event makes the status of the interpretation that could respond to it much more problematic." [xlv] From this moment on, the symptom comes to be linked to the impact of language on the body. "This will be picked up in way that is perhaps too much on the side of the logician in the formula 'the signifier is the cause of *jouissance*', but this is pertains to the idea of the fundamental body event which is the incidence of language [la langue]." [xlv] The writing of *jouissance* on the body has the structure of the inverted message from the first period of Lacan's teaching and Lacan can then reformulate his definition of the inverted message. "This is why Lacan can write, 'the subject receives his own message in an inverted form. Here this means his own *jouissance* in the form of the *jouissance* of the Other.' In other words, that which, in this still undeveloped, glimpsed, form brings about the corporization of the dialectic of the subject and the Other." [xlvi]

The interpretation that has a chance to respond to the corporized writing of the symptom is not only a hybrid between speech and writing, but must take account of the hidden consequences implied by this hybrid. In the Saussurean signifier, what serves as writing is the atom which links together the signifier and the signified. Once this link has been exposed as being artificial and given over to the link to be constructed between writing and speech, then speech finds itself animated by a new dimension, that of the voice that was hidden there. It is the voice which returns in the jaculation as a new use of the signifier. Jacques-Alain Miller called the return of this voice vociferation. "Vociferation adds something to speech. It adds the value, the dimension and the weight of the voice." [xlvii] The voice breaks the link of statement and enunciation. Jaculation aims to be uttered from a place which is no longer that of the enunciation of the subject, it is uttered from the place of "no-longer-anyone." "The place of No-longer-Anyone [Plus-Personne], is without doubt the place of the subject, but a place conceived and named by Lacan as being the burnt ring in the bush of *jouissance*... it is what vociferates from the place of "No-longer-anyone." [xlviii]

Lacan then considers how to account for the fact that, if the signifier is the cause of *jouissance*, one must consider how this *jouissance* can escape the auto-eroticism of the body and also be responsive to the interpretative jaculation. "[O]ne must raise the question of knowing if psychoanalysis... is not what one could call an autism à deux? However, there is something with which to force open this autism, namely that language [la langue] is a communal affair [un affaire commune]." [xlix] *Jouissance* is autoerotic, but language is not a

private affair. It is communal. And Lacan explores the resources of what could allow the analyst to make something other than sense resonate, something which evokes *jouissance* in common language [la langue commune]. There is first and foremost poetry: “these forcings by which a psychoanalyst can sound out something else, something other than meaning, for meaning is what resonates with the help of the signifier, but what resonates doesn’t go very far... in what one calls poetic writing you have the dimension of what poetic interpretation could be [...] Chinese poets cannot do otherwise than write.”<sup>[i]</sup>

But Chinese poetic writing is not only the incarnation of a new link between speech and writing. It also includes a modality of the voice, of vociferation, in the form of a certain psalmody, of a singing, playing upon the interplay of tonic accents characteristic of the Chinese language. “There is something that gives the feeling that they are not reduced there, it’s that they sing, it’s that they modulate, it’s that there is what François Cheng said in front of me, namely a tonic counter-point, a modulation that makes it sing.”<sup>[ii]</sup>

By taking account of the different dit-mansions in the new use of the signifier that interpretation makes possible, Lacan is able to break with the Saussurean conception of the sign and the linguistics deduced from it. “Linguistics is still a science that I would say is very badly oriented. If linguistics has raised itself up, it is in so far as one Roman Jakobson has broached the question of poetics in a forthright manner. Metaphor and metonymy have implications for interpretation only insofar as they are cable of bringing something else into play. And this other thing that they bring into play is what tightly unites sound and meaning.”<sup>[iii]</sup> The psychoanalyst’s use of metaphor and metonymy does not, however, have the same aim as the poet who aims at an aesthetic effect that liberates a surplus enjoyment of its own.

As with the witticism, the psychoanalyst must aim at ethics, in other words *jouissance*. “That is even what a witticism consists of, it consists in deploying a word in a different usage than the one for which it is made. In the case of *famillionnaire*, the word is a little crumpled, but it is in this crumpling that its operative effect resides.”<sup>[iii]</sup> The new poetry that Lacan brings to light through interpretation is not linked to beauty but touches *jouissance*, as the witticism triggers a particular surplus enjoyment. “We have nothing beautiful to say. A different resonance is at stake, one founded upon witticism. A witticism is not beautiful, it only depends on an equivoque, or as Freud said, on an economy.”<sup>[iv]</sup>

This new use in this new aim defines very well the signifier in a new usage, even the possibility of producing a bespoke new signifier. “Why does one not invent a new signifier? Our signifiers are always received. For example, a signifier which, like the real, would have no effect of meaning. One never knows, perhaps it would be fruitful. It might be fruitful, it might be a means, a means of astonishment at least.”<sup>[v]</sup>

The new signifier raises the act of saying [le dire] to the level of an event, like the symptom. “Note, I did not say speech [la parole], I said the act of saying [le dire], not all speech is an act of saying [un dire], if this were not the case, all speech would be an event, which is not the case and one would not speak of vain speech. An act of saying, un dire, is of the order of the event.”<sup>[vi]</sup> The power that Lacan attributes to this new use of the signifier acts directly on the symptom. In this regard he uses a curious expression by speaking of extinguishing [éteindre] the symptom. “It is in so far as an accurate interpretation extinguishes a symptom, that truth is characterized as being poetic.”<sup>[vii]</sup>

How can we understand this verb, extinguish. I would suggest returning to the ‘Spiritual Mirror’ with which our text began and reread a paragraph that concerns the impact of saying [le dire], and in which the gleam of light and the extinction of the lightening are knotted: “When man, seeking to empty himself of all thoughts, advances in the shadowless gleam of imaginary space, abstaining from even awaiting what will emerge from it, a dull mirror shows him a surface in which nothing is reflected.”<sup>[lviii]</sup> The new signifier comes to be inscribed on a surface where no glimmer of meaning comes to be inscribed. It remains the pure trace of an outside-meaning that has finally extinguished the false shimmers of the belief in the symptom.

Translated by Philip Dravers and Florencia F. C. Shanahan

<sup>[i]</sup> Lacan, J., *Écrits*. The First Complete Edition in English, tr. B. Fink, Routledge, London, 2006. p. 707. [[The Position of the Unconscious \(Bonneval Hospital\): 31st October 1960: Jacques Lacan](#) : Information [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=5584](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=5584) : p263 of Bruce Fink’s translation, see Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink and Maire Jaanus (eds), ‘Reading Seminar XI: Lacan’s Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis’, 1995, p259-282 or reproduced below.]

<sup>[ii]</sup> Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I, Freud’s Papers on Technique*, tr. J. Forrester, W.W. Norton & Co., New York/London, 1991, p. 8. [See [Seminar I: Freud’s papers on technique: 1953-1954 : begins on 18th November 1953 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1139](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1139) : p1 of John Forrester’s translation : Seminar I : 18<sup>th</sup> November 1953]

<sup>[iii]</sup> [T.N. The term ‘n’importe quoi’ was translated in Seminar I as ‘anything’, but could also be pushed further to ‘anything whatever’, ‘anything at all’ etc. Its sense is of something that has no import, that does not imply or signify anything. It also means, ‘rubbish’, ‘nonsense’, and even, in contemporary usage, ‘Whatever!’]

<sup>[iv]</sup> Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I, Freud’s Papers on Technique*, op.cit. [See [Seminar I: Freud’s papers on technique: 1953-1954 : begins on 18th November 1953 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1139](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1139) : p1 of John Forrester’s translation : Seminar I : 18<sup>th</sup> November 1953]

<sup>[v]</sup> Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X, Anxiety*, tr. A. R. Price, Polity, Cambridge, 2014, p. 225. [See [Seminar X: The Anxiety \(or Dread\): 1962-1963: begins 14th November 1962: Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=212](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=212) : Seminar X : 8<sup>th</sup> May 1963 : pXVII 156-157 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation]

<sup>[vi]</sup> Diény J-P., Paul Demiéville (1894-1979) in: *École pratique des hautes études, 4ème section, Livret 2. Rapport sur les conférences des années 1981-1982*, pp. 23-29.

<sup>[vii]</sup> Lacan, J., “On a Purpose”, *Écrits*, op. cit.p. 304 [T.N. quoted by Jacques-Alain Miller, in “The Space of a Lapsus”, TLR6, p. 70 (French) and p. 73 (English), where éclair is translated

as ‘spark’.] : See [Écrits : 1966 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1206](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1206)

[viii] Lacan, J., Seminar XII, “The Object of Psychoanalysis”, unpublished. : See [Seminar XII : Crucial Problems for Psychoanalysis : 1964-1965 : from 2nd December 1964 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=6644](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=6644) : Seminar XII : 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1965 : p136-137 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation

[ix] Cf. Heidegger M., “Logos”, tr. J. Lacan, pp. 59-79.

[x] Lacan, J., The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book V, Formations of the Unconscious, tr. R. Grigg, Polity, Cambridge, 2017, pp. 433-434. : See Seminar V : 18<sup>th</sup> June 1957 : [Seminar V : The Formations of the Unconscious : 1957-1958 : begins 6th November 1957 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12054](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12054) : p339-340 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation

[xi] Lacan, J., *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 496. [The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power:10th-13th July 1958 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138) : p9-10 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation

[xii] Lacan, J., Seminar XIV, “The Logic of the Fantasy”, lesson of 21 June 1967, unpublished. : See [Seminar XIV: The logic of phantasy: 1966-1967: begins 16th November 1966 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1455](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1455) : Seminar XIV : 21<sup>st</sup> June 1967 : pXXIV 267 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation

[xiii] Ibid. : Seminar XIV : 21<sup>st</sup> June 1967 : pXXIV 267-268 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation

[xiv] Ibid. : Seminar XIV : 21<sup>st</sup> June 1967 : pXXIV 268 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation : See [Seminar XIV: The logic of phantasy: 1966-1967: begins 16th November 1966 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1455](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1455) :

[xv] Lacan, J., “Direction of the Treatment...”, *Écrits*, op. cit., pp. 496-497. : See [The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power:10th-13th July 1958 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138) : p10-11 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation

[xvi] Ibid., p. 497. : See [The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power:10th-13th July 1958 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138) : p10-11++ of Cormac Gallagher’s translation

[xvii] Ibid. : See [The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power:10th-13th July 1958 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138) : p10-11++ of Cormac Gallagher’s translation

[xviii] Jacques-Alain Miller, “Interpretation in Reverse”, *Psychoanalytical Notebooks*, Issue 2, 1999. Available on-line:

[Jacques-Alain Interpretation-in-Reverse.pdf](#) : Information & references : [Interpretation in Reverse : 1996 : Jacques-Alain Miller](#) or [here](#) <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12368>

[xix] Miller, J.-A., “The Monologue of l’Apparole”, tr. M. Downing Roberts, Qui Parle, 9 (Spring/Summer 1996), p. 171. [T.N. translation modified; the reference to Encore, can be found on page 138.]

[xx] Ibid., p. 173.

[xxi] Ibid., p. 178-179.

[xxii] Ibid., p.180.

[xxiii] Ibid.

[xxiv] Ibid., p. 181.

[xxv] Ibid.

[xxvi] Ibid., p. 181 (translation modified).

[xxvii] Lacan, J., Seminar XXII, “R.S.I”, Lesson of 11 February 1975. Text established in French by J.-A. Miller, Ornicar ?, n° 4, pp. 95-97.

[xxviii] Miller, J.-A., “Introduction à l’érotique du temps” [“Introduction to the Erotics of Time”, excerpts published in Lacanian Ink, Issue 24/25], in La Cause freudienne, No. 56, Navarin, Paris, March 2004, p. 77.

[xxix] Ibid.

[xxx] Ibid., p. 78.

[xxxi] Ibid., p. 85.

[xxxii] Ibid., pp. 96-97.

[xxxiii] Ibid.

[xxxiv] Miller, J.-A., “Lacanian Biology and the Event of the Body”, Lacanian Ink, Issue 18, 2001, pp. 6-29.

[xxxv] Lacan, J., The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VIII, Transference, tr. B. Fink, Polity, London, 2017, p. 372. Lacan speaks of “Pindar’s famous ejaculatory proclamation.”

[xxxvi] Lacan J., Seminar XIII, “The Object of Psychoanalysis (1965-1966), lesson of 1December 1965, unpublished.

[xxxvii] Lacan J., Seminar XII, “Crucial Problems for Psychoanalysis” (1964-1965), lesson of 27 February 1965, unpublished.

[xxxviii] Lacan, J., Seminar XIII, op. cit.

[xxxix] Demiéville, P., Entretiens de Linji, Fayard, 1972, quoted by Nathalie Charraud, “Lacan et le Bouddhisme Chan” La Cause freudienne, No. 79 (2011/2013), p. 123.

[xl] Miller, J.-A., XVIII, Nullibité, Lesson of 11 June 2008, unpublished.

[xli] Miller, J.-A., “L’orientation lacanienne, Le tout dernier Lacan,” teaching delivered within the framework of the Department of Psychoanalysis Paris VIII, published as “En deçà de l’insconscient”, La Cause du Désir, No. 91, Navarin, Paris, 2015, p. 107.

[xlii] I am referring to the version of this testimony presented at the soirée of the pass, on 21 May 2019, which has yet to be published. Other published versions are available which bear out the reasoning.

[xliii] Lacan, J., The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX, Encore, W.W. Norton & Co., New York/London, 1998, p. 145.

[xliv] Miller, J.-A., “Lacanian Biology and the Event of the Body”, Lacanian Ink, Issue 18, op. cit.

[xlv] Ibid.

[xlvi] Ibid.

[xlvii] Ibid.

[xlviii] Ibid.

[xlix] Lacan, J., Seminar XXIV, “L’insu que sait de l’une-bévue s’aile à mourre”, lesson of 19 April 1977, unpublished.

[l] Ibid.

[li] Ibid.

[lii] Ibid.

[liii] Ibid.

[liv] Ibid.

[lv] Ibid.

[lvi] Lacan, J., Seminar XXI, “Les non-dupes errent”, lesson of 18 December 1973, unpublished.

[lvii] Ibid.

[lviii] Lacan, J., “Presentation on Psychological Causality”, Écrits, op. cit., p. 153

## Full quotes for the references : by Julia Evans

Footnote i. Quote Laurent : A second proposition must be added to this: “Psychoanalysts are part and parcel of the concept of the unconscious, as they constitute that to which the unconscious is addressed.”

From [The Position of the Unconscious \(Bonneval Hospital\): 31st October 1960:](#)

[Jacques Lacan](#) : Information [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=5584](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=5584) : p263 of Bruce Fink's translation, see Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink and Maire Jaanus (eds), 'Reading Seminar XI: Lacan's Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis', 1995, p259-282  
Psychoanalysis thus underwrites it by furnishing an astrology that is more decent than the one to which our society continues to surreptitiously sacrifice.

I thus consider justified the prejudice psychoanalysis encounters in eastern Europe. It was up to psychoanalysis not to deserve that prejudice, as it was possible that, presented with the test of different social exigencies, psychoanalysis might have proved less tractable had it received harsher treatment [elle s'y fût trouvée moins traitable d'être plus mal traitée]. I gauge that on the basis of my own position in psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis would have done better to examine its ethics and learn from the study of theology, following a path indicated by Freud as unavoidable. At the very least, its deontology in science should make it realize that it is responsible for the presence of the unconscious in this field.

This function was served by my students at this colloquium, and I have contributed thereto in accordance with the method that I have constantly adopted on such occasions, situating each in his position in relation to the subject. The main axis is sufficiently well indicated in the recorded responses.

It would be of some interest, if only to the historian, to have the transcripts of the talks actually given, even if they were cut where blanks appeared due to defects in the recording devices. They underscore the incompetence of the one whose services designated him as the person who could highlight with the greatest tact and accuracy the detours of a moment of combat in a place in which ideas were exchanged – his connections, his culture, and even his social savvy [entregent] allowing him to understand better than anyone else the recordings with the intonations. His failings [défaillance] already ensconced him in the good graces of defection. [Lacan is apparently referring here to Jean-Bertrand Pontalis. See note at the end of this quote.]

I do not deplore the occasion that was missed, everyone having since taken ample advantage of a time-worn practice, carefully reworking his presentation. I will take advantage of the occasion to explain my present doctrine of the unconscious, as they constitute that to which the unconscious is addressed. I thus cannot but include my discourse on the unconscious in the very thesis it enunciates: the presence of the unconscious, being situated in the locus of the Other, is to be sought in every discourse, in its enunciation.

Notes



Jean-Bertrand Pontalis. From Wikipedia - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Bertrand\\_Pontalis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Bertrand_Pontalis) , A student of Jean-Paul Sartre, Pontalis became a professor of philosophy in the forties, before undergoing an analysis with his associate Jacques Lacan the following decade. He was, however, one of the minority group of disciples/analysands who did not follow Lacan into the École Freudienne de Paris, but rather stayed within the legitimist sphere as founding members of the Association Psychanalytique de France, of which he later became president.

Together with Jean Laplanche, he wrote the influential work *The Language of Psychoanalysis* in 1967; while among his later, more literary writings were *Windows* and *Crossing the Shadows*.

His 1993 autobiography, *Love of Beginnings*, was deliberately ahistorical, emphasising what he called "holes" in discourse, where the process of slipping through or evading set formats and ways of thinking opened up new beginnings: "When words fail, it is because, without realising it, one is about to touch a different earth".

---

Footnote ii : See [Seminar I: Freud's papers on technique: 1953-1954 : begins on 18th November 1953 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [herehttp://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1139](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1139) : p1 of John Forrester's translation : Seminar I : 18<sup>th</sup> November 1953

Overture to the Seminar

The master breaks the silence with anything - with a sarcastic remark, with a kick-start. That is how a buddhist master conducts his search for meaning, according to the technique of *zen*. It behoves the students to find out for themselves the answer to their own questions. The master does not teach *ex cathedra* a ready made science; he supplies an answer when the students are on the verge of finding it.

This kind of teaching is a refusal of any system. It uncovers a thought in motion - nonetheless vulnerable to systematisation, since it necessarily possesses a dogmatic aspect. Freud's thought is the most perennially open to revision. It is a mistake to reduce it to a collection of hackneyed phrases. Each of his ideas possesses a vitality of its own. That is precisely what one calls the dialectic.

Certain of these ideas were, at a given moment, indispensable to Freud, because they supplied an answer to a question that he had formulated previously, in other terms. Hence one only gains a sense of their value by relocating them in their context.

But it is not enough to do some history, the history of thought, and to say that Freud lived in a scientific century. Rather, with *The Interpretation of Dreams*, something of a different essence, of a concrete psychological density, is reintroduced, namely, meaning.

---

Footnote iv : Quote : When Lacan isolates this anything from the Zen master, [\[iv\]](#) Lacan is not speaking about Zen technique in general – see Footnote ii

---

Footnote v : Quote but in particular that of Linji, one of the founders of a school whose influence was central in the transmission of Chan Buddhism to Japan. This author was dear to the person Lacan used to refer to as his "good mentor," [\[v\]](#) Paul Demiéville, who in 1947 published an important study, *The Spiritual Mirror*, which he used as reference :

See [Seminar X: The Anxiety \(or Dread\): 1962-1963: begins 14th November 1962: Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=212](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=212) : Seminar X : 8<sup>th</sup> May 1963 : pXVII 156-157 of Cormac Gallagher's translation :

This is done to materialise before you that the monotheism-polytheism opposition is perhaps not something as clear as it is usually represented for you. For the thousand and one statues which are there are all properly and identically the same Buddha. Besides, by right, each one of you is a Buddha, I say by right because for particular reasons you may have been thrown

into the world with some defect which may constitute a more or less irreducible obstacle to gaining access to it.

It nevertheless remains that this identity of the subjective *one* in its multiplicity, its infinite variability, to a final *one* with its completed access to non-dualism, in its access to the beyond of every pathetic variation, to the beyond of every cosmic worldly change, is something in which we have less reason to interest ourselves in as a phenomenon, than the fact that it allows us to approach the relationships that it demonstrates by the consequences that it had historically, structurally in the thoughts of men.

In truth, I said that what is there under a thousand and one supports, in reality these thousand and one supports, thanks to the effects of multiplication inscribed in what you can see, the multiplicity of their arms and of some heads which crown the central head, ought to be multiplied in such a way that there are in reality here 33,333 of the same identical beings. This is only a detail.

I told you what a Buddha was. It is not absolutely speaking a God, it is a *bodhisattva*, which means to go quickly and create a void, as I might say, an almost Buddha. It would be completely a Buddha if precisely it was not there; but since it is there, and under this multiplied form, which has demanded, as you see, a lot of trouble, this is only the image of the trouble that he for his part takes to be there. He is there for you. He is a Buddha who has not yet succeeded in disinteresting himself, no doubt because of one of these obstacles to which I alluded earlier, to disinterest himself in the salvation of humanity. That is the reason why, if you are Buddhists, you prostrate yourself before this sumptuous gathering. It is because in effect you owe, I think, recognition to the unity which has troubled itself in such a great number to remain within range of bringing you help. For there is also said - the iconography enumerates it - the cases in which they will bring you help.

The *bodhisattva* in question is called in Sanscrit - you have already heard tell of him, I hope; his name is widely known, especially in our own day; all of this turns around this sphere vaguely called the element for anyone who does yoga - the *bodhisattva* in question here is Avalokitesvara.

The first image, the one of the statue that I passed around among you, is a historical avatar of this Avalokitesvara. I thus took the right path before becoming interested in Japanese. Fate decreed that I should have elucidated with **my good master Demiéville**, in the years when psychoanalysis allowed me more leisure, this book, this book which is called *The Lotus and the True Law* which was written in Chinese to translate a Sanscrit text by Kumarajiva. This text is more or less the historical turning point at which there appears the avatar, the singular metamorphosis that I am going to ask you to remember, namely that this *bodhisattva*, Avalokitesvara, the one who hears the tears of the world, is transformed from the time of Kumarajiva, who seems to be a little responsible for it, is transformed into a female divinity. This female divinity with whom I think you are also ever so little in accord with, in harmony with, is called Kuan-yin or again Kuan-shih-yin, this is also the meaning that Avalokitesvara has: it is the one who considers, who goes, who is in agreement. That is Kuan; this is the word I spoke to you about earlier and that is her wailing or her tears. Kuan-shih-yin - the "shih" can sometimes be effaced - the Kuan-yin is a female divinity. In China there is no ambiguity: the Kuan-yin always appears in a female form and it is at this transformation and on this transformation that I would ask you to dwell for a moment. In Japan these same words are written Kannon or Kann-ze-non, according to whether one inserts there or not the character of the world. Not all the forms of Kannon are feminine. I would even say that the majority of them are not. And because you have before your eyes the image of the statues of this temple, the same sanctity, divinity - a term which is to be left in suspense here - which is represented in this multiple form, you can see that the characters are provided with little moustaches and with tiny outlines of beards. Here therefore they are in a masculine form,

which corresponds in effect to the canonical structure these statues represent, the number of arms and of heads involved. But it is exactly the same being that is involved as in the first statue whose representations I circulated among you. It is even this form which is specified, can be seen as "Nio-i-Yin", Kannon or Kann-ze-non. "Nio-i-yin" in this case, which is therefore to be remembered here - there is a character which is going to be a little stifled, but after all not too much so - "Nio-i-yin" means "like the wheel of desires". It is exactly the meaning that its correspondent in Sanscrit has.

Here then is what we find ourselves confronted with: what is involved is rediscovering in the most well-attested fashion the assimilation of pre-Buddhic divinities into the different stages of this hierarchy which thenceforth is articulated as the levels, the stages, the forms of access to the final realisation of beauty, namely to the final understanding of the radically illusory character of all desire.

---

P2 Footnote vi ... Chinese subitism : From Wikipedia, The term **subitism** points to sudden enlightenment, the idea that insight is attained all at once. The opposite approach, that enlightenment can be achieved only step by step, through an arduous practice, is called gradualism.

---

Footnote vii : Quote : Jacques-Alain Miller has insisted on this side of Lacan's teaching, namely: "allowing oneself to be led in this way by the letter of Freud's work, up to the spark [the lightning] that it necessitates, without selecting a destination in advance—and by not backing away from the residue, found anew at the end, of its enigmatic point of departure, and even by not considering that he had accounted, at the end of the proceedings, for the astonishment by which he entered into the proceedings... [vii]" : On a Purpose : 1966 : Jacques Lacan : Written as an introduction to Jean Hyppolite's commentary on Freud's 'Verneinung' : See [Écrits : 1966 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1206](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1206) : p303 of Bruce Fink's translation : The two samples of my seminar that follow inspire me to give the reader some idea of the purpose of my teaching. P304 of Bruce Fink's translation :

For it was by allowing himself [Jean Hyppolite] to be led in this way by the letter of Freud's work, up to the spark that it necessitates, without selecting a destination in advance – and by not backing away from the residue, found anew at the end, of its enigmatic point of departure, and even by not considering that he had accounted, at the end of the proceedings for the astonishment by which he entered into the proceedings – that a tried and true logician brought me the guarantee of what constituted my request, when for the preceding three years already I had been legitimating my work as a *literal commentary* on Freud's work.

The *requirement to read* does not take up as much space in the culture of psychoanalysts as one might think.

There is nothing superstitious in my privileging the letter of Freud's work. It is in circles where liberties are taken with that letter that people render that letter sacred in a way that is altogether compatible with its debasement to routinized use.

Freud's discovery shows the structural reason why the literality of any text, whether proposed as sacred or profane, increases in importance the more it involves a genuine confrontation with truth.

That structural reason is found precisely in what the truth that it bears, that of the unconscious, owes to the letter of language – that is, to what I call “the signifier.”

While this incidentally accounts for Freud’s quality as a writer, it is above all decisive in interesting psychoanalysis as much as possible in language and in what language determines in the subject.

-----  
Footnote viii : Quote : “Everyone knows that a Zen exercise has something to do, though one doesn’t know what it means, with the subjective realization of a void.” [viii] : See [Seminar XII : Crucial Problems for Psychoanalysis : 1964-1965 : from 2nd December 1964 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [herehttp://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=6644](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=6644) : Seminar XII : 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1965 : p136-137 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation : What is involved is to interrogate what is at stake for us in this function of the other, how it presents itself to us, and it is this that I intend to introduce today, because undoubtedly the step has I think been taken, easily, facilitated by our last explorations, of what I always meant by introducing, precisely at the level of this question of the other, what is essential for us in order to know what identification means, by introducing the question which so horrified all those around me who preferred to find my message futile, indeed gone uselessly astray, the question described as that of the mustard pots.

The question of the mustard pots, posed first of all as the fact that the mustard pot is characterised by this experiential fact that there is never any mustard in it, that the mustard pot is by definition always empty, the question of the mustard pots poses this question, the question precisely of the distinction between what is indiscernible. It is easy to say that the mustard pot here, is distinguished from the (22) one there, as Aristotle tells us, because they are not made of the same matter.

Thus, the question is easily resolved, and if I chose mustard pots, it is precisely to avoid the difficulty. If it involved the body, as it did earlier, you would see that Aristotle would not have had such an easy answer, for the body, being what has the property, not only of assimilating to itself the matter that it absorbs but, as we have seen suggested by Freud, of assimilating something quite different with it, namely, its essence as body. There you would not have found it so easy to distinguish between the indiscernibles and you might, with the monk, I hesitate to say practising Zen, because you are soon going to spread it throughout Paris that I am teaching you Zen, and what might result from it, anyway, it is all the same a Zen formula and this monk is called Tchi Un. He tells you: “like this body” undoubtedly, at the level of the body, it is impossible to distinguish any body from all the other bodies, and it is not because there are two hundred and sixty of you here that this unit is less real, because moreover in the case of the Buddha, he was something like three hundred and three million, three hundred and thirty thousand, three hundred and three, and it was always the same Buddha. But we have not got that far. We take the mustard pots, the mustard pots are distinct but I think the question is, the hollow, the void that the mustard pot constitutes. Is it the same (23) void or are there different voids? Here the question is a little bit more thorny, and it is precisely rejoined by this genesis of one in zero, to which arithmetical thinking is constrained.

In a word, these voids in effect are so much a single void, that they only begin to be distinguished from the moment that one fills one of them and that the recurrence begins because there is one void the less. Such is the inaugural establishment of the subject.

Someone, before you, in the closed part of my seminar, was able to make coincide, intersect, so rigorously the deduction which coexists between a certain form of my introduction of the subject, that it is not by chance, but the apologue that I give you here about the void and its filling and of the genesis of a distinction of lack as it is introduced at the level of the pint; the "One Tuborg, one" (Une Tuborg, une) - I would be the first to have substituted the garçon de café for God the creator - "One Tuborg, one" means, introduces the possibility, that afterwards I may ask for another, and nevertheless it is always Tuborg, always similar to itself.

The introduction of "one" is here the essential point at the level of lack. This other subsequently gives the measure or the cause of my thirst, that it also gives me the (24) opportunity to order it for another and, by bi-univocal correspondence, to establish as such this pure other, such is the level of operation where there is generated, where there is first introduced as presence the lack of the subject.

It is starting from there, and uniquely from there, that there can be conceived the perfect bipolarity, the perfect ambivalence, of everything that will subsequently be produced at the level of demand, it is in so far as the subject is established, is supported, as zero, as this zero which lacks its filling up, that there can operate the symmetry, I would say, of what is established and what, for Freud, remains enigmatic between the object that he can have and the object that he can be.

It is precisely by remaining at this level that there can be pushed perhaps to its term, a quite particular conjuring farce, because it is not true that everything is exhausted for the subject in the dimension of the Other, that with respect to the Other, everything is a demand to have, into which there is transferred, there is established a semblance of being.

The coordinates of the space of the Other do not operate in this simple dyedre[?]; in other words, the zero point, the origin of the coordinates from which we might establish it, is not a true zero point.

-----  
Footnote x : quote : This is why, in the 1950s, Lacan became interested in the contribution of the heterodox English psychoanalyst Edward Glover, from the 1930s, referring to his comments on the effect of inaccurate interpretation as follows:

“An article that I advise you to read on the matter is one by Glover called “Therapeutic Effects of Inexact Interpretation,”... It's a very interesting question, and it leads Glover to draw up a general situation about all the positions taken by whoever finds himself in the position of consultant in relation to every kind of disorder. Having done this, he generalizes and extends the notion of interpretation to every formulated position taken by whomever one consults and draws up a scale of the different positions of the doctor in relation to the patient.”[\[x\]](#)

Information & references : [The therapeutic effect of inexact interpretation : a contribution to the theory of suggestion : October 1931 : Edward Glover](#) or [here](#)  
<http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12085>

+++Update Glover & put the other references to Laurent down+++++Do Seminar V

Seminar V : 18<sup>th</sup> June 1957 : see [Seminar V : The Formations of the Unconscious : 1957-1958 : begins 6th November 1957 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here](#)  
<http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12054> : p339-340 of Cormac Gallagher's translation : It is extremely important to articulate correctly the different lines on which analysis is situated. There is an article which I would recommend you to read, it is the article by Glover which is called: "The Therapeutic Effect of Inexact Interpretation" (October 1931, Vol. 12, Art. 4 of the *IJP*).

It is one of the most remarkable and most intelligent articles which could be written on such a subject. It is really in fact the starting base from which the question of interpretation can be approached.

In fact the basis of this article and of the problem that it poses, is something which can more or less be situated as follows: at the point in time that Glover wrote it, we are still at a time when Freud is alive, but at which the great change of analytic technique around the analysis of resistances and of aggressivity has happened. Glover articulates that this analysis of resistances and of the transference is something which with the experience and the development of notions acquired in analysis, is something which implies going over, covering as one might say, in the sense that ground must be covered by the analytic progress the totality of the systèmes fantasmatiques - let us translate "phantasy systems" in this way: the systems of phantasies - which we have learned to recognise in analysis. It is clear that at that time more had been learned, more was known than right at the beginning of analysis, and the question which is posed, is: what was our therapy when we did not know the whole extent, the whole range, of these phantasy systems?

Does it mean that what we did at that time, were incomplete therapeutic treatments, less worthwhile than those which we are carrying out now? It is obviously a very interesting question, in connection with which he is led in a way to draw up a kind of general report on all the positions articulated, taken up, by the one who finds himself in the position of being consulted about any difficulties whatsoever. In a certain way he generalises, he extends the notion of interpretation to every articulated position taken by the person who is consulted, and he draws up a table of the different positions of the doctor with regard to the patient.

-----  
Footnote xi : quote : Glover is sensitive to the aporias inherent in interpretation but does not take account of the operative value of the place of the truth as such. The phlogistic fluid in question is in fact meaning as it appears as escaping the relationship between human beings spontaneously without any basis or principle.

“This importance of the signifier in the localization of analytic truth appears implicitly when an author holds firmly to the internal coherence of analytic experience in defining aporias. One should read Edward Glover to gauge the price he pays for not having the term ‘signifier’ at his disposal. In articulating the most relevant views, he finds interpretation everywhere,

even in the banality of a medical prescription [...] Conceived of in this way, interpretation becomes a sort of phlogiston: it is manifest in everything that is understood rightly or wrongly...”[xi]

[The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power:10th-13th July 1958 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138) : p9-10 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation : To decipher the diachrony of unconscious repetitions, interpretation must introduce into the synchrony of the signifiers that compose it, something that suddenly makes translation possible - precisely what the function of the Other as harbouring the code allows, since it is in connection with it that the missing element appears.

This importance of the signifier in locating analytic truth appears in filigree once an author holds firmly to experienced connections in the definition of aporias. You should read Edward Glover if you want to appreciate the price he pays for lacking this term: though articulating the most relevant insights, he find interpretation everywhere, finding nowhere to stop it, even in the banality of a medical prescription. He even goes as far as to say quite baldly - I am not sure whether he is aware of what he is saying - that symptom- formation is an incorrect interpretation by the subject [13]. Conceived of in this way, interpretation becomes a sort of phlogiston: manifest in everything that is understood rightly or wrongly, providing it feeds the flame of the imaginary, of that pure display, which, under the name of aggressivity, flourished in the technique of that period (1931 – recent enough to be still applicable today. Cf. [13].)

It is only in as much as interpretation culminates in the here and now of this interplay that it is distinguished from the reading of the *signatura rerum* in which Jung tries to outdo Boehme. To follow it there would not suit our analysts at all.

-----  
Footnote xii : quote : Because of the proliferation of meaning, Glover had the insight to grasp that the binary of the true and the false is not suited to psychoanalysis:

“When Mr. Glover speaks about correct or incorrect interpretation, he can only do so by avoiding this dimension of the truth [...] it is very difficult to speak about a ‘false’ interpretation [...] of incorrect interpretation [...] [for] sometimes it is not wide of the mark for all that. [...] Because truth rebels! And that however inexact it might be one has all the same tickled something.”[xii]

Seminar XIV : 21<sup>st</sup> June 1967 : pXXIV 267 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation : See [Seminar XIV: The logic of phantasy: 1966-1967: begins 16th November 1966 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1455](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1455) : And if interpretation were only something that produces material, I mean, if one radically eliminates the dimension of truth, all interpretation is only suggestion.

This is what puts in their place these very interesting speculations - because one clearly sees that they are only designed to avoid the word *truth* - when Mr. Glover speaks about correct or incorrect interpretation, he can only do so by avoiding this dimension of the truth and he does it, the dear man, ( a man who knows very well what he is saying) not simply to avoid the dimension - for you are going to see that he does not avoid it. Only look. The fact is that one can speak about the dimension of truth, but that it is very difficult to speak about a “false”

interpretation. The bivalency is polar, but it leaves us embarrassed as regards the excluded third. And that is why he admits the eventual fruitfulness - I mean, Glover - of incorrect interpretation. Consult his text. Incorrect does not mean that it is false. It means that it has nothing to do with what is at stake at that moment, in terms of truth. But sometimes it is not necessarily wide of the mark for all that, because ... because there is no way here of not seeing it re-emerge. Because the truth rebels! That however inexact it might be one has all the same tickled something.

---

Footnote xiii : quote : “In this analytic discourse designed to capture truth, it is the interpretative interpretation-response that represents the truth, the interpretation [...] as being possible there [...] the discourse that we have specified as free discourse has for its function to make room for it. It tends towards nothing else than to establish a locus of reserve in order that this interpretation maybe inscribed there as a locus reserved for the truth. This place is the one that the analyst occupies. I point out to you that he occupies it, but that it is not where the patient puts him! This is the interest of the definition that I give of transference [...] He is placed in the position of the subject supposed to know.”[\[xiii\]](#)

Seminar XIV : 21<sup>st</sup> June 1967 : pXXIV 267-268 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation : See [Seminar XIV: The logic of phantasy: 1966-1967: begins 16th November 1966 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1455](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1455) : So then in this analytic discourse designed to capture the truth, it is the interpretative interpretation - response that represent the truth, the interpretation ... as being possible there - even if it does not happen - which orients the whole discourse. And the discourse that we have ordered as free discourse has as a function making room for it. It tends to nothing else then to establish a locus of reservation in order that this interpretation maybe inscribed there as a locus reserved for the truth.

This place is the one that the analyst occupies. I point out to you that he occupies it, that is not where the patient puts him! This is the interest of the definition that I give of transference. After all, why not recall that it is specific? He is placed in the position of a subject who is supposed to know, and he knows very well that this only works because he holds that position, because it is there that the very effects of transference are produced, the ones, of course, on which he has to intervene to rectify them in the sense of the truth. [see next quote]

---

Footnote xiv : quote : The analytic interpretation is thus taken between the knowledge supposed about the mysterious link between the unconscious and jouissance and the actual emptiness which it is a question of producing: “In other words, he is between two stools, between the false position of being the subject supposed to know (which he knows he is not), and that of having to rectify the effects of this supposition on the part of the subject, and this in the name of truth. This is why the transference is the source of what is called resistance.”[\[xiv\]](#)

Seminar XIV : 21<sup>st</sup> June 1967 : pXXIV 268 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation : See [Seminar XIV: The logic of phantasy: 1966-1967: begins 16th November 1966 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1455](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1455) : Namely, that he is between two stools. Between the false position, of being the subject *supposed to know* (which he



knows well he is not) and that of having to rectify the effects of this supposition on the part of the subject, (8) and this in the name of the truth. This indeed is why the transference is the source of what is called resistance.

-----

Footnote xv : quote : Interpretation thus finds its foundation as the resumption of the insertion in the signifier of what he calls, in a remarkable way, life.

“... signification no more emanates from life than phlogiston escapes from bodies in combustion. We should speak of signification rather as of the combination of life with the O atom of the sign [Lacan clarifies in a footnote: the “O” must be read as zero], the sign insofar as it first of all connotes presence or absence, by essentially introducing the *and* that links them, since in connoting presence or absence, it institutes presence against a background of absence, just as it constitutes absence in presence.”[\[xv\]](#)

: See [The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power:10th-13th July 1958 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138) : p10-11 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation : My doctrine of the signifier is first of all a discipline in which those I form have to train themselves about the different ways in which the signifier effects the advent of the signified, which is the only conceivable way that interpretation can produce anything new. For it is not based on any assumption of divine archetypes, but on the fact that the unconscious has the radical structure of language, that a material operates in it according to certain laws, those discovered in the study of positive languages, languages that are or were actually spoken.

The phlogiston metaphor, which was suggested to me a moment ago by Glover, gets its appropriateness from the error that it suggests: meaning no more emanates from life than phlogiston escapes from burning bodies. We should speak of it rather as the combination of life with the atom O of the sign [Footnote 8], first and foremost of the sign in so far as it connotes presence *or* absence, by introducing essentially the *and* that links them, since by connoting presence or absence, it establishes presence against a background of absence, just as it constitutes absence in presence.

[Footnote 8 O, which rather than being vocalised as the symbolic letter of oxygen, evoked by the metaphor being used, can be read, zero, inasmuch as this figure symbolises the essential function of place in the structure of the signifier. Here is an example: in the USA where Kris ended up, publication gets you tenure, and a teaching like mine would every week have to stake its claim to priority against the plundering it would not fail to occasion. In France it is by way of infiltration that my ideas penetrate a group, where people obey the orders that prohibit my teaching. Since they are accursed, they ideas can only serve as adornments for some dandies. No matter: the void that they make reverberate, whether I am quoted or not makes another voice heard there.]

-----

Footnote xvi : quote : And Lacan gives as the figure of this inaugural moment of conjunction, between the place of the Zero position of the subject included in the signifier with life, in the game of the Fort-Da: “This is the point of insemination for a symbolic order that pre-exists the infantile subject and in accordance with which he has to structure himself.”[\[xvi\]](#) : See [The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power:10th-13th July 1958 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138) : p11 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation

: At the same time, there also appears in it the value of the object as in itself insignificant (what the child makes appear and disappear), and the subsidiary character of phonetic perfection in relation to phonematic distinction - and no one would dispute that Freud was right to translate it immediately by the *Fort! Da!* of the German he as an adult spoke [9].

This is the point of insertion [JE : Notice different translation, insemination (Bruce Fink's)/insertion (Cormac Gallagher's & p234 of Alan Sheridan's translation)] of a symbolic order that pre-exists the infantile subject and in accordance with which he will have to structure himself.

4. I will spare myself the task of giving the rules of interpretation

### **Further Reference**

Quote : between the place of the Zero position of the subject included in the signifier with life, in the game of the Fort-Da.

Beyond the Pleasure Principle : 1920g : Sigmund Freud Part II, P283 of pfl : SE Vol II, pp. 14–17. : To request a copy of this text send to [je.lacanian@icloud.com](mailto:je.lacanian@icloud.com)

At this point I propose to leave the dark and dismal subject of the traumatic neurosis and pass on to examine the method of working employed by the mental apparatus in one of its earliest normal activities - I mean in children's play.

The different theories of children's play have only recently been summarized and discussed from the psycho-analytic point of view by Pfeifer (1919), to whose paper I would refer my readers. These theories attempt to discover the motives which lead children to play, but they fail to bring into the foreground the economic motive, the consideration of the yield of pleasure involved. Without wishing to include the whole field covered by these phenomena, I have been able, through a chance opportunity which presented itself, to throw some light upon the first game played by a little boy of one and a half and invented by himself. It was more than a mere fleeting observation, for I lived under the same roof as the child and his parents for some weeks, and it was some time before I discovered the meaning of the puzzling activity which he constantly repeated

The child was not at all precocious in his intellectual development. At the age of one and a half he could say only a few comprehensible words; he could also make use of a number of sounds which expressed a meaning intelligible to those around him. He was, however, on good terms with his parents and their one servant-girl, and tributes were paid to his being a 'good boy'. He did not disturb his parents at night, he conscientiously obeyed orders not to touch certain things or go into certain rooms, and above all he never cried when his mother left him for a few hours. At the same time, he was greatly attached to his mother, who had not only fed him herself but had also looked after him without any outside help. This good little boy, however, had an occasional disturbing habit of taking any small objects he could get hold of and throwing them away from him into a corner, under the bed, and so on, so that hunting for his toys and picking them up was often quite a business. As he did this he gave vent to a loud, long-drawn-out 'o-o-o-o', accompanied by an expression of interest and satisfaction. His mother and the writer of the present account were agreed in thinking that this was not a mere interjection but represented the German word 'fort'. I eventually realized that it was a game and that the only use he made of any of his toys was to play 'gone' with them.

One day I made an observation which confirmed my view. The child had a wooden reel with a piece of string tied round it. It never occurred to him to pull it along the floor behind him, for instance, and play at its being a carriage. What he did was to hold the reel by the string and very skilfully throw it over the edge of his curtained cot, so that it disappeared into it, at the same time uttering his expressive 'o-o-o-o'. He then pulled the reel out of the cot again by the string and hailed its reappearance with a joyful 'da'. This, then, was the complete game - disappearance and return. As a rule one only witnessed its first act, which was repeated untiringly as a game in itself, though there is no doubt that the greater pleasure was attached to the second act.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A further observation subsequently confirmed this interpretation fully. One day the child's mother had been away for several hours and on her return was met with the words 'Baby o-o-o-o!' which was at first incomprehensible. It soon turned out, however, that during this long period of solitude the child had found a method of making himself disappear. He had discovered his reflection in a full-length mirror which did not quite reach to the ground, so that by crouching down he could make his mirror-image 'gone'.

The interpretation of the game then became obvious. It was related to the child's great cultural achievement - the instinctual renunciation (that is, the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction) which he had made in allowing his mother to go away without protesting. He compensated himself for this, as it were, by himself staging the disappearance and return of the objects within his reach. It is of course a matter of indifference from the point of view of judging the effective nature of the game whether the child invented it himself or took it over on some outside suggestion. Our interest is directed to another point. The child cannot possibly have felt his mother's departure as something agreeable or even indifferent. How then does his repetition of this distressing experience as a game fit in with the pleasure principle? It may perhaps be said in reply that her departure had to be enacted as a necessary preliminary to her joyful return, and that it was in the latter that lay the true purpose of the game. But against this must be counted the observed fact that the first act, that of departure, was staged as a game in itself and far more frequently than the episode in its entirety, with its pleasurable ending.

No certain decision can be reached from the analysis of a single case like this. On an unprejudiced view one gets an impression that the child turned his experience into a game from another motive. At the outset he was in a passive situation - he was overpowered by the experience; but, by repeating it, unpleasurable though it was, as a game, he took on an active part. These efforts might be put down to an instinct for mastery that was acting independently of whether the memory was in itself pleasurable or not. But still another interpretation may be attempted. Throwing away the object so that it was 'gone' might satisfy an impulse of the child's, which was suppressed in his actual life, to revenge himself on his mother for going away from him. In that case it would have a defiant meaning: 'All right, then, go away! I don't need you. I'm sending you away myself.' A year later, the same boy whom I had observed at his first game used to take a toy, if he was angry with it, and throw it on the floor, exclaiming: 'Go to the fwont!' He had heard at that time that his absent father was 'at the front', and was far from regretting his absence; on the contrary he made it quite clear that he had no desire to be disturbed in his sole possession of his mother.<sup>1</sup> We know of other children who liked to express similar hostile impulses by throwing away objects instead of persons.<sup>2</sup> We are therefore left in doubt as to whether the impulse to work over in the mind some overpowering experience so as to make oneself master of it can find expression as a primary event, and independently of the pleasure principle. For, in the case we have been discussing,

the child may, after all, only have been able to repeat his unpleasant experience in play because the repetition carried along with it a yield of pleasure of another sort but none the less a direct one.

<sup>1</sup> When this child was five and three-quarters, his mother died. Now that she was really 'gone' ('o-o-o'), the little boy showed no signs of grief. It is true that in the interval a second child had been born and had roused him to violent jealousy.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. my note on a childhood memory of Goethe's (1917b).<sup>2</sup>

-----

Footnote xvii : Quote : It is accompanied by a particular mark drawn from life and marks the place of a non-object which he will soon name object a. "I will spare myself the task of providing the rules of interpretation. It is not that they cannot be formulated, but their formalizations presuppose developments that I cannot presume to be known." [xvii]

See [The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power:10th-13th July 1958 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=138) : p11 of Cormac Gallagher's translation : 4. I will spare myself the task of giving the rules of interpretation. It is not that they cannot be formulated, but their formulae presuppose developments that I cannot presume to be known, and it would be impossible to provide a condensed account of them here.

I will confine myself to remarking that when one reads the classical commentaries on interpretation, one always regrets how little is made of the very data that are advanced.

For example, everyone recognises in his own way that to confirm that an interpretation is well founded, it is not the conviction with which it is received that matters, since the criterion will be found much more rather in the material that emerges as a result of it.

-----

Footnote xviii : Quote : Jacques-Alain Miller has defined the problematic in an important article that opposes translation interpretation to asemantic interpretation, which aims only at the opacity of jouissance. The empty place is no longer "in reserve", it is brought to the fore: "The question is not to know whether the session is long or short, silent or chatty. Either the session is a semantic unity, in which S<sub>2</sub> comes to punctuate the elaboration – delusion in the service of the Name of the Father – (many sessions are like that), or the analytic session is an a-semantic unity bringing the subject back to the opacity of his jouissance. This supposes that it be cut before it closes on itself." : See [Interpretation in Reverse : 1996 : Jacques-Alain Miller](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12368](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12368)

Let's say that in the text S<sub>1</sub> always absorbs S<sub>2</sub>. The words which would translate its sense into another language are as if devoured in advance by this very text, as if it was translating itself, and, by virtue of this, the relation of signifier and signified does not take the form of the unconscious. You will never be able to separate what Joyce wanted to say from what he said — integral transmission, but in a mode which is the reverse of the matheme.

The *zero effect* of the elementary phenomenon is obtained here through an *aleph effect*, which opens to the infinity of the semantic, or, better, to the flight of sense.

What we still call ‘interpretation’, although analytic practice is always increasingly post-interpretative, is revealing no doubt, but of what if not of an irreducible opacity in the relation of the subject to *lalangue*. And this is why interpretation — this post-interpretation — is no longer, to be precise, a punctuation.

Punctuation belongs to the system of signification; it is still semantic; it still produces a quilting point. This is why the post-interpretative practice which, every day a little more, takes over interpretation, indexes itself not on punctuation but on the cut.

Let us for the time being give an image to this cut, that of a separation between S1 and S2, the very one that is inscribed on the inferior line of the matheme of the ‘analytic discourse’: S2 -S1.

The consequences of it are fundamental for the very construction of what we call the analytic session.

The question is not to know whether the session is long or short, silent or chatty. Either the session is a semantic unity, in which S2 comes to punctuate the elaboration — delusion in the service of the Name-of-the-Father — (many sessions are like that), or the analytic session is an a-semantic unity bringing the subject back to the opacity of his *jouissance*. This supposes that it be cut before it closes on itself.

Here therefore I oppose the path of elaboration to the path of perplexity. Don’t worry about elaboration, there will always be too much of it.

-----  
Footnote xxvii : Quote : Lacan comes to oppose interpretation and speech. “Analytic interpretation [...] is brought to bear in a way that goes much further than speech. Speech is an object of elaboration for the analysand, but what does it bear of the effects of what the analyst says – for he does say. It is not nothing to formulate that the transference plays a role there, but that does not clarify anything. It would be a question of explaining how interpretation is brought to bear and that it does not necessarily involve an enunciation.” : See [Seminar XXII: R. S. I. : 1974-1975: from 19th November 1974 : Jacques Lacan](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=45) or [here](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=45) <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=45> Seminar XXII 11<sup>th</sup> February 1975 : p73-74 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation : It is certain that it is brought to bear, analytic interpretation is brought to bear in a way that goes much further than the word. The word is an object of elaboration for the analysand, but what the analyst says – for he says – what the analyst says has effects about which it is not nothing to say that transference plays a role in it, but, it is not nothing but it does not illuminate anything. It would be a matter of saying how the interpretation is brought to bear, and that it does not inevitably imply a stating (enunciation).

-----  
Footnote xxxiv : Quote : This interpretation is not of the order of a translation by addition of a signifier two, S2, in relation to an S1, a signifier One. It does not aim at concatenation or the production of a signifying chain. It responds to the new aim of tightening the knot around

the body event and the inscription that can be noted (a) in a renewed use: “The famous concept of the letter, which was made to overcome the dichotomy of the signifier and the object.” : See [Lacanian Biology and the Event of the Body : 12th & 19th May 1999 \(Paris VIII\) : Jacques-Alain Miller](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12423](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12423) : This quotation has not been found. ‘Letter’ is used on p21 : Perhaps even more startling as a short circuit is Lacan’s analogy found on page 90 of *Encore* (See <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12423> for details) : “The function I give the letter is what makes it analogous to a germ.” Lacan reworks the following scheme, making the letter analogous to the germ. It has surpassed this term “germ” since he speaks of the germ separate from the bodies for which it is the vehicle for life and death together. [Diagrams omitted] This analogy of the letter and the germ is evidently made to give us the notion of a reproduction of the letter, but which supposes the exteriority of knowledge (savoir) in relationship to being, in relationship to body. It is transmission of the letter, but in a position of exteriority. Thus Lacan says : “Knowledge (savoir) is in the Other. It is a knowledge which is supported by the signifier and which owes nothing to the knowing (connaissance of life (vivant).”

-----

Footnote xxxv : Quote : Lacan had already used this term ‘jaculation’ to account for the power of the poetic text, whether with reference to Pindare : See [Seminar VIII : Transference : 1960-1961 : Begins 16th November 1960 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=6124](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=6124) [xxxv] Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VIII, Transference*, tr. B. Fink, Polity, London, 2017, p. 372. Lacan speaks of “Pindar’s famous ejaculatory proclamation.” : Seminar VIII : 21<sup>st</sup> June 1961: p316 of Cormac Gallagher’s translation : I already announced to you the last time that I would begin again under the sign of the celebrated ejaculation of Pindar, in the eighth Pythian Ode composed for Aristomenes, the wrestler from Agina, the winner at the Games, "man, the dream of a shadow".

We will take up here again our reference to this relationship, the one to which, for your sakes, I tried to give the support of a model, between two concrete levels of identification - it is not by chance that I am putting the accent on the necessary distinction between them, an obvious distinction, phenomenologically within everyone's range. The ideal ego is not to be confused with the ego-ideal, this is something that the psychologist can discover of his own accord, and which moreover he does not fail to do. That the thing is just as important in the articulation of the Freudian dialectic, is indeed what will be confirmed for us, for example by the work to which I alluded the last time, that of M. Conrad Stein on primary identification.

This work ends with the recognition that what still remains obscure, is the difference between the two series that Freud distinguishes, underlines and accentuates as being the identifications of the ego and the identifications of the ego- ideal .

-----

Footnote [xxxvi] Lacan J., Seminar XIII, “The Object of Psychoanalysis (1965-1966, lesson of 1 December 1965, unpublished. : Quote : or Angelus Silesius and his mystic jaculations. [xxxvi] : See [Seminar XIII: The Object of Psychoanalysis: 1965-1966 : from December 1st 1965: Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=284](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=284) or [Science and Truth: 1st December 1965 session of Seminar XIII: The Object of](#)

[Psychoanalysis : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=739](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=739) : p14 of Bruce Fink's translation : In the *ego* that Descartes accentuates by virtue of the superfluousness of its function in certain of his Latin texts (a subject of exegesis that I leave here to the specialists), one must grasp the point at which it continues to be what it presents itself as: dependent on the god of religion. A curious scrap of *ergo*, the *ego* is bound up with this God. Descartes' approach is, singularly, one of safeguarding the *ego* from the deceitful God, and thereby safeguarding the *ego's* partner—going so far as to endow the latter with the exorbitant privilege of guaranteeing the eternal truths only insofar as he is their creator.

The lot shared by the *ego* and God that is emphasized here is the same as that rendingly proffered by Descartes' contemporary, Angelus Silesius, in his mystical adjurations, upon which he imposes the form of distichs. [25]

Those who keep up with my work would do well to recall here the use I made of the cherubic wanderer's jaculatory prayers [26], taking them up within the trajectory of the introduction to narcissism I was working on, following my own bent, the year of my commentary on President Schreber. [27]

Now one can be a bit shaky at this junction, that is how beauty walks [*c'est le pas de la beauté*], but one has to shake it just right [*il faut boiter juste*].

And first of all by realizing that the two sides do not fit together there [*ne s'emboîtent pas*].

Footnote 25 : Angelus Silesius (otherwise known as Johannes Scheffler) was a German theologian and poet, known especially for *Der cherubinische Wandersmann* (1674), written in the form of distichs, that is, rhymed couplets; see the partial English translation: *Selections from the Cherubic Wanderer*, translated and introduced by J. E. C. Fitch (London: Allen & Unwin, 1932).

Footnote 26 : *ejaculation* (jaculatory prayers) could also be translated in this context as "ejaculatory prayers" or simply "ejaculations": "short prayers 'darted up' to God" (*OED*).

Footnote 27 : The only reference I have been able to locate to Silesius in Seminar III is on page 361 where Lacan uses the words "ejaculatory speech" (*parole jaculatoire*); he refers to Silesius more directly in Seminar II, 160/131; his intended reference here, however, seems to be to Seminar I, 257- 58/231-33, a seminar in which one finds a long discussion of narcissism and a few lines of one of Silesius' prayers

-----

Footnote xxxvii : Lacan J., Seminar XII, "Crucial Problems for Psychoanalysis" (1964-1965), lesson of 27 February 1965, unpublished. : See [Seminar XII : Crucial Problems for Psychoanalysis : 1964-1965 : from 2nd December 1964 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=6644](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=6644) : Quote : Or again, of Serge Leclaire's Poordjeli— an expression outside meaning of different elements of the fantasy, he made "a secreta jaculation, a jubilatory expression, an onomatopoeia," [xxxvii] as he made a jaculation out of the "Fort-Da". : Seminar XII : 27<sup>th</sup> February 1965 : There is no session on the 27<sup>th</sup> February & an extended discussion of Leclaire's paper on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 1965. See [The Dream with the Unicorn – Pôor\(d\)j'e-li : 30th October 1960 \(Bonneval Hospital\) \[published 1966/68\] : Serge Leclaire](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=11872](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=11872) :

27<sup>th</sup> January 1965 : pVII 81 of Cormac Gallagher's translation : Dr Lacan: I want to preserve for this first meeting all its austerity. I am going to ask someone whom I expressly asked to be present at this first meeting, Conrad Stein, who at the time when Leclair for the first time went into the example that he took up today in a completed and perfectly articulated fashion, I am going to ask Conrad Stein who had raised a certain number of objections, of questions, who had put in doubt the exact relevance of the articulation at this moment of the first chain which goes from lit-la-corne, gathers together in the la licorne [the unicorn] its character, properly speaking, of ideational representative of the unconscious, whether there remains in suspense for him, some question about the relevance of what he had put forward, what he has been able since then, because of these very questions, as he has said himself, to specify.

-----

Footnote xxxviii : Lacan, J., Seminar XIII, op. cit. : Quote : In the seminar on The Object of Psychoanalysis, he took up the first sentences from his first Seminar on the action of the Zen master: "Everyone knows, though one does not know what it means, that a Zen exercise has something to do with the subjective realization of a void [...] the mental void that it is a matter of obtaining and which would be obtained, this singular moment, in an abruptness following a period of waiting, sometimes provoked by a word, a sentence, a jaculation, even a rude remark, a snub, a kick in the ass. It is quite certain that these kinds of slapstick moments or clownish behaviour have meaning only in the light of a long subjective preparation [...]."[xxxviii] : See [Seminar XIII: The Object of Psychoanalysis: 1965-1966 : from December 1st 1965: Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=284](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=284) or [Science and Truth: 1st December 1965 session of Seminar XIII: The Object of Psychoanalysis : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=739](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=739) : Seminar XIII : 15<sup>th</sup> December 1965 : pIII 18 of Cormac Gallagher's translation : But altogether essential to delimit this sort of trap-door of exteriority that I am trying to define with regard to the function of the dust-bin in its relationships with writing.

This does not imply the exclusion of all hierarchy. Let us say that among the reviews that we are surrounded by, there are more or less distinguished dust-bins. But in looking carefully at things I have not seen any tangible advantages in the dust bins of the rue de Lille as compared to those of the surrounding area.

So then let us take up our hole again. Everyone known that a Zen exercise has something to do, even though people do not know very well what that means, with the subjective realisation of a void.

(15) And we are not forcing things in admitting that anyone, the average contemplative, will see this figure, will say to himself that there is something like a sort of high point which ought to have some relationship with the mental void that it is a matter of obtaining and that this singular high point will be obtained in an abruptness, succeeding a wait which is sometimes realised by a word, a sentence, an ejaculation, even a rudeness, a cocking of the snout, a kick in the backside. It is quite certain that these kind of pantalooneries or clowning have no sense except with respect to a long subjective preparation.

But again. At the point that we have got to, if the circle, however empty it may be, is to be considered by us as defining its holing value, if finding favour in it to depict what we have approached by all sorts of convergences, about what is involved in the o-object; that the o-object is linked qua fall (chute) to the emergence, to the structuring of the subject as division



is what represents, I must say, the whole point of the questioning. What is involved in the subject in our field is this hole, this fall, this ptose, to employ here a Stoic term the quite insoluble difficulty of which for the commentator when it is confronted with the simple categoren seems to me is this with respect to a lecton, another mysterious term, let us translate it (produisons-le) with all sorts of reservations and in the crudest fashion (16) which is certainly inexact by meaning, incomplete meaning, in other words a fragment of thought.

-----