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Translated by Jack W. Stone.

⁽⁴²⁾THE SYMPTOM

In analysis, there are nonetheless, it must be said, certain results. They are not always what one expects: because one is wrong to expect, which is what makes it difficult to be an analyst. I have tried to specify something about analysts that I have named analytic discourse.

Analytic discourse exists because it is the analysand who sustains it (*le tient*) . . . fortunately (*heureusement*). He has the *heur* (h-e-u-r), the *heur*, which is sometimes a *bon-heur*,¹ to have met an analyst. This doesn't always happen. Often the analyst believes the philosopher's stone--if I can say this--of his profession consists of remaining silent. I happen to do what are called supervisions. I don't know why they call it supervision. It's a super-audition. I mean, it is very surprising that one might, in hearing what a practitioner has told you--surprising, that through what he says to you, you can have a representation of the one who is in analysis, the analysand. This is a new dimension. I will soon speak of this fact, the dit-mension, which I write not at all as one usually writes it in French. The best thing for me to do is to make an effort and show you how I write it:

dit-mension

That's how I write it . . . dit-mension . . . which is to say--in English, this is understood--*mention*, the place where a said (*dit*) reposes.

⁽⁴³⁾ So the analyst, nonetheless, has some things to say. He has some things to say to his analysand, to the one who, all the same, is not there to encounter the simple silence of the analyst. What the analyst has to say is of the order of the truth. I don't know if you have much of a sense of the truth (*de la vérité quelque chose de très sensible*). I mean: if you have an idea of what the truth is. Every discourse implies at least one place that is that of the truth. What I call discourse is in reference to a social link. Analysis is of this order. Except that, since it is wholly new, because, after all, it doesn't date back such a long time, it involves a pact. An analysand knows that the analyst will expect him a certain number of times a week and in principle the analysand must be there. If not, the analyst--even if the analysand does not come--will demand some fees. Naturally, this implies that the analyst also has some duties. He must be there. The truth, when does this begin?

It begins from the moment when one makes use of sentences. The sentence is a saying (*dire*). And this saying is *the saying of the truth*.

Somewhere I have--not only said, but written, that there is a nuance . . . there is more than a nuance, there is a mountain between the saying and the written. The proof is that people believe themselves a lot more sure of a promise when they have what one calls a paper. A paper that acknowledges a debt, for example. This paper gives support to the

¹ Happiness or good luck [tr.].

truth of the promise. It looks bad for someone to say: "This writing is not mine." In any case, this is when some expertises intervene, handwriting analysts who say: "Yes, this is indeed his writing (*cette écriture-là*)," which proves that a writing also has something individual about it. But writing has not always existed. Before, there was oral tradition. This did not prevent things from being transmitted from voice to voice. This is the origin of the principle of poetry.

I have made a certain number of points about what there is of the truth. It is sustainable to say that the truth has a structure of fiction. It is what we normally call myth--a lot of truths have a mythic existence--this is indeed why one cannot exhaust it, say it all. Which I have said in this form: there is only a half-saying (*mi-dire*) of the truth. One says the truth as one can, which is to say, in part. It is only in this way that⁽⁴⁴⁾ it presents itself, presents itself as a whole (*tout*).

And it is indeed there that lodges the difficulty: it is that one must make felt to the one who is in analysis that this truth is never whole, that it is not true for everyone, that it is not--this is an old idea--that it is not general, that it does not hold for everyone. How is it possible that there are analysts? The thing is only possible because the analysand receives cognition--if one can say this--from observing a rule, to only say what he can have to say, what he bears in his heart (*tient à cœur*) as we say in French. This is to echo--but it is not because a thing is an echo that it is specified--this is to echo a very old idea of what was the center of the being called human--what one called *anthropos*: the center was the heart--*tumos*--that is at least how it was designated; beneath the heart was the epitumean. But this conception gave man a privilege. There were two kinds of men: those specified as being from a *polis*-- . . . lambda, iota, sigma--as being citizens, who alone were human beings in the full sense (*de plein droit*). Of course, all this is a bit muddled. It nonetheless remains the case that through different structures the relation called political continues to exist. It exists, all the same, more solidly than any other relation.

I have cleared the path for something I have called the saying of the truth. The analyst has warned, before the postulant enters into analysis, he has warned him that he must say everything (*tout dire*). What does "say everything" mean? This cannot have meaning (*du sens*). This can only mean to say no matter what. In fact, this is what happens. This is how one enters analysis. The strange thing is that something happens on the order of an inertia, a polarization, an orientation. The analysand (if the analysis functions, advances) comes to speak in a more and more centered way, centered on something that has always been opposed to the *polis* (in the sense of the town), a knowledge about his particular family. The inertia that makes a subject only speak of mama or papa is nonetheless a curious business. In saying no matter what, it is curious that this inclination (*pente*) is followed, that this acts, this ends up acting like water, by making itself a river, a river of return to what holds one to one's family, which is to say, one's childhood. We could say that this explains the fact that the analyst only intervenes from a particular truth, because the child⁽⁴⁵⁾ is not an abstract child. He has had a history and a history specified by this particularity: it is not the same thing to have had his mama and the mama of his neighbor, and it's the same for the papa.

A papa is not all what one believes. He is not at all necessarily the one who made that child with a woman. In many cases, there is no guarantee, given that, after all, many things can happen to the woman, especially if she is a little loose (*si elle traîne un peu*). This is why papa is not at all, necessarily, the one who is--it must be said--the father in the

real, animal sense. The father is a function that refers to the real, and this is not necessarily the true of the real (*le vrai du réel*). This does not prevent the real of the father from being absolutely fundamental in analysis. The father's mode of existence is owed to the real. This is the only case where the real is stronger than the true. Let us say that the real, too, can be mythic. This does not prevent it from being as important, for structure, as any truthful saying (*dire vrai*). In this direction is the real.

It is very disturbing. It is very disturbing that there is a mythic real, and this is indeed why Freud so strongly maintained the function of the father in his doctrine.

Well. Up to now I have spoken slowly so that you might at least understand some fundamental truths, but I must tell you this: since I have been teaching for an excessively long time, I no longer even remember what I said the first time--which you will find reproduced in *Seminar I*, already published, almost twenty-two years ago, published as a reproduction of my seminar--I have confidence in my stenographer, the person who very much wanted to be sure to put things in her [his?] own French; this is a very good person, someone closely related to me, who indeed wanted to do this work.

What I have stated to begin with concerning the saying, the saying of the truth, is that it is the practice that teaches it to us. And I have suggested (*amorcé*), in what I have stated, I have suggested this: that this is a par-said (*par-dit*), an analysis. A part[y?] (*partie*) for (*entre*) someone who speaks, but whom one has warned that his chitchat (*parlote*) has importance. You know there are people one has to deal with in analysis with whom it is hard to obtain this. There are some for whom saying words is not easy. One calls this autism. This is a bit hastily said. It is not necessarily that.

They are simply people for whom the weight of words is very ⁽⁴⁶⁾serious and who are not disposed to take their ease with these words. I sometimes have to respond to cases like these with that famous supervision I just referred to, which, more simply, we call a control in French (which, of course, does not mean we believe we control anything). Me, often, in my controls--at the beginning at least--I encourage the analyst--or he or she who believe themselves such--to follow his movements instead. I do not think it is without reason that--not that he puts himself in this position; there is very little control over this--but I think it is not without reason that someone come to tell him or her (*lui*) something simply in the name of this: that he has been told that this person was an analyst. It is not without reason, because he expects something from it. Now, it is a question of understanding how what I am depicting for you in very broad strokes can function.

Can function in a way that, nonetheless, the social link constituted by analysis might rebound, might perpetuate itself. It is there that I have taken a side (*pris parti*) and I have said . . . --in something where, on the one hand, someone speaks without worrying in the least about contradicting himself, and then, on the other, someone does not speak--since, most of the time, it is indeed necessary to let the person who is there for something do the talking; when he speaks, he is supposed to say the truth, not just any truth, but the truth the analysand has to hear. That the analysand has to hear, why? For what he expects, that is, to be freed of the symptom.

What might it suppose that, by a saying (*dire*), someone might be freed of the symptom? It supposes that the symptom and this sort of intervention on the part of the analyst--this seems to me the least one can say--are of the same order. The symptom also says something to him. It says--it is another form of the truthful saying (*vrai dire*) and what the analyst does, in sum, is to try to do a little more than to gloss (*glisser*) over it. This

indeed is why analysis, analytic theory, uses a term like resistance. The symptom, that resists (*ça résiste*). It is not something that goes away all by itself; but presenting an analysis as something on the order of a duel is also completely contrary to the truth. This is why I have--with time, it did not come right away--tried to construct something that would account for what happens in ⁽⁴⁷⁾an analysis. I do not have the least "conception of the world," as one says. The world is that charming little shell at the center of which one puts that precious stone, that unique thing that would be man. It is conceived to have (given this schema) things that palpitate in it: an interior world. And the world, then, would be an exterior world. I do not at all believe that this suffices. I do not at all believe there is an interior world that is the reflection of the exterior world, or *visa-versa* (*ni non plus le contraire*). I have tried to formulate something that incontestably supposes a more complicated organization. If we say--we analysts--that there is an unconscious, this is founded on experience. The experience consists of this: from the origin there has been a relationship with "lalangue," which merits being called, quite correctly, maternal because it is through the mother that the child--if I can say this --receives it. He does not learn it. He has an inclination toward it. It is very surprising to see how a child very soon manipulates things as notably grammatical as the usage of the words "perhaps" ("*peut-être*") or "not yet" ("*pas encore*"). Of course, he has heard them, but the fact he understands their meaning is something that merits all of our attention.

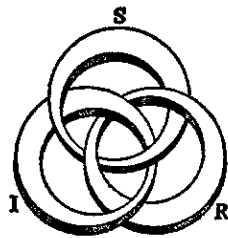
In language there is something structured. Linguists enclose themselves in this, in manifesting this structure one calls grammatical. The fact that the child is so at ease with it, that he so soon familiarizes himself with the usage of a structure that--it is not for nothing that we have pinpointed it, but in an elaborated way--one calls figures of rhetoric manifests that one does not teach him grammar. One elaborates grammar starting with what already functions as speech. And grammar (*cela*) is not what is most characteristic. If I have employed the term, "the unconscious is structured like a language," it is because I want to maintain that a language is not the language. There is something in *the* language of the already too general, of the too logical.

It is the whole system, which presents itself as if it were innate, that the child plays, in reference to the departure of its mother, with the statement that so struck Freud--coming from one of his grandchildren--the statement *Fort-Da*. It is there that all is inserted. This is already, this *Fort-Da*, a figure of rhetoric.

Someone of whom I was rather astonished that he cited me, because I did not even know he knew me--he knows me ⁽⁴⁸⁾ manifestly through Paul de Man, Paul de Man who greeted me at Yale, Paul de Man to whom, of course, I can only be very grateful for all the care he took to clear the way for my arrival in the Americas--but, nonetheless, I am surprised that so many people say certain things that are not so far from what I say . . . a sort of little whirlpool is produced like that in several places, a manner of saying things (*de dire*) that, me, I call style. I do not have a "conception of the world," but I have a style, a style that, naturally, is not altogether easy, but this is the whole problem. What is a style? What is a thing? How is a style situated, characterized? Me, in the time when I only spoke with comrades, which was the most natural thing to do, it was to say "this is not altogether that" and if what I have written after having said it, if what I have written to elaborate what I have said, has a certain *cachet*, it is from marking that I try to get a firmer grip on what is "altogether that." Of course, this is not easy; it is not easy to start, as, for example, some structuralists do, from a division between nature and culture. Culture is what I myself have

tried to quarter in the form of four discourses, but of course this is not limitative. It is discourse that floats, that swims on the surface of our politics, I mean of our way of conceiving of a certain social link. If this link was purely political, we have added something else there. We have added the discourse one calls academic and the discourse one calls scientific, which are not the same thing (*qui ne se confondent pas*), contrary to what one imagines. It is not for nothing that, in the academic field, one reserves special faculties for scientific discourse. One keeps it separate, but this is not for nothing. I have shown somewhere that there is a relationship, which is not anodyne, between scientific discourse and hysteric discourse. This might appear bizarre--in a certain sequence near certain functions that I have defined in employing a certain S_1 and a certain S_2 , which are not the same function, and also a certain S that I call a subject and a certain object (**a**), in a certain revolving order near these four functions--scientific discourse only distinguishes itself from hysteric discourse by the order in which all this is distributed.

⁽⁴⁹⁾All this has led to something that one can draw in employing several different colors. I have believed myself able to link the symbolic (it's that one there; it's the arbitrary), the real, and the imaginary.

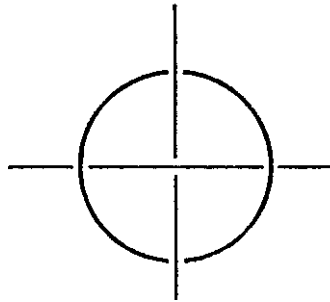


How does it happen that after having distinguished this symbolic, this imaginary, and this real, and having specified from this that the symbolic is our link to language, that it is from this that comes this distinction that we are speaking *beings* (*êtres parlants*)? It is a vicious circle to say we are speaking beings. We are "*parlêtres*," a word that has the advantage of substituting for the unconscious, by equivocating on *parlote* (chitchat), on the one hand, and on the fact that *it is to language* we owe this crazy idea (*folie*) that there is a being: because it is certain that we believe in it; we believe in it because of what appears to constitute a substance; but how is this from being, outside of the fact that language uses the verb "to be"? It uses the verb to be, but moderately. Man could say he *is* a body, and this would be very sensible, for it is obvious that the fact that he consists in a body is what he is most certain of. One has emitted some doubts about the existence of the exterior world in the name of our, after all, only having some perceptions of it, but it suffices to raise (as I just did myself) a bump in encountering something hard for it to be altogether manifest that there are things that resist, that there are things that are not displaced so easily; on the other hand, what man insists on is not that he is a body, but, as it is expressed (this is something quite striking), *that he has one*.

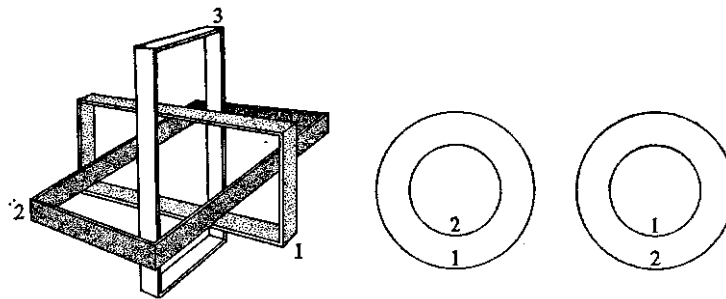
In the name of what can he say he has a body? In the name of his treating it as a go-as-I-push-you, treating it like a piece of furniture. For example, he puts it in wagons and lets himself be carted around. It is nonetheless also true that this began to be initiated

(*s'amorcer*)⁽⁵⁰⁾ when he put it in chariots. Well, I would like to say that this *parlêtre* story meets with this other apprehension of the body and that this does not go all by itself. I mean that a body has another way of consisting than the one I have designated there as having a spoken form, the form of the unconscious, inasmuch as it arises from speech as such. These are marks of which we see the trace in what there is of the unconscious. These are marks left by a certain way of having a relationship with a knowledge, which constitutes the fundamental substance of what there is of the unconscious. We imagine the unconscious is something like an instinct, but this is not true. We are altogether lacking in instinct, and the way we react is linked, not to an instinct, but to a certain knowledge borne not so much by words as by what I call signifiers. Signifiers, these are what say--this is, of course, a much more profound rhetoric--these are what lend themselves to the equivocal. Interpretation must always—for the analyst—take into account that, in what is said, there is the sound (*le sonore*), and that this sound must consonate with what there is of the unconscious.

There is something important in this way of representing the link, the link between the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real, and this is what it is: we need not necessarily pose these three terms as being flat. The body, of course, also has a form, a form we believe to be spherical, but we must also know how to draw things otherwise.

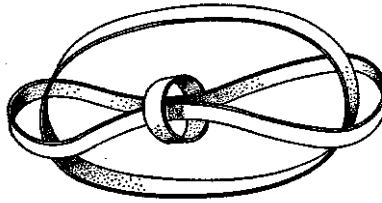


It is, as you see, remarkable that for an object as familiar as you⁽⁵¹⁾ can imagine this way of drawing the knot is for me, that I am forced to keep a little piece of paper on hand. That means it is not so natural to draw it like this. This is therefore a knot.

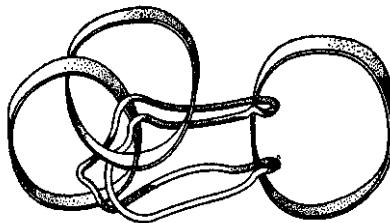


I hope everyone sees that this makes a knot. What does that mean? That means, in regard to this reference to the sphere, *1* envelopes *2*. We can quite precisely make the *1* encircle the *2*, as we can the *2* the *1*. But what does it mean that the *3* is situated in this fashion? It is situated in a fashion rendered sensible by the manner of arranging what we call in this instance *the sphere and the cross*, except this is not a sphere, but a ring (*rond*). A

ring is not the same thing as a sphere. Let us suppose that I shrink this ring in the middle and we obtain this, which is one more form of what we can state as being a Borromean knot.



I mean that, in whatever way the number 3 here envelopes the 1, it is enveloped by the other, but it is enveloped by the other in a third dimension. Contrary to what we imagine--we others who are ambitious and who pass our time dreaming of a fourth--we would do better ⁽⁵²⁾ to think of the weight of the third dit-mension (which I have just described). One must marvel at the third before making one more. Nothing is easier than making one more. When they are all separated, that is, if we suppose three circles . . . which all drift away, it suffices to make a fourth; it suffices to reconnect them with a circle, a circle constituting a ring (*d'une façon dont ça fasse un rond*), to rediscover what constitutes the consistency of these circles (*ce qui fait de ces cercles la consistance*).



After having furnished you with these knots the given that leads to this notion that there is no space, that there are only knots--or, more precisely, that it is as a function of knots that we think space--now, since I am not finishing too late . . . I would be happy to hear your questions . . .