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*Translated by Jack W. Stone.*

<sup>(7)</sup>It is not easy ... *It is not easy to speak in a country which is perfectly strange for me* [in English]. You see, I am trying to make myself understood by everyone, although my English is rather elementary and indeed I am trying to improve it--I am trying to improve it this year in a way that is a little paradoxical, by reading--by reading Joyce (*laughter*). One of my listeners, inspired by my recent talk (*conference*) (a talk requested of me to open the Joyce conference)--a listener at my seminar to which people throng, to my great surprise as to that of everyone else--and, naturally, I did not announce my talk on Joyce there--wrote an article in a French review where literature is particularly twiddled with (*tortillee*). Twisted, like that. But at times things appear in this review that make sense--at times, a lot of sense--and in particular what was advanced by my listener: he advanced that, after Joyce, the English language no longer existed.

Obviously, this is not true, since, even in (*jusqu' à*) *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce respected what Chomsky calls "grammatical structure." But, naturally, he gave the English word a hard time. He went so far as to inject words belonging to a great number of other languages, including Norwegian, and even certain Asian languages, into his own type of English; he constrained these English words to admit other vocables, vocables that are not at all respectable, if I can say this, for anyone who uses English.

We can say that there exists in English, in its mix (*l'ensemble*), all sorts of vocables: those that form the Latin root and those said to be Germanic, which, in fact, are not Germanic, but belong to another branch of Indo-European: Anglo-Saxon.

We find the Germanic roots on the Saxon side, but, <sup>(8)</sup>in the end, there is something specific to English that must be studied as such to grasp what characterizes it in opposition to other languages.

But the important thing, at least as we analysts conceive it, is to tell the truth. And, since we have a rather particular idea of truth, we know that to do so is very difficult.

And, since it has been agreed that I would speak first and that there would then be questions, I would like to begin by making what is precisely called contact with you who are here this evening, by--why not?--asking some questions myself. Naturally, this supposes that you would like to answer them, even if with another question.

I would first like to address a question to those who have chosen to present themselves as psychoanalysts. I would like to ask them--and I will necessarily have to answer first--how they have come to what can, after all, be reasonably called their . . . *job* [in English]. Being an analyst is a *job*, and, in fact, a very hard *job*. It is even an unusually tiring job (*travail*) and, if I can take up again the words of the last analyst I saw before this visit to the United States--he confided to me that he needed to rest a little between each of his analyses and that this gave his work its rhythm.

To tell the truth, I myself don't have time to rest between two analyses. Because of my notoriety, a lot of people come to be analyzed, to ask me to analyze them. This evening, in the house of Shoshana Felman, a group of young people asked me how I chose my patients. I answered that I did not choose them, like that, directly, but that they had to testify to what they expected as a result of their request.

Now, let me answer my question: how did I become a psychoanalyst? I came to it late, not before I was thirty-five. I had committed what is called in France a doctoral thesis in medicine. This was not my first written work, for a thesis has to be really written. A thesis is, by definition, something that has to be written and defended. At that time, a thesis was a serious business, in which one exposed oneself to contradiction.

<sup>(9)</sup>Today, one presents oneself before a jury usually composed of two or three of your old patrons, who are perfectly informed on a subject that they have more often than not suggested to you. This was not my case. I really had to establish my thesis. I had called it--this is for the psychiatrists out there--*On Paranoid Psychosis in its Relations with the Personality*. I was naïve then. I believed that the personality was something easily grasped. I would no longer dare give this title to what it was a question of, for, in fact, I do not believe that psychosis has anything to do with the personality. Psychosis is a test of rigor. In this sense, I would say that I am psychotic. I am psychotic simply because I have always tried to be rigorous.

This obviously goes quite far, since it supposes that logicians, for example, who tend toward this end, geometers also, would in the final analysis share a certain form of psychosis. Today, I think like this. I gathered thirty-three cases of psychosis for this thesis--I did not undertake it imprudently: in none of them did I find an exception to this search for rigor. But, since one cannot--contrary to common practice, I think that one cannot speak of thirty-three cases (my thesis would have had to have been thousands of pages long), I contented myself with writing a thesis of a reasonable number of pages: I mean a volume that could be held in the hand. And I spoke in it of one of these cases, which seemed to me exemplary, namely because the person in question had committed numerous . . . writings. She committed these writings in the form of numerous letters that outraged a bunch of people; I mean that she was an erotomaniac.

A number of people here know what an erotomaniac is: erotomania implies the choice of a more or less a celebrated person and the idea that this person is only concerned with you. It would be necessary to find out how this idea takes root, although this is impossible up to now.

What is certain is that, once the mechanism has been put to work, every fact proves that the illustrious personage (in this case a woman) is in an amorous relation, not with the personality, but with the person named, designated, by a certain name.

At this time, this person had her name in the newspapers following a gesture <sup>(10)</sup> she had made against a celebrated actress, in a way coherent with her erotomania directed toward this actress--just as it had been directed formerly to other celebrities (it is not rare to see operating this slippage from one figure to another). In any case, she had slightly wounded this actress and was sent to prison. I allowed myself to be coherent and thought that a person who always knew so well what she did knew also where it would lead her, and it is a fact that her stay in prison calmed her. From one day to the next her up to then rigorous elucubrations disappeared. I allowed myself--as psychotic as my patient--to take this seriously and to think that, if prison calmed her, what she really sought was there.

I also gave this a rather bizarre name: I called it "paranoia of self-punishment."

Obviously, this is pushing logic a bit far. And it reminded me that for Freud there was something of the same order.

Freud did not principally study psychotics. But he had, like me, studied the writings of a psychotic, the famous president Schreber. And, as regards president Schreber, Freud does not adopt the same type of position as I did. It is true that this was a much more advanced (*poussé*) case of logic. But I noticed that, because of what constituted the foundation of his thought, Freud was not psychotic. Freud was not psychotic, unlike many, because he was interested in

something different. His first interest was hysteria. And his way of approaching this other thing was perfectly serious, consisting not of collecting writings--for the cases he treated, unlike psychotics, were not people who flood the world with writings--but of listening. He spent a lot of time listening, and what he listened to resulted in something paradoxical in regard to what I have just said. It resulted in a reading.

It was while he listened to hysterics that he read that there was an unconscious. This was something he could do no more than construct and in which he was implicated; he was implicated, in that, to his great surprise, he noticed that he could not avoid participating in what the hysterics told him, that he was affected by it. <sup>(11)</sup>Naturally, everything in the resulting rules by which he established psychoanalytic practice was conceived to counter this consequence, to allow him to conduct things so as to avoid being affected. To this end, he promoted a certain number of rules that were quite healthy, and which implied the supposition that the hysteric has what is called an unconscious. And what I have tried to do--excuse me for abridging like this--is to recognize what the unconscious postulated by Freud might indeed be. Now that analysts are so numerous, everyone can know what the reading of the unconscious is, for, after all, since the time when analysts emerged, people have begun to understand something; but this phenomenon, practically unthinkable, that so many people come to analysis, gives rise to a real problem. Not only do they come to us, they return. What can induce them to find such satisfaction in analysis, when going through analysis is such an uncomfortable experience? Not everyone is capable of it. It is necessary to have a certain dose of it, to have understood enough about it to know that it can have certain effects--effects that the people who undertake an analysis, those whom I call analysands, really count on. They especially count on these effects when it comes to things that block (*embarrassent*) their path, things that have to do with . . . I will not say thought, but rather with what prevents it from functioning logically, with what parasites it (for example, a phobia, or obsessions, now studied in a quasi-exhaustive fashion, such as are implicated in this very special form of mental illness which is precisely a neurosis) or, in the case of hysterics, with things that manifest themselves by the body.

These corporeal effects, which have been diversely qualified, constitute what is believed to be the same thing as what were formerly called stigmata, by which one identified so-called witches.

It is truly curious that things turned out in a way that Freud could suppose that the cause of all these neuroses--hysteria, phobia, obsessions--had to be sought in what he called the unconscious.

Now, in our experience--I can say "our" <sup>(12)</sup>since it is assimilable--what do we see, what do we hear when we undertake the analysis of a neurosis?

We see, as Freud tells us, people irresistibly telling us about their mama and their papa. While the only instruction we give them is simply to say what they . . . I would not say, what they think, but what they believe they think, for, in truth, no one thinks, and it is a pure illusion to think one thinks, an illusion that has been the source of a certain number of philosophical systems.

We imagine that we think; we imagine that we believe what we say. Knowledge and belief are the key words in the mouths of thinkers, logicians, and . . . psychotics, in the final analysis. The only thing I cannot understand is how they can speak of knowledge and belief as if knowledge could be perfectly authenticated, while belief would be a simple hodge-podge (*hachis*) of opinions. How can we tell the difference between knowledge and belief? They try to give some criteria . . .

There is an excellent writer, a logician named Hintikka, who has written a book in which he intrepidly pursues the attempt to distinguish between *Knowledge and Belief* [*in English*], as his book is titled. He *believes* profoundly that there is a difference. But why doesn't he see that three-quarters of so-called knowledge is nothing but belief? This amuses me.

In any case, what we hear in the course of an analysis is an effort to get free (*sortir*) of all this by a road that has nothing to do either with knowledge (*connaissance*) or belief--to get free by saying only what is really on one's mind.

The fantastic thing is that, when people take this road, they are always led back to something they associate essentially with how their family raised them. Freud's first hysterics were very preoccupied with their fathers--all one has to do is read the first breakthrough, the *Studies on Hysteria*; it is quite remarkable. Then, because of these hysterics, Freud came to be interested in dreams, because they spoke to him about them.

Let us try to approach these things correctly, which is to say, in taking Freud where he began, before he got involved in <sup>(13)</sup>metapsychology. Metapsychology implies the construction of something that presupposes the hypothesis of a soul--this is what *meta*-psychology signifies; it supposes psychology as a given. It evokes metaphysics, something that allows one to consider psychology from the outside.

Before Freud went off in this direction, he wrote three books: *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, and *Jokes in their Relation to the Unconscious*. What struck me when I read these three books is that Freud's knowledge of dreams was restricted to the narration given of them. One could say that the real dream is ineffable, and, in many cases, it is. How can there be a real experience of the dream? This was one of the objections made to Freud. This objection lacks validity. For it is precisely on the material of the narration itself --the manner in which the dream is recounted--that Freud worked. And, if he gave an interpretation, it was based on the repetition, the frequency, the weight of certain words. If I had a copy here of *The Science of Dreams* [sic], I could open it to any page and you would see that it is always the narration of the dream as such--as verbal material--that serves as the basis for the interpretation.

In the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, it's exactly the same thing. If there were no taking into account of the slip-of-the-tongue (*lapsus*) or of the failed act (*l'acte manqué*), there would be no interpretation.

The principal example is given by the witticism of which the quality and the feeling of satisfaction shown by the laughter--Freud insisted on this--come essentially from the linguistic material.

This has made me affirm--something that seems obvious to me--that the unconscious is structured like . . . (I said "is structured like," which is perhaps to exaggerate a little, since it presupposes the existence of a structure--but it is absolutely true that there is a structure) . . . the unconscious is structured like a language. With one reservation: what creates the structure is the manner in which language emerged to begin with for a human being. This, in the final analysis, is what allows us to speak of structure. Languages have something in common--perhaps not all of them, since we cannot know them all; there are perhaps exceptions--but it is true of the languages we encounter in treating subjects who come to us. At times they have kept the memory of a <sup>(14)</sup>first language, different from the one they have ended up speaking. In quite a curious way, Freud noticed in his practice that this could result in a form of perversion--namely, fetishism--that is not ordinarily caused by this type of ambiguity. But I think there are enough people here who remember the *Glanz auf der Nase*, which comes from the fact that a Germanophone had kept the memory of the English expression *to glance at the nose*. Freud

combined this with another fact he had discovered concerning the origin of fetishes, which was that they imply several significations at different stages, which all lead back to the male organ. Thus, Freud, after years of experience, came to write the well-known *Three Essays on Sexuality* in an effort to construct something that would be a regular scansion of the development of every child.

I believe that this scansion itself is intimately linked to certain *patterns* [in English] of language. I mean that the so-called oral, anal, and even urinary phases are too profoundly mixed up with the acquisition of language; toilet training, for example, is manifestly anchored in the conception the mother has of what she awaits from the child--namely, excrements--which makes it so that, fundamentally, it is around this very first training the child receives that turn all the stages of what Freud, with his prodigious *insight* [in English], calls sexuality. I must abridge a little.

I will propose that what is most fundamental in the so-called sexual relations of the human being involves language, in this sense: that it is not for nothing that we call the language we use our mother tongue. It is an elementary truth of psychoanalysis that, despite the idea of instinct, it would be very problematic for a man to be in any way interested in a woman if he did not have a mother. It is one of the mysteries of psychoanalysis that the little boy is immediately attracted to the mother, while the little girl is in a state of reproach, of disharmony with her. I have had enough analytic experience to know how ravaging the mother/daughter relationship can be. If Freud chose to accentuate this, to build a whole construction around it, it was not for nothing.

Now that I have finished this rather long introduction, <sup>(15)</sup>I would like to return to the question I began by asking the analysts here, since it was not necessarily in this particular, atypical, fashion that they themselves were led to psychoanalysis. I have not even told you all I went through before becoming interested in psychotics and before they led me to Freud, having simply stressed that, in my thesis, I found myself applying Freud (*Freudisme*) without knowing it. I am not going to start over. It was a sort of *glissade*, from the fact that at the end of my medical studies I was led to see and speak to some crazy people (*fous*), and was thus led to Freud, who spoke in a style that, for me also, was imposed by contact with mental illness.

I don't think we can really say that neurotics are mentally ill. Most people are neurotics. Fortunately, they are not psychotics. What is called a neurotic symptom is simply something that allows them to live. They live a difficult life and we try to alleviate their discomfort. At times we give them the feeling that they are normal. Thank God, we do not render them so normal that they end up psychotic. We have to be very prudent on this point. Certain among them really do have the vocation to push things to their limit.

Excuse me if what I am saying seems audacious--it isn't.

I can only bear witness to what my practice furnishes me. An analysis does not have to be pushed too far. When the analysand thinks he is fortunate to be alive, it's enough.

So I would like someone to tell me--and I am not here as a touchstone of the answer, I mean, it is not I who am the touchstone--how someone decides to authorize himself as a psychoanalyst in the USA.

Since I have this opportunity to meet a certain number of colleagues, I would like to get an idea of what corresponds here to something I have instituted in my school and that I call "the pass."

The pass consists of this: at the point where someone considers himself enough prepared to dare being an analyst, he can say to someone of his own generation, a peer--not his master nor

a pseudo-master--what has given him the nerve to receive people in the name of analysis.

<sup>(16)</sup> You must admit that the discovery of the unconscious is a very curious thing, the discovery of a very specialized sort of knowledge, intimately knotted with the material of language, which sticks to the skin of everyone just from his being a human being, and beginning with which we can explain what is called, wrongly or rightly, his development, which is to say, how he has succeeded in adjusting more or less well in society.

What strikes me is the point to which we are ignorant of how we end up finding our place here or there--on a hunch (*au pifomètre*)--why we are sucked in (*aspirés*) by something.

It is certain that I came to medicine because I had the suspicion that the relations between man and woman played a determinant role in the symptoms of human beings. This progressively pushed me toward those who have not succeeded at it, since we can certainly say that psychosis is a sort of insolvency (*faillite*) in what concerns the accomplishment of what is called "love."

In the domain of love, the patient I spoke to you of could surely have had a lot (*gros*) against fatality. I would like to conclude with this word.

In the word *fatality--fatum*--there is a sort of prefiguration in it of the notion itself of the unconscious. *Fatum* comes from *fari*, the same root as in *infans*, which, naturally, does not refer, as one commonly supposes, to someone who does not speak; but, beginning from the moment when his first words have crystallized--a material crystallization of what conditions him as a human being--we can say that he is *infans*.

Now, if someone would like to answer me, I would not think that I have wasted my time, since I am inviting him to tell the truth. I don't see why anyone would hesitate to say how he has come to this.

You might simply say: I belong to a psychoanalytic association, for it seems to me a nice situation and it has given me a job that is not disagreeable, since it interests everybody.

But the end of truth, the true truth, is that between man and woman this does not work.

### <sup>(17)</sup>QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The Moderator, Pr. Geoffroy Hartman--You are invited to ask some questions.

JACQUES LACAN – Who wants to blab first?

D<sup>R</sup> STANLEY LEAVY – I have a question, Dr. Lacan. When we analyze, we always try to find the unconscious fantasies.

J. LACAN – I have tried to give a formula for the fantasy, but I do not wish to impose my way of writing it this evening.

D<sup>R</sup> LEAVY – But how do you distinguish the fantasy itself from the words used to communicate it? Is the analysis accomplished by the study--the reading, if you like--of the words alone of the fantasy, or can we suppose that a fantasy exists behind language? Or else do you think the analyst must abstain from seeking anything outside of language?

J. Lacan-- The analyst operates by letting himself be guided by the verbal terms used by the person who speaks. If Freud recommends something, it is, he says so explicitly, not to guard against anything; you might one day encounter a case totally different from anything you could have foreseen as classifiable. Follow what comes from the person you are listening to. However,

the disturbing thing is that never, in the history of analysis, has a totally original fantasy appeared. You always discover the same old things. It is enough to lead you to despair. I hope not to end my life without having found something or other I can leave to posterity, something I have invented. But up to now my inspiration has failed me. Obviously, I bend under this burden. And, since I am very old, I cannot invent a new fantasy. It is something that all the analysis in the world, as supple as it might be, cannot do. But this would be a great service, for neurotics are people who aspire to a perversion they will never attain to. <sup>(18)</sup>It would be helpful to invent something, but we end up going in a circle. For example, how far can the fantasy of stabbing one's neighbor, killing him with a thousand blows, go? This has existed since time immemorial, and obviously it stimulates the imagination of certain people, but everyone knows that these people are never the ones who really put it in action. To do this, one must be effectually established somewhere as an executioner (*exécuteur*); such things are only done by people who are paid for it.

In fact, the terrible thing is that analysis in itself is currently a wound: I mean that it is itself a social symptom, the last form of social dementia to be conceived.

It wasn't conceived for nothing: it happened that at a certain moment in its history medicine recognized it could not treat everything, that it had business (*à faire*) with something new.

Analysis is really the tail (*queue*) of medicine, the place where it can find refuge; for elsewhere it has become scientific, something that interests people the least.

To speak rigorously, science doesn't simply emerge, like that. One really has to get down to it. But once this has happened, there are scientific schools. What interests most of the people in a science department is a good position. The persons who have really contributed in some way to science can be counted on one's fingers; they have won Nobel prizes. Not everyone is capable of this: most people use science in a very particular and limited way. The strange thing is that Freud thought he did science. He didn't do science; he was in the process of producing a certain practice that can be characterized as the last flower of medicine.

This last flower found refuge here because medicine had so many means of operating, entirely repetered in advance, ruled like music paper, that it had to bump up against the fact that there were symptoms that had nothing to do with the body, but only with the fact that the human is afflicted, if I can say this, by language. With the language by which he is afflicted, he fills in for (*supplée à*) what is absolutely ineludible: no sexual rapport for the human.

<sup>(19)</sup>Freud's so-called fundamental sexuality consists in reminding us that everything to do with sex has always failed (*raté*). This is the basis and the principle of the idea itself of the *fiasco*. Failure (*le ratage*) itself can be defined as what is sexual in every human act. This is why there are so many failed acts (*actes manqués*). Freud indicated perfectly that a failed act always has something to do with sex. The failed act *par excellence* is precisely the sexual act. One of the two is always unsatisfied. We must tell the truth, after all. And this is what people are always talking about.

M<sup>S</sup>. TURKELL – Why do you say that Freud did not do science when your own intention, if I understand you correctly, is to return to psychoanalysis its true object, the unconscious, precisely as the object of a science?

J. LACAN – I believe it is already a lot that Freud inaugurated an entirely new mode of human relations – since it is obvious that the important thing is what happens between the analysand and

the analyst. If I have called it a social wound, it is because the social is always a wound.

But why have I said that? It is because--what am I trying to do? To succeed, naturally; I am naïve, like everyone else--I imagined that linguistics was a science. It has this ambition. It tries to act as if it were a science. Just look at the most serious minds in linguistics, Jacobson, Chomsky--they tell me he is on a new trail now, but Chomsky himself could do no better than repeat the logic of Port-Royal. He has called it Cartesian, but it is just the logic of Port-Royal; it doesn't go beyond that. The logic of Port-Royal already poses some very serious questions. What it called logic is already a form of linguistics. It suffices to open it to see that what it deals with is of this order. And if I have recognized that the unconscious can in no way be approached without reference to linguistics, I consider that I have added my effort to the Freudian breakthrough. But it is already a lot that Freud himself opened this path, gave it its axis and practice, showed that this was henceforth the only real medicine possible.

Who is the historian here, the historian of psychoanalysis? Is it you?

<sup>(20)</sup>LUCILLE RITVO – Yes.

J. LACAN – You are a historian. Will you add a new chapter to your history of psychoanalysis with what I am saying?

L. RITVO – Do you mean this talk?

J. LACAN – I have said explicitly that psychoanalysis was a historic moment.

L. RITVO – Isn't that true for everything?

J. LACAN – Psychoanalysis has a weight in history. If there are things that belong to history; these are things of the psychoanalytic order.

L. RITVO – That seems to vague and general. What does it have to do with psychoanalysis?

J. LACAN – What I call history is the history of epidemics. The Roman Empire, for example, was an epidemic. Christianity is an epidemic.

Ms. X. – Psychoanalysis, too.

J. LACAN – Psychoanalysis is an epidemic.

P<sup>R</sup> HARTMAN – It's contagious . . .

L. RITVO – History is concerned with everything people are willing to pay to find written as history.

J. LACAN – This is absolutely true. It is something that exists in a second degree. People write on the subject of what has been written. This is why written documents are required. You can only do history by writing second hand about something that has already been written somewhere.

Without the written document, you know you are in a dream. The historian requires a text:

a text or a bit of paper. In any case, there must be, in an archive, something that certifies, by a writing, the lack of which renders history impossible . . . What is not certified by writing cannot be considered history.

L. RITVO – I am not sure that it has to be written to be history. There are oral traditions; people who don't have writing can also have a history, a tradition that is transmitted. You can also do history by gathering artefacts. And, in other words, I believe--I may not be on firm ground here--that in archeology and the history of art, even if they do <sup>(21)</sup> not put written words on paper, one can do history

J. LACAN –The oral art always ends up in a written form. The historian as such requires a written document; he does not do a history of art. Art history is something totally imprecise. For the history of art to make sense, you need a date; this is something that leaves a written trace. When was Chartres Cathedral constructed? Anything that is properly of the historical order must be datable.

P<sup>R</sup> EDWARD CASEY – What is the place of the imaginary in history? To take up again your own terms, do you believe that history is totally symbolic?

J. LACAN – It's a particular kind of symbolic; a symbolic that joins the real by writing.

P<sup>R</sup> CASEY – But, even if this is so, there is a large proportion of the imaginary in history. Fables, for example, even if they are written, are . . .

J. LACAN – With fables, the question is of knowing how they are transmitted to us. They are transmitted by writing.

P<sup>R</sup> CASEY – Naturally, but, although they are written and involved in specific traditions, they contain something of the imaginary and the non-datable.

J. LACAN – Fortunately, there are edifices that have not yet crumbled. That will come, but . . .

P<sup>R</sup> CASEY – But what is the status of those edifices that have no basis in reality but are nonetheless written?

J. LACAN – In reality, the status of things does not directly concern me as a psychoanalyst.

P<sup>R</sup> CASEY – Naturally.

J. LACAN – I don't attempt a philosophy of art. I am already too occupied with the consequences of my practice, which is absolutely punctiform--it is only in a limited number of specific points that it touches on the domain of art. Freud tries to engage in something else and to see in art a sort of testimony to the unconscious.

He tried this on several occasions that were not especially fortunate. With Jensen's *Gradiva* it did not work. <sup>(22)</sup> For, after all, nothing forces the artist to admit that he has an unconscious. This is wild psychoanalysis. Any interpretation, even that of the *Moses*, is just

conjecture. We can be sure of this, for we have no means of analyzing the person who sculpted it.

P<sup>R</sup> CASEY – Nonetheless, there is an analogy between history and psychoanalysis in this discussion, in the sense that the both domains encounter things that are imaginary and are not real events.

J. LACAN – Yes, reconstructions. With those, we can't be sure of anything. Which doesn't prevent us from intervening.

P<sup>R</sup> CASEY – Even if you are not sure, doesn't it make a difference whether these events have or haven't really taken place?

J. LACAN – Let me tell you: you can never be sure that a memory isn't a screen memory. Which is to say, a memory that blocks the path of what I am able to map out (*repérer*) in the unconscious, which is to say, the presence--the wound--of language. We never know: a memory that is relived imaginarily--a screen memory--is always suspect. An image always blocks the truth. I am using terms here that every analyst knows. The concept itself of the screen memory shows the mistrust the analyst has in regard to anything memory thinks it reproduces. What one calls memory is, strictly speaking, always suspect. Incidentally, this is why Freud bumps up against the famous original trauma. The Wolfman's case is so long only because Freud is trying desperately to make something clear and cannot know if the Wolfman, concerning the copulation of his parents, is only reporting a screen memory. A trauma is always suspect.

P<sup>R</sup> CASEY --...But not necessarily imaginary, such that . . .

J. LACAN – Sexuality is always traumatic as such. The first kind of trauma is obviously that to which Freud testifies--after all, let us give the *Five Analyses* their weight. Thus, what does Little Hans' phobia consist of? Of the fact that he suddenly notices that he has a little organ that moves. It's perfectly clear. And he wants to give a meaning to it. But, as far as this meaning goes, no little boy<sup>(23)</sup> ever experiences his penis as attached to him naturally. He always considers his penis traumatic. I mean, he thinks it belongs outside of the body. This is why he regards it as a separated thing, as a horse starting to buck and kick. What can Little Hans' phobia signify if it isn't that he is in the process of translating the original version of the story, the fact that he notices he has a penis?

He hasn't yet succeeded in taming it (*à le dompter*) with words. These words, it is the analyst--which is to say, his father (Freud wasn't yet occupied with him)--Freud pressed him to say words that would calm him. And, as you have from Little Hans' own testimony--as an adult, he came to the United States--they succeeded perfectly in delivering him from his fantasy, in a way that he no longer remembered having even been little Hans.

This case was a success, but what does this signify except that the father, with Freud's help, succeeded in preventing the discovery of the penis from having consequences that were too disastrous?

D<sup>R</sup> ROBERT LIFTON – Can I ask a question? Returning to your first assertion that all of history arises from psychoanalysis--which is perfectly true, I think--a considerable effort is

now being made in our country, and also in France, I believe, to in some way associate psychoanalysis and history, to approach history with psychoanalytic insight, and I believe that there is a fundamental dilemma here concerning how one approaches symbolization; if one takes what you call the symbolic seriously, one finds it in disagreement with the classical analytic concept of symbolic formation, for your concept envisages the totality of human mental activity (*mentisme*) as taken up in this symbolic process of creation and re-creation, and, if one approaches history, it becomes less and less satisfying.

J. LACAN – That's absolutely true.

D<sup>R</sup> LIFTON – Also, in this dilemma over the way one uses psychoanalytic insight to approach history, my own aim is to distance myself from the concepts of defense and instinct in favor of the continuity and discontinuity of life as it is symbolized. And I believe that one can approach . . .

J. LACAN – Continuity and discontinuity?

<sup>(24)</sup>D<sup>R</sup> LIFTON – Or what one could call death and continuity. In other words, how can one retain . . .

J. LACAN – This is your leaning? Then I am . . . what is your name?

D<sup>R</sup> LIFTON – Robert Lifton.

J. LACAN – I am a Liftonian (*laughter*). For I find your direction as valid as mine. I have come to take my direction because of the path by which I came to psychoanalysis, but I see no reason why there wouldn't be another key. You have only to see what it opens . . .

L.RITVO – I think, as a historian of the sciences, that people have always taken scientific discoveries--whichever they are--and tried to make them agree with other phenomena than those that provoked them. Newtonian physics, for example, was the basis of the American Constitution. I don't believe Newton dreamed of anything like this.

And I believe that the more you distance yourself from the phenomenon for which the theory was developed, the less applicable it is. Also, I believe that what psychoanalysis and history have in common is the human being, but psychoanalysis considers him as an individual as he is revealed in a very particular situation, and it is the responsibility of whoever desires to make use of it in another field to test and see if it is applicable and still valid in this field. I do not believe that one can take it as a whole and expect it to agree with a situation different from that in which it was developed.

J. LACAN – You have an ambitious conception of history . . . the same as that of the Church Fathers. The Church Fathers reinterpret the whole of history so that it becomes necessary that history engender the Church.

P<sup>R</sup> HARTMAN – If the Church is a theory, something comparable to a scientific theory, Dr. Lacan says that, according to you, all history would have to be reinterpreted to be shown in

agreement with this theory.

L. RITVO – No, I said that one cannot apply a scientific theory as a whole to history.

P<sup>R</sup> HARTMAN – You spoke of the transitory character of all scientific theory . . .

<sup>(25)</sup>L. RITVO – Yes, a scientific theory is transitory.

P<sup>R</sup> HARTMAN – A scientific theory is then shown to be mortal, within a limit of time . . .

L. RITVO – This is true. It is valuable for a particular set of observations; for example, Newton's theory is valuable for a certain set of observations. Beyond that, Einstein's theory is more suitable, and no longer that of Newton. Thus Newton is invalidated beyond that point.

J. LACAN – Yes.

P<sup>R</sup> HARTMAN – What were you saying about psychoanalysis then?

L. RITVO – I was saying that psychoanalysis can only be valid in the field of its observations, which is the analytic situation.

J. LACAN – This is exactly what I say. We have no means of knowing if the unconscious exists outside of psychoanalysis.

L. RITVO – I don't know if there is no means of knowing it; I don't know if it has already been tried and if, in trying it, it will or will not be valid for external domains.

P<sup>R</sup> LOUIS DUPRE – Can't we draw a conclusion, Doctor, from what you have said? In the case of many analytic interpretations in art and literature, I often ask myself if the interpreter hasn't reduced the symbol to a symptom and thus effected a simplification that no longer responds to the original.

J. LACAN – Yes, that is what art history does.

P<sup>R</sup> DUPRE – Fine. But also certain analytic interpretations that tend to . . .

J. LACAN – Which are always excessive . . .

P<sup>R</sup> DUPRE – Which tend to reduce the signifier to a simple signified . . .

J. LACAN – I absolutely agree . . .

P<sup>R</sup> DUPRE – . . . Reduced to a simple sign that is no longer a symbol. And thus they miss the true nature of the signifier as such.

The Moderator, P<sup>R</sup> HARTMAN – We haven't yet heard a psychoanalyst reveal how he or she authorized themselves . . .

D<sup>R</sup> MARSHALL EDELSON – To return to the question: is linguistics a science? --is psychoanalysis a science? In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud says somewhere: "Our ideas bring us closer to the unknown reality." If science is this effort to draw closer to the unknown reality, then linguistics and psychoanalysis are sciences.

<sup>(26)</sup>J. LACAN – But they do not have this status. For what has been put forth as science begins with Galileo. In Galileo's line comes Newton . . . And we are just beginning to have some idea of what biology is.

M<sup>S</sup> TURKELL – But what is your definition of science? That's the question.

J. LACAN – Up to the present, everything that has been produced as science is non-verbal. Of course, it is obvious that language is used to teach the sciences, but scientific formulas are always expressed by means of little letters.  $1/2 mv^2$ , as the relation between the acceleration of speed, can only be explained in language by some long detours. Its signification has to be strictly limited and, even then, it is not perfectly satisfying. For example, when we deal with electrons, we no longer really know what we understand by mass or speed because we are incapable of measuring them. Science is what is sustained, in its relationship with the real, thanks to the usage of little letters.

M<sup>S</sup> TURKELL – Is that what makes mathemes so important for you in psychoanalysis?

J. LACAN – It is certain that I try to give form to something that would act as a nucleus to psychoanalysis, in the same way as these little letters do.

I have tried to write a certain formula, which I express as well as I can, with a big S, which represents the subject and which has to be barred (S), then a little sign (<>), and finally an (a). All of them put between parentheses. This is an attempt to imitate science. For I believe that science can only begin in this way.

D<sup>R</sup> SYDNEY BLATT – But isn't this possible for psychological science? I worry about this definition because I would affirm that psychoanalysis and depth psychology will never be able to satisfy it.

M<sup>S</sup> Y. – It also eliminates biology.

D<sup>R</sup> BLATT – The question is not whether or not this is a science—everything depends on how one defines science; the question is whether the difference comes from discourse. The difference in discourse is that in psychoanalysis, psycholinguistics, and other domains, man tries to reflect on himself rather than <sup>(27)</sup> on an external object. This requires a different set of definitions, different means of investigation. Whether we define it as science or not is not the important thing. The question is if we can specify the different domains of discourse.

J. LACAN – That is exactly right.

The Interpreter, S. FELMAN – While the other person who spoke thought that in psychoanalysis mathematization is an impossible wish, that it will never be possible to mathematize all of it.

J. LACAN – I did not say to mathematize all of it, but to begin to isolate in it a mathematizable minimum.

D<sup>R</sup> BLATT – In other words, there are two models, one of which would be, as you are saying, the attempt to approach a mathematical structure, even if in a limited way. But the other model, which I believe is more possible, is to ignore this requirement and, in its place, to hold to--for I believe it is important to hold to traditional science—the feeling for evidence and to the principles or concepts constructed around the evidence in a way that still derives from scientific tradition, but requires different criteria for the science of the *self* [*in English*], inasmuch as it is opposed to the science of external objects.

Would you admit of the possibility of a scientific model different from yours ?

J. LACAN – Yes, I would admit of it.

L. RITVO – Scientists ask themselves if mathematics is a science since it has no facts, no field of observation. It is a tool for science, but scientists are not sure that it is a science.

P<sup>R</sup> FELMAN – But it all depends on the definition of science.

L. RITVO – That's true. His definition omits biology, geology, and, in fact, all the biological . . .

P<sup>R</sup> FELMAN – Do you take experimental science as the only model?

L. RITVO – No, but science in the larger sense is an approach to evaluating whether your formulations are of the speculative order, hypothetical, or sufficiently proven to constitute a theory. As Darwin said, "You cannot harm science<sup>(28)</sup> with a false theory, but only with a falsification of facts."

J. LACAN – But it is remarkable that observation is only satisfied when it ends with a formula that can be called mathematical. Observation alone does not satisfy the mind (*l'esprit*), if this word means anything.

L. RITVO – That is a very limited view of science. It omits a large part of science.

D<sup>R</sup> EDELSON – May I evoke something specific concerning language ? How can I say things that have never been said before ? How can I pronounce sentences that have never been said by someone else ? Sentences that are not imposed on me by my environment ? They come from inside ? They are agreed with by my entourage, but these people do not constrain me to say what I am saying. I have a choice. I can say a lot of things among the

same people.

J. LACAN – But—an entourage is a reflection . . .

D<sup>R</sup> F. EDELSON – Two more questions. When I hear two sentences and they have the same structure, how do I know they signify different things ? Or, when I hear two sentences that have different structures how do I know they signify the same thing ? In trying to answer these questions, I have the theory of an abstract structure, the mind : what arises from my mind allows me to do these things. I can have more than one theory. One theory will help me explain better than another how I am able to do these things. In using new ways of envisioning the world, man needs new concepts; this is no less scientific. If I am in a world where I have to understand things by concepts such as "rules" and "signification," these are still concepts that help me understand. This doesn't make me a-scientific. Freud speaks of the meaning or signification of symptoms rather than of their cause. This is still the question of a scientist.

J. LACAN – That is precisely what Freud introduced.

D<sup>R</sup> EDELSON – We are in agreement.

J. LACAN – That is what Freud introduced and it is why I raise the question of the reading Freud made of meaning. The amusing thing is that this succeeds. It is what a certain Reik called a <sup>(29)</sup> "surprise ": the thing that surprises us. Precisely because we think that science alone has business with the real. But the real, as we speak of it, is completely denuded of meaning (*sens*). We can be satisfied, we can be sure that we are dealing with something of the real only when it no longer has any meaning whatsoever. It has no meaning because it is not with words that we write the real. It is with little letters.

D<sup>R</sup> EDELSON – The logical constructions we make to understand the unknown reality become reality in their time. What had once been a logical fiction in physics is today a reality.

J. LACAN – Logical constructions, I have said I considered them psychotic . . .

The Interpreter, P<sup>R</sup> FELMAN – He is joking; at the beginning of his presentation, he said a perfectly coherent construction was how he defined psychosis.

D<sup>R</sup> EDELSON – Hum.

P<sup>R</sup> FELMAN – It was a provocative assertion.

D<sup>R</sup> EDELSON – I am provoked.

P<sup>R</sup> FELMAN – But he then said that in this sense he was a psychotic, since he tried to be rigorous. Also, he is not against rigor, but he does not equate it with science. This, I believe, is the main point. Coherence as such would only be proof of psychosis and not of

truth.

J. LACAN – Psychosis is full of meaning.

D<sup>R</sup> EDELSON – Psychosis is called stereotyped and is deprived of meaning in my experience.

J. LACAN – But the stereotypes only hold for the psychotic because of their meaning.

D<sup>R</sup> BLATT – Yes, but this is because the psychotic forces himself to make sense—clings to the synthetic function—to remain in relation with the world.

P<sup>R</sup> DUPRE – But why, Doctor, do you insist so much on the need for mathematical formulas to define science ?

J. LACAN – Because it is historically true.

P<sup>R</sup> DUPRE – But that began with Descartes, in France, that is not . . .

J. LACAN – That began with Galileo.

P<sup>R</sup> DUPRE – Alright, but adding a hundred years doesn't make<sup>(30)</sup> much of a difference. The mathematization of science is almost an exception in human history, and it is an exception that scientists, at least, abandon. We no longer believe in it. Also, why reduce the science of the mind—which escapes it from the start—to a point of view that no longer exists even in the sciences ? There can be other models. For example, none of the social sciences, the sciences of the mind, need mathematical formulas to express themselves clearly. Mathematical formulas are used, but rather as an abbreviation of what one thinks, or for pedagogical ends, even in today's economics.

D<sup>R</sup> EDELSON – Mathematical science is not quantitative. The mathematical is logical.

J. LACAN – Yes, it is not quantitative.

D<sup>R</sup> EDELSON – If it is the logic of relations that subtends mathematics, these are purely symbolic forms. If we introduce mathematics to understand the mind, we simply use symbolic forms to account for the nature, the structure of the mind. It has nothing to do with the quantity, the measurement of anything.

P<sup>R</sup> DUPRE – That's exactly what I say. Which is why it cannot be appropriated at our convenience.

D<sup>R</sup> EDELSON – But what supports mathematics is the logic of relations, the logic of symbolization.

P<sup>R</sup> DUPRE – Of some symbolization, but not the one we need for our ends.

L. RITVO – Would you say that Buffon, Lamarck, and Cuvier, and Claude Bernard, Pasteur, and Darwin, and Lyell—that none of these is a scientist ?

J. LACAN – Of course they are.

L. RITVO – But they did not formulate these mathematical concepts; their work was deprived of mathematical expression.

P<sup>R</sup> EDELSON – He invokes mathematics otherwise than you do. These are symbolic forms that have nothing to do with quantity.

P<sup>R</sup> HARTMAN – The quarrel concerns the interpretation of the symbolism of mathemes.

P<sup>R</sup> DUPRE – But that's the problem: what is the exact status of the symbolism of mathemes ? Is it a universal symbolism or a . . .

<sup>(31)</sup>J. LACAN – It is an elaborated symbolism, always elaborated by means of letters.

P<sup>R</sup> HARTMAN – But what of words (*quid des mots*) ? Even if analytic science contains mathemes, there is the question of the practice and of the translation of these mathemes in analytic practice, which is verbal, isn't it ?

J. LACAN – There is nonetheless a world between the word and the letter.

P<sup>R</sup> HARTMAN – But you desire to show what links them . . .

J. LACAN – Yes, and that amuses me.

M<sup>S</sup> TURKELL – How would you articulate the idea that psychoanalysis aspires to the status of science to what you have called an epidemic? In a sense, it is a social phenomenon . . .

J. LACAN – An epidemic is not a social phenomenon, at least not in science's case.

M<sup>S</sup> TURKELL – What is a scientific epidemic ?

J. LACAN – It is when something is taken as a simple emergence when in fact it is a radical rupture. It is a historical event that has propagated itself and has greatly influenced the conception of what one calls a universe, which itself has a very narrow base, except in the imaginary.

P<sup>R</sup> HARTMAN – You have devoted a lot of time and wisdom . . .

J. LACAN – Since I have benefited from your attention, I will try to say a little more about this tomorrow.

P<sup>R</sup> HARTMAN – You ended your presentation with the word “destiny” and we will now end with the word “epidemic.” You have, in fact, answered an epidemic of questions and we very much appreciate it.