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Translated by Jack W. Stone.

⁽⁵³⁾Linguistics is that by which psychoanalysis could hook on to science.

But psychoanalysis is not a science; it is a practice.

As we were speaking of it just now, Mr. Quine asked me what I owed to Claude Lévi-Strauss: I owe him a lot, if not everything. That doesn't prevent me from having a wholly other notion of structure than his.

I think structure has nothing to do with philosophy, which reasons about man as it can, but which puts at its center the idea that man is made for wisdom.

I have, conforming to Freud's thought, no friendship with wisdom. I do not do philosophy because it is very far from this someone who addresses us, to answer him with wisdom.

I have tried to densify, to formulate, something concerning our practice, something coherent. This has led me to some elucubrations that worry me a lot.

This has led me to a teaching that I have led with a lot of prudence. I have resorted to teaching because it was asked of me, God knows why.

It is certain that after Freud the practice is carried on in a way such that one might ask oneself if Freud believed that it would even survive him.

From the way he is taken in it, one might think that those formed by the practice itself truly had authority to decide what an analyst is. The question I have come to: who is capable of being an analyst? has led a certain number of ⁽⁵⁴⁾my colleagues to leave me (this, following the putting in place of an inquest: how could someone, after an analytic experience, put himself in the situation of being an analyst?).

This has led me quite far, as I have said in my preceding talks in the USA, the points where this has led me, I dare not say as a theory: is there a theory of analysis? Yes, certainly. I am not sure that I have the best.

After having reflected a lot, I have distinguished two foundations (*assises*). The reference to the body, first. One can grasp that, for analysis, the body is apprehended only as what is most imaginary.

A body is reproduced by a form.

A form that is manifested in that this body is reproduced, subsists, and functions all alone.

We haven't the least information about its functioning.

We apprehend it as a form.

We value it as such, by its appearance.

This appearance of the human body, men adore it.

They adore, in sum, a pure and simple image.

I have begun to put the accent on what Freud calls narcissism, *id est* the fundamental knot that makes it so that, to give himself an image of what he calls the world, man conceives of it as this unity of pure form that the body represents for him.

From the surface of the body, man has taken the idea of a privileged form. And his first apprehension of the world has been the apprehension of his *semblable*. Then, this body, he has seen it, he has abstracted it, he has made of it a sphere: the good form. It reflects the bubble, the sack of skin. Beyond this idea of the enveloped and enveloping sack (man began with this), the idea of the concentricity of the spheres has been its first relation to science as such. In Greek science, we see this harmony of the spheres by which one is now a little surprised and of which one can say with Pascal that it no longer exists.

"The center is everywhere and the circumference nowhere," says Pascal. This doesn't mean he was right: the center is not everywhere. This means we must apprehend something of another order than spherical space.

It is not sure that the image of the circumference is the best ⁽⁵⁵⁾representation of a sphere, and it is thus that I have been led to clear a path, that is, that the circle is not the correct image of a sphere; it is the image of a sphere when one sections it, which is to say, when one flattens it out.

The sheet of paper we scribble on is easily felt; we can do no better than the flattening out.

This flattening out, in the measure that we advance in the world, tends to fray as if this surface on which we project everything surrounding us had holes.

And the circle is characterized as making a hole. Shock in return: the mathematical idea of topology. In the world, there are not only circles. But these circles can make a knot between them. This is how topology began. These knots have made it possible for me to make a link with what there is of our experience.

These knots, if there is a closed, circular, representable consistency of these three terms I have cleared the way for, beginning with Freud:

– From the capture beginning with *the form* of the body.

– From this usage of speech, which is striking, whatever idea one might have of what conditions for the human the fact that he speaks. (This is another consistency.)

We must grasp that what we call logic has no other support than the *logos*. The strange thing: we grasp so badly and so little that this logic is circular. It only holds, only substantifies itself, this logic, by making a circle. The vicious circle is the a-b-c of logic.

From the moment we depart from language it is to language we return.

- How, beginning with that, we imagine ourselves to touch on a *real* which would be a third circle, if one can say this; that its form would be circular, this is what escapes us.

Of the real that would be altogether of the real, this . . .

The first lineaments of science show the real for the human eye as what returned always to the same place in the heavens: the stars said to be fixed (quite wrongly, since they turn and, if they turn, it is because it is we who turn). This was not obvious at first.

There is no other possible definition of the real than: it is ⁽⁵⁶⁾the impossible; when something finds itself characterized as impossible, it is only there that is the real; when one bangs into it, the real, it is the impossible to penetrate.

We have dreamed that it would be elastic. Because of this, I have been led to write the term existence otherwise: ex-sistence. What bumps into something and into what something bumps are precisely the other consistencies.

These three terms:

– those we imagine as a form,

– those we take for being circular in language,

– and this ex-sistence to language and the imaginary as well, which have led me to stress why they are knotted together.

In any case, it's practical.

It is a cord, a thread conveyed by me. This has rendered a service, at least in this practice.

These three circles, I name them, but their order is not indifferent. Coloring them introduces a distinction, indicates they are different.

I, R, S, are detached. This is seen in the fact that they are superimposed:

– first, I,

– beneath it, R,

– beneath R, S.

The S passes beneath the two other circles. Everything happens as if the three circles were independent.

Then, the circle that knots them must

– catch the circle beneath it,

– pass over the I twice,

– return to the one beneath it to take it in passing beneath it (figure 1).

A fundamental passage above the above, beneath the beneath; figure 1 is exactly the same as figure 2; to obtain figure 2, it suffices to pull on ring S a little.

In another drawing, one can make three straight lines of these circles (figure 3).

The four-ringed figure, figure 2, I call the figure of psychic reality, and Σ is the symptom.

The symptom is the note proper to the human dimension.

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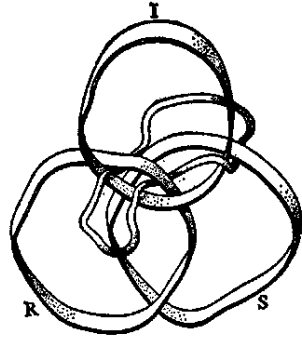


Figure 1.

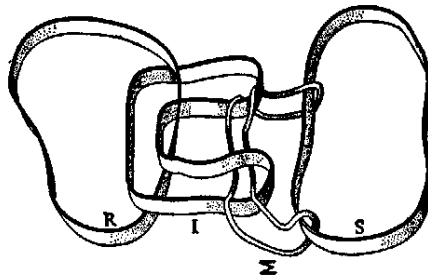


Figure 2.

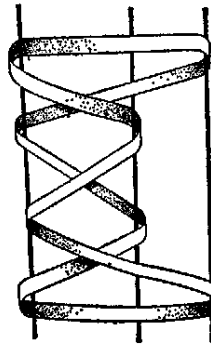


Figure 3.

⁽⁵⁸⁾God perhaps has some symptoms, but his knowledge (*connaissance*) is probably of the paranoiac order. One asks oneself what might be the consistency of a God who created the world with words.

The specificity of figure 2 is that this (*ça*) makes a circle: $\Sigma+S$, this makes a new sort of S. The symptom is just as much a part of the unconscious. Linguistics specifies what we interpret the symptom with.

In interpreting, we make with the Σ a circularity, we give full exercise to what can be supported of *lalangue*, while what the analysand has always testified to is his symptom.

There is no better way to mark pure difference than color; thus, in this particular knotting, the coloring makes it felt that there are two types of Borromean knots, which are impossible to confuse with one another.

It suffices for one ring to be broken for the two others to be free, differentiating the knot from the chain where only the rupture of a middle ring frees the extremities.

It is easy to grasp that this Borromean knot can have as many rings as one wants.
I content myself with four.

There is not only the three-termed knot, R, S, I. We cannot content ourselves with it, for, since they are not distinguishable, these three terms could pass for a new form of imaginary, of real, even of symbolic: without mathematics, we would not grasp that these three are trinitary.

We encounter the Trinity all the time. Notably in the sexual domain. It is not only an individual that it fixes, but also another; this is marked in the experience of analysis of clinical relations (clinical, the analysand is on the couch; it is a question of a certain *clinamen*, cf. Lucretious and the Epicureans in their nominalism).

The so-called mystery of the Divine Trinity reflects what is in each of us, and what it illustrates best is paranoid knowledge.

Freud said that analysis was a "organized paranoia" (*paranoia raisonnée*); analysis does have this aspect (*face*).

On its own, analysis confirms that the best representatives of these three categories, R, S, I, ⁽⁵⁹⁾ are the nuts (*dingues*). The rigidly mad (*raides-fous*) do not doubt for a single instant being in the real.

This could lend itself to some dirty jokes concerning the Divine Trinity, because the Divine Trinity is not so *dingue*, so *dieu-ingue*.

This is indeed why there must be a fourth term.

Symptom and unconscious; an endless screw (*vis sans fin*), round. And one never succeeds in unwinding it all (*à ce que tout soit défoulé*¹): *Urverdrangung*: there is a hole.

This is because there is a knot and some real that remains at the bottom (*dans le fond*).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. – Question to Roman Jacobson.

D'eux [of them] comes from *de illis*.

Deux [two] from *duo*.

Is the phoneme destined to snatch up (*happer*) the equivoke, or is this chance only for the French ear?

Is it not the equivoke (which is what interpretation plays on) that makes a circle of the symptom with the symbolic?

For, intervening in a certain manner on the symptom, one finds oneself equivocating.

Is there a side of linguistics treatable as such?

This would be the side to which an analyst must always be sensible: *the fun* (le fun).

Answer: There are numerous works on this subject, particularly on Indian languages. Jackson, a specialist on aphasia, has written on the pun. The only languages that do not make puns are formalized (artificial) languages. And grammar tends to actualize the pun.

2. – Lacan at the blackboard.

¹ Lacan translates *verdrangung* (repression) as *refoulement* (the *urverdrangung* is the primally repressed). *Défoulé* could perhaps be translated as "un-" or "de-repressed" [tr.].

Is figure 1 a plane? For the fourth ring, it must be perforated. Knots are not imagined (*ça ne s' imagine pas*). Knots are the thing against which the mind most rebels. They are so little conformed with the enveloped-enveloping side of all ⁽⁶⁰⁾that regards the body that I consider breaking oneself in to the practice of knots as breaking inhibition. Inhibition: the imaginary would be formed by mental inhibition.

The signifier is not the phoneme.

The signifier is the letter. Only the letter makes a hole.

3. – Question of MR. QUINE. : The aim (*but*) of analysis is to un-make the knot?

Answer : No, that holds firm.

One could advance that if Freud demonstrates something, it is that sexuality makes a hole, but the human being hasn't the least idea what this is.

A woman presentifies herself for the man by a symptom; a woman is a symptom for the man.

4. – The soul.

The only thing that seems to me to substantify the soul is the symptom.

Man would think with his soul. The soul would be the tool of thought. What would be the soul of this so-called tool?

The soul of the symptom is something hard, like a bone.

We believe we think with our brain.

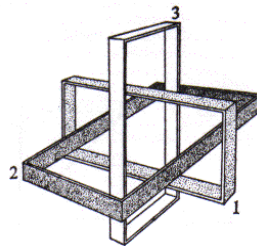
Me, I think with my feet, it is only there that I encounter something hard; at times, I think with the platysmas (*peauciers*) of my forehead, when I bang into something. I have seen enough electro-encephalograms to know that there is no shadow of a thought there.

5 – Do the knots have three dimensions?

Exactly. The *more geometrico*, geometric thought altogether neglects the reality of space. We believe we know something of the third dimension because of binocular vision, but we always function in two dimensions.

6. – Question of Mr. Quine: solid models give us an idea of the third dimension. It is only vision that misses it.

Answer : One can represent the third dimension by the armillary sphere, but no one has thought of this figure:



Models scarcely put us in the third dimension. We live in cubes; we think ourselves to be in spheres.

There is nothing less sure than our having an interior. Waste (*les déchets*) perhaps comes from the interior, but the characteristic of man is that he doesn't know what to do with his waste.

Civilization is waste, *cloaca maxima*.

Waste is the only thing that testifies to our having an interior.

IMPROMPTU ON ANALYTIC DISCOURSE

a \mathfrak{S}
 \mathfrak{S}_2 \mathfrak{S}_1

– \mathfrak{S}_1 is what represents the subject: a speech, the *parlêtre*. It is inasmuch as the subject says no matter what that this goes to the place of the truth.

$\mathfrak{S}_2 \leftarrow \mathfrak{S}_1$

– The analyst is incarnated by a *semblant* of an (a); he is, in sum, produced by the saying of the truth, as is done in the relation $\mathfrak{S}_1 \rightarrow \mathfrak{S}_2$. The analyst is a kind of falling (*chute*) of this saying, and, as such, he seems (*fait semblant*) to "understand," and that's how he intervenes at the level of the unconscious.

$\mathfrak{S}_1 \rightarrow \mathfrak{S}_2$
 \downarrow
 (a)

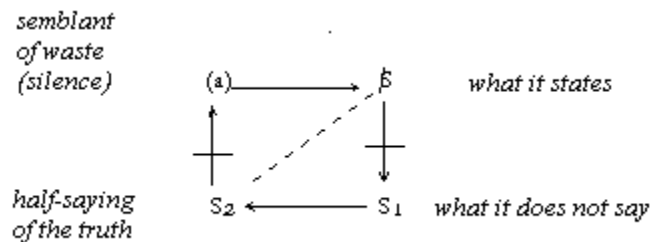
– Truth is characterized by the fact of this \mathfrak{S}_2 : the analyst only says words; the one who is supposed to know something is the analyst: a pure supposition, of course.

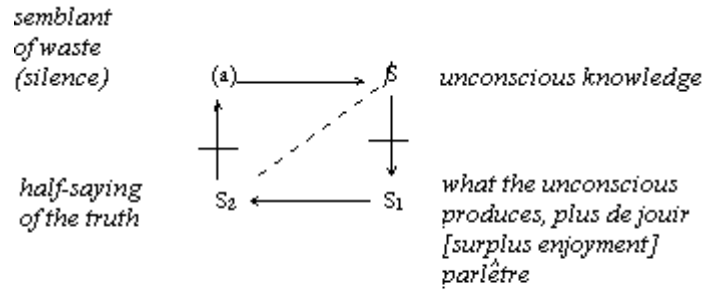
This \mathfrak{S}_2 , what the analyst is supposed to know, is never completely said; it is only said in the form of the half-saying (*mi-dire*) of the truth.

It is by this analytic discourse that I have made the distinction between what is stated (*énoncé*) and a sort of half-saying.

It is inasmuch as the analyst is this *semblant* of waste (a) that he intervenes at the level of the subject \mathfrak{S} , which is to say, of what is conditioned:

1. by what it states (*ce qu'il énonce*),
2. by what it does not say (*ce qu'il ne dit pas*).





The silence corresponds to the semblant of waste.