

THREE

The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis

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Preface

'In particular, it should not be forgotten that the division into embryology, anatomy, physiology, psychology, sociology and clinical medicine does not exist in nature and there is only one discipline: a *neurobiology* to which observation obliges us to add the epithet *human* when it concerns us.' (Quotation chosen as an inscription on an Institute of Psychoanalysis in 1952)

Before proceeding to the report itself, something should be said of the surrounding circumstances. For they had some effect on it.

The theme was suggested to the author as the basis of the customary theoretical report for the annual meeting of the society, which, at that time, represented psychoanalysis in France. For eighteen years, this society had pursued what had become a venerable tradition under the title 'Congrès des Psychanalystes de langue française', then, for two years this congress had been extended to psychoanalysts speaking any of the Romance languages (Holland being included out of linguistic tolerance). The Congress in question took place in Rome in September.

Meanwhile, serious disagreements led to a secession in the French group. These disagreements came to a head on the occasion of the foundation of an 'institute of psychoanalysis'. The group that had succeeded in imposing its statutes and programme on the new institute was then heard to declare that it would prevent the member who, with others, had tried to introduce a different conception into the institute, from speaking at Rome, and it tried every means in its power to do so.

Yet it did not seem to those who, as a result, had founded the new Société française de Psychanalyse that they were under any obligation to deprive the majority of the students, who had rallied to their teaching, of the forthcoming event, or even to hold it elsewhere than in the eminent place for which it had been planned.

The generous sympathy that had been shown them by the Italian group meant that they could hardly be regarded as unwelcome guests in the Universal City.

As far as I was concerned, I felt considerably emboldened, however unequal I proved to be to the task of speaking about speech, by a certain connivance inscribed in the place itself.

Indeed, I recalled that well before the glory of the world's most elevated throne had been established, Aulus Gellius, in his *Noctes Atticae* gave to the place called *Mons Vaticanus* the etymology *vagire*, which designates the first stammerings of speech.

If, then, my speech was to be nothing more than a *vagitus*, an infantile cry, at least it would be an auspicious moment to renovate the foundations that this discipline of speech derives from language.

Moreover, this renovation derived too much meaning from history for me to avoid breaking with the traditional style that places a 'report' somewhere between a compilation and a synthesis, and not give it the ironical style of a radical questioning of the foundations of that discipline.

Since my listeners were those same students who expect us to speak, it was above all for them that I fomented my speech, in order to renounce, for their sake, the rules that are observed between augers by which meticulousness of detail is passed off as rigour, and rule confused with certainty.

Indeed, in the conflict that led them to the present outcome, it was realized that their autonomy as subjects had been ignored to such an exorbitant degree that the primary requirement sprang from a reaction against the permanent tone that had permitted this excess.

The fact is that a vice was revealed that went well beyond the local circumstances that triggered off this conflict. The mere fact that one could claim to regulate the training of psychoanalysts in so authoritarian a fashion posed the question as to whether the established modes of this training did not produce the paradoxical result of maintaining them perpetually as minors.

Certainly the highly organized initiatory forms which, for Freud, were a guarantee that his doctrine would be transmitted are justified in the situation of a discipline that can survive only by maintaining itself at the level of an integral experience.

But have these forms not led to a dispiriting formalism that discourages initiative by penalizing risk, and turns the reign of the opinion of the

learned into a principle of docile prudence in which the authenticity of research is blunted before it finally dries up?

The extreme complexity of the notions we use has the effect that in no other field does a mind run a greater risk, in exposing his judgement, of discovering his true capacities.

But this ought to have the result of making our first, if not sole, concern the formulation of theses through the elucidation of principles.

The severe selection that is, indeed, necessary cannot be left to the endless postponements of a fastidious co-optation, but should be based on the fecundity of concrete production and the dialectical testing of contradictory views.

For me, this does not imply that any particular value is to be placed on divergence. On the contrary, we were not in the least surprised to hear at the London International Congress – where, because we had failed to follow the prescribed forms, we had come as beggars – a personality well disposed towards us, deplore the fact that we could not justify our secession on the grounds of some doctrinal disagreement. Does this mean that an association that is supposed to be international should have any other purpose than the maintenance of the principle of the community of our experience?

It is no doubt an open secret that it's a long time since this was the case, and it was with no sense of scandal that to the impenetrable M. Zilboorg, who, setting our case aside, insisted that no secession should be acceptable except on the basis of a scientific dispute, the penetrating M. Wälder could reply that if we were to confront the principles in which each of us believed his experience was based our walls would dissolve very quickly into the confusion of Babel.

Our own opinion is, that if we do innovate, nothing is to be gained by taking credit for it.

In a discipline that owes its scientific value solely to the theoretical concepts that Freud forged in the progress of his experience – concepts which, by continuing to be badly criticized and yet retaining the ambiguity of the vulgar tongue, benefit, with a certain risk of misunderstanding, from these resonances – it would seem to me to be premature to break with the tradition of their terminology.

But it seems to me that these terms can only become clear if one establishes their equivalence to the language of contemporary anthropology, or even to the latest problems in philosophy, fields in which psychoanalysis could well regain its health.

In any case, I consider it to be an urgent task to disengage from concepts that are being deadened by routine use the meaning that they regain both from a re-examination of their history and from a reflexion on their subjective foundations.

That, no doubt, is the teacher's prime function – the function from which all others proceed, and the one in which the price of experience is best inscribed.

If this function is neglected, meaning is obscured in an action whose effects are entirely dependent on meaning, and the rules of psychoanalytic technique, by being reduced to mere recipes, rob the analytic experience of any status as knowledge and even of any criterion of reality.

For nobody is less demanding than a psychoanalyst as to what provides the status of his action, which he himself is not far from regarding as magical. This is because he is incapable of situating it in a conception of his field that he would not dream of according to his practice.

The epigraph with which I have adorned this preface is a rather fine example.

Indeed, it accords with a view of analytic training rather like that of a driving-school which, not content with claiming the unique privilege of issuing the driving licence, also imagines that it is in a position to supervise the making of the car.

This comparison may or may not be valid, but it is as valid as those current in our most serious conventicles, which, because they originated in my address to the fools, do not even have the savour of a practical joke perpetrated by initiates, but seem none the less to be given currency by virtue of their pompous ineptitude.

They begin with the well-known comparison between the candidate who allows himself to get involved at too early a stage in practice and the surgeon who operates without sterilization, and they go on to the tear-jerking comparison between those unfortunate students divided in their loyalties to disputing masters and children caught up in their parents' divorce.

No doubt this latest born comparison seems to me to be inspired by the respect due to those who have indeed been subjected to what, moderating my thought, I will call a pressure to teach, which has put them severely to the test, but one may also wonder on hearing the tremulous tones of the masters whether the bounds of childishness have not, without warning, been pushed back to the point of foolishness.

Yet the truths contained in these clichés are worthy of more serious examination.

As a method based on truth and the demystification of subjective camouflages, does psychoanalysis display an excessive ambition to apply its principles to its own corporation: that is, to psychoanalysts' views of their role in relation to the patient, their place in intellectual society, their relations with their peers and their educational mission?

Perhaps, by reopening a few windows to the daylight of Freud's thought, this report will allay the anguish that some people feel when a symbolic action becomes lost in its own opacity.

However, in referring to the circumstances surrounding this speech, I am not trying to blame its all too obvious inadequacies on the haste with which it was composed, since its meaning, as well as its form, derives from that same haste.

Moreover, I have shown, in an exemplary sophism of intersubjective time, the function of haste in logical precipitation, where truth finds its unspersedable condition.

Nothing is created without a sense of urgency; urgency always produces its supersession in speech.

But nor is there anything that does not become contingent when the moment for it comes to man, when he can identify in a single reason the course he chooses and the disorder he denounces, in order to understand its coherence in the real and anticipate by his certainty the action that weighs them against one another.



Introduction

'We are going to determine that while we are still at the aphelion of our matter, for, when we arrive at the perihelion, the heat will be capable of making us forget it.'

(Lichtenberg)

'"Flesh composed of suns. How can such be?" exclaim the simple ones.'
(R. Browning, *Parleying with certain people*)

Such is the fright that seizes man when he unveils the face of his power that he turns away from it even in the very act of laying its features bare. So it has been with psychoanalysis. Freud's truly Promethean discovery was such an act, as his works bear witness; but that discovery is no less present in each humble psychoanalytic experience conducted by any one of the labourers formed in his school.

One can trace over the years this decline of interest in the functions of speech and in the field of language. This decline is responsible for the 'alterations in aim and technique' that are now acknowledged within the psychoanalytic movement, and whose relation to the general lessening of therapeutic effectiveness is nevertheless ambiguous. In fact the emphasis on the resistance of the object in current psychoanalytic theory and technique must itself be subjected to the dialectic of analysis, which cannot fail to recognize in this emphasis an alibi of the subject.

Let us try to outline the topography of this shift of emphasis. If we examine the literature that we call our 'scientific activity', the present problems of psychoanalysis fall clearly under three headings:

(a) The function of the imaginary, as I shall call it, or, to put it more simply, that of phantasies in the technique of the psychoanalytic experience and in the constitution of the object at the various stages of psychical development. The original impetus in this area came from the analysis of children, and from the fertile and tempting field offered to the attempts of researchers by access to the formation of structures at the preverbal level. It is there, too, that the culmination of this impetus is now inducing a return in the same direction by posing the problem of what symbolic status is to be given to phantasies in their interpretation.

(b) The concept of the libidinal object relations which, by renewing the idea of the progress of the treatment, is quietly altering the way in which it is conducted. Here the new perspective took its departure from the extension of the psychoanalytic method to the psychoses and from the momentary opening up of the psychoanalytic technique to data based on different principles. At this point psychoanalysis merges with an existential phenomenology – one might say, with an activism animated by charity. There again, a clear-cut reaction is taking place in favour of a return to the technical pivot of symbolization.

(c) The importance of the counter-transference and, correlatively, of the training of the analyst. Here the emphasis has resulted from the difficulties arising in the termination of the treatment, together with those that occur when the training analysis results in the introduction of the candidate into the practice of analysis. And the same oscillation can be observed in each case. On the one hand, the being of the analyst is shown, not without courage, to be a by no means negligible factor in the results of the analysis – and even a factor in the effects of the analysis that should, towards the end, be brought out into the open. On the other hand, it is put forward no less forcefully that no solution is possible

except by an ever more thorough exploration of the mainsprings of the unconscious.

Besides the pioneer activity that they are manifesting on three different frontiers, these three problems have one thing in common with the vitality of the psychoanalytic experience that sustains them. This is the temptation for the analyst to abandon the foundation of speech, and this precisely in areas where, because they border on the ineffable, its use would seem to require a more than usually close examination: that is to say, childhood training by the mother, Samaritan-type aid, and dialectical mastery. The danger indeed becomes great if, on top of this, he abandons his own language in favour of others already established about whose compensations for ignorance he knows very little.

We would truly like to know more about the effects of symbolization in the child, and psychoanalysts who are also mothers, even those who give our loftiest deliberations a matriarchal air, are not exempt from that confusion of tongues by which Ferenczi designated the law of the relationship between the child and the adult.¹

Our wise men's ideas about the perfect object relation are somewhat uncertainly conceived, and, when expounded, they reveal a mediocrity that does the profession no honour.

There can be little doubt that these effects – where the psychoanalyst resembles the type of modern hero famous for his vain exploits in situations entirely beyond his control – could be corrected by a proper return to a field in which the analyst ought to be past master: the study of the functions of speech.

But, since Freud, it seems that this central field of our domain has been left fallow. Note how he himself refrained from venturing too far into its outlying parts: he discovered the libidinal stages of the child through the analysis of adults and intervened in little Hans's case only through the mediation of his parents. He deciphered a whole section of the language of the unconscious in paranoid delusion, but used for this purpose only the key text that Schreber left behind in the volcanic debris of his spiritual catastrophe. On the other hand, however, he rose to a position of complete mastery as far as the dialectic of this work and the traditional view of its meaning were concerned.

Does this amount to saying that if the master's place remains empty, it is not so much the result of his own passing as that of an increasing obliteration of the meaning of his work? To convince ourselves of this, we have surely only to ascertain what is going on in the place he vacated.

A technique is being handed on in a cheerless manner, reticent to the point of opacity, a manner that seems terrified of any attempt to let in the fresh air of criticism. It has in fact assumed the air of a formalism pushed to such ceremonial lengths that one might well wonder whether it does not bear the same similarity to obsessional neurosis that Freud so convincingly defined in the observance, if not in the genesis, of religious rites.

When we consider the literature that this activity produces to feed on, the analogy becomes even more marked: the impression is often that of a curious sort of closed circuit in which the *méconnaissance* of the origin of the terms produces the problem of making them agree with each other, and in which the effort to solve this problem reinforces the original *méconnaissance*.

In order to get to the causes of this deterioration of analytic discourse, one may legitimately apply the psychoanalytic method to the collectivity that embodies it.

Indeed, to speak of a loss of the meaning of psychoanalytic action is as true and as pointless as to explain the symptom by its meaning so long as that meaning is not recognized. We know that in the absence of such a recognition, the action of the analyst will be experienced only as an aggressive action at the level at which it occurs, and that in the absence of the social 'resistances' in which the psychoanalytic group used to find reassurance, the limits of its tolerance towards its own activity – now 'acknowledged', if not actually approved of – no longer depend upon anything more than the numerical strength by which its presence is measured on the social scale.

These principles are adequate in the distribution of the symbolic, imaginary, and real conditions that will determine the defence mechanisms we can recognize in the doctrine – isolation, undoing what has been done, negation and, in general, *méconnaissance*.

Thus, if the importance of the American group in relation to the psychoanalytic movement as a whole is measured by its mass, it will be easy enough to weigh accurately the conditions to be met with there.

In the symbolic order first of all, one cannot neglect the importance of the *c* factor, which I noted at the Congress of Psychiatry in 1950 as being the constant characteristic of any given cultural milieu: the condition here of the ahistoricism, which, by common accord, is recognized as being the principal feature of 'communication' in the United States, and which, in my opinion, is at the antipodes of the psychoanalytic

experience. To this must be added a native mental form, known as behaviourism, which so dominates the notion of psychology in America that it has now completely obscured the inspiration of Freud in psychoanalysis itself.

As for the other two orders, we leave to those concerned the task of assessing what the mechanisms that manifest themselves in the life of the psychoanalytic societies owe, respectively, to the relative eminence of those within the group, and to the experienced effects of their free enterprise on the whole of the social body – as well as the value to be placed on a notion emphasized by one of their most lucid representatives, namely, the convergence that can be observed between the foreignness of a group dominated by the immigrant, and the distancing into which it is drawn by the function demanded by the cultural conditions indicated above.

In any case it appears incontestable that the conception of psychoanalysis in the United States has inclined towards the adaptation of the individual to the social environment, towards the quest for behaviour patterns, and towards all the objectification implied in the notion of 'human relations'.² And the indigenous term 'human engineering'² strongly implies a privileged position of exclusion in relation to the human object.

Indeed, the eclipse in psychoanalysis of the most living terms of its experience – the unconscious and sexuality, which apparently will cease before long even to be mentioned – may be attributed to the distance from the human object without which such a position could not be held.

We do not have to take sides over the doctrinaire and commercial mentalities, both of which have been noted and denounced in the official writings of the analytic group itself. The Pharisee and the shopkeeper interest us only because of their common essence, the source of the difficulties that both have with speech, particularly when it comes to 'talking shop'.²

The fact is that although the incommunicability of motives may sustain a master, it is not on a par with true mastery – that at least which the teaching of psychoanalysis requires. This became all the more obvious when, not long ago, in order to sustain his primacy, a master felt impelled, if only for the sake of appearances, to give at least one lesson.

This is why the attachment to the traditional technique, unshakably reaffirmed from the same quarters, after a consideration of the results of the work on the frontier lines enumerated above, is not without equivocation; this equivocation is to be measured by the substitution of the term

'classic' for 'orthodox' in describing this technique. One remains loyal to tradition because one has nothing to say about the doctrine itself.

As far as I am concerned, I would assert that the technique cannot be understood, nor therefore correctly applied, if the concepts on which it is based are ignored. It is our task to demonstrate that these concepts take on their full meaning only when orientated in a field of language, only when ordered in relation to the function of speech.

At this point I must note that in order to handle any Freudian concept, reading Freud cannot be considered superfluous, even for those concepts that are homonyms of current notions. This has been well demonstrated, I am opportunely reminded, by the misadventure that befell a theory of the instincts in a revision of Freud's position by an author somewhat less than alert to its explicitly stated mythical content. Obviously he could hardly be aware of it, since he tackles the theory through the work of Marie Bonaparte, which he repeatedly cites as an equivalent of the text of Freud

without the reader being in any way advised of the fact – relying no doubt on the good taste of the reader, not without reason, not to confuse the two, but proving no less that he has not the remotest understanding of the true level of the secondary text. As a result, from reductions to deductions, and from inductions to hypotheses, the author comes to his conclusion by way of the strict tautology of his false premises: namely, that the instincts in question are reducible to the reflex arc. Like the pile of plates whose collapse is the main attraction of the classic music hall turn – leaving nothing in the hands of the performer but a couple of ill-assorted fragments – the complex construction that moves from the discovery of the migrations of the libido in the erogenous zones to the metapsychological passage from a generalized pleasure principle to the death instinct becomes the binomial dualism of a passive erotic instinct, modelled on the activity of the lice seekers so dear to the poet,³ and a destructive instinct, identified simply with motility. A result that merits an honourable mention for the art, intentional or otherwise, of carrying a misunderstanding to its ultimate logical conclusions.

I *Empty speech and full speech in the psychoanalytic realization of the subject*

Donne en ma bouche parole vraie et estable et fay de moy langue caulte.

(*L'Internele Consolacion*, XLV^o Chapitre:
'qu'on ne doit pas chascun croire et du legier
trebuchement de paroles.'⁴)

Cause toujours.

(Motto of causalist thought)⁵

Whether it sees itself as an instrument of healing, of training, or of exploration in depth, psychoanalysis has only a single medium: the patient's speech. That this is self-evident is no excuse for our neglecting it. And all speech calls for a reply.

I shall show that there is no speech without a reply, even if it is met only with silence, provided that it has an auditor: this is the heart of its function in analysis.

But if the psychoanalyst is not aware that this is how the function of speech operates, he will simply experience its appeal all the more strongly, and if the first thing to make itself heard is the void, it is within himself that he will experience it, and it is beyond speech that he will seek a reality to fill this void.

Thus it is that he will come to analyse the subject's behaviour in order to find in it what the subject is not saying. Yet in order to obtain an avowal of what he finds, he must nevertheless talk about it. He then resorts once again to speech, but that speech is now rendered suspect by having replied only to the failure of his silence, in the fact of the echo perceived from his own nothingness.

But what in fact was this appeal from the subject beyond the void of his speech? It was an appeal to the very principle of truth, through which other appeals resulting from humbler needs will vacillate. But first and foremost it was the appeal of the void, in the ambiguous gap of an attempted seduction of the other by the means on which the subject has come compliantly to rely, and to which he will commit the monumental construct of his narcissism.

'That's it all right, introspection!' exclaims the *prud'homme* who knows its dangers only too well. He is certainly not the last, he admits, to have tasted its charms, if he has exhausted its profit. Too bad that he hasn't more time to waste. For you would hear some fine profundities from him were he to arrive on your couch.

It is strange that an analyst, for whom this sort of person is one of the first encounters in his experience, should still take introspection into account in psychoanalysis. For from the moment that the wager is taken up, all those fine things that one thought one had in reserve disappear from view. If he does engage in it, they will appear of little account, but others present themselves sufficiently unexpected by our friend to seem ridiculous to him and to silence him for a while. The common lot.⁶

He then grasps the difference between the mirage of the monologue whose accommodating fancies once animated his outpourings, and the forced labour of this discourse without escape, on which the psychologist (not without humour) and the therapist (not without cunning) have bestowed the name of 'free association'.

For free association really is a labour – so much so that some have gone so far as to say that it requires an apprenticeship, even to the point of seeing in such an apprenticeship its true formative value. But if viewed in this way, what does it form but a skilled craftsman?

Well, then, what of this labour? Let us consider its conditions and its fruit, in the hope of throwing more light on its aim and profit.

The aptness of the German word *durcharbeiten* – equivalent to the English 'working through' – has been recognized in passing. It has been the despair of French translators, in spite of what the immortal words of a master of French style offered them by way of an exercise in exhausting every last drop of sense: '*Cent fois sur le métier, remettez . . .*'⁷ – but how does the work (*l'ouvrage*) make any progress here?

The theory reminds us of the triad: frustration, aggressivity, regression. This is an explanation so apparently comprehensible that we may well be spared the need to understand it. Intuition is prompt, but we should be all the more suspicious of the self-evident that has become an *idée reçue*. If analysis should come round to exposing its weakness, it will be advisable not to rest content with recourse to affectivity – that taboo-word of dialectical incapacity which, with the verb to *intellectualize* (whose pejorative acceptance makes a merit of this incapacity), will go down in the history of the language as the stigmata of our obtuseness regarding the subject.⁸

Shall we ask instead where the subject's frustration comes from? Does it come from the silence of the analyst? A reply to the subject's empty speech, even – or especially – an approving one, often shows by its effects that it is much more frustrating than silence. Is it not rather a matter of a frustration inherent in the very discourse of the subject?

Does the subject not become engaged in an ever-growing dispossession of that being of his, concerning which – by dint of sincere portraits which leave its idea no less incoherent, of rectifications that do not succeed in freeing its essence, of stays and defences that do not prevent his statue from tottering, of narcissistic embraces that become like a puff of air in animating it – he ends up by recognizing that this being has never been anything more than his construct in the imaginary and that this construct disappoints all his certainties? For in this labour which he undertakes to reconstruct *for another*, he rediscovers the fundamental alienation that made him construct it *like another*, and which has always destined it to be taken from him *by another*.⁹

This ego, whose strength our theorists now define by its capacity to bear frustration, is frustration in its essence.¹⁰ Not frustration of a desire of the subject, but frustration by an object in which his desire is alienated and which the more it is elaborated, the more profound the alienation from his *jouissance* becomes for the subject. Frustration at a second remove, therefore, and such that even if the subject were to reintroduce its form into his discourse to the point of reconstituting the passifying image through which the subject makes himself an object by displaying himself before the mirror, he could not be satisfied with it, since even if he achieved his most perfect likeness in that image, it would still be the *jouissance* of the other that he would cause to be recognized in it. This is why there is no adequate reply to this discourse, for the subject will regard as contempt anything that is said about his misapprehension.

The aggressivity experienced by the subject at this point has nothing to do with the animal aggressivity of frustrated desire. This assumption, which seems to satisfy most people, actually masks another that is less agreeable for each and every one of us: the aggressivity of the slave whose response to the frustration of his labour is a desire for death.

It is therefore readily conceivable how this aggressivity may respond to any intervention which, by denouncing the imaginary intentions of the discourse, dismantles the object constructed by the subject to satisfy them. This is in effect what is called the analysis of resistances, the dangerous aspect of which is immediately apparent. It is already indicated by the existence of the simple-minded analyst who has never seen revealed anything but the aggressive signification of his subjects' phantasies.¹¹

Such an individual who, not hesitating to plead for a 'causalist' analysis that would aim to transform the subject in his present by learned explanations of his past, betrays well enough by his very intonation the

anxiety that he wishes to spare himself – the anxiety of having to think that his patient's freedom may be dependent upon that of his own intervention. Whether or not the expedient into which he plunges may possibly be beneficial at some moment or other to the subject, this has no more importance than a stimulating pleasantry and will not detain me any longer.

Rather let us focus on this *hic et nunc* to which some analysts feel we should confine the handling of the analysis. It may indeed be useful, provided the imaginary intention that the analyst uncovers in it is not detached by him from the symbolic relation in which it is expressed. Nothing must be read into it concerning the ego of the subject that cannot be reassumed by him in the form of the 'I', that is, in the first person.

'I have been this only in order to become what I can be': if this were not the permanent high point of the subject's assumption of his own mirages, in what sense would this constitute progress?

From this point on, the analyst cannot without peril track the subject down into the intimacy of his gestures, nor even into that of his static state, except by reintegrating them as silent parts into his narcissistic discourse – and this has been noted very sensitively, even by young practitioners.

The danger involved here is not that of the subject's negative reaction, but rather that of his capture in an objectification – no less imaginary than before – of his static state or of his 'statue', in a renewed status of his alienation.

Quite the contrary, the art of the analyst must be to suspend the subject's certainties until their last mirages have been consumed. And it is in the discourse that the progress of their resolution must be marked.

Indeed, however empty this discourse may seem, it is so only if taken at its face value: that which justifies the remark of Mallarmé's, in which he compares the common use of language to the exchange of a coin whose obverse and reverse no longer bear any but effaced figures, and which people pass from hand to hand 'in silence'. This metaphor is enough to remind us that speech, even when almost completely worn out, retains its value as a *tessera*.¹²

Even if it communicates nothing, the discourse represents the existence of communication; even if it denies the evidence, it affirms that speech constitutes truth; even if it is intended to deceive, the discourse speculates on faith in testimony.

Moreover, it is the psychoanalyst who knows better than anyone else

that the question is to understand which 'part' of this discourse carries the significative term, and this is, ideally, just how he proceeds: he takes the description of an everyday event for a fable addressed to whoever hath ears to hear, a long tirade for a direct interjection, or on the other hand a simple *lapsus* for a highly complex statement, or even the sigh of a momentary silence for the whole lyrical development it replaces.

It is, therefore, a beneficent punctuation, one which confers its meaning on the subject's discourse. This is why the adjournment of a session – which according to present-day technique is simply a chronometric break and, as such, a matter of indifference to the thread of the discourse – plays the part of a metric beat which has the full value of an actual intervention by the analyst for hastening the concluding moments. This fact should lead us to free this act of termination from its routine usage and to employ it for the purposes of the technique in every useful way possible.

It is in this way that regression is able to operate. Regression is simply the actualization in the discourse of the phantasy relations reconstituted by an *ego* at each stage in the decomposition of its structure. After all, this regression is not real; even in language it manifests itself only by inflections, by turns of phrase, by '*trébuchements si légers*' that in the extreme case they cannot go beyond the artifice of 'baby talk' in the adult. To impute to regression the reality of an actual relation to the object amounts to projecting the subject into an alienating illusion that does no more than echo an alibi of the psychoanalyst.

It is for this reason that nothing could be more misleading for the analyst than to seek to guide himself by some supposed 'contact' experienced with the reality of the subject. This cream puff of intuitionist and even phenomenological psychology has become extended in contemporary usage in a way that is thoroughly symptomatic of the rarefaction of the effects of speech in the present social context. But its obsessional power becomes flagrantly obvious when put forward in a relation which, by its very rules, excludes all real contact.

Young analysts, who might nevertheless allow themselves to be taken in by the impenetrable gifts that such a recourse implies, will find no better way of retracing their steps than to consider the successful outcome of the actual supervision they themselves undergo. From the point of view of contact with the real, the very possibility of such supervision would become a problem. In fact the contrary is the case: here the supervisor manifests a second sight, make no mistake about it, which makes the

experience at least as instructive for him as for the person supervised. And this is almost all the more so because the person under his supervision demonstrates in the process fewer of these gifts, which are held by some people to be all the less communicable in proportion as they themselves draw attention to their technical secrets.

The reason for this enigma is that the supervised person acts as a filter, or even as a refractor, of the subject's discourse, and in this way there is presented to the supervisor a ready-made stereograph, making clear from the start the three or four registers on which the musical score constituted by the subject's discourse can be read.

If the supervised person could be put by the supervisor into a subjective position different from that implied by the sinister term *contrôle* (advantageously replaced, but only in English, by 'supervision'), the greatest profit he would derive from this exercise would be to learn to maintain himself in the position of second subjectivity into which the situation automatically puts the supervisor.

There he would find the authentic way to reach what the classic formula of the analyst's vague, even absent-minded, attention expresses only very approximately. For it is essential to know towards what that attention is directed; and, as all our labours show, it is certainly not directed towards an object beyond the subject's speech in the way it is for certain analysts who make it a strict rule never to lose sight of that object. If this were to be the way of analysis, then it would surely have recourse to other means – otherwise it would be the only example of a method that forbade itself the means necessary to its own ends.

The only object that is within the analyst's reach is the imaginary relation that links him to the subject *qua ego*. And although he cannot eliminate it, he can use it to regulate the yield of his ears, which is normal practice, according to both physiology and the Gospels: having ears *in order not to hear*, in other words, in order to pick up what is to be heard. For he has no other ears, no third or fourth ear to serve as what some have tried to describe as a direct transaudition of the unconscious by the unconscious.¹³ I shall deal with the question of this supposed mode of communication later.

I have tackled the function of speech in analysis from its least rewarding angle, that of 'empty' speech, where the subject seems to be talking in vain about someone who, even if he were his spitting image, can never become one with the assumption of his desire. I have pointed out the source of the growing devaluation of which speech has been the object

in both theory and technique. I have had to raise by slow degrees, as if they were a heavy millstone that had fallen on speech, what can serve only as a sort of steering-wheel for the movement of analysis: that is to say, the individual psycho-physiological factors that, in reality, are excluded from its dialectic. To regard the goal of psychoanalysis to be to modify the individual inertia of these factors is to be condemned to a fiction of movement with which a certain trend in psychoanalytic technique seems in fact to be satisfied.

If we now turn to the other extreme of the psychoanalytic experience – its history, its argumentation, the process of the treatment – we shall find that to the analysis of the here and now is to be opposed the value of anamnesis as the index and source of therapeutic progress; that to obsessional intrasubjectivity is to be opposed hysterical intersubjectivity; and that to the analysis of resistance is to be opposed symbolic interpretation. The realization of full speech begins here.

Let us examine the relation constituted by this realization.

It will be recalled that shortly after its birth the method introduced by Breuer and Freud was baptized by one of Breuer's patients, Anna O., the 'talking cure'. It was the experience inaugurated with this hysterical patient that led them to the discovery of the pathogenic event dubbed the traumatic experience.

If this event was recognized as being the cause of the symptom, it was because the putting into words of the event (in the patient's 'stories') determined the lifting of the symptom. Here the term '*prise de conscience*', borrowed from the psychological theory that was constructed on this fact, retains a prestige that merits a healthy distrust of explanations that do office as self-evident truths. The psychological prejudices of Freud's day were opposed to acknowledging in verbalization as such any reality other than its own *flatus vocis*. The fact remains that in the hypnotic state verbalization is dissociated from the *prise de conscience*, and this fact alone is enough to require a revision of that conception of its effects.

But why is it that the doughty advocates of the behaviourist *Aufhebung* do not use this as their example to show that they do not have to know whether the subject has remembered anything whatever from the past? He has simply recounted the event. But I would say that he has verbalized it – or, to develop a term whose echoes in French call to mind a Pandora figure other than the one with the box (in which the term should probably be locked up for good),¹⁴ that he has made it pass into the *verbe*,¹⁵ or,

more precisely, into the *epos*¹⁶ by which he brings back into present time the origins of his own person. And he does this in a language that allows his discourse to be understood by his contemporaries, and which furthermore presupposes their present discourse. Thus it happens that the recitation of the *epos* may include a discourse of earlier days in its own archaic, even foreign language, or may even pursue its course in present time with all the animation of the actor; but it is like an indirect discourse, isolated in quotation marks within the thread of the narration, and, if the discourse is played out, it is on a stage implying the presence not only of the chorus, but also of spectators.

Hypnotic recollection is, no doubt, a reproduction of the past, but it is above all a spoken representation – and as such implies all sorts of presences. It stands in the same relation to the waking recollection of what is curiously called in analysis 'the material', as the drama in which the original myths of the City State are produced before its assembled citizens stands in relation to a history that may well be made up of materials, but in which a nation today learns to read the symbols of a destiny on the march. In Heideggerian language one could say that both types of recollection constitute the subject as *gewesend* – that is to say, as being the one who thus has been. But in the internal unity of this temporalization, the existent marks the convergence of the having-beens. That is to say, other encounters being assumed to have taken place since any one of these moments having been, there would have issued from it another existent that would cause him to have been quite otherwise.

The ambiguity of the hysterical revelation of the past is due not so much to the vacillation of its content between the imaginary and the real, for it is situated in both. Nor is it because it is made up of lies. The reason is that it presents us with the birth of truth in speech, and thereby brings us up against the reality of what is neither true nor false. At any rate, that is the most disquieting aspect of the problem.

For it is present speech that bears witness to the truth of this revelation in present reality, and which grounds it in the name of that reality. Yet in that reality, only speech bears witness to that portion of the powers of the past that has been thrust aside at each crossroads where the event has made its choice.

This is why the condition of continuity in anamnesis, by which Freud measures the completeness of the cure, has nothing to do with the Bergsonian myth of a restoration of duration in which the authenticity of each instant would be destroyed if it did not sum up the modulation of all

the preceding ones. The point is that for Freud it is not a question of biological memory, nor of its intuitionist mystification, nor of the paramnesia of the symptom, but a question of recollection, that is, of history, balancing the scales, in which conjectures about the past are balanced against promises of the future, upon the single knife-edge or fulcrum of chronological certainties. I might as well be categorical: in psychoanalytic anamnesis, it is not a question of reality, but of truth, because the effect of full speech is to reorder past contingences by conferring on them the sense of necessities to come, such as they are constituted by the little freedom through which the subject makes them present.

The meanders of the research pursued by Freud into the case of the Wolf Man confirm these remarks by deriving their full meaning from them.

Freud demands a total objectification of proof so long as it is a question of dating the primal scene, but he no more than presupposes all the re-subjectifications of the event that seem to him to be necessary to explain its effects at each turning-point where the subject restructures himself – that is, as many restructurings of the event as take place, as he puts it, *nachträglich*, at a later date.¹⁷ What is more, with an audacity bordering on offhandedness, he asserts that he holds it legitimate in the analysis of processes to elide the time intervals in which the event remains latent in the subject.¹⁸ That is to say, he annuls the *times for understanding* in favour of the *moments of concluding* which precipitate the meditation of the subject towards deciding the meaning to attach to the original event.

Let it be noted that *time for understanding* and *moment of concluding* are functions that I have defined in a purely logical theorem and which are familiar to my students as having proved extremely favourable to the dialectical analysis through which we guide their steps in the process of a psychoanalysis.

It is certainly this assumption of his history by the subject, in so far as it is constituted by the speech addressed to the other, that constitutes the ground of the new method that Freud called psychoanalysis, not in 1904 – as was taught until recently by an authority who, when he finally threw off the cloak of prudent silence, appeared on that day to know nothing of Freud except the titles of his works – but in 1895.¹⁹

In this analysis of the meaning of his method, I do not deny, any more than Freud himself did, the psycho-physiological discontinuity manifested by the states in which the hysterical symptom appears, nor do I deny that this symptom may be treated by methods – hypnosis or even narcosis –

that reproduce the discontinuity of these states. I simply repudiate any reliance on these states – and as deliberately as Freud forbade himself recourse to them after a certain time – whether to explain the symptom or to cure it.

For if the originality of the analytic method depends on means that it must forego, it is because the means that it reserves to itself are enough to constitute a domain whose limits define the relativity of its operations.

Its means are those of speech, in so far as speech confers a meaning on the functions of the individual; its domain is that of concrete discourse, in so far as this is the field of the transindividual reality of the subject; its operations are those of history, in so far as history constitutes the emergence of truth in the real.

To begin with, in fact, when the subject begins analysis he accepts a position more constituting in itself than all the duties by which he allows himself to be more or less enticed: that of interlocution, and I see no objection in the fact that this remark may leave the listener nonplussed.²⁰ For I shall take this opportunity of stressing that the allocation of the subject entails an allocutor²¹ – in other words, that the locutor²² is constituted in it as intersubjectivity.

Secondly, it is on the basis of this interlocution, in so far as it includes the response of the interlocutor, that the meaning of what Freud insists on as the restoration of continuity in the subject's motivations becomes clear. An operational examination of this objective shows us in effect that it can be satisfied only in the intersubjective continuity of the discourse in which the subject's history is constituted.

In this way, the subject may vaticinate on his history under the influence of one or other of those drugs that anaesthetize the consciousness and which have been christened in our day 'truth serums' – an unwitting *contresens* that reveals all the irony inherent in language. But precisely because it comes to him through an alienated form, even a retransmission of his own recorded discourse, be it from the mouth of his own doctor, cannot have the same effects as psychoanalytic interlocution.

It is therefore in the position of a third term that the Freudian discovery of the unconscious becomes clear as to its true grounding. This discovery may be simply formulated in the following terms:

The unconscious is that part of the concrete discourse, in so far as it is transindividual, that is not at the disposal of the subject in re-establishing the continuity of his conscious discourse.

This disposes of the paradox presented by the concept of the unconscious if it is related to an individual reality. For to reduce this concept to unconscious tendencies is to resolve the paradox only by ignoring the experience that shows clearly that the unconscious participates in the functions of the idea, and even of thought – as Freud plainly insisted when, unable to avoid a conjunction of contrary terms in the term ‘unconscious thought’, he bestowed on it the sacramental invocation: *sit venia verbo*.²³ In any case we obey him by throwing the blame, in effect, on the *verbum*, but on that *verbum* that is realized in the discourse that runs from mouth to mouth – like the hidden object in hunt-the-slipper – so as to confer on the act of the subject who receives its message the sense that makes of this act an act of his history, and which confers on him his truth.

Hence the objection that is raised against the notion of unconscious thought as a contradiction in terms by a psychology inadequately grounded in its logic, collapses when confronted by the very distinction of the psychoanalytic domain, in so far as this domain reveals the reality of the discourse in its autonomy. And the psychoanalyst’s *eppur si muove!* has the same effect as Galileo’s; an effect that is not that of factual experience, but that of the *experimentum mentis*.

The unconscious is that chapter of my history that is marked by a blank or occupied by a falsehood: it is the censored chapter. But the truth can be rediscovered; usually it has already been written down elsewhere. Namely:

- in monuments: this is my body. That is to say, the hysterical nucleus of the neurosis in which the hysterical symptom reveals the structure of a language, and is deciphered like an inscription which, once recovered, can without serious loss be destroyed;
- in archival documents: these are my childhood memories, just as impenetrable as are such documents when I do not know their provenance;
- in semantic evolution: this corresponds to the stock of words and acceptations of my own particular vocabulary, as it does to my style of life and to my character;
- in traditions, too, and even in the legends which, in a heroicized form, bear my history;
- and, lastly, in the traces that are inevitably preserved by the distortions necessitated by the linking of the adulterated chapter to the chapters surrounding it, and whose meaning will be re-established by my exegesis.

The student who has the idea that reading Freud in order to understand Freud is preferable to reading Mr. Fenichel – an idea rare enough, it is true, for my teaching to have to go about recommending it – will realize, once he sets about it, that what I have just said has so little originality, even in its verve, that there appears in it not a single metaphor that Freud’s works do not repeat with the frequency of a *leitmotif* in which the very fabric of the work is revealed.

At every instant of his practice from then on, he will be more easily able to grasp the fact that these metaphors, like the negation whose doubling undoes it, lose their metaphorical dimension, and he will recognize that this is so because he is operating in the proper domain of the metaphor, which is simply the synonym for the symbolic displacement brought into play in the symptom.

After that it will be easier for him to form an opinion of the imaginary displacement that motivates the works of Mr Fenichel, by measuring the difference in consistency and technical efficacy between reference to the supposedly organic stages of individual development and research into the particular events of a subject’s history. The difference is precisely that which separates authentic historical research from the so-called laws of history, of which it can be said that every age finds its own philosopher to diffuse them according to the values then prevailing.

This is not to say that there is nothing to be gained from the different meanings uncovered in the general march of history along the path which runs from Bossuet (Jacques-Bénigne) to Toynbee (Arnold), and which is punctuated by the edifices of Auguste Comte and Karl Marx. Everyone knows very well that they are worth as little for directing research into the recent past as they are for making any reasonable presumptions about the events of tomorrow. Besides, they are modest enough to postpone their certainties until the day after tomorrow, and not too prudish either to admit the retouching that permits predictions about what happened yesterday.

If, therefore, their role is somewhat too slender for scientific progress, their interest lies elsewhere: in their very considerable role as ideals. It is this which prompts me to make a distinction between what might be called the primary and the secondary functions of historization.

For to say of psychoanalysis or of history that, considered as sciences, they are both sciences of the particular, does not mean that the facts they deal with are purely accidental, or simply factitious, and that their ultimate value is reducible to the brute aspect of the trauma.

Events are engendered in a primary historization. In other words, history is already producing itself on the stage where it will be played out, once it has been written down, both within the subject and outside him.

At such and such a period, some riot or other in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine is experienced by its actors as a victory or defeat of the Parlement or the Court; at another, as a victory or defeat of the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. And although it is 'the peoples' (as Cardinal de Retz would have said) who always foot its bill, it is not at all the same historical event – I mean that the two events do not leave the same sort of memory behind in men's minds.

This is to say that, with the disappearance of the reality of the Parlement and the Court, the first event will return to its traumatic value, admitting a progressive and authentic effacement, unless its meaning is deliberately revived. Whereas the memory of the second event will remain very much alive even under censorship – in the same way that the amnesia of repression is one of the most lively forms of memory – as long as there are men to place their revolt under the command of the struggle for the coming to political power of the proletariat, that is to say, men for whom the key-words of dialectical materialism will have a meaning.

At this point it would be too much to say that I was about to carry these remarks over into the field of psychoanalysis, since they are there already, and since the disentanglement that they bring about in psychoanalysis between the technique of deciphering the unconscious and the theory of instincts – to say nothing of the theory of drives – goes without saying.

What we teach the subject to recognize as his unconscious is his history – that is to say, we help him to perfect the present historization of the facts that have already determined a certain number of the historical 'turning-points' in his existence. But if they have played this role, it is already as facts of history, that is to say, in so far as they have been recognized in one particular sense or censored in a certain order.

Thus, every fixation at a so-called instinctual stage is above all a historical scar: a page of shame that is forgotten or undone, or a page of glory that compels. But what is forgotten is recalled in acts, and undoing what has been done is opposed to what is said elsewhere, just as compulsion perpetuates in the symbol the very mirage in which the subject found himself trapped.

To put it briefly, the instinctual stages, when they are being lived, are already organized in subjectivity. And to put it clearly, the subjectivity

of the child who registers as victories and defeats the heroic chronicle of the training of his sphincters, enjoying (*jouissant*) the imaginary sexualization of his cloacal orifices, turning his excremental expulsions into aggressions, his retentions into seductions, and his movements of release into symbols – this subjectivity *is not fundamentally different* from the subjectivity of the psychoanalyst who, in order to understand them, tries to reconstitute the forms of love that he calls pregenital.

In other words, the anal stage is no less purely historical when it is actually experienced than when it is reconstituted in thought, nor is it less purely grounded in intersubjectivity. On the other hand, seeing it as a mere stage in some instinctual maturation leads even the best minds straight off the track, to the point that there is seen in it the reproduction in ontogenesis of a stage of the animal phylum that is to be looked for among threadworms, even jellyfish – a speculation which, ingenious as it may be when penned by Balint, leads elsewhere to the most nebulous daydreams, or even to the folly that goes looking in the *protistum* for the imaginary blueprint of breaking and entering the body, fear of which is supposed to control female sexuality. Why, then, not look for the image of the ego in the shrimp, under the pretext that both acquire a new carapace after shedding the old?

In the years 1910–20, a certain Jaworski constructed a very fine system in which the 'biological plan' could be found right up to the confines of culture, and which actually provided the crustacea with a historical counterpart at some period or other of the later Middle Ages, if I remember rightly, in the form of a widespread flowering of armour – and, indeed, left no animal form without a human respondent, not excepting molluscs and bedbugs.

Analogy is not metaphor, and the use that philosophers of nature have made of it calls for the genius of a Goethe, but even his example is not encouraging. Nothing is more repugnant to the spirit of our discipline, and it was by deliberately avoiding analogy that Freud opened up the right way to the interpretation of dreams, and so to the notion of analytic symbolism. Analytic symbolism, I insist, is strictly opposed to analogical thinking, whose dubious tradition results in the fact that some people, even in our own ranks, still consider it to be part and parcel of our method.

This is why excessive excursions into the ridiculous must be used for their eye-opening value, since, by opening our eyes to the absurdity of a theory, they will bring our attention to bear on dangers that have nothing theoretical about them.

This mythology of instinctual maturation, built out of selections from the works of Freud, actually engenders spiritual problems whose vapour, condensing into nebulous ideals, returns to inundate the original myth with its showers. The best writers set their wits to postulating formulae that will satisfy the demands of the mysterious 'genital love'²³ (there are some notions whose strangeness adapts itself better to the parenthesis of a borrowed term, and they initial their attempt with the avowal of a *non liquet*). However, nobody appears to be disturbed by the *malaise* that results; and it can be seen rather as matter fit to encourage all the Münchhausens of psychoanalytic normalization to pull themselves up by the hair in the hope of attaining the paradise of the full realization of the genital object, indeed of the object, period.

If we, as psychoanalysts, are well placed to appreciate the power of words, this is no reason to display it in the interests of the insoluble, nor for 'binding heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and laying them on men's shoulders', as Christ's malediction is expressed to the Pharisees in the text of St Matthew.

In this way the poverty of the terms in which we try to enclose a subjective problem may leave a great deal to be desired for particularly exacting spirits, should they ever compare these terms to those that structured in their very confusion the ancient quarrels centred around Nature and Grace.²⁴ Thus this poverty may well leave them apprehensive concerning the quality of the psychological and sociological results that one may expect from their use. And it is to be hoped that a better appreciation of the functions of the *logos* will dissipate the mysteries of our phantastic charismata.

To confine ourselves to a more lucid tradition, perhaps we shall understand the celebrated maxim in which La Rochefoucauld tells us that '*il y a des gens qui n'auraient jamais été amoureux, s'ils n'avaient jamais entendu parler de l'amour*',²⁵ not in the Romantic sense of an entirely imaginary 'realization' of love, which would make of this remark a bitter objection on his part, but as an authentic recognition of what love owes to the symbol and of what speech entails of love.

In any case, one has only to go back to the works of Freud to realize to what a secondary and hypothetical place he relegates the theory of instincts. The theory cannot in his eyes stand for a single instant against the least important particular fact of a history, he insists, and the *genital narcissism* he invokes when summing up the case of the Wolf Man shows us well enough the disdain in which he holds the constituted order of the

ubidinal stages. Furthermore, he evokes the instinctual conflict in his summing up only to move away from it immediately and to recognize in the symbolic isolation of the 'I am not castrated', in which the subject asserts himself, the compulsive form in which his heterosexual choice remains riveted, in opposition to the effect of homosexualizing capture undergone by the ego when brought back to the imaginary matrix of the primal scene. This is in truth the subjective conflict, in which it is only a question of the vicissitudes of subjectivity, in so far as the 'I' wins and loses against the 'ego' at the whim of religious catechizing or of the indoctrinating *Aufklärung* – a conflict whose effects Freud made the subject bring to realization through his help before explaining them to us in the dialectic of the Oedipus complex.

It is in the analysis of such a case that one sees clearly that the realization of perfect love is a fruit not of nature but of grace – that is to say, the fruit of an intersubjective agreement imposing its harmony on the divided nature that supports it.

'But what, then, is this subject that you keep dinning into our ears?' some impatient listener finally protests. 'Haven't we already learned the lesson from Monsieur de la Palice²⁶ that everything experienced by the individual is subjective?'

Naïve lips, whose praise will occupy my final days, open yourselves again to hear me. No need to close your eyes. The subject goes well beyond what is experienced 'subjectively' by the individual, exactly as far as the truth he is able to attain, and which perhaps will fall from those lips you have already closed again. Yes, this truth of his history is not all contained in his script, and yet the place is marked there by the painful shocks he feels from knowing only his own lines, and not simply there, but also in pages whose disorder gives him little comfort.

That the unconscious of the subject is the discourse of the other appears even more clearly than anywhere else in the studies that Freud devoted to what he called telepathy, as manifested in the context of an analytic experience. This is the coincidence of the subject's remarks with facts about which he cannot have information, but which are still at work in the connexions of another experience in which the same psychoanalyst is the interlocutor – a coincidence moreover constituted most often by an entirely verbal, even homonymic, convergence, or which, if it involves an act, is concerned with an 'acting out'²⁷ by one of the analyst's other patients or by a child of the person being analysed who is also in analysis. In a case of resonance in the communicating networks of discourse, an

exhaustive study of which would throw light on similar facts presented by everyday life.

The omnipresence of human discourse will perhaps one day be embraced under the open sky of an omniconmunication of its text. This is not to say that human discourse will be any more harmonious than now. But this is the field that our experience polarizes in a relation that is only apparently two-way, for any positing of its structure in merely dual terms is as inadequate to it in theory as it is ruinous for its technique.



II *Symbol and language as structure and limit of the psychoanalytic field*

Τὴν ἀρκλήν ὁ τι καὶ λαλῶ ὄμνῃ

(Gospel according to St John, VIII, 25)

'Do crossword puzzles.'

(Advice to a young psychoanalyst)

To take up the thread of my argument again, let me repeat that it is by a reduction of the history of the particular subject that psychoanalysis touches on relational *Gestalten*, which analysis then extrapolates into a regular process of development. But I also repeat that neither genetic psychology nor differential psychology, on both of which analysis may throw light, is within its compass, because both require experimental and observational conditions that are related to those of analysis only by homonymy.

To go even further: what stands out from common experience (which is confused with sense experience only by the professional of ideas) as crude psychology – namely, the wonder that wells up during some momentary suspension of daily care at whatever it is that pairs off human beings in a disparity that goes beyond that of the grotesques of a Leonardo or of a Goya, or the surprise that the thickness proper to a person's skin opposes to the caress of a hand still animated by the thrill of discovery without yet being blunted by desire – all this, it may well be said, is done away with in an experience that is averse to such caprices and resistant to such mysteries.

A psychoanalysis normally proceeds to its termination without revealing to us very much of what our patient derives in his own right from his particular sensitivity to events or colours, from his readiness to grasp

things or to accede to his weaknesses of the flesh, from his ability to retain or to invent, and even from the vivacity of his tastes.

This paradox is only an apparent one and is not due to any personal deficiency, and if it is possible to base it on the negative conditions of our experience, it simply presses us a little harder to examine that experience for what there is in it that is positive.

For this paradox does not become resolved in the efforts of certain people – like the philosophers mocked by Plato for being so driven by their appetite for reality that they went about embracing trees²⁸ – who go so far as to take every episode in which this fleeting reality appears for the lived reaction of which they show themselves so fond. For these are the very people who, making their objective what lies beyond language, react to our rule of 'Don't touch' by a sort of obsession. Keep going in that direction, and I dare say the last word in the transference reaction will be a reciprocal sniffing. I am not exaggerating: nowadays a young analyst-in-training, after two or three years of fruitless analysis, can actually hail the long-awaited arrival of the object relation in such a sniffing of his subject, and can reap as a result of it the *dignus est intrare*²⁹ of our approval, the guarantee of his abilities.

If psychoanalysis can become a science (for it is not yet one) and if it is not to degenerate in its technique (and perhaps that has already happened), we must rediscover the sense of its experience.

To this end, we can do no better than to return to the work of Freud. For an analyst to point out that he is a practitioner of the technique does not give him sufficient authority, from the fact that he does not understand Freud III, to challenge the latter in the name of a Freud II whom he thinks he understands. And his very ignorance of Freud I is no excuse for considering the five great psychoanalyses as a series of case studies as badly chosen as they are badly expressed, however marvellous he thinks it that the grain of truth hidden within them ever managed to escape.³⁰

Take up the work of Freud again at the *Traumdeutung* to remind yourself that the dream has the structure of a sentence or, rather, to stick to the letter of the work, of a rebus; that is to say, it has the structure of a form of writing, of which the child's dream represents the primordial ideography, and which, in the adult, reproduces the simultaneously phonetic and symbolic use of signifying elements, which can also be found both in the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt and in the characters still used in China.

But even this is no more than the deciphering of the instrument. The important part begins with the translation of the text, the important part that Freud tells us is given in the elaboration of the dream – that is to say, in its rhetoric. Ellipsis and pleonasm, hyperbaton or syllepsis, regression, repetition, apposition – these are the syntactical displacements; metaphor, catachresis, autonomasis, allegory, metonymy, and synecdoche – these are the semantic condensations in which Freud teaches us to read the intentions – ostentatious or demonstrative, dissimulating or persuasive, retaliatory or seductive – out of which the subject modulates his oneiric discourse.

We know that he laid it down as a rule that the expression of a desire must always be sought in the dream. But let us be sure what he meant by this. If Freud admits, as the motive of a dream apparently contrary to his thesis, the very desire to contradict him on the part of the subject whom he had tried to convince of his theory,³¹ how could he fail to admit the same motive for himself from the moment that, having arrived at this point, it was from another that his own law came back to him?

In short, nowhere does it appear more clearly that man's desire finds its meaning in the desire of the other, not so much because the other holds the key to the object desired, as because the first object of desire is to be recognized by the other.

Indeed, we all know from experience that from the moment the analysis becomes engaged in the path of transference – and for us it is the index that this has taken place – each of the patient's dreams is to be interpreted as a provocation, a masked avowal, or a diversion, by its relation to the analytic discourse, and that in proportion to the progress of the analysis, his dreams become more and more reduced to the function of elements in the dialogue being realized in the analysis.

In the case of the psychopathology of everyday life,³² another field to which Freud turned his attention, it is clear that every unsuccessful act is a successful, not to say 'well turned', discourse, and that in the *lapsus* it is the gag that hinges on speech, and exactly in the right quarter for its word to be sufficient to the wise.

But let us go straight to the part where the book deals with chance and the beliefs it gives rise to, and especially to the facts in which Freud applies himself to showing the subjective efficacy of number associations left to the fate of a random choice, or to the luck of the draw. Nowhere do the dominant structures of the psychoanalytic field reveal themselves better than in such a success, and the appeal made in passing to unknown

intellectual mechanisms is no more in this case than his distressed excuse for the total confidence he placed in the symbols, a confidence that wavers as the result of being justified beyond all limits.

If for a symptom, whether neurotic or not, to be admitted in psychoanalytic psychopathology, Freud insists on the minimum of overdetermination constituted by a double meaning (symbol of a conflict long dead over and above its function in a *no less symbolic* present conflict), and if he has taught us to follow the ascending ramification of the symbolic lineage in the text of the patient's free associations, in order to map it out at the points where its verbal forms intersect with the nodal points of its structure, then it is already quite clear that the symptom resolves itself entirely in an analysis of language, because the symptom is itself structured like a language, because it is from language that speech must be delivered.

To those who have not studied the nature of language in any depth, the experience of number association will show immediately what must be grasped here, namely, the combinatory power that orders its ambiguities, and they will recognize in this the very mainspring of the unconscious.

Indeed, if from the numbers obtained by breaking up the series of digits in the chosen number, from their combination by all the operations of arithmetic, even from the repeated division of the original number by one of the numbers split off from it, if the resulting numbers³³ prove among all the numbers in the actual history of the subject, to possess a symbolizing function, it is because they were already latent in the choice from which they began. And if the idea that it was the figures themselves that determined the destiny of the subject is then refuted as superstitious, we are forced to admit that it is in the order of existence of their combinations, that is to say, in the concrete language that they represent that everything that analysis reveals to the subject as his unconscious resides.

We shall see that philologists and ethnographers reveal enough to us about the combinatory certainty that is established in the completely unconscious systems with which they deal for them to find nothing surprising in the proposition advanced here.

But if anyone should still be in doubt about the validity of what I am saying, I would appeal once more to the testimony of the man who since he discovered the unconscious, is not entirely without credentials to designate its place; he will not fail us.

For, however little interest has been taken in it – and with good reason

– *Jokes and their relation to the Unconscious*³⁴ remains the most unchallengeable of his works because it is the most transparent, a work in which the effect of the unconscious is demonstrated to us to its most subtle confines; and the face it reveals to us is that of the spirit in the ambiguity conferred on it by language, where the other side of its regal power is the witticism or ‘conceit’ (*pointe*), by which the whole of its order is annihilated in an instant – the ‘conceit’, in fact, where its domination over the real is expressed in the challenge of non-sense, where humour, in the malicious grace of the ‘mind free from care’ (*esprit libre*), symbolizes a truth that has not said its last word.

We must accompany Freud along the admirably compelling detours of this book on his walk through this chosen garden of bitterest love.

Here all is substance, all is pearl. The spirit that lives as an exile in the creation whose invisible support it is, knows that it is at every instant the master capable of annihilating it. Not even the most despised of all the forms of this hidden royalty – haughty or perfidious, dandylike or easy-going – but Freud can make their secret lustre gleam. Stories of that derided Eros figure, like him born of penury and pain: the marriage broker on his rounds of the ghettos of Moravia, discreetly guiding the avidity of the apprentices, and suddenly discomfiting his client with the illuminating non-sense of his reply. ‘He who lets the truth escape like that,’ comments Freud, ‘is in reality happy to throw off the mask.’³⁵

It is truth in fact that throws off the mask in his words, but only so that the spirit might take on another and more deceiving one: the sophistry that is merely a stratagem, the logic that is merely a lure, even the comic that tends merely to dazzle. The spirit (*esprit*) is always elsewhere. ‘Wit [*esprit*] in fact entails such a subjective conditionality . . . : wit is only what I accept as such,’³⁶ continues Freud, who knows what he is talking about.³⁷

Nowhere is the intention of the individual more evidently surpassed by what the subject finds – nowhere does the distinction that I make between the individual and the subject make itself better understood – since not only must there have been something foreign to me in what I found for me to take pleasure in it, but it must also remain this way for this find to hit its mark. This takes its place from the necessity, so clearly marked by Freud, of the third listener, always presupposed, and from the fact that the witticism does not lose its power in its transmission into indirect speech. In short, pointing the amboceptor – illuminated by the

pyrotechnics of the word exploding with supreme alacrity – towards the locus of the Other.

There is only one reason for wit to fall flat: the platitude of the truth that is explained.

Now this concerns our problem directly. The present disdain for research into the language of symbols – which can be seen by a glance at the summaries of our publications before and after the 1920s – corresponds in our discipline to nothing less than a change of object, whose tendency to align itself at the most commonplace level of communication, in order to accommodate the new objectives proposed for the psychoanalytic technique, is perhaps responsible for the rather gloomy balance sheet that the most lucid writers have drawn up of its results.³⁸

How, indeed, could speech exhaust the meaning of speech, or, to put it better, with the Oxford logical positivists, the meaning of meaning – except in the act that engenders it? Thus Goethe’s reversal of its presence at the origin of things, ‘In the beginning was the act’, is itself reversed in its turn: it was certainly the Word (*verbe*) that was in the beginning, and we live in its creation, but it is the action of our spirit that continues this creation by constantly renewing it. And we can only turn back on that action by allowing ourselves to be driven ever further ahead by it.

I shall try it myself only in the knowledge that *that* is its way . . .

No one is supposed to be ignorant of the law; this somewhat humorous formula taken direct from our Code of Justice nevertheless expresses the truth in which our experience is grounded, and which our experience confirms. No man is actually ignorant of it, since the law of man has been the law of language since the first words of recognition presided over the first gifts – although it took the detestable *Danaoi* who came and fled over the sea for men to learn to fear deceiving words accompanying faithless gifts. Until that time, for the pacific Argonauts³⁹ – uniting the clefts of the community with the bonds of a symbolic commerce – these gifts, their act and their objects, their erection into signs, and even their fabrication, were so much a part of speech that they were designated by its name.⁴⁰

Is it with these gifts or with the passwords that give them their salutary non-sense that language, with the law, begins? For these gifts are already symbols, in the sense that symbol means pact and that they are first and foremost signifiers of the pact that they constitute as signified, as is plainly seen in the fact that the objects of symbolic exchange – pots made to

remain empty, shields too heavy to be carried, sheaves of wheat that wither, lances stuck into the ground – all are destined to be useless, if not simply superfluous by their very abundance.

Is this neutralization of the signifier the whole of the nature of language? On this assessment, one could see the beginning of it among sea swallows, for instance, during the mating parade, materialized in the fish they pass between each other from beak to beak. And if the ethologists are right in seeing in this the instrument of an activation of the group that might be called the equivalent of a festival, they would be completely justified in recognizing it as a symbol.

It can be seen that I do not shrink from seeking the origins of symbolic behaviour outside the human sphere. But this is certainly not to be done by way of an elaboration of the sign. It is on this path that Mr Jules H. Massermann,⁴¹ after so many others, has set off, and I shall stop here for an instant, not only because of the knowing tone with which he makes his approach, but also because of the welcome that his work has found among the editors of our official journal. Following a tradition borrowed from employment agencies, they never neglect anything that might provide our discipline with 'good references'.

Think of it – here we have a man who has reproduced neurosis *ex-pe-ri-men-tal-ly* in a dog tied down to a table, and by what ingenious methods: a bell, the plate of meat that it announces, and the plate of potatoes that arrives instead; you can imagine the rest. He will certainly not be one, at least so he assures us, to let himself be taken in by the 'ample ruminations', as he puts it, that philosophers have devoted to the problem of language. Not him, he's going to grab it from your throat.

We are told that a raccoon can be taught by a judicious conditioning of his reflexes to go to his feeding trough when he is presented with a card on which his menu is listed. We are not told whether it shows the various prices, but the convincing detail is added that if the service disappoints him, he comes back and tears up the card that promised too much, just as an irritated woman might do with the letters of an unfaithful lover (*sic*).

This is one of the supporting arches of the bridge over which the author carries the road that leads from the signal to the symbol. It is a two-way road, and the return journey from the symbol to the signal is illustrated by no less imposing works of art.

For if you associate the projection of a bright light into the eyes of a human subject with the ringing of a bell, and then the ringing alone

to the command 'Contract',⁴² you will succeed in getting the subject to make his pupils contract just by giving the order himself, then by muttering it, and eventually just by thinking it – in other words you will obtain a reaction of the nervous system that is called autonomous because it is usually inaccessible to intentional effects. Thus, if we are to believe this writer, Mr Hudgins 'has created in a group of subjects a highly individualized configuration of related and visceral reactions from the "idea-symbol"⁴³, "Contract", a response that could be referred back through their individual experiences to an apparently distant source, but in reality basically physiological – in this example, simply the protection of the retina against an excessively bright light'. And the author concludes: 'The significance of such experiments for psychosomatic and linguistic research does not even need further elaboration.'

For my part, I would have been curious to learn whether subjects trained in this way also react to the enunciation of the same syllables in the expressions: 'marriage contract', 'contract bridge', 'breach of contract',⁴⁴ or even to the word 'contract' progressively reduced to the articulation of its first syllable: contract, contrac, contra, contr . . . The control experiment required by strict scientific method would then be offered all by itself as the French reader murmured this syllable between his teeth, even though he would have been subjected to no conditioning other than that of the bright light projected on the problem by Mr Jules H. Massermann. I would then ask this author whether the effects observed in this way among conditioned subjects still appeared to dispose so easily of further elaboration. For either the effects would no longer be produced, thus revealing that they do not depend even conditionally on the semanteme, or they would continue to be produced, posing the question of its limits.

In other words, they would cause the distinction of signifier and signified, so blithely confused by the author in the English term 'idea-symbol', to appear in the very instrument of the word. And without needing to examine the reactions of subjects conditioned by the command 'Don't contract', or even by the entire conjugation of the verb 'to contract', I could draw the author's attention to the fact that what defines any element whatever of a language (*langue*) as belonging to language, is that, for all the users of this language (*langue*), this element is distinguished as such in the ensemble supposedly constituted of homologous elements.

The result is that the particular effects of this element of language are bound up with the existence of this ensemble, anterior to any possible

link with any particular experience of the subject. And to consider this last link independently of any reference to the first is simply to deny in this element the function proper to language.

This reminder of first principles might perhaps have saved our author, in his unequalled naïveté, from discovering the textual correspondence of the grammatical categories of his childhood in the relations of reality.

This monument of naïveté, in any case of a kind common enough in these matters, would not be worth so much attention if it were not the achievement of a psychoanalyst, or rather of someone who, as chance will have it, represents everything produced by a certain tendency in psychoanalysis – in the name of the theory of the *ego* or of the technique of the analysis of defences – everything, that is, most contrary to the Freudian experience. In this way the coherence of a sound conception of language along with the maintenance of this conception is revealed *a contrario*. For Freud's discovery was that of the field of the effects in the nature of man of his relations to the symbolic order and the tracing of their meaning right back to the most radical agencies of symbolization in being. To ignore this symbolic order is to condemn the discovery to oblivion, and the experience to ruin.

And I affirm – an affirmation that cannot be divorced from the serious intent of my present remarks – that it would seem to me preferable to have the raccoon I mentioned sitting in the armchair where, according to our author, Freud's timidity confined the analyst by putting him behind the couch, rather than a 'scientist' who discourses on language and speech as he does.

For the raccoon, at least, thanks to Jacques Prévert (*'une pierre, deux maisons, trois ruines, quatre fossoyeurs, un jardin, des fleurs, un raton-laveur'*),⁴⁵ has entered the poetic bestiary once and for all and participates as such, in its essence, in the high function of the symbol. But that being resembling us who professes, as he has done, a systematic *méconnaissance* of that function, banishes himself from everything that can be called into existence by it. This being so, the question of the place to be assigned to our friend in the classification of nature would seem to me to be simply that of an irrelevant humanism, if his discourse, crossed with a technique of speech of which we are the custodians, were not in fact too fruitful, even in engendering sterile monstrosities within it. Let it be known therefore, since he also prides himself on braving the reproach of anthropomorphism, that it is this last term that I would employ in saying that he makes his own being the measure of all things.

Let us return to our symbolic object, which is itself extremely consistent in its matter, even if it has lost the weight of its use, but whose imponderable meaning will produce displacements of some weight. Is it there, then, that the law and language are to be found? Perhaps not yet.

For even if there appeared among the sea swallows some kaid of the colony who, by gulping down the symbolic fish before the gaping beaks of the others, were to inaugurate that exploitation of swallow by swallow – a phantasy I once took pleasure in developing – this would not be in any way sufficient to reproduce among them that fabulous history, the image of our own, whose winged epic kept us captive on Anatole France's *Penguin Island*; and there would still be something else needed to create a 'hirundinized' universe.

This something completes the symbol, thus making language of it. In order for the symbolic object freed from its usage to become the word freed from the *hic et nunc*, the difference resides not in its material quality as sound, but in its evanescent being in which the symbol finds the permanence of the concept.

Through the word – already a presence made of absence – absence itself gives itself a name in that moment of origin whose perpetual re-creation Freud's genius detected in the play of the child. And from this pair of sounds modulated on presence and absence⁴⁶ – a coupling that the tracing in the sand of the single and the broken line of the mantic *kwa* of China would also serve to constitute – there is born the world of meaning of a particular language in which the world of things will come to be arranged.

Through that which becomes embodied only by being the trace of a nothingness and whose support cannot thereafter be impaired, the concept, saving the duration of what passes by, engenders the thing.

For it is still not enough to say that the concept is the thing itself, as any child can demonstrate against the pedant. It is the world of words that creates the world of things – the things originally confused in the *hic et nunc* of the all in the process of coming-into-being – by giving its concrete being to their essence, and its ubiquity to what has always been:⁴⁷ *χτῆμα ἐξ ἀεί*.

Man speaks, then, but it is because the symbol has made him man. Even if in fact overabundant gifts welcome the stranger who has introduced himself to the group, the life of the natural groups that constitute the community is subjected to the rules of matrimonial alliance governing the exchange of women, and to the exchange of gifts determined by the

marriage: as the Sironga proverb says, a relative by marriage is an elephant's thigh.⁴⁸ The marriage tie is governed by an order of preference whose law concerning the kinship names is, like language, imperative for the group in its forms, but unconscious in its structure. In this structure, whose harmony or conflicts govern the restricted or generalized exchange discerned in it by the social anthropologist, the startled theoretician finds the whole of the logic of combinations: thus the laws of number – that is to say, the laws of the most refined of all symbols – prove to be immanent in the original symbolism. At least, it is the richness of the forms in which are developed what are known as the elementary structures of kinship that makes it possible to read those laws in the original symbolism. And this would suggest that it is perhaps only our unconsciousness of their permanence that allows us to believe in the freedom of choice in the so-called complex structures of marriage ties under whose law we live. If statistics have already allowed us to glimpse that this freedom is not exercised in a random manner, it is because a subjective logic orients this freedom in its effects.

This is precisely where the Oedipus complex – in so far as we continue to recognize it as covering the whole field of our experience with its signification – may be said, in this connexion, to mark the limits that our discipline assigns to subjectivity: namely, what the subject can know of his unconscious participation in the movement of the complex structures of marriage ties, by verifying the symbolic effects in his individual existence of the tangential movement towards incest that has manifested itself ever since the coming of a universal community.

The primordial Law is therefore that which in regulating marriage ties superimposes the kingdom of culture on that of a nature abandoned to the law of mating. The prohibition of incest is merely its subjective pivot, revealed by the modern tendency to reduce to the mother and the sister the objects forbidden to the subject's choice, although full licence outside of these is not yet entirely open.

This law, then, is revealed clearly enough as identical with an order of language. For without kinship nominations, no power is capable of instituting the order of preferences and taboos that bind and weave the yarn of lineage through succeeding generations. And it is indeed the confusion of generations which, in the Bible as in all traditional laws, is accused as being the abomination of the Word (*verbe*) and the desolation of the sinner.

We know in fact what ravages a falsified filiation can produce, going

as far as the dissociation of the subject's personality, when the constraint of his entourage is used to sustain the lie. They may be no less when, as a result of a man having married the mother of the woman of whom he has had a son, the son will have for a brother a child who is his mother's brother. But if he is later adopted – and the case is not invented – by the sympathetic couple formed by a daughter of his father's previous marriage and her husband, he will find himself once again the half-brother of his foster mother, and one can imagine the complex feelings with which he will await the birth of a child who will be in this recurring situation his brother and his nephew at the same time.

As a matter of fact the mere 'time-lag' (*décalage*) produced in the order of generations by a late-born child of a second marriage, in which the young mother finds herself the contemporary of an older brother, can produce similar effects, as we know was the case of Freud himself.

This same function of symbolic identification through which primitive man believes he reincarnates an ancestor with the same name – and which even determines an alternating recurrence of characters in modern man – therefore introduces in subjects exposed to these discordances in the father relation a dissociation of the Oedipus relation in which the constant source of its pathogenic effects must be seen. Even when in fact it is represented by a single person, the paternal function concentrates in itself both imaginary and real relations, always more or less inadequate to the symbolic relation that essentially constitutes it.

It is in the *name of the father* that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law. This conception enables us to distinguish clearly, in the analysis of a case, the unconscious effects of this function from the narcissistic relations, or even from the real relations that the subject sustains with the image and the action of the person who embodies it; and there results from this a mode of comprehension that will tend to have repercussions on the very way in which the interventions of the analyst are conducted. Practice has confirmed its fecundity for me, as well as for the students whom I have introduced to this method. And, both in supervising analyses and in commenting on cases being demonstrated, I have often had the opportunity of emphasizing the harmful confusion produced by ignoring it.

Thus it is the virtue of the Word that perpetuates the movement of the Great Debt whose economy Rabelais, in a famous metaphor, extended to the stars themselves. And we shall not be surprised that the chapter in

which, with the macaronic inversion of kinship names, he presents us with an anticipation of the discoveries of the anthropologists, should reveal in him the substantial divination of the human mystery that I am trying to elucidate here.⁴⁹

Identified with the sacred *hau* or with the omnipresent *mana*, the inviolable Debt is the guarantee that the voyage on which wives and goods are embarked will bring back to their point of departure in a never-failing cycle other women and other goods, all carrying an identical entity: what Lévi-Strauss calls a 'zero-symbol' (*symbole zéro*), thus reducing the power of Speech to the form of an algebraic sign.⁵⁰

Symbols in fact envelop the life of man in a network so total that they join together, before he comes into the world, those who are going to engender him 'by flesh and blood';⁵¹ so total that they bring to his birth, along with the gifts of the stars, if not with the gifts of the fairies, the shape of his destiny; so total that they give the words that will make him faithful or renegade, the law of the acts that will follow him right to the very place where he *is* not yet and even beyond his death; and so total that through them his end finds its meaning in the last judgement, where the Word absolves his being or condemns it – unless he attain the subjective bringing to realization of being-for-death.

Servitude and grandeur in which the living being would be annihilated, if desire did not preserve its part in the interferences and pulsations that the cycles of language cause to converge on him, when the confusion of tongues takes a hand and when the orders contradict one another in the tearing apart of the universal work.

But for this desire itself to be satisfied in man requires that it be recognized, through the agreement of speech or through the struggle for prestige, in the symbol or in the imaginary.

What is at stake in an analysis is the advent in the subject of that little reality that this desire sustains in him with respect to the symbolic conflicts and imaginary fixations as the means of their agreement, and our path is the intersubjective experience where this desire makes itself recognized.

From this point on it will be seen that the problem is that of the relations between speech and language in the subject.

Three paradoxes in these relations present themselves in our domain.

In madness, of whatever nature, we must recognize on the one hand the negative freedom of speech that has given up trying to make itself recognized, or what we call an obstacle to transference, and, on the other

hand, we must recognize the singular formation of a delusion which – tabulous, fantastic, or cosmological; interpretative, demanding, or idealist – objectifies the subject in a language without dialectic.⁵²

The absence of speech is manifested here by the stereotypes of a discourse in which the subject, one might say, is spoken rather than speaking: here we recognize the symbols of the unconscious in petrified forms that find their place in a natural history of these symbols beside the embalmed forms in which myths are presented in our story-books. But it is an error to say that the subject assumes these symbols: the resistance to their recognition is no less strong in psychosis than in the neuroses when the subject is led into it by an attempt at treatment.

Let it be noted in passing that it would be worthwhile mapping the places in social space that our culture has assigned to these subjects, especially as regards their assignment to the social services relating to language, for it is not unlikely that there is at work here one of the factors that consign such subjects to the effects of the breakdown produced by the symbolic discordances that characterize the complex structures of civilization.

The second case is represented by the privileged domain of psychoanalytic discovery: that is, symptoms, inhibition, and anxiety in the constituent economy of the different neuroses.

Here speech is driven out of the concrete discourse that orders the subject's consciousness, but it finds its support either in the natural functions of the subject, in so far as an organic stimulus sets off that opening (*blanche*) of his individual being to his essence, which makes of the illness the introduction of the living being to the existence of the subject⁵³ – or in the images that organize at the limit of the *Umwelt* and of the *Innenwelt* their relational structuring.

The symptom is here the signifier of a signified repressed from the consciousness of the subject. A symbol written in the sand of the flesh and on the veil of Maia, it participates in language by the semantic ambiguity that I have already emphasized in its constitution.

But it is speech functioning to the full, for it includes the discourse of the other in the secret of its cipher.

It was by deciphering this speech that Freud rediscovered the primary language of symbols,⁵⁴ still living on in the suffering of civilized man (*Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*).

Hieroglyphics of hysteria, blazons of phobia, labyrinths of the *Zwangsneurose* – charms of impotence, enigmas of inhibition, oracles of

anxiety – talking arms of character,⁵⁵ seals of self-punishment, disguises of perversion – these are the hermetic elements that our exegesis resolves, the equivocations that our invocation dissolves, the artifices that our dialectic absolves, in a deliverance of the imprisoned meaning, from the revelation of the palimpsest⁵⁶ to the given word of the mystery and to the pardon of speech.

The third paradox of the relation of language to speech is that of the subject who loses his meaning in the objectifications of discourse. However metaphysical its definition may appear, we cannot ignore (*méconnaissance*) its presence in the foreground of our experience. For here is the most profound alienation of the subject in our scientific civilization, and it is this alienation that we encounter first of all when the subject begins to talk to us about himself: hence, in order to resolve it entirely, analysis should be conducted to the limits of wisdom.

To give an exemplary formulation of this, I could not find a more pertinent terrain than the usage of common speech – pointing out that the 'ce suis-je' of the time of Villon has become reversed in the 'c'est moi' of modern man.

The *moi*, the ego, of modern man, as I have indicated elsewhere, has taken on its form in the dialectical impasse of the *belle âme* who does not recognize his very own *raison d'être* in the disorder that he denounces in the world.

But a way out is offered to the subject for the resolution of that impasse when his discourse is delusional. Communication can be validly established for him in the common task of science and in the posts that it commands in our universal civilization; this communication will be effective within the enormous objectification constituted by that science, and it will enable him to forget his subjectivity. He will make an effective contribution to the common task in his daily work and will be able to furnish his leisure time with all the pleasures of a profuse culture which, from detective novels to historical memoirs, from educational lectures to the orthopaedics of group relations, will give him the wherewithal to forget his own existence and his death, at the same time to misconstrue (*méconnaissance*) the particular meaning of his life in false communication.

If the subject did not rediscover in a regression – often pushed right back to the 'mirror stage' – the enclosure of a stage in which his ego contains its imaginary exploits, there would hardly be any assignable limits to the credulity to which he must succumb in that situation. And

this is what makes our responsibility so formidable when, along with the mythical manipulations of our doctrine, we bring him one more opportunity to alienate himself, in the decomposed trinity of the ego, the superego, and the id, for example.⁵⁷

Here there is a language-barrier opposed to speech, and the precautions against verbalism that are a theme of the discourse of the 'normal' man in our culture merely serve to reinforce its thickness.

There might be some point in measuring its thickness by the statistically determined total of pounds of printed paper, miles of record grooves, and hours of radio broadcasting that the said culture produces per head of population in the sectors A, B, and C of its domain. This would be a fine research project for our cultural organizations, and it would be seen that the question of language does not remain entirely within the domain of the convolutions in which its use is reflected in the individual.

We are the hollow men

We are the stuffed men

Leaning together

Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!

and so on.

The resemblance between this situation and the alienation of madness, in so far as the formula given above is authentic – that is, that here the subject is spoken rather than speaking – obviously derives from the demand, presupposed by psychoanalysis, for 'true' speech. If this consequence, which pushes the constituent paradoxes of what I am saying here to their limit, were to be turned against the good sense of the psychoanalytic perspective, I would readily accept the pertinence of this objection, but only to find my own position confirmed in it – and this by a dialectical return in which there would be no shortage of authorized god-fathers, beginning with Hegel's denunciation of 'the philosophy of the cranium', and stopping only at Pascal's warning, at the dawn of the historical era of the 'ego', echoing in these terms: '*Les hommes sont si nécessairement fous, que ce serait être fou par un autre tour de folie, de n'être pas fou.*'⁵⁸

This is not to say, however, that our culture pursues its course in the shadowy regions beyond creative subjectivity. On the contrary, creative subjectivity has not ceased in its struggle to renew the never-exhausted power of symbols in the human exchange that brings them to the light of day.

To take into account how few subjects support this creation would be to accede to a Romantic viewpoint by comparing what is not equivalent. The fact is that this subjectivity, in whatever domain it appears – in mathematics, in politics, in religion, or even in advertising – continues to animate the whole movement of humanity. And another look, probably no less illusory, would make us accentuate this opposing trait: that its symbolic character has never been more manifest. It is the irony of revolutions that they engender a power all the more absolute in its exercise, not because it is more anonymous, as people say, but because it is more reduced to the words that signify it. And more than ever, on the other hand, the strength of the churches resides in the language that they have been able to maintain: an authority, it must be said, that Freud left in the dark in the article where he sketches for us what we would call the collective subjectivities of the Church and the Army.⁵⁹

Psychoanalysis has played a role in the direction⁶⁰ of modern subjectivity, and it cannot continue to sustain this role without bringing it into line with the movement in modern science that elucidates it.

This is the problem of the grounding that must assure our discipline its place among the sciences: a problem of formalization, which, it must be admitted, has not got off to a very good start.

For it seems that, caught by the very quirk in the medical mind against which psychoanalysis had to constitute itself, it is with the handicap of being half a century behind the movement of the sciences, like medicine itself, that we are seeking to join up with them again.

It is in the abstract objectification of our experience on fictitious, or even simulated, principles of the experimental method, that we find the effect of prejudices that must first be swept from our field if we wish to cultivate it according to its authentic structure.

Since we are practitioners of the symbolic function, it is astonishing that we should turn away from probing deeper into it, to the extent of failing to recognize (*méconnaître*) that it is this function that situates us at the heart of the movement that is now establishing a new order of the sciences, with a new putting in question of anthropology.

This new order signifies nothing more than a return to a conception of true science whose claims have been inscribed in a tradition beginning with Plato's *Theaetetus*. This conception has become degraded, as we know, in the positivist reversal which, by making the human sciences the crowning glory of the experimental sciences, in actual fact made them subordinate to experimental science. This notion results from an erroneous

view of the history of science founded on the prestige of a specialized development of the experiment.

But since today the conjectural sciences are discovering once again the age-old conception of science, they are forcing us to revise the classification of the sciences that we have inherited from the nineteenth century, in a sense indicated clearly by the most lucid spirits.

One has only to follow the concrete evolution of the various disciplines in order to become aware of this.

Linguistics can serve us as a guide here, since that is the role it plays in the vanguard of contemporary anthropology, and we cannot possibly remain indifferent to it.

The mathematicized form in which is inscribed the discovery of the *phoneme* as the function of pairs of oppositions formed by the smallest discriminate elements capable of being distinguished in the semantic structure, leads us to the very grounding in which the last of Freud's doctrines designates the subjective sources of the symbolic function in a vocalic connotation of presence and absence.

And the reduction of every language to the group of a very small number of these phonemic oppositions, by initiating an equally rigorous formalization of its highest morphemes, puts within our reach a precisely defined access to our own field.

It is up to us to make use of these advances to discover their effects in the domain of psychoanalysis, just as ethnography – which is on a line parallel to our own – has already done for its own by deciphering myths according to the synchrony of mythemes.

Isn't it striking that Lévi-Strauss, in suggesting the implication of the structures of language with that part of the social laws that regulate marriage ties and kinship, is already conquering the very terrain in which Freud situates the unconscious?⁶¹

From now on, it is impossible not to make a general theory of the symbol the axis of a new classification of the sciences where the sciences of man will once more take up their central position as sciences of subjectivity. Let me indicate its basic principle, which, of course, does not preclude further elaboration.

The symbolic function presents itself as a double movement within the subject: man makes an object of his action, but only in order to restore to this action in due time its place as a grounding. In this equivocation, operating at every instant, lies the whole process of a function in which action and knowledge alternate.⁶²

Two examples, one borrowed from the classroom, the other from the everyday life of our time:

- the first, mathematical: phase one, man objectifies in two cardinal numbers two collections he has counted; phase two, with these numbers he realizes the act of adding them up (cf. the example cited by Kant in the introduction to the transcendental aesthetic, section IV, in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*);
- the second, historical: phase one, the man who works at the level of production in our society considers himself as belonging to the proletariat; phase two, in the name of belonging to it, he joins in a general strike.

If these two examples come from areas which, for us, are the most contrasted in the domain of the concrete – the first involving an operation always open to a mathematical law, the second, the brazen face⁶³ of capitalist exploitation – it is because, although they seem to come from a long way apart, their effects come to constitute our subsistence, and precisely by meeting each other in the concrete in a double reversal: the most subjective of the sciences having forged a new reality, and the shadow of social distribution arming itself with a symbol in action.

Here the opposition that is traced between the exact sciences and those for which there is no reason to decline the appellation of 'conjectural' no longer seems to be acceptable – for lack of any grounds for that opposition.⁶⁴

For exactitude is to be distinguished from truth, and conjecture does not exclude rigour. And even if experimental science derives its exactitude from mathematics, its relation to nature does not remain any less problematic.

Indeed, if our link to nature urges us to wonder poetically whether it is not its very own movement that we rediscover in our science, in

. . . *cette voix*
Qui se connaît quand elle sonne
N'être plus la voix de personne
*Tant que des ondes et des bois,*⁶⁵

it is clear that our physics is simply a mental fabrication whose instrument is the mathematical symbol.

For experimental science is not so much defined by the quantity to which it is in fact applied, as by the measurement it introduces into the real.

This can be seen in relation to the measurement of time without

which experimental science would be impossible. Huyghens' clock, which alone gave experimental science its precision, is merely the organ embodying Galileo's hypothesis on the equigravity of bodies – that is, the hypothesis on uniform acceleration that confers its law, since it is the same, on any kind of fall.

It is amusing to point out that the instrument was completed before it had been possible to verify the hypothesis by observation, and that by this fact the clock rendered the observation useless at the same time as it offered it the instrument of its rigour.⁶⁶

But mathematics can symbolize another kind of time, notably the intersubjective time that structures human action, whose formulae are beginning to be given us by the theory of games, still called strategy, but which it would be better to call *stochastics*.

The author of these lines has attempted to demonstrate in the logic of a sophism the temporal sources through which human action, in so far as it orders itself according to the action of the other, finds in the scansion of its hesitations the advent of its certainty; and in the decision that concludes it, this action given to that of the other – which it includes from that point on – together with its consequences deriving from the past, its meaning-to-come.

In this article it is demonstrated that it is the certainty anticipated by the subject in the '*time for understanding*' which, by the haste which precipitates the '*moment of concluding*', determines in the other the decision that makes of the subject's own movement error or truth.

It can be seen by this example how the mathematical formalization that inspired Boolean logic, to say nothing of set theory, can bring to the science of human action the structure of intersubjective time that is needed by psychoanalytic conjecture if it is to ensure its own rigour.

If, on the other hand, the history of the technique of the historian shows that its progress is defined in the ideal of an identification of the subjectivity of the historian with the constituting subjectivity of the primary historization in which the event is humanized, it is clear that psychoanalysis finds its precise bearings here: that is to say, in knowledge, as realizing this ideal, and in curative efficacy, as finding its justification there. The example of history will also dissipate like a mirage that recourse to the experienced reaction that obsesses both our technique and our theory, for the fundamental historicity of the event that we retain suffices to conceive the possibility of a subjective reproduction of the past in the present.

Furthermore, this example makes us realize how psychoanalytic regression implies that progressive dimension of the subject's history that Freud emphasizes as lacking in the Jungian concept of neurotic regression, and we understand how the experience itself renews this progression by assuring its relief.

Finally, the reference to linguistics will introduce us to the method which, by distinguishing synchronic from diachronic structurings in language, will enable us to understand better the different value that our language assumes in the interpretation of the resistances and the transference, or even to differentiate the effects proper to repression and the structure of the individual myth in obsessional neurosis.

The list of the disciplines named by Freud as those that should make up the disciplines accessory to an ideal Faculty of Psychoanalysis is well known. Besides psychiatry and sexology, we find 'the history of civilization, mythology, the psychology of religions, literary history, and literary criticism'.⁶⁷

This whole group of subjects, determining the *cursus* of an instruction in technique, are normally inscribed within the epistemological triangle that I have described, and which would provide with its method an advanced level of instruction in analytic theory and technique.

For my part, I should be inclined to add: rhetoric, dialectic in the technical sense that this term assumes in the *Topics* of Aristotle, grammar, and, that supreme pinnacle of the aesthetics of language, poetics, which would include the neglected technique of the witticism.

And if these subject headings tended to evoke somewhat outmoded echoes for some people, I would not be unwilling to accept them, as constituting a return to our sources.

For psychoanalysis in its early development, intimately linked to the discovery and study of symbols, was on the way to participating in the structure of what was called in the Middle Ages, 'the liberal arts'. Deprived, like them, of a true formalization, psychoanalysis became organized, like them, in a body of privileged problems, each one promoted by some felicitous relation of man to his own measure, and taking on from this particularity a charm and a humanity that in our eyes might well make up for the somewhat recreational aspect of their presentation. But we should not disdain this aspect of the early development of psychoanalysis; it expresses in fact nothing less than the re-creation of human meaning in an arid period of scientism.

These aspects of the early years should be all the less disdained since

psychoanalysis has not raised the level by setting off along the false paths of a theorization contrary to its dialectical structure.

Psychoanalysis will provide scientific bases for its theory or for its technique only by formalizing in an adequate fashion the essential dimensions of its experience which, together with the historical theory of the symbol, are: intersubjective logic and the temporality of the subject.



III *The resonances of interpretation and the time of the subject in psychoanalytic technique*

*Entre l'homme et l'amour,
Il y a la femme.*

*Entre l'homme et la femme,
Il y a monde.*

*Entre l'homme et le monde,
Il y a un mur.*⁶⁸

(Antoine Tudal, in *Paris en l'an 2000*)

*Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla
pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent: Σιβύλλα τί θέλεις,
respondebat illa: ἀπο θανεῖν θέλω.*⁶⁹
(*Satyricon*, XLVIII)

Bringing the psychoanalytic experience back to speech and language as its grounding is of direct concern to its technique. Psychoanalysis is not yet submerged in the ineffable, but there has certainly been a tendency in this direction, always along the way of no return of separating analytic interpretation more and more from the principle on which it depends. Any suspicion that this deviation of psychoanalytic practice is the motive force behind the new aims to which psychoanalytic theory is being opened up is consequently well founded.

If we look at the situation a little more closely, we can see that the problem of symbolic interpretation began by intimidating our little group before becoming embarrassing to it. The successes obtained by Freud, because of the heedlessness about matters of doctrine from which they seem to proceed, are now a matter of astonishment, and the display so evident in the cases of Dora, the Rat Man, and the Wolf Man seems to us to be little short of scandalous. True, our cleverer friends do not shrink

from doubting whether the technique employed in these cases was really the right one.

This disaffection in the psychoanalytic movement can in fact be ascribed to a confusion of tongues, and, in a recent conversation with me, the most representative personality of its present hierarchy made no secret about it.

It is worth noting that this confusion increases when each analyst presumes to consider himself the one chosen to discover in our experience the conditions of a completed objectification, and the enthusiasm which greets these theoretical attempts seems to grow more fervent the more derisive they prove to be.

It is certain that the principles of the analysis of resistances, however well-founded they may be, have in practice been the occasion of an ever greater *méconnaissance* of the subject for want of being understood in their relation to the intersubjectivity of speech.

If we follow the proceedings of the first seven sessions of the case of the Rat Man, and they are reported to us in full, it seems highly improbable that Freud did not recognize the resistances as they came up, and precisely in the places where our modern technicians drill into us that he overlooked them, since it is Freud's own text, after all, that enables them to pinpoint them. Once again the Freudian text manifests that exhaustion of the subject that continues to amaze us, and no interpretation has so far worked out all its resources.

I mean that Freud not only let himself be trapped into encouraging his subject to go beyond his initial reticence, but that he also understood perfectly the seductive power of this exercise in the imaginary order. To be convinced of this, one has only to refer to the description that he gives us of his patient's expression during the painful recital of the represented torture that supplied the theme of his obsession, that of the rat forced into the victim's anus: 'His face', Freud tells us, 'reflected the horror of a pleasure of which he was unaware.'⁷⁰ The effect of the repetition of this account at that time did not escape Freud, any more than did the identification of the psychoanalyst with the 'cruel captain' who had forced this story to enter the subject's memory, nor therefore the import of the theoretical clarifications of which the subject required to be guaranteed before pursuing his discourse.

Far from interpreting the resistance at this point, however, Freud astonishes us by acceding to his request, and to such an extent in fact that he seems to be taking part in the subject's game.

But the extremely approximative character of the explanations with which Freud gratifies him, so approximative as to appear somewhat crude, is sufficiently instructive: at this point it is clearly not so much a question of doctrine, nor even of indoctrination, but rather of a symbolic gift of speech, pregnant with a secret pact, in the context of the imaginary participation which includes it and whose import will reveal itself later in the symbolic equivalence that the subject establishes in his thought between rats and the florins with which he remunerates the analyst.

We can see therefore that Freud, far from failing to recognize (*méconnaître*) the resistance, uses it as a propitious predisposition for the setting in movement of the resonances of speech, and he conforms, as far as he can, to the first definition he gave of resistance,⁷¹ by making use of it to implicate the subject in his message. In any case he will change tack abruptly from the moment he sees that, as a result of being carefully manipulated, the resistance is turning towards maintaining the dialogue at the level of a conversation in which the subject would from then on be able to perpetuate his seduction while maintaining his evasion.

But we learn that analysis consists in playing in all the many staves of the score that speech constitutes in the registers of language and on which depends the overdetermination of the symptom, which has no meaning except in that order.

And at the same time we discover the source of Freud's success. In order for the analyst's message to respond to the profound interrogation of the subject, the subject must hear and understand it as the response that is particular to him; and the privilege that Freud's patients enjoyed in receiving its 'good news' from the very lips of the man who was its annunciator, satisfied this demand in them.

Let us note in passing that in the case of the Rat Man the subject had had an advance taste of it, since he had glanced at the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, which had just then been published.

This is not to say that this book is very much better known today, even by analysts, but the vulgarization of Freudian concepts, which have passed into the common consciousness, their collision with what I call the language barrier, would deaden the effect of our speech, if we were to give it the style of Freud's remarks to the Rat Man.

But it is not a question of imitating him. In order to rediscover the effect of Freud's speech, it is not to its terms that we shall have recourse, but to the principles that govern it.

These principles are simply the dialectic of the consciousness-of-self,

as realized from Socrates to Hegel, from the ironic presupposition that all that is rational is real to its culmination in the scientific view that all that is real is rational. But Freud's discovery was to demonstrate that this verifying process authentically attains the subject only by decentring him from the consciousness-of-self, in the axis of which the Hegelian reconstruction of the phenomenology of mind, maintained it: that is, that this discovery renders even more decrepit any pursuit of the *prise de conscience* which, beyond its status as a psychological phenomenon, cannot be inscribed within the conjuncture of the particular moment that alone embodies the universal and in default of which it vanishes into generality.

These remarks define the limits within which it is impossible for our technique to fail to recognize the structuring moments of the Hegelian phenomenology: in the first place the master-slave dialectic, or the dialectic of the *belle âme* and of the law of the heart, and generally whatever enables us to understand how the constitution of the object is subordinated to the realization of the subject.

But if there still remains something prophetic in Hegel's insistence on the fundamental identity of the particular and the universal, an insistence that reveals the measure of his genius, it is certainly psychoanalysis that provides it with its paradigm by revealing the structure in which that identity is realized as disjunctive of the subject, and without appeal to any tomorrow.

Let me simply say that this is what leads me to object to any reference to totality in the individual, since it is the subject who introduces division into the individual, as well as into the collectivity that is his equivalent. Psychoanalysis is properly that which reveals both the one and the other to be no more than mirages.

This would seem to be something that could no longer be forgotten, were it not precisely the teaching of psychoanalysis that it is forgettable – concerning which we find, by a return more legitimate than it is believed to be, that confirmation comes from psychoanalysts themselves, from the fact that their 'new tendencies' represent this forgetting.

For if, on the other hand, Hegel is precisely what we needed to confer a meaning other than that of stupor on our so-called analytic neutrality, this does not mean that we have nothing to learn from the elasticity of the Socratic maieutics, or 'art of midwifery', or even from the fascinating technical procedure by which Plato presents it to us – be it only by our experiencing in Socrates and in his desire the still-intact enigma of the

psychoanalyst, and by situating in relation to the Platonic *skopia* our own relation to truth – in this case, however, in a way that would respect the distance separating the reminiscence that Plato came to presuppose as necessary for any advent of the idea, from the exhaustion of being that is consummated in Kierkegaardian repetition.⁷²

But there is also a historical difference between Socrates' interlocutor and ours that is worth examining. When Socrates relies on a naïve reason that he can extract equally well from the discourse of the slave, it is in order to give authentic masters access to the necessity of an order that makes justice of their power, and truth of the master words of the city. But we analysts have to deal with slaves who think they are masters, and who find in a language whose mission is universal the support of their servitude, and the bonds of its ambiguity. So much so that, as one might humorously put it, our goal is to restore in them the sovereign freedom displayed by Humpty Dumpty when he reminds Alice that after all he is the master of the signifier, even if he isn't the master of the signified in which his being took on its form.

We always come back, then, to our double reference to speech and to language. In order to free the subject's speech, we introduce him into the language of his desire, that is to say, into the *primary language* in which, beyond what he tells us of himself, he is already talking to us unknown to himself, and, in the first place, in the symbols of the symptom.

In the symbolism brought to light in analysis, it is certainly a question of a language. This language, corresponding to the playful wish to be found in one of Lichtenberg's aphorisms, has the universal character of a language (*langue*) that would be understood in all other languages (*langues*), but, at the same time, since it is the language that seizes desire at the very moment in which it is humanized by making itself recognized, it is absolutely particular to the subject.

Primary Language, I say, by which I do not mean 'primitive language' (*langue primitive*), since Freud, whose feat in this total discovery merits comparison with Champollion's, deciphered it in its entirety in the dreams of our contemporaries. Moreover, the essential field of this language was authoritatively defined by one of the earliest pioneers associated with this work, and one of the few to have brought anything new to it: I mean Ernest Jones, the last survivor of those to whom the seven rings of the master were given and who attested by his presence in the highest places of an international association that they were not reserved simply for bearers of relics.

In a fundamental paper on symbolism,⁷³ Dr Jones points out, somewhere around page 15, that although there are thousands of symbols in the sense that the term is understood in analysis, all of them refer to one's own body, to kinship relations, to birth, to life, and to death.

This truth, recognized here as a fact, enables us to understand that although, in psychoanalytic terms, the symbol is repressed in the unconscious, it carries in itself no index of regression, or even of immaturity. For it to induce its effects in the subject, it is enough that it make itself heard, since these effects operate without his being aware of it – as we admit in our everyday experience, explaining many reactions of normal as well as of neurotic subjects by their response to the symbolic sense of an act, of a relation, or of an object.

There is therefore no doubt that the analyst can play on the power of the symbol by evoking it in a carefully calculated fashion in the semantic resonances of his remarks.

This is surely the way for a return to the use of symbolic effects in a renewed technique of interpretation in analysis.

In this regard, we could take note of what the Hindu tradition teaches about *dhvani*,⁷⁴ in the sense that this tradition stresses the property of speech by which it communicates what it does not actually say. Hindu tradition illustrates this by a tale whose ingenuousness, which appears to be the usual thing in these examples, shows itself humorous enough to induce us to penetrate the truth that it conceals.

A girl, it begins, is waiting for her lover on the bank of a stream when she sees a Brahmin coming along towards her. She runs to him and exclaims in the warmest and most amiable tones: 'What a lucky day this is for you! The dog that used to frighten you by its barking will not be along this river bank again, for it has just been devoured by a lion that is often seen around here . . .'

The absence of the lion may thus have as much effect as his spring would have were he present, for the lion only springs once, says the proverb appreciated by Freud.⁷⁵

The *primary* character of symbols in fact brings them close to those numbers out of which all the others are composed, and if they therefore underlie all the semantemes of a language (*langue*), we shall be able to restore to speech its full value of evocation by a discreet search for their interferences, using as our guide a metaphor whose symbolic displacement will neutralize the secondary meanings of the terms that it associates.

This technique would require for its teaching as well as for its learning

a profound assimilation of the resources of a language (*langue*), and especially of those that are concretely realized in its poetic texts. It is well known that Freud was in this position in relation to German literature, which, by virtue of an incomparable translation, can be said to include Shakespeare's plays. Every one of his works bears witness to this, and to the continual recourse he had to it, no less in his technique than in his discovery – this in addition to a knowledge of the ancient classics, a modern initiation into folklore, and an interested participation in the conquests of contemporary humanism in the domain of ethnography.

It might well be demanded of the practitioner of analysis not to denigrate any attempt to follow Freud along this road.

But the tide is against us. It can be measured by the condescending attention paid to the 'wording',⁷⁶ as if to some novelty; and the English morphology of the term gives a subtle enough support to a notion still difficult to define, for people to make a point of using it.

What this notion masks, however, is not exactly encouraging when an author⁷⁷ is amazed by the fact of having obtained an entirely different result in the interpretation of one and the same resistance by the use, 'without conscious premeditation', he emphasizes, of the term 'need for love'⁷⁸ instead and in the place of 'demand for love',⁷⁹ which he had first put forward, without seeing anything deeper in it (as he emphasizes himself). If the anecdote is to confirm this reference of the interpretation to the 'ego psychology' in the title of the article, it is rather, it seems, a reference to the 'ego psychology' of the analyst, in so far as this interpretation makes shift with such a weak use of English that this writer can push his practice of analysis to the limits of a nonsensical stuttering.⁸⁰

The fact is that 'need' and 'demand' have a diametrically opposed meaning for the subject, and to hold that their use can be confused even for an instant amounts to a radical *méconnaissance* of the 'intimation' of speech.

For in its symbolizing function speech is moving towards nothing less than a transformation of the subject to whom it is addressed by means of the link that it establishes with the one who emits it – in other words, by introducing the effect of a signifier.

This is why it is necessary for us to return once more to the structure of communication in language and to dissipate once and for all the mistaken notion of 'language as a sign', a source in this domain of confusions in discourse and of malpractices in speech.

If the communication of language is conceived as a signal by which the sender informs the receiver of something by means of a certain code, there

is no reason why we should not give as much credence and even more to any other sign when the 'something' in question is of the individual: there is even every reason for us to give preference to any mode of expression that comes close to the natural sign.

It is in this way that the technique of speech has fallen into discredit among us. We can be seen in search of a gesture, a grimace, an attitude, an act of mimicry, a movement, a shudder, nay, an arrest of habitual movement; shrewd as we are, nothing can now stop us from letting our bloodhounds off the leash to follow these tracks.

I shall show the inadequacy of the conception of 'language as a sign' by the very manifestation that best illustrates it in the animal kingdom, a manifestation which, if it had not recently been the object of an authentic discovery, it seems it would have been necessary to invent for this purpose.

It is now generally admitted that when the bee returns to the hive from its honey-gathering it indicates to its companions by two sorts of dance the existence of nectar and its relative distance, near or far, from the hive. The second type of dance is the most remarkable, for the plane in which the bee traces the figure-of-eight curve – which is why it has been called the 'wagging dance',⁸¹ – and the frequency of the figures executed within a given time, designate, on the one hand, exactly the direction to be followed, determined in relation to the inclination of the sun (on which bees are able to orientate themselves in all weathers, thanks to their sensitivity to polarized light), and, on the other hand, the distance, up to several miles, at which the nectar is to be found. And the other bees respond to this message by setting off immediately for the place thus designated.

It took some ten years of patient observation for Karl von Frisch to decode this kind of message, for it is certainly a code, or system of signalling, whose generic character alone forbids us to qualify it as conventional.

But is it necessarily a language? We can say that it is distinguished from language precisely by the fixed correlation of its signs to the reality that they signify. For in a language signs take on their value from their relations to each other in the lexical distribution of semantemes as much as in the positional, or even flecational, use of morphemes, in sharp contrast to the fixity of the coding used by bees. And the diversity of human languages (*langues*) takes on its full value from this enlightening discovery.

Furthermore, while the message of the kind described here determines

the action of the *socius*, it is never retransmitted by it. This means that the message remains fixed in its function as a relay of the action, from which no subject detaches it as a symbol of communication itself.⁸²

The form in which language is expressed itself defines subjectivity. Language says: 'You will go here, and when you see this, you will turn off there.' In other words, it refers itself to the discourse of the other. As such it is enveloped in the highest function of speech, in as much as speech commits its author by investing the person to whom it is addressed with a new reality, as for example, when by a 'You are my wife', a subject marks himself with the seal of wedlock.

This is in fact the essential form from which all human speech derives rather than the form at which it arrives.

Hence the paradox by which one of my most acute listeners, when I began to make my views known on analysis as dialectic, thought he could oppose my position by a remark that he formulated in the following terms: 'Human Language (according to you) constitutes a communication in which the sender receives his own message back from the receiver in an inverted form.' This was an objection that I had only to reflect on for a moment before recognizing that it carried the stamp of my own thinking – in other words, that speech always subjectively includes its own reply, that Pascal's '*Tu ne me chercherais pas si tu ne m'avais trouvé*'⁸³ simply confirms the same truth in different words, and that this is the reason why, in the paranoiac refusal of recognition, it is in the form of a negative verbalization that the inavowable feeling finally emerges in the persecutory 'interpretation'.

Furthermore, when you congratulate yourself on having met someone who speaks the same kind of language as you do, you do not mean that you meet with him in the discourse of everybody, but that you are united to him by a special kind of speech.

Thus the antinomy immanent in the relations between speech and language becomes clear. As language becomes more functional, it becomes improper for speech, and as it becomes too particular to us, it loses its function as language.

One is aware of the use made in primitive traditions of secret names in which the subject identifies his own person or his gods, to the point that to reveal these names is to lose himself or to betray these gods; and the confidences of our subjects, as well as our own memories, teach us that it is not at all rare for children to rediscover spontaneously the virtue of such a usage.

Finally, it is by the intersubjectivity of the 'we' that it assumes that the value of a language as speech is measured.

By an inverse antinomy, it can be observed that the more the function of language becomes neutralized as it moves closer to information, the more language is imputed to be laden with *redundancies*. This notion of redundancy in language originated in research that was all the more precise because a vested interest was involved, having been prompted by the economic problem of long-distance communication, and in particular that of the possibility of carrying several conversations at once on a single telephone line. It can be asserted that a substantial portion of the phonetic material is superfluous to the realization of the communication actually sought.

This is highly instructive for us,⁸⁴ for what is redundant as far as information is concerned is precisely that which does duty as resonance in speech.

For the function of language is not to inform but to evoke.

What I seek in speech is the response of the other. What constitutes me as subject is my question. In order to be recognized by the other, I utter what was only in view of what will be. In order to find him, I call him by a name that he must assume or refuse in order to reply to me.

I identify myself in language, but only by losing myself in it like an object. What is realized in my history is not the past definite of what was, since it is no more, or even the present perfect of what has been in what I am, but the future anterior of what I shall have been for what I am in the process of becoming.

If I now place myself in front of the other to question him, there is no cybernetic computer imaginable that can make a reaction out of what the response will be. The definition of response as the second term in the 'stimulus response' circuit is simply a metaphor sustained by the subjectivity imputed to the animal, a subjectivity that is then ignored in the physical schema to which the metaphor reduces it. This is what I have called putting the rabbit into the hat so as to be able to pull it out again later. But a reaction is not a reply.

If I press an electric button and a light goes on, there is no response except for *my* desire. If in order to obtain the same result I must try a whole system of relays whose correct position is unknown to me, there is no question except as concerns my anticipation, and there will not be one any longer, once I have learned enough about the system to operate it without mistakes.

But if I call the person to whom I am speaking by whatever name I

choose to give him, I intimate to him the subjective function that he will take on again in order to reply to me, even if it is to repudiate this function.

Henceforth the decisive function of my own reply appears, and this function is not, as has been said, simply to be received by the subject as acceptance or rejection of his discourse, but really to recognize him or to abolish him as subject. Such is the nature of the analyst's *responsibility* whenever he intervenes by means of speech.

Moreover, the problem of the therapeutic effects of correct interpretation posed by Mr Edward Glover⁸⁵ in a remarkable paper has led him to conclusions where the question of correctness moves into the background. In other words, not only is every spoken intervention received by the subject in terms of his structure, but the intervention takes on a structuring function in him in proportion to its form. It is precisely the scope of nonanalytic psychotherapy, and even of the most ordinary medical 'prescriptions', to be interventions that could be described as obsessional systems of suggestion, as hysterical suggestions of a phobic order, even as persecutory supports, each one taking its particular character from the sanction it gives to the subject's *méconnaissance* of his own reality.

Speech is in fact a gift of language, and language is not immaterial. It is a subtle body, but body it is. Words are trapped in all the corporeal images that captivate the subject; they may make the hysteric 'pregnant', be identified with the object of *penis-neid*, represent the flood of urine of urethral ambition, or the retained faeces of avaricious *jouissance*.

What is more, words themselves can undergo symbolic lesions and accomplish imaginary acts of which the patient is the subject. You will remember the *Wespe* (wasp), castrated of its initial W to become the S.P. of the Wolf Man's initials at the moment when he realizes the symbolic punishment whose object he was on the part of Grusha, the wasp.⁸⁶

You will remember also the S that constitutes the residue of the hermetic formula into which the conjuratory invocations of the Rat Man became condensed after Freud had extracted the anagram of the name of his beloved from its cipher, and which, tacked on to the final 'amen' of his ejaculatory prayer, externally floods the lady's name with the symbolic ejection of his impotent desire.⁸⁷

Similarly, an article by Robert Fliess,⁸⁸ inspired by Abraham's inaugural remarks, shows us that the discourse as a whole may become the object of an erotization, following the displacements of erogeneity in the body image as they are momentarily determined by the analytic relation.

The discourse then takes on a phallic-urethral, anal-erotic, or even an oral-sadistic function. It is in any case remarkable that the author seizes the effect of this function above all in the silences that mark the inhibition of the satisfaction experienced through it by the subject.

In this way speech may become an imaginary, or even real object in the subject and, as such, swallow up in more than one respect the function of language. We shall then place speech inside the parentheses of the resistance that it manifests.

But this will not be in order to put speech on the index of the analytic relation, for that relation would then lose everything, including its *raison d'être*.

Analysis can have for its goal only the advent of a true speech and the realization by the subject of his history in his relation to a future.

Maintaining this dialectic is in direct opposition to any objectifying orientation of analysis, and emphasizing this necessity is of first importance if we are to see through the aberrations of the new tendencies being manifested in psychoanalysis.

I shall illustrate my remarks on this point again by a return to Freud, and, since I have already made use of it, by the case of the Rat Man.

Freud even goes so far as to take liberties with factual accuracy when it is a question of attaining to the truth of the subject. At one moment he perceives the determining role played by the proposal of marriage brought to the subject by his mother at the origin of the present phase of his neurosis. In any case, as I have shown in my seminar, Freud had had a lightning intuition of it as a result of personal experience. Nevertheless, he does not hesitate to interpret its effect to the subject as that of his dead father's prohibition against his liaison with the lady of his thoughts.

This interpretation is not only factually inaccurate. It is also psychologically inaccurate, for the castrating action of the father, which Freud affirms here with an insistence that might be considered systematic, played only a secondary role in this case. But the apperception of the dialectical relationship is so apt that Freud's act of interpretation at that moment sets off the decisive lifting of the death-bearing symbols that bind the subject narcissistically both to his dead father and to the idealized lady, their two images being sustained, in an equivalence characteristic of the obsessional neurotic, one by the phantasmic aggressivity that perpetuates it, the other by the mortifying cult that transforms it into an idol.

Similarly, it is by recognizing the forced subjectification of the ob-

sessional debt⁸⁹ in the scenario of the vain attempts at restitution – a scenario that too perfectly expresses the imaginary terms of this debt for the subject even to try to realize it – a debt whose pressure is exploited by the subject to the point of delusion, that Freud achieves his goal. This is the goal of bringing the subject to rediscover – in the history of his father's lack of delicacy, his marriage with the subject's mother, the 'poor, but pretty' girl, his marred love-life, the distasteful memory of the beneficent friend – to rediscover in this history, together with the fateful constellation⁹⁰ that had presided over the subject's very birth, the gap impossible to fill, of the symbolic debt of which his neurosis is the notice of non-payment.

There is no trace here at all of a recourse to the ignoble spectre of some sort of original 'fear', nor even to a masochism that it would be easy enough to brandish, even less to that obsessional counterforcing propagated by some analysts in the name of the analysis of defences. The resistances themselves, as I have shown elsewhere, are used as long as possible in the sense of the progress of the discourse. And when it is time to put an end to them, it is in acceding to them that the end is reached.

For it is in this way that the Rat Man succeeds in introducing into his subjectivity his true mediation in the transference form of the imaginary daughter that he ascribes to Freud in order to receive through her a marriage tie with him, and who unveils her true face to him in a key dream: that of death gazing at him with her bituminous eyes.

Moreover, if it is with this symbolic pact that the ruses of the subject's servitude came to an end, reality did not fail him, it seems, in consummating these nuptials. And the footnote of 1923 [p. 249], which Freud dedicated by way of epitaph to this young man who had found in the risks of war 'the end that awaited so many young men of value on whom so many hopes could be founded', thus concluding the case with all the rigour of destiny, elevates it to the beauty of tragedy.

In order to know how to reply to the subject in analysis, the procedure is to recognize first of all the place where his *ego* is, the *ego* that Freud himself defined as an *ego* formed of a verbal nucleus; in other words, to know through whom and for whom the subject poses *his question*. So long as this is not known, there will be the risk of a misunderstanding concerning the desire that is there to be recognized and concerning the object to whom this desire is addressed.

The hysterical subject captures this object in an elaborate intrigue and, his *ego* is in the third party by whose mediation the subject enjoys that

object in which his question is embodied. The obsessional subject drags into the cage of his narcissism the objects in which his question reverberates back and forth in the multiplied alibi of mortal figures and, subduing their heady acrobatics, addresses its ambiguous homage towards the box in which he himself has his seat, that of the master who cannot be seen or see himself.

Trahit sua quemque voluptas; one identifies himself with the spectacle, and the other puts one on.

For the hysterical subject, for whom the technical term 'acting out' takes on its literal meaning since he is acting outside himself, you have to get him to recognize where his action is situated. For the obsessional neurotic, you have to get him to recognize you in the spectator, invisible from the stage, to whom he is united by the mediation of death.

It is therefore always in the relation between the subject's ego (*moi*) and the 'I' (*je*) of his discourse that you must understand the meaning of the discourse if you are to achieve the dealienation of the subject.

But you cannot possibly achieve this if you cling to the idea that the ego of the subject is identical with the presence that is speaking to you.

This error is fostered by the terminology of the analytic topography, which is all too tempting to an objectifying cast of mind, allowing it to make an almost imperceptible transition from the concept of the ego defined as the perception-consciousness system, that is, as the system of the objectification of the subject – to the concept of the ego as correlative with an absolute reality and thus, in a singular return of the repressed in psychologistic thought, to rediscover in the ego the 'function of the real' in relation to which Pierre Janet, for instance, orders his psychological conceptions.

Such a transition can occur only when it has not been recognized that in the works of Freud the topography of the *ego*, the *id*, and the *superego* is subordinated to the metapsychology whose terms he was propounding at the same period and without which the new topography becomes meaningless. Thus analysts became involved in a sort of psychological orthopaedics that is still having its effect.

Michael Balint has analysed in a thoroughly penetrating way the intricate interaction of theory and technique in the genesis of a new conception of analysis, and he finds no better term to indicate the problem than the catchphrase, borrowed from Rickman, of the advent of a 'two-body psychology'.

It couldn't be better put. Analysis is becoming the relation of two

bodies between which is established a phantasmic communication in which the analyst teaches the subject to apprehend himself as an object; subjectivity is admitted into it only within the parentheses of the illusion, and speech is placed on the index of a search for the lived experience that becomes its supreme aim, but the dialectically necessary result appears in the fact that, since the subjectivity of the analyst is free of all restraint, his subjectivity leaves the subject at the mercy of every summons of his speech.

Once the intrasubjective topography has become entified, it is in fact realized in the division of labour between the two subjects involved. And this deformed usage of Freud's formula that all that is of the *id* must become of the *ego* appears under a demystified form; the subject, transformed into a *cela*,⁹¹ has to conform to an *ego* in which the analyst will have little trouble in recognizing his ally, since in actual fact it is to the analyst's *ego* that the subject is expected to conform.

This is precisely that process expressed in many a theoretical formulation of the 'splitting of the *ego*' in analysis. Half of the subject's *ego* passes over to the other side of the wall that separates the analysand from the analyst, then half of that half, and so on, in an asymptotic procession that will never succeed, however far it advances into the opinion that the subject has acquired of himself, in cancelling out the whole of the margin from which he can go back on the aberration of the analysis.

But how could the subject of a type of analysis whose axis is the principle that all his formulations are systems of defence be defended against the total disorientation in which this principle leaves the dialectic of the analyst?

Freud's interpretation, whose dialectical method appears so clearly in the case of Dora,⁹² does not present these dangers, for, when the analyst's prejudices (that is to say, his counter-transference, a term whose use in my opinion cannot be extended beyond the dialectical reasons for the error) have misled him in his intervention, he pays the price for it on the spot by a negative transference. For this negative transference manifests itself with a force that is all the greater the further such an analysis has already involved the subject in an authentic recognition, and what usually results is the breaking off of the analysis.

This is exactly what happened in Dora's case, because of Freud's relentless persistence in wanting to make her recognize the hidden object of her desire in the person of Herr K, in whom the constituting presumptions of his counter-transference lured him into seeing the promise of her happiness.

Dora herself was undoubtedly deceived in this relation, but she did not resent any the less the fact that Freud, too, was deceived. But she came back to see him, after a delay of fifteen months in which the fateful cipher of her 'time for understanding' is inscribed, we can sense her embarking on a deception that she had been deceiving, and the convergence of this second-degree deception with the aggressive intention imputed to her by Freud – and not inaccurately, but without his recognizing what it actually sprang from – presents us with the rough outline of the intersubjective complicity that any 'analysis of resistances' sure of its rights might have perpetuated between them. There can be little doubt that with the means now offered us by the progress of our technique, this human error could have been extended beyond the limits of the diabolical.

None of this is of my own invention, for Freud himself later recognized the prejudicial source of his defeat in his own *méconnaissance* at the time of the homosexual position of the object at which the hysterical subject's desire was aimed.⁹³

No doubt the whole process that has culminated in this present tendency of psychoanalysis goes back, and from the very first, to the analyst's guilty conscience about the miracle operated by his speech. He interprets the symbol and, lo and behold, the symptom, which inscribes the symbol in letters of suffering in the subject's flesh, disappears. This unseemly thaumaturgy is unbecoming to us, for after all we are scientists, and magic is not a practice we can defend. So we disclaim responsibility by attributing magical thinking to the patient. Before long we'll be preaching the Gospel according to Lévy-Bruhl to him. But in the meantime, lo and behold, we have become thinkers again, and have re-established the proper distance between ourselves and our patients – a traditional distance that was perhaps a little too recklessly abandoned, a distance expressed so nobly in the words of Pierre Janet when he spoke of the feeble abilities of the hysterical subject compared to our own lofty position. The poor little thing, he confides to us, 'she understands nothing about science, and doesn't even imagine how anybody could be interested in it. . . . If we consider the absence of control that characterizes their thinking, instead of allowing ourselves to be scandalized by their lies, which, in any case, are very naïve, we should rather be astonished that there are so many truthful ones', and so on.

Since these words represent the feelings to which many present-day analysts who condescend to talk to the patient 'in his own language'

have returned, they may help us to understand what has happened in the meantime. For if Freud had been capable of subscribing to such feelings, how would he have been able to hear as he did the truth enclosed within the little stories of his first patients, or decipher a gloomy delusion like Schreber's to the point of extending it to embrace man eternally bound to his symbols?

Is our reason so weak that it cannot recognize itself on equal terms in the mediation of scientific discourse and in the primary exchange of the symbolic object, and cannot rediscover there the identical measure of its original cunning?

Need I point out what the yardstick of 'thought' is worth to practitioners of an experience that is occupied rather more closely with an intestinal eroticism than with an equivalent of action?

Need I point out that I do not have to resort to 'thought' to understand that if I am talking to you in this moment of speech, it is in so far as we have in common a technique of speech that enables you to understand me when I speak to you, and which disposes me to address myself through you to those who understand nothing of that technique?

Certainly we must be attentive to the 'un-said' that lies in the holes of the discourse, but this does not mean that we are to listen as if to someone knocking on the other side of a wall.

For if we are to concern ourselves from now on with nothing but these sounds, as some analysts pride themselves on doing, it must be admitted that we have not placed ourselves in the most favourable conditions to decipher their meaning. Without first racking our brains to understand this meaning, how can one translate what is not of itself language? Led in this way to appeal to the subject, since it is after all to *his* account that we must transfer this understanding, we shall implicate him with us in the wager, a wager that we understand him and then wait until a return makes us both winners. As a result, in continuing to perform this shuttling back and forth, he will learn quite simply to set the pace himself, a form of suggestion that is no worse than any other – in other words, a form of suggestion in which, as in every other form of suggestion, one does not know who is keeping the score. The procedure is recognized as being sound enough when it is a question of being six feet under.⁹⁴

Half-way to this extreme the question arises: does psychoanalysis remain a dialectical relation in which the non-action of the analyst guides the subject's discourse towards the realization of his truth, or is it to be reduced to a phantasmatic relation in which 'two abysses brush against

each other' without touching, while the whole gamut of imaginary regressions is exhausted – like a sort of 'bundling'⁹⁵ pushed to its extreme limits as a psychological experience?

In fact, this illusion that impels us to seek the reality of the subject beyond the language barrier is the same as that by which the subject believes that his truth is already given in us and that we know it in advance; and it is moreover as a result of this that he is wide open to our objectifying intervention.

But for his part, no doubt, he does not have to answer for this subjective error which, whether it is avowed or not in his discourse, is immanent in the fact that he has entered analysis, and that he has already concluded the original pact involved in it. And the fact that we find in the subjectivity of this moment the reason for what can be called the constituting effects of the transference – in so far as they are distinguished by an index of reality from the constituted effects that succeed them – is all the more ground for not neglecting this subjectivity.⁹⁶

Freud, let it be recalled, in touching on the feelings involved in the transference, insisted on the need to distinguish in it a factor of reality. He concluded that it would be an abuse of the subject's docility to want to persuade him in every case that these sentiments are a mere transference repetition of the neurosis.⁹⁷ Consequently, since these real feelings manifest themselves as primary and since the charm of our own persons remains a doubtful factor, there would seem to be some mystery here.

But this mystery becomes clarified if it is viewed within the phenomenology of the subject, in so far as the subject constitutes himself in the search for truth. One has only to go back to the traditional givens – which the Buddhists could provide us with, although they are not the only ones who could – to recognize in this form of the transference the normal error of existence, under the three headings of love, hate, and ignorance. It is therefore as a counter-effect of the movement of analysis that we shall understand their equivalence in what is called an originally positive transference – each one being illuminated by the other two under this existential aspect, if one does not except the third, which is usually omitted because of its proximity to the subject.

Here I evoke the invective through which I was called on as a witness to the lack of discretion shown by a certain work (which I have already cited too often) in its senseless objectification of the play of the instincts in analysis, by someone whose debt to me can be recognized by his use of the term 'real' in conformity with mine. It was in these words that,

as people say, he 'unburdened his heart': 'It is high time to put an end to the fraud that tends to perpetrate the belief that anything real whatsoever takes place during treatment.' Let us leave aside what has befallen it, for alas, if analysis has not cured the dog's oral vice of which the Gospel speaks, its condition is worse than before: it is other people's vomit that it laps up.

For this sally was not ill directed, since it sought in fact to distinguish between those elementary registers whose grounding I later put forward in these terms: the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real – a distinction never previously made in psychoanalysis.

Reality in the analytic experience does in fact often remain veiled under negative forms, but it is not too difficult to situate it.

Reality is encountered, for instance, in what we usually condemn as active interventions; but it would be an error to define the limit of reality in this way.

For it is clear on the other hand that the analyst's abstention, his refusal to reply, is an element of reality in analysis. More exactly, it is in this negativity in so far as it is a pure negativity – that is, detached from any particular motive – that lies the junction between the symbolic and the real. This naturally follows from the fact that this non-action of the analyst is founded on our firm and stated knowledge of the principle that all that is real is rational, and on the resulting precept that it is up to the subject to show what he is made of.

The fact remains that this abstention is not maintained indefinitely; when the subject's question has taken on the form of true speech, we give it the sanction of our reply, but thereby we have shown that true speech already contains its own reply and that we are simply adding our own lay to its antiphon. What can this mean except that we do no more than to confer on the subject's speech its dialectical punctuation?

The other moment in which the symbolic and the real come together is consequently revealed, and I have already marked it theoretically: that is to say, in the function of time, and this makes it worth pausing for a moment to consider the technical effects of time.

Time plays its role in analytic technique in several ways.

It presents itself first of all in the total duration of the analysis, and involves the meaning to be given to the termination of the analysis, which is the question that must precede that of the signs of its end. I shall touch on the problem of fixing its termination. But it is now clear that this duration can only be anticipated for the subject as indefinite.

This is for two reasons that can only be distinguished in a dialectical perspective:

The first, which is linked to the limits of our field, and which confirms my remarks on the definition of its confines: we cannot predict for the subject what his 'time for understanding' will be, in so far as it includes a psychological factor that escapes us as such.

The second, which is properly of the subject and through which the fixing of a termination is equivalent to a spatializing projection in which he finds himself already alienated from himself at the very beginning: from the moment that the coming-to-term of his truth can be predicted – whatever may come about in the ensuing interval in the intersubjective relation of the subject and the analyst – the fact is that the truth is already there. That is to say that in this way we re-establish in the subject his original mirage in so far as he places his truth in us, and that if we then give him the sanction of our authority, we are setting the analysis off on an aberrant path whose results will be impossible to correct.

This is precisely what happened in the celebrated case of the Wolf Man, and Freud so well understood its exemplary importance that he took support from it again in his article on finite or indefinite analysis.⁹⁸

The fixing in advance of a termination to an analysis, a first form of active intervention, inaugurated (*pro pudor!*) by Freud himself,⁹⁹ whatever may be the divinatory sureness (in the proper sense of the term)¹⁰⁰ of which the analyst may give proof in following his example, will invariably leave the subject in the alienation of his truth.

Moreover, we find the confirmation of this point in two facts from Freud's case:

In the first place, in spite of the whole cluster of proofs demonstrating the historicity of the primal scene, in spite of the conviction that he shows concerning it – remaining imperturbable to the doubts that Freud methodically cast on it in order to test him – the Wolf Man never managed in spite of it all to integrate his recollection of the primal scene into his history.

Secondly, the same patient later demonstrated his alienation in the most categorical way, in a paranoid form.

It is true that here there is at work another factor through which reality intervenes in the analysis – namely, the gift of money whose symbolic value I shall save to treat of elsewhere, but whose import is indicated in what I have already said concerning the link between speech and the constituting gift of primitive exchange. In this case the gift of money is reversed by an initiative of Freud's in which, as much as in his insistence

on coming back to the case, we can recognize the unresolved subjectification within him of the problems that this case leaves in suspense. And nobody doubts that this was a factor in the subsequent onset of the psychosis, however without really being able to say why.

Surely it is understood nevertheless that admitting a subject to be nurtured in the prytaneum¹⁰¹ of psychoanalysis in return for services he renders to science as a case available for study (for it was in fact through a group collection that the Wolf Man was supported), is also to initiate and establish him in the alienation of his truth?

The material of the supplementary analysis of the Wolf Man undertaken by Ruth Mack Brunswick¹⁰² illustrates the responsibility of the previous treatment with Freud by demonstrating my remarks on the respective places of speech and language in psychoanalytic mediation.

What is more, it is in the perspective of speech and language that one can grasp how Ruth Mack Brunswick has not at all taken her bearings incorrectly in her delicate position in relation to the transference. (The reader will be reminded of the very wall of my metaphor of the language barrier, in that the wall figures in one of the Wolf Man's dreams, the wolves of the key-dream showing themselves eager to get around it . . .) Those who follow my seminar know all this, and the others can try their hand at it if they like.¹⁰³

What I want to do is to touch on another aspect of analysis that is particularly ticklish at the moment, that of the function of time in the technique of analysis. I wish to say something about the duration of the session.

Once again it is a question of an element that manifestly belongs to reality, since it represents our working time, and from that angle it falls under the heading of the prevalent professional rule.

But its subjective effects are no less important – and in the first place for the analyst. The taboo nature that has recently characterized discussion of this time limit proves well enough that the subjectivity of the psychoanalytic group is not at all entirely free in this respect, and the scrupulous, not to say obsessional, character that the observation of a standard time limit takes on for some if not most analysts – a standard whose historical and geographical variation seems nevertheless to bother no one – is certainly the sign of the existence of a problem that they are all the more reluctant to deal with because they realize to what extent it would entail a putting into question of the function of the analyst.

On the other hand, nobody can possibly fail to recognize its importance

for the subject in analysis. The unconscious, it is said, in a tone that is all the more evident in proportion as the speaker is less capable of justifying what he means – the unconscious needs time to reveal itself. I quite agree. But I ask: how is this time to be measured? Is its measure to be that of what Alexandre Koyré calls ‘the universe of precision’? Obviously we live in this universe, but its advent for man is relatively recent, since it goes back precisely to Huyghens’ clock – in other words, to 1659 – and the *malaise* of modern man does not exactly indicate that this precision is in itself a liberating factor for him. Are we to say that this time, the time of the fall of heavy bodies, is in some way sacred in the sense that it corresponds to the time of the stars as they were fixed in eternity by God who, as Lichtenberg put it, winds up our sundials? Perhaps we might get a somewhat better idea of time by comparing the time required for the creation of a symbolic object with the moment of inattention when we let it fall.

However this may be, if the labour of our function during this time remains problematic, I believe I have brought out clearly enough the function of labour in what the patient brings to realization during that time.

But the reality of this time, whatever that reality may be, consequently takes on a localized value from it: that of receiving the product of this labour.

We play a recording role by assuming the function, fundamental in any symbolic exchange, of gathering what *do kamo*, man in his authenticity, calls ‘the lasting word’.¹⁰⁴

As a witness called to account for the sincerity of the subject, depositary of the minutes of his discourse, reference as to his exactitude, guarantor of his uprightness, custodian of his testament, scrivener of his codicils, the analyst has something of the scribe about him.

But above all he remains the master of the truth of which this discourse is the progress. As I have said, it is he above all who punctuates its dialectic. And here he is apprehended as the judge of the value of this discourse. This entails two consequences.

The suspension of a session cannot *not* be experienced by the subject as a punctuation in his progress. We know very well how he calculates its coming-to-term in order to articulate it upon his own delays, or even upon the loopholes he leaves himself, how he anticipates its end by weighing it like a weapon, by watching out for it as he would for a place of shelter.

It is a fact, which can be plainly seen in the study of the manuscripts of

symbolic writings, whether it is a question of the Bible or of the Chinese canonicals, that the absence of punctuation in them is a source of ambiguity. The punctuation, once inserted, fixes the meaning; changing the punctuation renews or upsets it; and a faulty punctuation amounts to a change for the worse.

The indifference with which the cutting up of the ‘timing’¹⁰⁵ interrupts the moments of haste within the subject can be fatal to the conclusion towards which his discourse was being precipitated, or can even fix a misunderstanding or misreading in it, if not furnish a pretext for a retaliatory ruse.

Beginners seem more struck by the effects of this fact than others – which makes one think that for the others it is simply a matter of submitting to routine.

Certainly the neutrality that we manifest in strictly applying the rule concerning the length of the session maintains us in the path of our non-action.

But this non-action has its limits, otherwise there would be no interventions at all – and why make an intervention impossible at this point, which is consequently privileged in this way?

The danger that this point may take on an obsessional value for the analyst rests simply in the fact that it lends itself to the connivance of the subject, a connivance that is not only overt for the obsessional subject, but which takes on a special force for him, precisely from his feelings about his labour. The keynote of forced labour that envelops everything for this subject, even the activities of his leisure time, is only too well known.

This meaning is sustained by his subjective relation to the master in so far as it is the master’s death for which he waits.

In fact the obsessional subject manifests one of the attitudes that Hegel did not develop in his dialectic of the master and the slave. The slave has given way in face of the risk of death in which mastery was being offered to him in a struggle of pure prestige. But since he knows that he is mortal, he also knows that the master can die. From this moment on he is able to accept his labouring for the master and his renunciation of pleasure in the meantime; and, in the uncertainty of the moment when the master will die, he waits.

Such is the intersubjective reason, as much for the doubt as for the procrastination that are character traits of the obsessional subject.

In the meantime, all his labour falls under the heading of this intention, and becomes doubly alienating by this fact. For not only is the subject’s

handiwork taken from him by another – which is the constituting relation of all labour – but the subject's recognition of his own essence in his handiwork, in which this labour finds its justification, also eludes him, for he himself 'is not in it'. He *is* in the anticipated moment of the master's death, from which moment he will begin to live, but in the meantime he identifies himself with the master as dead, and as a result of this he is himself already dead.

Nevertheless he makes an effort to deceive the master by the demonstration of the good intentions manifested in his labour. This is what the dutiful children of the analytic catechism express in their rough and ready way by saying that the subject's *ego* is trying to seduce his *superego*.

This intrasubjective formulation becomes immediately demystified once it is understood in the analytic relation, where the subject's 'working through' is in fact employed for the seduction of the analyst.

Nor is it by chance that, from the moment that the dialectical progress begins to approach the questioning of the intentions of the *ego* in our subjects, the phantasy of the analyst's death – often felt in the form of fear or even of anxiety – never fails to be produced.

And the subject then sets off again in an even more demonstrative elaboration of his 'good will'.

How, then, can we doubt the effect of any disdain shown by the master towards the product of such labour? The subject's resistance may even become completely disconcerted because of it.

From this moment, his *alibi* – hitherto unconscious – begins to unveil itself for him, and he can be seen passionately in quest of the justification of so many efforts.

I would not have so much to say about it if I had not been convinced that, in experimenting with what have been called my short sessions, at a stage in my experience that is now concluded, I was able to bring to light in a certain male subject phantasies of anal pregnancy as well as the dream of its resolution by Caesarean section, in a delaying of the end of the session where I would otherwise have had to go on listening to his speculations on the art of Dostoievsky.

However, I am not here to defend this procedure, but to show that it has a precise dialectical meaning in its technical application.¹⁰⁶

And I am not the only one to have remarked that it ultimately becomes one with the technique known as *Zen*, which is applied as the means of the subject's revelation in the traditional ascesis of certain Far Eastern schools.

Without going to the extremes to which this technique is carried, since

they would be contrary to certain of the limitations imposed by ours, a discreet application of its basic principle in analysis seems much more acceptable to me than certain modes of analysis known as the analysis of resistances, in so far as this technique does not in itself entail any danger of the subject's alienation.

For this technique only breaks the discourse in order to deliver speech.

Here we are then, at the foot of the wall, at the foot of the language barrier. We are in our place there, that is to say, on the same side as the patient, and it is on this wall – the same for him as for us – that we shall try to respond to the echo of his speech.

Beyond this wall, there is nothing for us but outer darkness. Does this mean that we are entirely masters of the situation? Certainly not, and on this point Freud has bequeathed us his testament on the negative therapeutic reaction.

The key to this mystery, it is said, is in the agency of a primordial masochism – in other words, in a pure manifestation of that death instinct whose enigma Freud propounded for us at the height of his experience.

We cannot turn up our noses at this problem, any more than I can postpone examination of it here.

For I note that this same refusal to accept this culminating point of Freud's doctrine is shared by those who conduct their analysis on the basis of a conception of the *ego* whose error I have denounced, and by those whom, like Reich, go so far with the principle of seeking the ineffable organic expression beyond speech that, like him, in order to deliver it from its armour, they might symbolize, as he does, the orgasmic induction that, like him, they expect from analysis, in the superimposition of the two vermicular forms whose stupefying schema may be seen in his book on character analysis.

Such a combination will no doubt allow me an optimistic view of the rigour of the formations of the mind, when I have demonstrated the profound relationship uniting the notion of the death instinct to the problems of speech.

As a moment's reflection shows, the notion of the death instinct involves a basic irony, since its meaning has to be sought in the conjunction of two contrary terms: instinct in its most comprehensive acceptance being the law that governs in its succession a cycle of behaviour whose goal is the accomplishment of a vital function; and death appearing first of all as the destruction of life.

Nevertheless, both the definition of life, given by Bichat at the dawn

of biology, as being the whole set of forces that resist death; as well as the most modern conception of life – to be found in Cannon's notion of homeostasis – as the function of a system maintaining its own equilibrium, are there to remind us that life and death are compounded in a polar relation at the very heart of phenomena related to life.

So the congruence between the contrasted terms of the death instinct and the phenomena of repetition to which Freud's explanation in fact related them under the term 'automatism'¹⁰⁷ ought not to cause difficulty, if it were simply a question of a biological notion.

But we all know very well that it is not a question of biology, and this is what makes this problem a stumbling block for so many of us. The fact that so many people come to a halt on the apparent incompatibility of these terms might well be worth our attention in that it manifests a dialectical innocence that would probably be somewhat disconcerted by the classical problem posed to semantics in the determinative declaration: a hamlet on the Ganges, by which Hindu aesthetics illustrates the second form of the resonances of language.¹⁰⁸

This notion must be approached through its resonances in what I shall call the poetics of the Freudian corpus, the first way of access to the penetration of its meaning, and the essential dimension, from the origins of the work to the apogee marked in it by this notion, for an understanding of its dialectical repercussions. It must be remembered, for example, that Freud tells us he found his vocation for medicine in the call heard during a public reading of Goethe's famous 'Hymn to Nature' – in that text brought to light by a friend in which the poet, in the declining years of his life, agreed to recognize a putative child of the most youthful effusions of his pen.

At the other end of Freud's life, we find in the article on analysis considered as finite or indefinite, the express reference of his new conception to the conflict of the two principles to which the alternation of universal life was subjected by Empedocles of Agrigentum in the fifth century B.C. – that is, in the pre-Socratic period where nature and mind were not distinguished.¹⁰⁹

These two facts are a sufficient indication that here it is a question of a myth of the dyad, whose exposition by Plato is in any case evoked in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, a myth that can only be understood in the subjectivity of modern man by its elevation to the negativity of the judgement in which it is inscribed.

This is to say that, in the same way as the repetition compulsion – all the more misunderstood by those who wish to divide the two terms from

each other – has in view nothing less than the historizing temporality of the experience of transference,¹¹⁰ so does the death instinct essentially express the limit of the historical function of the subject. This limit is death – not as an eventual coming-to-term of the life of the individual, nor as the empirical certainty of the subject, but, as Heidegger's formula puts it, as that 'possibility which is one's ownmost, unconditional, unsurpassable, certain and as such indeterminable (*unüberholbare*)',¹¹¹ for the subject – 'subject' understood as meaning the subject defined by his historicity.

Indeed, this limit is at every instant present in what this history possesses as achieved. This limit represents the past in its real form, that is to say, not the physical past whose existence is abolished, nor the epic past as it has become perfected in the work of memory, nor the historic past in which man finds the guarantor of his future, but the past which reveals itself reversed in repetition.¹¹²

This is the dead partner taken by subjectivity in the triad which its mediation institutes in the universal conflict of *Philia*, 'love', and *Neikos*, 'discord'.

There is therefore no further need to have recourse to the outworn notion of primordial masochism in order to understand the reason for the repetitive games in which subjectivity brings together mastery of its dereliction and the birth of the symbol.

These are the games of occultation¹¹³ which Freud, in a flash of genius, revealed to us so that we might recognize in them that the moment in which desire becomes human is also that in which the child is born into language.

We can now grasp in this the fact that in this moment the subject is not simply mastering his privation by assuming it, but that here he is raising his desire to a second power. For his action destroys the object that it causes to appear and disappear in the anticipating *provocation* of its absence and its presence. His action thus negatives the field of forces of desire in order to become its own object to itself. And this object, being immediately embodied in the symbolic dyad of two elementary exclamations, announces in the subject the diachronic integration of the dichotomy of the phonemes, whose synchronic structure existing language offers to his assimilation; moreover, the child begins to become engaged in the system of the concrete discourse of the environment, by reproducing more or less approximately in his *Fort!* and in his *Da!* the vocables that he receives from it.

Fort! Da! It is precisely in his solitude that the desire of the little child has already become the desire of another, of an *alter ego* who dominates him and whose object of desire is henceforth his own affliction.

If the child now addresses himself to an imaginary or real partner, he will also see this partner obey the negativity of his discourse, and since his appeal has the effect of making the partner disappear, he will seek in a banishing summons the provocation of the return that brings the partner back to his desire.

Thus the symbol manifests itself first of all as the murder of the thing, and this death constitutes in the subject the eternalization of his desire.

The first symbol in which we recognize humanity in its vestigial traces is the sepulture, and the intermediary of death can be recognized in every relation in which man comes to the life of his history.

This is the only life that endures and is true, since it is transmitted without being lost in the perpetuated tradition of subject to subject. How is it possible not to see how loftily this life transcends that inherited by the animal, in which the individual disappears into the species, since no memorial distinguishes his ephemeral apparition from that which will reproduce it again in the invariability of the type. In fact, apart from those hypothetical mutations of the *phylum* that must be integrated by a subjectivity that man is still only approaching from the outside – nothing except the experiments to which man associates it, distinguishes a rat from the rat, a horse from the horse, nothing except this inconsistent passage from life to death – whereas Empedocles, by throwing himself into Mount Etna, leaves forever present in the memory of men this symbolic act of his being-for-death.

Man's freedom is entirely inscribed within the constituting triangle of the renunciation that he imposes on the desire of the other by the menace of death for the enjoyment of the fruits of his serfdom – of the consented-to sacrifice of his life for the reasons that give to human life its measure – and of the suicidal renunciation of the vanquished partner, depriving of his victory the master whom he abandons to his inhuman solitude.

Of these figures of death, the third is the supreme detour through which the immediate particularity of desire, reconquering its ineffable form, rediscovers in negation a final triumph. And we must recognize its meaning, for we have to deal with it. This third figure is not in fact a perversion of the instinct, but rather that desperate affirmation of life that is the purest form in which we recognize the death instinct.

The subject says 'No!' to this intersubjective game of hunt-the-slipper

in which desire makes itself recognized for a moment, only to become lost in a will that is will of the other. Patiently, the subject withdraws his precarious life from the sheeplike conglomerations of the Eros of the symbol in order to affirm it at the last in an unspoken curse.

So when we wish to attain in the subject what was before the serial articulations of speech, and what is primordial to the birth of symbols, we find it in death, from which his existence takes on all the meaning it has. It is in effect as a desire for death that he affirms himself for others; if he identifies himself with the other, it is by fixing him solidly in the metamorphosis of his essential image, and no being is ever evoked by him except among the shadows of death.

To say that this mortal meaning reveals in speech a centre exterior to language is more than a metaphor; it manifests a structure. This structure is different from the spatialization of the circumference or of the sphere in which some people like to schematize the limits of the living being and his milieu:¹¹⁴ it corresponds rather to the relational group that symbolic logic designates topologically as an annulus.

If I wished to give an intuitive representation of it, it seems that, rather than have recourse to the surface aspect of a zone, I should call on the three-dimensional form of a torus, in so far as its peripheral exteriority and its central exteriority constitute only one single region.¹¹⁵

This schema satisfactorily expresses the endless circularity of the dialectical process that is produced when the subject brings his solitude to realization, be it in the vital ambiguity of immediate desire or in the full assumption of his being-for-death.

But by the same fact it can be grasped that the dialectic is not individual, and that the question of the termination of the analysis is that of the moment when the satisfaction of the subject finds a way to realize himself in the satisfaction of everyone – that is to say, of all those whom this satisfaction associates with itself in a human undertaking. Of all the undertakings that have been proposed in this century, that of the psychoanalyst is perhaps the loftiest, because the undertaking of the psychoanalyst acts in our time as a mediator between the man of care and the subject of absolute knowledge.¹¹⁶ This is therefore why it requires a long subjective ascesis, and one which can never be interrupted, since the end of the training analysis itself is not separable from the engagement of the subject in its practice.

Let it be renounced, then, by whoever cannot rejoin at its horizon the subjectivity of his time. For how could he possibly make his being the

axis of so many lives if he knew nothing of the dialectic that engages him with these lives in a symbolic movement? Let him be well acquainted with the whorl into which his period draws him in the continued enterprise of Babel, and let him be aware of his function as interpreter in the discord of languages. As for the darkness of the *mundus* around which the immense tower is coiled, let him leave to the mystic vision the task of seeing in it the putrescent serpent of life raised on an everlasting rod.¹¹⁷

I may be permitted a laugh if these remarks are accused of turning the meaning of Freud's work away from the biological basis he would have wished for it towards the cultural references with which it is shot through. I do not want to preach to you the doctrine of factor *b*, designating the first, nor of factor *c*, designating the second. All I have tried to do is to remind you of the misconstrued *a*, *b*, *c* of the structure of language, and to teach you to spell once again the forgotten *b-a*, *ba*, of speech.¹¹⁸

For what recipe would guide you in a technique that is composed of the first and draws its effects from the second, if you did not recognize the field and the function of both?

The psychoanalytic experience has rediscovered in man the imperative of the Word as the law that has formed him in its image. It manipulates the poetic function of language to give to his desire its symbolic mediation. May that experience enable you to understand at last that it is in the gift of speech¹¹⁹ that all the reality of its effects resides; for it is by way of this gift that all reality has come to man and it is by his continued act that he maintains it.

If the domain defined by this gift of speech is to be sufficient for your action as also for your knowledge, it will also be sufficient for your devotion. For it offers it a privileged field.

When the Devas, the men, and the Asuras were ending their novitiate with Prajapâti, so we read in the second Brâhmana of the fifth lesson of the Bhrad-âranyaka Upanishad, they addressed to him this prayer: 'Speak to us.'

'*Da*', said Prajapâti, god of thunder. 'Did you hear me?' And the Devas answered and said: 'Thou hast said to us: *Damyata*, master yourselves' – the sacred text meaning that the powers above submit to the law of speech.

'*Da*', said Prajapâti, god of thunder. 'Did you hear me?' And the men answered and said: 'Thou hast said to us: *Datta*, give' – the sacred text meaning that men recognize each other by the gift of speech.

'*Da*', said Prajapâti, god of thunder. 'Did you hear me?' And the Asuras answered and said: 'Thou hast said to us: *Dayadhyam*, be merciful'

– the sacred text meaning that the powers below resound to the invocation of speech.¹²⁰

That, continues the text, is what the divine voice caused to be heard in the thunder: Submission, gift, grace. *Da da da*.¹²¹

For Prajapâti replies to all: 'You have heard me.'



Notes

1. Ferenczi, 'Confusion of Tongues between the Adult and the Child', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* XXX (1949), iv; 225–30.

2. English in the original [Tr.].

3. The reference is Rimbaud's *The Lice Seekers*. The author in question is the French analyst Bénassy [Tr.].

4. 'Put true and stable speech into my mouth and make of me a cautious tongue' (*The Internal Consolation*, Chapter XLV: That one should not believe everyone and of slight stumbling over words) [Tr.].

5. 'Always a cause' or 'keep talking' [Tr.].

6. Paragraph rewritten in 1966.

7. Boileau, *L'Art Poétique*, I: *Hâtez-vous lentement; et, sans perdre courage, Vingt fois sur le métier remettez votre ouvrage:*

In Pope's translation:

Gently make haste, of labour not afraid

A hundred times consider what you've said: [Tr.].

8. Previously I had written: 'in psychological matters . . .' (1966).

9. Paragraph rewritten in 1966.

10. This is the crux of a deviation as much practical as theoretical. For to identify the *ego* with the discipline of the subject is to confuse imaginary isolation with the mastery of the instincts. This has one open to errors of judgement in the conduct of the treatment: such as trying to reinforce the *ego* in many neurones caused by its overforceful structure and that is a dead end. Hasn't my

friend Michael Balint written that a reinforcement of the *ego* should be beneficial to the subject suffering from *ejaculatio praecox* because it would permit him to prolong the suspension of his desire? But this can surely not be so, if it is precisely the fact that his desire is made dependent upon the imaginary function of the *ego* that the subject owes the short-circuiting of the act – which psychoanalytic clinical experience shows clearly to be intimately linked to narcissistic identification with the partner.

11. This is the same work that I praised at the end of my Introduction. [Added 1966.] It is clear in what follows that aggressivity is only a lateral effect of analytic frustration, even if this effect can be reinforced by a certain type of intervention; as such, this effect is not the reason for the frustration/regression dyad.

12. The allusion is to the function of the *tessera* as a token of recognition, or 'password'. The *tessera* was used in the early mystery religions where fitting together again the two halves of a broken piece of pottery was used as a means of recognition by the initiates – and in Greece the *tessera* was called the *sumbolon*. The central concept involved in the symbol is that of a *link* [Tr.].

The allusion to Mallarmé is to a passage in his preface to René Ghil's *Traité du Verbe* (1866); it can be found in the *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Pléiade, 1945, 368 and 857) [Tr.].

13. The reference is to Reik's *Listening with the Third Ear* [Tr.].

14. *Verbaliser*, in its legal sense, is the

equivalent of 'to write a traffic ticket'. *Pandore* is a slang term for a policeman. But *verbaliser* also has the sense of 'to talk too long' [Tr.].

15. 'Le verbe'. Like 'the Word', *le verbe* translates the Greek 'Logos' [Tr.].

16. The Greek 'epos' may variously mean 'word', 'speech', 'tale', 'song', 'promise', 'saying', 'message', and, in the plural, 'epic poetry', 'lines of verse' [Tr.].

17. *Gesammelte Werke* henceforth abbreviated *GW*, XII: 71; *Cinq psychanalyses*, Presses Universitaires de France henceforth abbreviated PUF, 356, a weak translation of the term.

18. *GW*, XII: 72, n.1, last few lines. The concept of *Nachträglichkeit* is to be found once more stressed in the note. *Cinq psychanalyses*, 356, n.1. *Standard Edition*, XVII: 45, n.1.

19. An article originally published in French in the *Revue Neurologique* as 'L'Hérédité et l'étiologie des névroses'. See *Standard Edition*, III: 143-56. The blunder denounced here illustrates among others how the said authority measured up to his 'leadership'.

20. The word-play is on 'interlocution' and 'interloqué' [Tr.].

21. Even if he is speaking 'off', he addresses himself to that Other with a capital 'O' whose theoretical basis I have consolidated since this was written, and which demands a certain *epoché* in the resumption of the term to which I limited myself at that time: that of 'inter-subjectivity' (1966).

22. I borrow these terms from the late Édouard Pichon who, both in the indications he gave for the development of our discipline and in those that guided him in people's dark places, showed a divination that I can attribute only to his practice of semantics.

23. English in the original [Tr.].

24. [Added 1966:] This reference to the aporia of Christianity announced a more precise one in its Jansenist culmen: a reference to Pascal in fact, whose wager, still intact, forced me to take the whole question up again in order to get at what

it conceals, which is inestimable for psychoanalysis – at this date (June 1966) still in reserve. [Pascal's 'pari' on the 'infini-rien' is to be found in *Pensée* 233 of the Brunschvicq edition, 451 of the Pléiade edition.]

25. 'There are people who would never have been in love, if they had never heard talk of love' (Maxim CXXXVI, Garnier edition) [Tr.].

26. 'Une vérité de La Palice' is a self-evident truth, a truism [Tr.].

27. English in the original [Tr.].

28. The reference is to the *Sophist*, 2496.

29. This is the phrase used by the chorus in the macaronic Latin of the burlesqued ceremony with which Molière's *Le Malade Imaginaire* ends.

30. This remark was made by one of the psychoanalysts most interested in this debate (1966).

31. See *Gegenwuschträume* in the *Traumdeutung*, *GW*: 156-7 and 163-4; *Standard Edition*, IV: 151 and 157-8.

32. *Standard Edition*, VI (1901). See also 'The Psychological Mechanism of Forgetfulness' (1898), *Standard Edition*, III: 287, which is reproduced in the *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, 5. Freud reported the incident to Fliess in Letter 96 of the *Origins of Psychoanalysis* (1954).

33. In order to appreciate the results of these procedures the reader should become thoroughly acquainted with the notes to be found in Émile Borel's book *Le Hasard*, and which I have since circulated, on the actual triviality of the supposedly 'remarkable' results obtained by beginning in this way with a particular number (1966).

34. (*Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten*, 1905), *Standard Edition*, VIII [Tr.].

35. *Standard Edition*, VIII: 106: 'Anyone who has allowed the truth to slip out in an unguarded moment is in fact glad to be free of pretence' [Tr.].

36. *Standard Edition*, VIII: 105: 'Thus jokes can also have a subjective deter-

minant of this kind . . . It declares that only what I allow to be a joke is a joke' [Tr.].

37. *Esprit* translates 'wit', 'mind', 'spirit', I have chosen to use 'spirit' here, except in the quotation from Freud, in which *Witz* (wit) is used in the German, and in the expression '*esprit libre*' ('mind free from care') [Tr.].

38. Cf. C. I. Oberndorf, 'Unsatisfactory Results of Psychoanalytic Therapy', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, XIX: 393-407.

39. The '*Argonautes pacifiques*' suggests the title of Malinowski's book, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* [Tr.].

40. Cf. among others, *Do Kamo*, by Maurice Leenhardt, Chapters IX and X.

41. Jules H. Massermann, 'Language Behaviour and Dynamic Psychiatry', *IJP* (1944), 1 and 2: 1-8.

42. English in the original.

43. English in the original.

44. English in the original.

45. 'A stone, two houses, three ruins, four ditchdiggers, a garden, some flowers, a raccoon' [Tr.].

46. That is, the *Fort! Da!*, where a child's (phonemic) opposition O/A was related by Freud to the presence and absence of persons and things. See 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920), *Standard Edition*, XVIII, 14-17 [Tr.].

47. 'An everlasting possession'. Thucydides, I, xxii: 'My history has been composed to be an everlasting possession, not the showpiece of an hour' [Tr.].

48. This proverb is the epigraph to Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté*, 1949 (*Elementary Structures of Kinship*, 1971), which is alluded to more directly in the two sentences that follow [Tr.].

49. *Tiers Livre*, iii, iv; *Quart Livre*, ix. Debts, says Panurge, are 'the connecting link between Earth and Heaven, the unique mainstay of the human race; one, I believe, without which all mankind would speedily perish'; they are 'the great soul of the universe' [Tr.].

50. Cf., for example, his 'Introduction à l'oeuvre de Marcel Mauss' (1950), where he compares the notion of mana to the concept of the zero-phoneme introduced into phonology by Roman Jakobson [Tr.].

51. '*Par l'os et par la chair*', an allusion to an anthropological binary opposition brought out by Lévi-Strauss in *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté* (1949) [Tr.].

52. Aphorism of Lichtenberg's: 'A madman who imagines himself a prince differs from the prince who is in fact a prince only because the former is a negative prince, while the latter is a negative madman. Considered without their sign, they are alike.'

53. To obtain an immediate subjective confirmation of this remark of Hegel's, it is enough to have seen in the recent myxomatosis epidemic a blinded rabbit in the middle of a road, lifting the emptiness of his vision changed into a *look* towards the setting sun: he was human to the point of the tragic.

54. The lines before and after this term will show what I mean by it.

55. Reich's error, to which I shall return, caused him to take armorial bearings for an armour.

56. The palimpsest is a piece of parchment or other writing material from which the writing has been erased to make way for a new text. Cf. Freud's discussion of recollection and memory in 'A Note on the Mystic Writing Pad' (1925), *Standard Edition*, XIX: 227-32 [Tr.].

57. Cf. 'The Mirror Stage', pp. 1-7. Lacan here uses the English translations for all three terms of the Freudian topography [Tr.].

58. 'Men are not so necessarily mad that it would be being mad by another kind of madness *not* to be mad' (*Pensées*, Brunschvicq ed. 414, Pléiade ed. 184) [Tr.].

59. Cf., in particular, Chapter V. of *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), *Standard Edition*, XVIII.

60. That is, 'guidance', as in the religious sense of '*direction de consciences*' [Tr].
61. Cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, 'Language and the Analysis of Social Laws', *American Anthropologist*, 53, No. 2 (April-June, 1951): 155-63. (An English translation of a later version of the article is to be found in Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. C. Jacobson and B. G. Schoepf, New York, London, 1963 [Tr].)
62. The last four paragraphs have been rewritten (1966).
63. '*Front d'airain*' - an allusion to Lassalle's *loi d'airain*, the 'iron law of wages' [Tr].
64. These two paragraphs have been rewritten (1966).
65. '... that [august] voice
Who knows herself when she sings
To be no longer the voice of anyone
As much as the voice of the waves
and woods.'
(Valéry: *La Pythie*.)
66. On the Galilean hypothesis and Huyghens' chronometer, cf. Alexandre Koyré, 'An Experiment in Measurement', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 97 (April, 1953). (The last two paragraphs of my text were rewritten in 1966.)
67. In 'The Question of Lay Analysis' (1926), *Standard Edition*, XX: 246.
68. 'Between man and love, there is woman. Between man and woman, there is a world. Between man and the world, there is a wall' [Tr].
69. 'For I have seen with my own eyes the Cumean Sibyll hanging inside a jar, and whenever boys ask her: "What do you wish, O Sibyll", she would reply: "I wish to die." This is the epitaph to *The Waste Land* (1922); Lacan has already quoted from *The Hollow Men* (1925) [Tr].
70. *Standard Edition*, X: 167-8.
71. In 'The psychotherapy of Hysteria' (1895), *Standard Edition*, II: 288-292.
72. I have fully developed these in-

- dications as the opportunity presented itself (1966). Four paragraphs rewritten.
73. 'The Theory of Symbolism', *British Journal of Psychology*, IX (2). Reprinted in his *Papers on Psychoanalysis*, London, 5th ed., 1948. Cf. the article: 'À la mémoire d'Ernest Jones: Sur sa théorie du symbolisme', *La Psychanalyse*, V (1960): 1-20; *Écrits*, 697-717.
74. The reference is to the teaching of Abhinavagupta (tenth century). Cf. Dr Kanti Chandra Pandey, 'Indian Aesthetics', *Chowkamba Sanskrit Series, Studies*, II, Benares, 1950.
75. In his 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable' (1937), *Standard Edition*, XXIII: 219.
76. English in the original.
77. Ernst Kris, 'Ego Psychology and Interpretation', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, XX, No. 1 (January, 1951): 15-29, in particular the passage quoted on pp. 27-8.
78. English in the original.
79. English in the original.
80. Paragraph rewritten (1966).
81. English in the original.
82. This for the use of whoever can still understand it after going to Littré to look for the justification of a theory that makes of speech an 'action beside', by the translation that Littré does in fact give of the Greek *parabole* (but why not 'action towards?') without having noticed at the same time that if this word always designates what it means, it is because of ecclesiastical usage that since the tenth century has reserved the word 'Word' for the Logos incarnate.
83. 'You would not be looking for me if you had not already found me', the words of Christ in *Le mystère de Jesus, Pensées* (Brunschvicq ed. 553, *Pléiade* ed. 736) [Tr].
84. Each language has its own taste in transmission, and since the legitimacy of such research is founded on its success, nothing forbids us to draw a moral from it. Consider, for example, the maxim pinned to the prefatory note as an epigraph. [En particulier, il ne faudra pas

- oublier que la séparation en embryologie, sociologie, clinique n'existe pas dans la nature et qu'il n'y a qu'une discipline: la *neurobiologie* à laquelle l'observation nous oblige d'ajouter l'épithète d'humaine en ce qui nous concerne.] Since it is so laden with redundancies, its style may possibly appear a little flat to you. But lighten it of them, and its audacity will get the enthusiasm it deserves: 'Parfaupe ouclaspá nannanbryle anaphi ologi pysocline ixispad anlana - égnia kune n'rbiol' ô blijouter tétumaine ennouconç. . . .' There we have the purity of its message finally laid bare. There meaning raises its head, there the avowal of being emerges, and our victorious wit bequeaths to the future its immortal imprint.
85. 'The Therapeutic Effect of Inexact Interpretation; a Contribution to the Theory of Suggestion', *IJP*, XII: 4.
86. Cf. *Standard Edition*, XVII: 89-97, 107-8, 112-13 (and note). The *Wespe* incident is reported on p. 94 [Tr].
87. *Standard Edition*, X: 225, 260, 280-81, 294-5. The original formula is decondensed on pp. 280-81, where the condensation of 'Gisela' into 'S' is also demonstrated [Tr].
88. 'Silence and Verbalization. A Supplement to the Theory of the "Analytic Rule"', *IJP*, XXX: 1.
89. Here equivalent for me to the term *Zwangsbefürchtung* 'obsessional or compulsive (transitive) fearing', 'apprehension', which needs to be rendered into its component elements without losing any of the semantic resources of the German language.
90. This is the subject's '*constellation familiale*', the history and the internal relationships of the subject's family - and 'history' in the precise sense of both a lived experience as well as of what the subject is told by his parents about their lives [Tr].
91. Literally 'that (thing)'. The French for the *id* is *le ça*, but this *cela* - the 'phenomenological' object - is precisely not the *ça* [Tr].
92. 'Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria' (1905), *Standard Edition*, VII: 7. It is here (pp. 117-18) that Freud for the first time indicates the importance of transference in the progress of psychoanalytic theory [Tr].
93. *Standard Edition*, VII: 120. The account itself was published four years after the breaking off of the analysis in 1901 [Tr].
94. Two paragraphs rewritten (1966).
95. This term refers to the custom, of Celtic origin and still employed among certain American Biblical sects, of allowing a couple engaged to be married, or even a passing guest and the daughter of the house, to pass the night together in the same bed, provided that they keep their outdoor clothes on. The word takes its meaning from the fact that the girl is usually wrapped up tightly in several sheets. (Quincey speaks of it. See also the book by Aurand le Jeune on this practice amongst the Amish people.)
- In this way the myth of Tristan and Iseult, and even the complex that it represents, would henceforth act as a sponsor for the analyst in his quest for the soul betrothed to mystifying nuptials via the extenuation of its instinctual phantasies.
96. Thus what I have designated in what follows as the support of transference, namely, *le sujet-supposé-savoir*, is to be found defined here (1966).
97. Cf. 'Observations on Transference-Love' (1915), *Standard Edition*, XII: 159 and, especially, 168 ff.
98. For this is the correct translation of the two terms that have been rendered, with that unfailing *contresens* already noted, by 'terminated and interminable analysis'.
- The usual French translation of the title 'Die endliche und die unendliche Analyse' (1937), *Standard Edition*, XXIII, is 'Analyse terminée et analyse interminable'; the English: 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable'. Lacan renders the title by 'analyse finie ou indéfinie' [Tr].
99. In the case of the Wolf Man, *op. cit.*: 10-11.

100. Cf. Aulus-Gellius, *Attic Nights*, II, 4:

'In a trial, when it is a question of knowing who shall be given the task of presenting the accusation, and when two or more people volunteer for this office, the judgement by which the tribunal names the accuser is called divination. . . . This word comes from the fact that since accuser and accused are two correlative terms that cannot continue to exist without each other, and since the type of judgement in question here presents an accused without accuser, it is necessary to have recourse to divination in order to find what the trial does not provide, what it leaves still unknown – that is to say, the accuser.'

101. In France, a type of boarding school [Tr.].

102. 'A supplement to Freud's "History of an Infantile Neurosis"' (1928), republished in *The Psycho-Analytic Reader* (1950). See the further details and references in Ernest Jones, *Sigmund Freud*, II: 306–12. Dr Mack Brunswick notes that she was simply the mediator between the Wolf Man and the absent Freud [Tr.].

103. Two paragraphs rewritten (1966).

104. 'La parole qui dure'. Cf. Leenhardt, 'La parole qui dure' (Tradition, mythe, statut), *Do Kamo* (1947): 173 ff. [Tr.].

105. English in the original.

106. Whether a damaged stone or a cornerstone, my strong point is that I have never yielded over this (1966).

107. Notably in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* [Tr.].

108. This is the form called *Laksana-laksana*.

109. Cf. 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable' (1937), *Standard Edition*, XXIII: 245 ff.; and *An Outline of Psycho-analysis* (1940), *ibid.*: 248 f.

110. Cf. 'Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through' (1914), *Standard Edition*, XII: 145.

111. *Being and Time* (1962): 294.

112. The four words '*renversé dans la répétition*' in which is inscribed my latest formulation of repetition (1966) are substituted for an improper recourse to the 'eternal return' ['*toujours présent dans l'éternel retour*'], which was all that I could convey at that time.

113. '*Jeux d'occultation*'. The child would associate the appearance and disappearance of a toy that he alternately threw away and drew back again with the vowel sounds 'o' and 'a', which Freud interpreted as those of the German words for 'gone!' (*Fort!*) and 'here!' (*Da!*). The repetition of this game was apparently evidence of the child's beginning to master his environment actively through speech, for the active repetition seemed clearly to replace the passivity of the situation where the child's mother was alternately present and absent. Freud notes the eventual detachment of the game from the figure of the mother, and he notes the importance of the antithesis of disappearance and return rather than the content of the opposition: by means of his image in a mirror, the child soon discovered how to make himself disappear. Cf. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), *Standard Edition*, XVIII: 14 ff. [Tr.].

114. Leenhardt, for example, uses this spatial representation in his *Do Kamo* to represent the native's existence as a locus of relationships with others [Tr.].

115. Premises of the topology that I have been putting into practice over the past five years (1966).

116. '. . . *comme médiatrice entre l'homme du souci et le sujet du savoir absolu*'. *Souci* is the usual French rendering of the Heideggerian *Sorge*, and *savoir* of the Hegelian *Wissen* [Tr.].

117. The serpent is Moses's brazen serpent, god of healing (*Numbers*, xxi, 9) [Tr.].

118. Cf. Freud's analysis of Dora, *Standard Edition*, VII: 39:

'It is a rule of psycho-analytic technique that an internal connection which is still undisclosed will announce its

presence by means of a contiguity – a temporal proximity – of associations; just as in writing, if "a" and "b" are put side by side, it means that the syllable "ab" is to be formed out of them.'

Freud's first use of this metaphor occurs in 'The Interpretation of Dreams', *Standard Edition*, IV: 247 and 314 [Tr.].

119. Let it be understood that it is not a question of those 'gifts' that are always supposed to be lacking in novices, but of

a gift that is in fact lacking to them more often than they lack it.

120. Ponge writes it: *réson* (1966). [In his *Pour un Malherbe*. 'Resound' is '*résonner*' in French; *réson* is a homonym of *raison*.]

121. '*Soumission, don, grâce*'. The three Sanskrit nouns (*damah*, *dānam*, *dayā*) are also rendered 'self-control'; 'giving', 'compassion' (Rhadhakrishnan), the three verbs, 'control', 'give', 'sympathize' (T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, Part V; 'What the thunder said').