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SIX

On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis

This article contains the most important parts of the seminar
given during the first two terms of the academic year
1955-6, at the École Normale Supérieure. It first
appeared in *La Psychanalyse*, vol. 4.



*Hoc quod triginta tres per annos in ipso loco studui,
et Sanctae Annae Genio loci, et dilectae
juventuti, quae eo me sectata est,
diligenter dedico.*



I Towards Freud

1. Half a century of Freudianism applied to psychosis leaves its problem
still to be rethought, in other words, at the *status quo ante*.

It might be said that before Freud discussion of psychosis did not
detach itself from a theoretical background that presented itself as psy-
chology, but which was merely a 'laicized' remainder of what we shall
call the long metaphysical coction of science in the School (with the capital
'S' that it deserves).

Now if our science, which concerns the *physis*, in its ever purer mathe-
matization, retains from this cooking no more than a whiff so subtle that
one may legitimately wonder whether there has not been a substitution
of person, the same cannot be said of the *antiphysis* (that is, the living
apparatus that one hopes is capable of measuring the said physis), whose
smell of burnt fat betrays without the slightest doubt the age-old practice
in the said cooking of the preparation of brains.

Thus the theory of abstraction, necessary in accounting for knowledge,
has become fixed in an abstract theory of the faculties of the subject,
which the most radical sensualist petitions could not render more functional
with regard to subjective effects.

The constantly renewed attempts to correct its results by the varied counterweights of the affect are doomed to failure as long as one omits to ask if it is indeed the same subject that is affected.

2. It is the question that one learns on the school bench (with a small 's') to avoid once and for all: for even if the alternations of identity of the *percipiens* are admitted, its function in the constitution of the unity of the *perceptum* is not discussed. The diversity of structure of the *perceptum* affects in the *percipiens* only a diversity of register, in the final analysis, that of the *sensoriums*. In law, this diversity is always surmountable if the *percipiens* is capable of apprehending reality.

That is why those whose task it is to answer the question posed by the existence of the madman could not prevent themselves from interposing between it and them those same school benches, which provided such a convenient shelter.

Indeed, I would dare to lump together, if I may say so, all the positions, whether they are mechanist or dynamist, whether they see genesis as deriving from the organism or from the psyche, and structure from disintegration or from conflict. All of them, ingenious as they are in declaring, in the name of a manifest fact that a hallucination is a *perceptum* without an object end up asking the *percipiens* the reason for this *perceptum*, without anyone realizing that in this request, a step has been skipped, the step of asking oneself whether the *perceptum* itself bequeathed a univocal sense to the *percipiens* here required to explain it.

This step, however, ought to appear legitimate in any unbiased examination of verbal hallucination, because it is not reducible to a specific *sensorium*, still less to a *percipiens* in the sense that the latter would give it its unity.

In effect, it is an error to hold it as essentially auditive when it is conceivable that it be not so at all (for a deaf-mute, for example, or in some non-auditive register of hallucinatory spelling). It is an error moreover because we realise that the act of hearing is not the same, according to whether it aims at the coherence of the verbal chain, namely, its over-determination at each instant by the deferred action (*après-coup*) of its sequence, as, too, the suspension at each instant of its value at the advent of a meaning, ever ready for return – or according to whether it accommodates itself in speech to sound modulation, to this or that end of acoustic analysis: tonal or phonetic, even of musical power.

These very brief remarks were enough to bring out the difference of the subjectivities concerned in the perspective of the *perceptum* (and the

extent to which it is misunderstood in the questioning of patients and the nosology of 'voices').

But one might claim to reduce this difference to a level of objectification in the *percipiens*.

This, however, is not the case. For it is at the level at which subjective 'synthesis' confers its full meaning on speech that the subject reveals all the paradoxes of which he is the patient in this singular perception. These paradoxes already appear when it is the other who offers speech: this is sufficiently evidenced in the subject by the possibility of his obeying this speech in so far as it governs his hearing and his being-on-his-guard, for simply by entering the other's auditory field, the subject falls under the sway of a suggestion from which he can escape only by reducing the other to being no more than the spokesman of a discourse that is not his own or of an intention that he is holding in reserve.

But still more striking is the subject's relation to his own speech, in which the important factor is rather masked by the purely acoustic fact that he cannot speak without hearing himself. Nor is there anything special about the fact that he cannot listen to himself without being divided as far as the behaviour of the consciousness is concerned. Clinicians did better by discovering verbal motor hallucination by detecting the outline of phonatory movements. Yet they have not articulated where the crucial point resides; it is that the *sensorium* being indifferent in the production of a signifying chain:

- (a) this signifying chain imposes itself, by itself, on the subject in its vocal dimension;
- (b) it takes as such a reality proportional to the time, perfectly observable in experience, that its subjective attribution involves;
- (c) its own structure *qua* signifier is determinant in this attribution, which, as a rule, is distributive, that is to say, possesses several voices, and, therefore, renders equivocal a supposedly unifying *percipiens*.

3. I shall illustrate what I have just said with a phenomenon taken from one of my clinical presentations for the year 1955–6, that is, the year of the seminar referred to here. Let us say that such a discovery can be made only at the cost of complete submission, even if it is intentional, to the properly subjective positions of the patient, positions which all too often one distorts in reducing them to a morbid process, thus reinforcing the difficulty of penetrating them with a not unjustified reticence on the part of the subject.

It was a case in fact of one of those shared delusions, of which I long ago showed the type in the mother/daughter couple, in which a sense of intrusion, developing into a delusion of being spied on, was merely the development of the defence proper to an affective binary relation, open as such to any form of alienation.

It was the daughter who, when interviewed, gave me as proof of the insults to which both of them were subjected by their neighbours a fact concerning the lover of the neighbour who was supposed to be harassing them with her attacks, after they had had to break off a friendship with her that was at first encouraged. This man, who was no more therefore than an indirect party to the situation, and indeed a somewhat shadowy figure in the patient's allegations, had, apparently, called after her, as he passed her in the corridor of the block of flats in which they lived, the offensive word: 'Sow!'.

Upon which, I, little inclined to see in it a counter-thrust to 'Pig!', which would be too easy to extrapolate in the name of a projection which, in such a case, is never more than the psychiatrist's own projection, went on to ask her what she might have said the moment before. Not without success: for, with a smile, she conceded that, on seeing the man, she had murmured the apparently harmless enough words: 'I've just been to the pork butcher's . . .'

Who were these words directed to? She was hard put to say it, thus giving me the right to help her. For their textual meaning, we cannot ignore the fact, among others, that the patient had suddenly taken leave of her husband and her family-in-law and thus given to a marriage that her mother disapproved of an outcome that has remained unchanged. This departure rested on the conviction she had acquired that these peasants proposed nothing less, in order to put an end to this good-for-nothing city girl, than to cut her into pieces.

What does it matter, however, whether or not one has to resort to the phantasy of the fragmented body in order to understand how the patient, a prisoner of the dual relationship, responds once more here to a situation that is beyond her comprehension.

For our present purposes, it is enough that the patient should have admitted that the phrase was allusive, even though she was unable to be anything other than perplexed as to which of the two present or the one absent person was being alluded to, for it thus appears that the *I*, as subject of the sentence in direct style, left in suspense, in accordance with its function as a 'shifter', as it is called in linguistics,¹ the designation

of the speaking subject, for as long as the allusion, in its conjuratory intention no doubt, itself remained in a state of oscillation. After the pause, this uncertainty came to an end with the apposition of the word 'sow', itself too loaded with invective to follow the oscillation isochronically. Thus the discourse came to realize its intention as rejection in hallucination. In the place where the unspeakable object is rejected in the real, a word makes itself heard, so that, coming in the place of that which has no name, it was unable to follow the intention of the subject without detaching itself from it by the dash preceding the reply: opposing its disparaging antistrophe to the cursing of the strophe thus restored to the patient with the index of the *I*, resembling in its opacity the ejaculations of love, when, lacking a signifier to name the object of its epithalamium, it employs the crudest trickery of the imaginary. 'I'll eat you up . . . Sweetie!' 'You'll love it . . . Rat!'

4. I have referred to this example here only to show in living, concrete detail that the function of irrealization is not everything in the symbol. For, in order that its irruption into the real should be beyond question, it has only to present itself, as it usually does, in the form of a broken chain.²

We also touch here upon the effect that every signifier has, once it is perceived, of arousing in the *percipiens* an assent composed of the awakening of the hidden duplicity of the second by the manifest ambiguity of the first.

Of course, all this may be regarded as mirage effects from the classical point of view of the unifying subject.

But it is striking that this point of view, reduced to itself, should offer, on hallucination for example, only views of such poverty that the work of a madman, no doubt as remarkable as Judge Schreber in his *Memoirs of my Nervous Illness*³ may, after being welcomed most enthusiastically, before Freud, by psychiatrists, be regarded, even after him, as a collection of writings to be offered as an introduction to the phenomenology of psychosis, and not only for the beginner.⁴

He provided me, too, with the basis of a structural analysis, when, in my seminar for the year 1955-6 on Freudian structures in psychosis, I followed Freud's advice and re-examined his case.

The relation between the signifier and the subject that this analysis reveals is to be met – it is apparent in this address – with the very appearance of these phenomena, if, returning from Freud's experience, one is aware of the point to which it is leading.

But this departure from the phenomenon, if properly carried out, would lead us back to that point, as was the case for me when an early study of paranoia led me thirty years ago to the threshold of psychoanalysis.⁵

Nowhere, in fact, is the fallacious conception of a psychical process in Jaspers' conception of this process, in which the symptom is merely the index, more irrelevant than in the approach to psychosis, because nowhere is the symptom, if one can decipher it, more clearly articulated in the structure itself.

Which makes it incumbent on us to define this process by the most radical determinants of the relation of man to the signifier.

5. But we do not have to have reached that stage to be interested in the variety of verbal hallucinations to be found in Schreber's *Memoirs*, or to recognize in them differences quite other than those in which they are 'classically' classified, according to their mode of involvement in the *perciptions* (the degree of his 'belief') or in the reality of the same ('audition'): or rather, the differences that derive from their speech structure, in so far as this structure is already in the *perceptum*.

Simply by considering the text of the hallucinations, a distinction arises for the linguist between code phenomena and message phenomena.

To the phenomena of code belong, in this approach, the voices that use the *Grundsprache*, which I would translate as 'basic language' (*langue-de-fond*), and which Schreber describes (S. 13-I)⁶ as 'a somewhat archaic, but always rigorous German that is particularly marked by its great wealth of euphemisms'. Elsewhere (S. 167-XII) he refers regretfully to 'its form, which is authentic on account of its characteristics of noble distinction and simplicity'.

This part of the phenomena is specified in expressions that are neological in form (new compound words – the process of compounding being governed here by the rules of the patient's language, *langue*) and usage. Hallucinations inform the subject of the forms and usages that constitute the neo-code: the subject owes to them, for example, primarily, the term *Grundsprache* to designate it.

It is something fairly close to these messages that linguists call *autonyms*, even though it is the signifier itself (and not that which it signifies) that is the object of the communication. But this peculiar, but normal relation between the message and itself is reduplicated here by the fact that these messages are regarded as being supported by beings whose relations they themselves state in modes that prove to be very similar to the con-

nexions of the signifier. The term *Nervenanhang*, which I would translate as nerve-annexation (*annexion-de-nerfs*), and which also derives from these messages, illustrates this remark in that passion and action between these beings is reduced to those annexed or disannexed nerves, but also in that these nerves, quite as much as the divine rays (*Gottesstrahlen*) to which they are homogeneous, are simply the joining together of the words (*paroles*) that they support (S. 130-X: what the voices formulate as: 'Do not forget that the nature of the rays is that they must speak').

There is the relation here of the system to its own constitution as signifier, which would seem to be relevant to the question of metalanguage and which, in my opinion, will demonstrate the impropriety of that notion if it is intended to define differentiated elements in language.

It should be noted, furthermore, that we are presented here with phenomena that have been wrongly called intuitive, on account of the fact that the effect of the signification anticipates the development of the signification. What is involved here, in fact is an effect of the signifier, in so far as its degree of certainty (second degree: signification of signification) assumes a weight proportional to the enigmatic void that first presents itself in the place of the signification itself.

The amusing thing in this case is that it is precisely to the extent that for the subject this high voltage of the signifier drops, that is to say, that the hallucinations are reduced to *ritornelli*, to mere repetitions, the inanity of which imputed to beings devoid of intelligence and personality, if not frankly effaced from the register of being, that it is to precisely this extent, as I say, that the voices take account of the *Seelenauffassung*, the conception-of-souls (in the basic language), a conception that is manifested in a catalogue of thoughts that is not unworthy of a book of classical psychology. A catalogue bound up in the voices with a pedantesque intention, a fact that does not prevent the subject from introducing the most pertinent commentaries. I would note that in these commentaries the source of the terms is always carefully distinguished, for example that although the subject uses the word *Instanz* (S. note of 30-II – lecture notes from 11 to 21-I), he emphasizes in a note: 'that word is mine'.

Thus the fundamental importance of memory-thoughts (*Erinnerungsgedanken, pensées-de-mémoire*) in the psychical economy does not escape him, and he immediately offers proof of this in the poetic and musical use of modulating repetition.

Our patient, who provides the priceless description of this 'conception of souls' as 'the somewhat idealized representation that souls have formed

of life and human thought' (S. 164-XII), thinks that he has 'gained insights into the essence of the process of thought and feeling in man that might be the envy of many psychologists' (S. 167-XII).

I would agree all the more readily in that, unlike them, he does not imagine that this knowledge, the scope of which he appreciates so humorously, proceeds from the nature of things, and that, although he thinks that he must make use of it, it is, as I have shown, on the basis of a semantic analysis!⁷

But to take up the thread of our argument, let us turn to the phenomena that I will contrast with the earlier ones as message phenomena.

We are dealing here with interrupted messages, by which a relation is sustained between the subject and his divine interlocutor, a relation to which the messages give the form of a challenge or endurance test.

Indeed, the voice of the partner limits the messages involved to the beginning of a sentence whose complement of sense presents, moreover, no difficulty for the subject, other than its harrassing, offensive side, which is usually of an ineptitude such as to discourage him. The bravery he shows in not faltering in his reply, in even thwarting the traps laid for him, is not the least important aspect for our analysis of the phenomenon.

But he will pause here again at the very text of what might be called hallucinatory provocation (or protasis). The subject gives us the following examples of such a structure (S. 217-XVI): (1) *Nun will ich mich* (now I will . . . myself . . .); (2) *Sie sollen nämlich . . .* (as for you, you ought to . . .); (3) *Das will ich mir . . .* (I will certainly . . .) – to take only these three – to which he must reply with their significant supplement, for him beyond doubt, namely: (1) face the fact that I am an idiot; (2) as for you, you ought to be exposed (a word of the basic language) as the negator of God and as given up to dissolute sensuality, not to mention other things; (3) think about it.

One might note that the sentence is interrupted at the point at which the group of words that one might call index-terms ends, the terms being either those designated by their function in the signifier, according to the term employed above, as shifters, or precisely the terms which, in the code, indicate the position of the subject on the basis of the message itself.

After which, the properly lexical part of the sentence, in other words that which comprises the words that the code defines by their use, whether the common code or the delusional code is involved, remains elided.

Is one not struck by the predominance of the function of the signifier in these two orders of phenomena, not to say urged to seek what lies at

the bottom of the association that they constitute; of a code constituted by messages on the code, and of a message reduced to that in the code which indicates the message.

All this had to be transferred with the greatest care to a graph,⁸ in which this year I tried to represent the connexions internal to the signifier, in so far as they structure the subject.

For there is a topology here that is quite distinct from what might be imagined given the requirement of an immediate parallel between the form of the phenomena and their pathways in the neuraxis.

But this topology, which follows the lines laid down by Freud when, after opening up the field of the unconscious through his work on dreams, he set out to describe the dynamics of the unconscious, without feeling restricted by any concern with cortical localization, is precisely what may best prepare the way for the questions that will be addressed to the surface of the cortex.

For it is only after the linguistic analysis of the phenomenon of language that one can legitimately establish the relation that it constitutes in the subject, and at the same time delimit the order of the 'machines' (in the purely associative sense that this term possesses in the mathematical theory of networks) that may realize this phenomenon.

It is no less remarkable that it should have been the Freudian experience that led the author of these lines in the direction presented here. Let us examine, then, what this experience introduces into our question.



II *After Freud*

1. What has Freud contributed here? We began by stating that, so far as the problem of psychosis was concerned, this contribution had led to a falling back.

This is immediately apparent in the simplistic character of the elements invoked in conceptions that all amount to a single fundamental schema, namely, how can the internal be transmitted to the external? It is no use, in effect, for the subject to try and encompass here an opaque id, since it is as ego, after all, in a way fully expressed in the present psychoanalytic orientation, as this same indestructible *percepiens*, that he is invoked in the motivation of psychosis. This *percepiens* is all-powerful over its no less unchanged correlative, reality, and the model of this power is derived from a datum accessible to common experience, that of affective projection.

For present theories are noteworthy for the totally uncritical way in which this mechanism of projection is used. The objections against such a use are overwhelming, yet this seems to deter no one, and this despite all the clinical evidence that there is nothing in common between affective projection and its supposed delusional effects, between the jealousy of the unfaithful spouse and that of the alcoholic, for example.

That Freud, in his essay of interpretation of the Schreber case, which is read so badly that it is usually reduced to the rehashings that followed, uses the form of a grammatical deduction in order to present the switching of the relation to the other in psychosis, namely, the different ways of denying the proposition, 'I love him', from which it follows that this negative judgement is structured in two stages: the first, the reversal of the value of the verb ('I hate him'), or inversion of the gender of the agent or object ('It is not I' or 'It is not him, but her' – or inversely); the second, an interversion of subjects ('He hates me', 'It is she he loves', 'It is she who loves me') – the logical problems formally involved in this deduction have retained no one's interest.

Especially as Freud in this text expressly dismisses the mechanism of projection as insufficient to account for the problem, and enters at that point on a very long, detailed and subtle discussion of repression, providing us at the same time with some tooting stones for our problem – let us say simply that these tooting stones continue to stand out inviolate above the clouds of dust produced in the psychoanalytic construction site.

2. Freud has since provided the article 'On Narcissism'. This text has been put to the same use, namely, a sort of pumping in and out of the libido by the *perciens*, according to every twist and turn of the psychoanalytic party line. The *perciens* is thus entitled to inflate and deflate a dummy reality.

Freud provided the first theory of the way in which the ego is constituted according to the other in the new subjective economy, determined by the unconscious: one responded to it by acclaiming in this ego the rediscovery of the good old fool-proof *perciens* and the synthesizing function.

Is it surprising that no other benefit should have been derived from it for psychosis than the definitive promotion of the notion of *loss of reality*?

This is not all. In 1924, Freud wrote an incisive article, 'The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis', in which he draws attention to the fact that the problem lies not in the reality that is lost, but in that which

takes its place. It is like talking to the deaf, since the problem has been resolved; the store of accessories is inside, and they are taken out as required.

In fact, such is the schema with which even M. Katan, in the studies in which he follows so attentively the different stages of Schreber's psychosis, guided by his concern to penetrate the prepsychotic phase, satisfies himself, when he uses the defence against instinctual temptation, against masturbation and homosexuality in this case, to justify the upsurge of the hallucinatory phantasmagoria, a curtain interposed by the operation of the *perciens* between the tendency and its real stimulant.

To think that this simplicity should have comforted us for a time, if we had considered that it should suffice to explain the problem of literary creation in psychosis!

3. After all, what problem would he still erect as an obstacle to the discourse of psychoanalysis, when the implication of a tendency in reality is a response from the regression of their couple? What might tire minds who accept that one should talk to them of regression, without distinguishing between regression in structure, regression in history, and regression in development (which Freud always differentiates as topographical, temporal, or genetic)?

I shall refrain from spending more time here drawing up an inventory of the confusion. It is quite familiar to those whom we train and would be of no interest to others. I shall be content to propose for their common meditation the effect of bewilderment (*dépaysement*) produced, at the sight of a speculation that is doomed to go round in circles between development and entourage, simply by features that are nevertheless the armature of the Freudian edifice: namely, the equivalence maintained by Freud of the imaginary function of the phallus in both sexes (for long the despair of lovers of false 'biological' windows, that is to say, the naturalists), the castration complex found as a normative phase of the assumption by the subject of his own sex, the myth of the murder of the father rendered necessary by the constituent presence of the Oedipus complex in every personal history, and, *last but not . . .*,⁹ the effect of duplication introduced into the love life by the very repetitive agency of the object that is always to be rediscovered as unique. Must we recall once more the profoundly dissident character of the notion of drive in Freud, the disjunction of principle between the tendency, its direction, and its object, and not only its original 'perversion', but its implication in a conceptual systematic, a systematic whose place Freud indicated, from

the very beginning of his work, under the heading of the sexual theories of childhood?

Is it not clear that we left all that behind long ago in an educative naturism that has no other principle than the notion of gratification and its obverse, frustration, which is nowhere mentioned by Freud.

No doubt the structures revealed by Freud continue to sustain, not only in their plausibility, but also in the way they are manipulated, the would-be dynamic forces with which psychoanalysis today claims to direct its flow. A deserted technique would be even more capable of 'miracles', – were it not for the additional conformism that reduces its effects to those of an ambiguous mixture of social suggestion and psychological superstition.

4. It is even striking that a demand for rigour is manifested only in people whom the course of things maintains by some aspect outside this concert, such as Mrs Ida Macalpine, who gave me cause to marvel and who, as I read her, seemed level-headed enough.

Her critique of the cliché that is confined in the factor of the repression of a homosexual drive, which, in fact, is quite unclear, to explain psychosis, is masterly, and she demonstrates this beautifully in the Schreber case itself. Homosexuality, supposedly a determinant of paranoiac psychosis, is really a symptom articulated in its process.

This process began at an early stage, at the moment when the first sign of it appeared in Schreber in the form of one of those hypnopompic ideas, which in their fragility present us with sorts of tomographies of the ego, an idea whose imaginary function is sufficiently indicated to us in its form: that it would be *beautiful* to be a woman undergoing the act of copulation.

Ida Macalpine, to make one just criticism, seems nonetheless to ignore the fact that although Freud placed considerable stress on the homosexual question, it was first to show that it conditions the idea of grandeur in delusion, but, more essentially, he indicates in it the mode of otherness in accordance with which the metamorphosis of the subject operates, in other words, the place in which his delusional 'transferences' succeed one another. She would have done better to trust the reason to which Freud once again clings here in a reference to the Oedipus complex, which she does not accept.

This difficulty should have led her to discoveries that would certainly have been illuminating for us, for nothing has yet been said about the function of what is known as the inverted Oedipus complex. Mrs Macalpine prefers to reject here any recourse to the Oedipus complex, replacing it

by a phantasy of procreation, which is observed in children of both sexes, even in the form of phantasies involving pregnancy, which, indeed, she regards as being linked to the structure of hypochondria.¹⁰

This phantasy is, indeed, essential, and I would add that in the first case in which I obtained this phantasy in a man, it was by a means that marked an important stage in my career, and the man in question was neither a hypochondriac nor a hysteric.

She feels, with some subtlety, even – *mirabile* the way things are today – the need to link this phantasy to a symbolic structure. But in order to find this outside the Oedipus complex, she goes off in search of ethnographical references which, on the evidence of her writing, she does not appear to have fully assimilated. This involves the 'heliolithic' theme, which has been championed by one of the most eminent adherents of the English diffusionist school. I am aware of the merits of these conceptions, but they do not appear to me to support in the least the idea that Mrs Macalpine tries to give of asexual procreation as a 'primitive' conception.¹¹

Mrs Macalpine's error is revealed, however, in the fact that she arrives at a result that is the opposite of the one she is looking for.

By isolating a phantasy in a dynamic that she describes as intrapsychical, according to a perspective that she opens up on the notion of the transference, she ends up by designating in the psychotic's uncertainty about his own sex, the weak spot on which the analyst must bring his intervention to bear, contrasting the happy effects of this intervention with the catastrophic effect, which, in fact, is constantly to be observed among psychotics, of any suggestion that he should recognize a latent homosexuality.

Now, uncertainty about one's sex is precisely a common feature in hysteria, whose encroachments in diagnosis Mrs Macalpine denounces.

This is because no imaginary formation is specific,¹² none is determinant either in the structure, or in the dynamics of a process. And that is why one is condemned to lacking both when, in the hope of reaching them more easily, one wishes to ignore the symbolic articulation that Freud discovered at the same time as the unconscious, and which, for him, is, in effect, consubstantial with it: it is the need for this articulation that he signifies for us in his methodical reference to the Oedipus complex.

5. How can one impute responsibility for this *méconnaissance* to Mrs Macalpine, when, far from disappearing, it has continued to grow and flourish in psychoanalysis?

This is why, in order to define the minimal split, which is certainly

justifiable between neurosis and psychosis, psychoanalysts are reduced to leaving responsibility for reality to the ego: which is what I would call leaving the problem of psychosis at the *statu quo ante*.

One point, however, was very specifically designated as the bridge across the frontier of the two domains.

They have even made use of it, in the most excessive way, on the question of the transference in psychosis. It would be uncharitable to assemble here what has been said on this subject. I shall simply take the opportunity of paying homage to Ida Macalpine's intelligence, when she sums up a position typical of the genius to be found in psychoanalysis today in these terms: in short, psychoanalysts claim to be able to cure psychosis in all cases where a psychosis is not involved.¹³

It is on this point that Midas, laying down the law one day on what psychoanalysis could do, expressed himself thus: 'It is clear that psychoanalysis is possible only with a subject for whom there is another!' And Midas crossed the two-way bridge thinking it to be a piece of waste land. How could it have been otherwise, since he was unaware that the river was there?

The term 'other', hitherto unheard among the psychoanalyst population, had no more meaning for it than the murmur of the reeds.



III With Freud

1. It is somewhat striking that a dimension that is felt as that of Something-else in so many of the experiences that men undergo, not at all without thinking about them, rather while thinking about them, but without thinking that they are thinking, and like Telemachus thinking of the expense (*pensant à la dépense*), should never have been thought to the extent of being congruently said by those whom the idea of thought assures of thinking.

Desire, boredom, confinement, revolt, prayer, sleeplessness (I would like to stop there, since Freud refers specifically to it by quoting in the middle of his Schreber a passage from Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*¹⁴), and panic are there as evidence of the dimension of that Elsewhere, and to draw our attention to it, not so much, as I would say, as mere states of mind that thinking-without-laughing¹⁵ can put back into place, but much more as permanent principles of collective organizations, outside which human life does not appear capable of maintaining itself for long.

No doubt it is not impossible that the most thinkable thinking-to-think, thinking itself to be that Other-thing, should always have been unable to tolerate this possible competition.

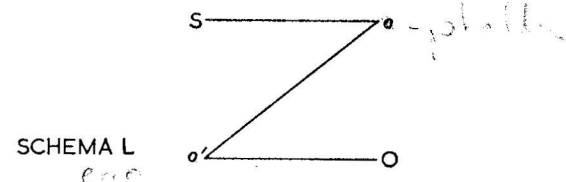
But this aversion becomes quite clear once the conceptual juncture, which nobody had yet thought of, was made, between this Elsewhere and the place, present for all and closed to each, in which Freud discovered that, without thinking about it, and without anyone being able to think he thinks about it better than anyone else therefore, it thinks (*ça pense*). It thinks rather badly, but it does think. For it is in these terms that it announces the unconscious to us: thoughts which, if their laws are not quite the same as those of our everyday thoughts, however noble or vulgar they may be, are perfectly articulated.

There is no longer any way, therefore, of reducing this Elsewhere to the imaginary form of a nostalgia, a lost or future Paradise; what one finds is the paradise of the child's loves, where, *baudelaire de Dieu!*¹⁶ something's going on, I can tell you.

Moreover, if any doubt still remained in our minds, Freud named the locus of the unconscious by a term that had struck him in Fechner (who, incidentally, is an experimentalist, and not at all the realist that our literary reference books suggest), namely, *ein anderer Schauplatz*, another scene; he makes use of it some twenty times in his early works.

This sprinkling of cold water having, let us hope, refreshed our minds, let us move on to the scientific formulation of the subject's relation to this Other.

2. By way of 'fixing our ideas' and the souls suffering here, I will apply the said relation to schema L, already produced and here simplified:



This schema signifies that the condition of the subject S (neurosis or psychosis) is dependent on what is being unfolded in the Other O. What is being unfolded there is articulated like a discourse (the unconscious is the discourse of the Other), whose syntax Freud first sought to define for those bits that come to us in certain privileged moments, in dreams, in slips of the tongue or pen, in flashes of wit.

Why would the subject be interested in this discourse, if he were not

taking part in it? He is, indeed, a participator, in that he is stretched over the four corners of the schema: namely, S, his ineffable, stupid existence, *o*, his objects, *o'*, his ego, that is, that which is reflected of his form in his objects, and O, the locus from which the question of his existence may be presented to him.

For it is a truth of experience for analysis that the subject is presented with the question of his existence, not in terms of the anxiety that it arouses at the level of the ego, and which is only one element in the series, but as an articulated question: 'What am I there?', concerning his sex and his contingency in being, namely, that, on the one hand, he is a man or a woman, and, on the other, that he might not be, the two conjugating their mystery, and binding it in the symbols of procreation and death. That the question of his existence bathes the subject, supports him, invades him, tears him apart even, is shown in the tensions, the lapses, the phantasies that the analyst encounters; and, it should be added, by means of elements of the particular discourse in which this question is articulated in the Other. It is because these phenomena are ordered in the figures of this discourse that they have the fixity of symptoms, are legible and can be resolved when deciphered.

3. One must insist, therefore, that this question is not presented in the unconscious as ineffable, that this question is a questioning (*une mise en question*), that is to say, that prior to all analysis it is articulated in it in discrete elements. This is most important, for these elements are those that linguistic analysis forces us to isolate as signifiers, and here they are seen at work in their purest form at the most unlikely, yet most likely point: – the most unlikely, since their chain is found to survive in an alterity in relation to the subject as radical as that of as yet undecipherable hieroglyphics in the solitude of the desert; – the most likely, because there alone their function of inducing the signification into the signified by imposing their structure on it may appear quite unambiguously.

For certainly the furrows opened up by the signifier in the real world will seek, in order to broaden them, the gaps that the real world *qua* existent (*étant*) offers to the signifier, to such an extent that an ambiguity may well survive in our understanding as to whether the signifier does not follow the law of the signified here.

But this is not the case at the level of the questioning not of the place of the subject in the world, but of his existence as subject, a questioning which, beginning with himself, will extend to his in-the-world relation

to objects, and to the existence of the world, in so far as it, too, may be questioned beyond its order.

4. It is of the utmost importance to realize in the experience of the unconscious Other in which Freud guides us that the question does not find its lineaments in protomorphic proliferations of the image, in vegetative intumescences, in animic halos irradiating from the palpitations of life.

The whole difference between Freud's orientation and that of the Jungian school, which attaches itself to such forms, is there: *Wandlungen der libido*. These forms may be promoted to the first level of a mantic, for they can be produced by the appropriate techniques (promoting imaginary creations: reveries, drawings, etc.) in a mappable site: one sees it on our schema stretched between *o* and *o'*, that is, in the veil of the narcissistic mirage, eminently suited to sustaining with its effects of seduction and capture whatever is reflected in it.

If Freud rejected this mantic, it is at the point at which it neglected the directing function of a signifying articulation, which takes effect from its internal law and from a material subjected to the poverty that is essential to it.

Similarly, it is to the extent that this style of articulation has been maintained, by virtue of the Freudian Word (*verbe*), albeit dismembered, in the community that claims to represent orthodoxy, that so deep a difference remains between the two schools, even to the point, as things now are, that neither is in a position to formulate the reason for it. As a result, the level of their practice will soon appear to be reducible to the distance between the modes of dreaming of the Alps and the Atlantic.

To take up Charcot's formula, which so delighted Freud, 'this does not prevent [the Other] from existing' in his place O.

For if he is taken away, man can no longer even sustain himself in the position of Narcissus. As if by elastic, the *anima* springs back on to the *animus* and the *animus* on to the animal, which between S and *o* sustains with its *Umwelt* 'external relations' noticeably closer than ours, without, moreover, one being able to say that its relation with the Other is negligible, but only that it appears otherwise than in the sporadic sketches of neurosis.

5. The L of the questioning of the subject in his existence has a combinatory structure that must not be confused with its spatial aspect. As such, it is the signifier itself that must be articulated in the Other, especially in its position as fourth term in the topology.

As support for this structure, we find in it the three signifiers in which

the Other may be identified in the Oedipus complex. They are sufficient to symbolize the significations of sexed reproduction, under the signifiers of relation, 'love' and 'procreation'.

The fourth term is given by the subject in his reality, foreclosed as such in the system, and entering into the play of the signifiers only in the mode of death, but becoming the true subject to the extent that this play of the signifiers will make it signify.

This play of the signifiers is not, in effect, an inert one, since it is animated in each particular part by the whole history of the ancestry of real others that the denomination of signifying Others involves in the contemporaneity of the Subject. Furthermore, in so far as it is set up *qua* rule over and above each part, this play already structures in the subject the three agencies: ego (ideal), reality, superego, the determination of which was to be the task of the second Freudian topography.

Furthermore, the subject enters the game as the dummy (*mort*), but it is as a living being that he plays it; it is in his life that he must take up the suit (*couleur*) that he may bid. He will do so by means of a set¹⁷ of imaginary figures, selected from among the innumerable forms of animic relations, the choice of which involves a certain arbitrariness, since, in order to correspond homologically to the symbolic triads, it must be numerically reduced.

To do this, the polar relation, by which the specular image (of the narcissistic relation) is linked as a unifier to all the imaginary elements of what is called the fragmented body, provides a couple that is prepared not only by a natural conformity of development and structure to serve as a homologue for the Mother/Child symbolic relation. The imaginary couple of the mirror stage, through that counter-nature that it manifests, if it must be related to a specific prematuration of birth in man, is appropriated to provide the imaginary triangle with the base to which the symbolic relation may in a sense correspond (see schema R).

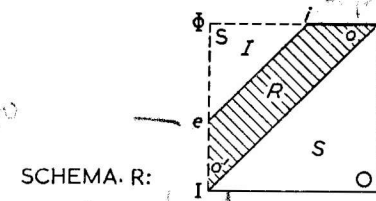
In effect, it is by means of the gap opened up by this prematuration in the imaginary, and in which the effects of the mirror stage proliferate, that the human animal is *capable* of imagining himself as mortal, which does not mean that he would be able to do so without his symbiosis with the symbolic, but rather that without this gap that alienates him from his own image, this symbiosis with the symbolic, in which he constitutes himself as subject to death, could not have occurred.

6. The third term of the imaginary triad, that in which the subject identifies himself, on the contrary, with himself as a living being is simply

the phallic image the unveiling of which in this function is not the least scandalous aspect of the Freudian discovery.

Let us inscribe here at once, under the heading of conceptual visualization of this double triad, what we shall henceforth call schema R, and which represents the lines of conditioning of the *perceptum*, in other words, of the object, in so far as these lines circumscribe the field of reality, rather than merely depending on them.

Thus taking the summits of the symbolic triangle: I as the ego-ideal, M as the signifier of the primordial object, and F as the position in O of the Name-of-the-Father, one can see how the homological fastening of the signification of the subject S under the signifier of the phallus may affect the support of the field of reality delimited by the quadrangle *MieI*. The other two summits of this quadrangle, *e* and *i*, represent the two imaginary terms of the narcissistic relation, the ego and the specular image.



SCHEMA R:

One may thus situate from *i* to M, that is in *o*, the extremities of the segments Si , So^1 , So^2 , So^n , SM, in which are placed the figures of the imaginary other in the relations of erotic aggression where they are realized – similarly, from *e* to I, that is in *o'*, the extremities of segments Se , So'^1 , So'^2 , So'^n , SI, in which the ego identifies itself, from its specular *Urbild* to the paternal identification of the ego-ideal.¹⁸

Those of you who attended my seminar for the year 1956–7 know the use that I made of the imaginary triad presented here, a triad of which the child as the desired object constitutes in reality the summit I – to restore to the notion of the Object Relation,¹⁹ now somewhat discredited by the mass of nonsense that the term has been used in recent years to validate, the capital of experience that legitimately belongs to it.

In effect, this schema enables us to show the relations that refer not to pre-Oedipal stages, which are not of course non-existent, but which cannot be conceived of in analytic terms (as is sufficiently apparent in the hesitant, but controlled work of Melanie Klein), but to the pregenital stages in so far as they are ordered in the retroaction of the Oedipus complex.

The whole problem of the perversions consists in conceiving how the

child, in his relation to the mother, a relation constituted in analysis not by his vital dependence on her, but by his dependence on her love, that is to say, by the desire for her desire, identifies himself with the imaginary object of this desire in so far as the mother herself symbolizes it in the phallus.

The phallocentrism produced by this dialectic is all that need concern us here. It is, of course, entirely conditioned by the intrusion of the signifier in man's psyche, and strictly impossible to deduce from any pre-established harmony of this psyche with the nature that it expresses.

This imaginary effect, which can be felt as a discord only from the prejudged vantage point of a normativity proper to instinct, has nevertheless determined the long quarrel, which has now died down, but whose damaging after effects still linger on, concerning the primary or secondary nature of the phallic phase. Even apart from the extreme importance of the question, this quarrel would merit our interest for the dialectical exploits it imposed on Dr Ernest Jones in maintaining that he was in complete agreement with Freud, while affirming a position that was diametrically opposed to his, namely, that which made him, with certain minor reservations no doubt, the champion of the English feminists, with their beloved egalitarian principle: 'to each his own' – for the boys the phallus for the girls the c . . . (*aux boys le phalle, aux girls le c . . .*).

7. Freud revealed this imaginary function of the phallus, then, to be the pivot of the symbolic process that completes in *both sexes* the questioning of the sex by the castration complex.

The present obscuring of this function of the phallus (reduced to the role of partobject) in the psychoanalytic concert is simply the consequence of the profound mystification in which culture maintains the symbol of it, in the sense that paganism itself produced it only at the culmination of its most secret mysteries.

Indeed, in the subjective economy, governed as we see it by the unconscious, it is a signification that is evoked only by what we call a metaphor, in particular, the paternal metaphor.

And this leads us, since it is with Mrs Macalpine that we chose to open this dialogue, to her need to refer to a 'heliolithism', by means of which she claims to see the codification of procreation in a pre-Oedipal culture, in which the procreative function of the father would be eluded.

Anything one can advance along these lines, in whatever form, will merely accentuate the signifying function that conditions paternity.

For in another debate dating from the time when psychoanalysts still

questioned themselves about doctrine, Dr Ernest Jones, with a remark that was more relevant than his previous one, did not provide a less inappropriate argument.

Concerning, in effect, the state of beliefs in some Australian tribe, he refused to admit that any collectivity of men could fail to recognize the fact of experience that, with certain enigmatic exceptions, no woman gives birth to a child without having undergone coitus, or even be ignorant of the lapse of time between the two events. For the credit that seems to me to be accorded quite legitimately to the human capacities to observe the real is precisely that which has not the slightest importance in the matter.

For, if the symbolic context requires it, paternity will nonetheless be attributed to the fact that the woman met a spirit at some fountain or some rock in which he is supposed to live.

It is certainly this that demonstrates that the attribution of procreation to the father can only be the effect of a pure signifier, of a recognition, not of a real father, but of what religion has taught us to refer to as the Name-of-the-Father.

Of course, there is no need of a signifier to be a father, any more than to be dead, but without a signifier, no one would ever know anything about either state of being.

I would take this opportunity of reminding those who cannot be persuaded to seek in Freud's texts an extension of the enlightenment that their pedagogues dispense to them how insistently Freud stresses the affinity of the two signifying relations that I have just referred to, whenever the neurotic subject (especially the obsessional) manifests this affinity through the conjunction of the themes of the father and death.

How, indeed, could Freud fail to recognize such an affinity, when the necessity of his reflexion led him to link the appearance of the signifier of the Father, as author of the Law, with death, even to the murder of the Father – thus showing that if this murder is the fruitful moment of debt through which the subject binds himself for life to the Law, the symbolic father is, in so far as he signifies this Law, the dead Father.



IV *Schreber's way*

1. We can now enter the subjectivity of Schreber's delusion.

The signification of the phallus, I have said, must be evoked in the subject's imaginary by the paternal metaphor.

This has a precise meaning in the economy of the signifier, the formalization of which I can do no more than indicate here, but which will be familiar to those of you who are attending the seminar I am giving this year on the formations of the unconscious. Namely: *formula of the metaphor, or of signifying substitution*:

$$\frac{S}{S'} \cdot \frac{S'}{x} \rightarrow S \left(\frac{I}{s} \right)$$

in which the capital Ss are signifiers, x the unknown signification and s the signified induced by the metaphor, which consists of the substitution in the signifying chain of S for S'. The elision of S', represented here by the bar through it, is the condition of the success of the metaphor.

This applies equally to the metaphor of the Name-of-the-Father, that is, the metaphor that substitutes this Name in the place first symbolized by the operation of the absence of the mother.

$$\frac{\text{Name-of-the-Father}}{\text{Desire of the Mother}} \cdot \frac{\text{Desire of the Mother}}{\text{Signified to the subject}} \rightarrow \text{Name-of-the-Father} \left(\frac{O}{\text{Phallus}} \right)$$

Let us now try to conceive of a circumstance of the subjective position in which, to the appeal of the Name-of-the-Father responds, not the absence of the real father, for this absence is more than compatible with the presence of the signifier, but the inadequacy of the signifier itself.

This is not a conception that should come as a complete surprise. The presence of the signifier in the Other is, in effect, a presence usually closed to the subject, because it usually persists in a state of repression (*verdrängt*), and because from there it insists on representing itself in the signified by means of its repetition compulsion (*Wiederholungszwang*).

Let us extract from several of Freud's texts a term that is sufficiently articulated in them to render them unjustifiable if this term does not designate in them a function of the unconscious that is distinct from the repressed. Let us take as demonstrated the essence of my seminar on the psychoses, namely, that this term refers to the most necessary implication of his thought on the phenomenon of psychosis: this term is *Verwerfung* (foreclosure).

It is articulated in this register as the absence of that *Bejahung*, or judgement of attribution, that Freud poses as a necessary precedent for

any possible application of *Verneinung* (negation), which he opposes to it as a judgement of existence: whereas the whole article from which he detaches this *Verneinung* as an element of analytic experience demonstrates in it the avowal of the signifier itself that it annuls.

It is on the signifier, then, that the primordial *Bejahung* bears, and other texts enable us to recognize this, in particular letter 52 of the Fliess correspondence, in which it is expressly isolated as the term of an original perception under the name of sign, *Zeichen*.

We will take *Verwerfung*, then, to be *foreclosure* of the signifier. To the point at which the Name-of-the-Father is called – we shall see how – may correspond in the Other, then, a mere hole, which, by the inadequacy of the metaphoric effect will provoke a corresponding hole at the place of the phallic signification.

It is the only form in which it is possible for us to conceptualize what Schreber shows us to be the result of the damage that he is in a position to reveal only in part and in which, he says, together with the names of Flechsig and Schreber, the term 'soul-murder' (*Seelenmord*: S. 22-II) plays an essential role.²⁰

It is clear that what we are presented with here is a disorder caused at the most personal juncture between the subject and his sense of being alive; the censorship that mutilates the text before the addition mentioned by Schreber to the somewhat distorted explanations that he has offered of his method leaves one to think that he associated with the names of living people facts that could not have been published on account of the conventions of the time. Moreover, the following chapter is missing in its entirety, and Freud had to be content to exercise his perspicacity on the allusion to *Faust*, to *Der Freischütz* and to Byron's *Manfred*, a work (from which he supposes the name of *Ahriman*, one of the apophanies of God in Schreber's delusion, to be borrowed) that seemed to him to derive in that reference all the value of its theme, namely, that the hero dies from the curse borne in him by the death of the object of fraternal incest.

For me, since like Freud I have chosen to trust a text which, apart from these few mutilations, regrettable as they are, remains a document whose guarantees of credibility are unrivalled, it is in the most advanced form of delusion of which the book is an expression, that I will try to show a structure that will prove to be similar to the process of psychosis itself.

2. Following this line of approach, I will observe with the touch of surprise with which Freud sees the subjective connotation of the recognized unconscious, that the delusion deploys all the wealth of its tapestry

around the power of creation attributed to speech, of which the divine rays (*Gottesstrahlen*) are the hypostasis.

This begins as a *leit-motiv* in the first chapter, where the author first pauses at the fact that the act of giving birth to an existence out of nothing offends reason, flies in the face of the evidence that experience provides in the transformations of a matter in which reality finds its substance.

He emphasizes the paradox to be found in his contrast with the most familiar ideas for the man he claims to be, as if there was any need of that: a *gebildet* German of the Wilhelmine period, nourished on Haeckelian metascientism, on the basis of which he provides a list of readings, an occasion for us to complete, by referring to them, what Gavarni calls somewhere a cerebral idea of Man.²¹

It is even in this considered paradox of the intrusion of a thought, for him hitherto unthinkable, that Schreber sees the proof that something must have happened that does not proceed from his own mind: a proof against which, it seems, only the *petitio principii*, outlined above in the position of the psychiatrist, give us the right to resist.

3. Having said this, let us follow a sequence of phenomena that Schreber establishes in his fifteenth chapter (S. 204–15).

We now know that the strength of his hand in the forced game of thought (*Denkzwang*) in which the words of God constrain him (see above, I–5) has a dramatic stake, which is that God, whose powers of misunderstanding, will appear later, considering the subject as annihilated, leaves him in the lurch (*liegen lassen*), a threat to which we will return.

The effort of repost, then, by which the subject is thus suspended, let us say, in his being as subject, eventually fails by a moment of ‘thinking-nothing’ (*Nichtsdenken*), certainly seems to be the least one can humanly expect by way of rest (Schreber says). This is what, according to him, occurs:

- (a) What he calls the miracle of howling (*Brüllenwunder*), a cry torn from his breast that surprises him beyond all expectations, whether he is alone or with others, who are horrified by the spectacle he offers them of his mouth suddenly gaping over the unspeakable void, abandoning the cigar that was stuck there only a moment earlier;
- (b) The call for help (*‘Hülfe’ rufen*), emitted by ‘divine nerves detached from the mass’, the plaintive tone of which is caused by the greater distance into which God withdraws;

(two phenomena in which the subjective tearing is sufficiently indistinguishable enough from its signifying mode for us not to labour the point);

- (c) The forthcoming blossoming, that is, in the occult zone of the perceptual field, in the corridor, in the next room, or manifestations which, though not extraordinary, appear to the subject to be intended for him;
- (d) The appearance at the next level of the distant, that is, beyond the grasp of the senses, in the park, *in the real*, of miraculous creations, that is, newly created ones, and Mrs Macalpine makes the perceptive observation that they always belong to flying species – birds or insects.

Do not these last meteors of delusion appear as the trace of a furrow, or as a fringe effect, showing both times in which the signifier that remained silent in the subject projects from its darkness a gleam of signification on to the surface of the real, then illuminates the real with a flash projected from below its basement of nothingness?

Thus, at the tip of hallucinatory effects, these creatures which, if one wished to apply with maximum rigour the criterion of the apparition of the phenomenon *in reality*, would alone be worthy of the name of hallucinations, recommend us to reconsider in their symbolic solidarity the trio of Creator, Creature, and Created that emerges here.

4. It is from the position of the Creator, in effect, that we will go back to that of the Created, which subjectively creates it.

Unique in his Multiplicity, Multiple in his Unity (such are the attributes, reminiscent of Heraclitus, with which Schreber defines him), this God, reduced in effect to a hierarchy of realms, which would be worth a study in itself, lowers himself into beings who appropriate disconnected identities.

Immanent in these beings, whose capture by their inclusion in Schreber’s being threatens his integrity, God is not without the intuitive support of a hyperspace, in which Schreber even sees significant transmissions conducted along wires (*Fäden*), which materialize the parabolic trajectory in accordance with which they enter his cranium through the occiput (S. 315–P.S. V).

Yet, in the course of time, through his manifestations, God lets the field of non-intelligent beings, beings who do not know what they say, beings of inanity, such as those enchanted birds, those talking birds,

those courts of heaven (*Vorhöfe des Himmels*), in which Freud's misogyny detected at first glance the white geese that represented the ideal girls of his time, only to see his view confirmed by the proper names²² that the subject later gives them. Let me say simply that for me they are much more representative by virtue of the surprise that is brought about in them by the similarity of the vocables and the purely homophonic equivalences on which their use depends (Santiago = Carthago, Chinesenthum = Jesum Christum, etc., S. 210-XV).

Similarly, the being of God in his essence withdraws ever further away into the space that conditions him, a withdrawal that can be intuited from the increasing slowness of his speech, which even goes as far as the beat of a stammered spelling (S. 223-XVI). So much so that simply by following the guide-lines of this process, we would regard this unique Other on which the existence of the subject is articulated as suited above all for emptying the places (S. note on 196-XIV) in which the murmur of the words is deployed, if Schreber did not take care to inform us in addition that this God is foreclosed from any other aspect of the exchange. He does so, while at the same time apologizing for doing so, but whatever regrets he may have about it, he has to state it clearly: God is not only impermeable to experience; he is incapable of understanding the living man; he grasps him only from the outside (which would certainly seem to be his essential mode); all interiority is closed to him. A 'system of notes' (*Aufschreibesystem*) in which acts and thoughts are preserved recalls, of course, in an elusive way, the notebook held by the guardian angel of our catechized childhood, but beyond that let us note the absence of any trace of the sounding of loins or hearts (S. 20-I).

Thus, after the purification of souls (*Läuterung*) has abolished in them all trace of personal identity, everything will be reduced to the eternal survival of this verbiage, with which only God need know the works that men's ingenuity has constructed (S. 300-P.S. II).

I could hardly fail to remark here that the great-nephew of the author of *Novae species insectorum* (Johann-Christian-Daniel von Schreber) stresses that none of the miraculous creatures is of a new species, or add, in opposition to Mrs Macalpine, who sees in them the Dove that travels from the lap of the Father to bring to the Virgin the fruitful tidings of the Logos, that they remind me rather of the dove that the conjuror pulls out of the opening of his waistcoat or sleeve.

Which will lead us at last to the surprising conclusion that the subject in the grip of these mysteries does not doubt his ability, Created being

though he be, either to elude with his words the traps set by the alarming inanity of his Lord, or to maintain himself in the face of the destruction that he believes his Lord capable of launching against him, or anyone else, by virtue of a right to which he is entitled in the name of the order of the World (*Weltordnung*), a right which, for all that it is his motivates this unique example of the victory of a creature that a series of disorders has made the object of his creator's '*perfidie*'. (The word let out, not without reservations, is in French: S. 226-XVI.)

Does not this recalcitrant created being, who prevents his fall only by the support of his Word (*verbe*) and by his faith in speech, form a strange pendant to Malebranche's continuous creation?

Perhaps we should take another look at the authors prescribed for the philosophy paper of the Baccalauréat, among which perhaps we have been too contemptuous of those outside the line leading up to the *homo psychologicus* in which our period finds the measure of a perhaps somewhat pedestrian, don't you think, humanism.

*De Malebranche ou de Locke
Plus malin le plus loufoque . . .*²³

Yes, but which of the two is it? There's the rub, dear colleague. Come on, drop that stiff manner. When will you feel at ease, then, when you are on your own ground?

5. Let us now try and re-situate the position of the subject as it is constituted here in the symbolic order on the triad that maps it in our schema R.

It seems to me, then, that if the Created I assumes in it the place in F, left vacant by the Law, the place of the Creator is designated in it by that *liegen lassen*, that fundamental let-lie, in which the absence that made it possible to construct oneself out of the primordial symbolization M of the mother appears to be denuded, from the foreclosure of the Father.

From one to the other a line, which would end in the Creatures of speech, occupying the place of the child rejected in the hopes of the subject (see the *Post-scriptum*), would thus be conceived as circumventing the hole dug in the field of the signifier by the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father (see Schema I, p. 212).

It is around this hole, in which the support of the signifying chain is lacking in the subject, and which has no need, one notes, of being ineffable in order to be awe-inspiring, that the whole struggle in which the subject reconstructed itself took place. In this struggle, he conducted

himself with honour, and the vaginas of heaven (another meaning of the word *Vorhöfe*, see above), the cohort of miraculous girls who laid siege to the edges of the hole provided the counterpoint, in the clucks of admiration from their harpies' throats: '*Verfluchter Kerl!* What a lad!' In other words: what a ram! Alas! It was by way of antiphrasis.

6. For already, and not long since, there had opened up for him in the field of the imaginary the gap that corresponded in it to the defect of symbolic metaphor, the gap that could only be resolved in the accomplishment of the *Entmannung* (emasculatation).

At first an object of horror for the subject, it was then accepted as a reasonable compromise (*vernünftig*, S. 177-XIII), consequently as an irrevocable choice (S. note to p. 179-XIII), and as a future motive of a redemption of interest to the entire world.

Although we can't leave the term *Entmannung* quite so easily, it will surely embarrass us less than it does Ida Macalpine in the position that I have described as being hers. No doubt she thought she was putting a little order into the matter by substituting the word 'unmanning' for 'emasculatation', which the translator of volume III of the *Collected Papers* had innocently believed to suffice, and even going so far as to ensure that the translation was altered in the authorized version then under preparation. Perhaps she detected some imperceptible etymological suggestion that differentiated the two terms, despite their identical usage.²⁴

But to what avail? Rejecting as improper the questioning of an organ which Mrs Macalpine, referring to the Memoirs, wishes to be destined to nothing more than a peaceful reabsorption in the subject's entrails – does she mean by this to represent to us the timorous slyboots in which he takes refuge when he shakes with fear, or the conscientious objection to description on which the author of *The Satyricon* lingers so mischievously?

Or does she believe perhaps that it was never a question of real castration in the complex of the same name?

No doubt she has good grounds for noticing the ambiguity there is in regarding as equivalents the transformation of the subject into a woman (*Verweiblichung*) and castration (for that is certainly the meaning of *Entmannung*). But she does not see that this ambiguity is that of the subjective structure itself, which produces it here: which involves only that which is confined at the imaginary level to the transformation of the subject into a woman, namely, precisely that which makes it decline from any heritage from which it may legitimately expect the attribution of a penis

to his person. This because if being and having are mutually exclusive in principle, they are confounded, at least as far as the result is concerned, when it is a question of a lack. Which does not prevent the distinction between them being of decisive importance subsequently.

As one realizes in observing that it is not by being foreclosed to the penis, but by having to be the phallus that the patient is doomed to become a woman.

The symbolic parity *Mädchen* = *Phallus*, or in English the equation *Girl* = *Phallus*, in the words of M. Fénichel,²⁵ to whom she gives the theme of an essay of some merit, if somewhat confused, has its root in the imaginary paths by which the child's desire succeeds in identifying itself with the mother's want-to-be, to which of course she was herself introduced by the symbolic law in which this lack is constituted.

It is as a result of the same mechanism that women in the real order serve, if they'll forgive me saying so, as objects for the exchanges required by the elementary structures of kinship and which are sometimes perpetuated in the imaginary order, while what is transmitted in a parallel way in the symbolic order is the phallus.

7. Here the identification, whatever it may be, by which the subject assumed the desire of the mother, triggers off, as a result of being shaken, the dissolution of the imaginary tripod (remarkably enough, it was in his mother's apartment, where he had taken refuge, that the subject had his first attack of anxious confusion with suicidal raptus: S. 39-40-IV).

No doubt the divination of the unconscious very soon warned the subject that, incapable as he is of being the phallus that the mother lacks, he is left with the solution of being the woman that men lack.

This is the meaning of this phantasy, his account of which has often been commented on and which I quoted above as belonging to the incubation period of his second illness, namely the idea 'that it would be beautiful being a woman submitting to copulation'. This *pons asinorum* of the Schreberian literature is here pinned in place.

Yet this solution was a premature one at the time, because for the *Menschenpielerei* ('Men's little games', a term that appeared in the fundamental language) that would normally follow, one can say that the call to the braves was doomed to fall flat, for the good reason that these braves became as improbable as the subject himself, as divested as him of any phallus. This is because there was omitted in the subject's imaginary order, no less for them than for him, that line parallel with the outline of their faces, that can be seen in a drawing by Little Hans, and which is

familiar to those who know children's drawing. It is because others were now no more than 'images of men flung together any old how', to combine in this translation of *flüchtig hingemachte Männer* W. G. Niederland's remarks on the uses of *hinmachen* and Édouard Pichon's brilliant stroke in the French translation.²⁶

So the affair would have been in danger of marking time in a rather dishonourable way, had not the subject succeeded in saving the day quite brilliantly.

He himself articulated the outcome (in November 1895, that is, two years after the beginning of his illness) under the name of *Versöhnung*: the word has the meaning of expiation, propitiation, and, in view of the characteristics of the fundamental language, must be drawn even more towards the primitive meaning of *Sühne*, that is to say, towards sacrifice, whereas one accentuates it in the direction of compromise (reasonable compromise, which the subject gives as the motivation for accepting his destiny).

Here Freud, going well beyond the rationalization of the subject himself, admits paradoxically that reconciliation (since it is the flat meaning that has been chosen in French), which the subject takes account of, finds its source in the deception of the partner that it involves, namely in the consideration that the spouse of God contracts in any case an alliance of nature to satisfy the most demanding self-love.

I think we can say that in this instance Freud failed his own norms and in the most contradictory way, in that he accepts as a turning-point of the delusion what he rejected in his general conception, namely to make the homosexual theme depend on the idea of grandeur (I will assume that my readers know his text).

The failure is to be found in necessity, that is, in the fact that Freud had not yet formulated what was to become 'On Narcissism: an Introduction'.

8. No doubt had he not three years later (1911-14) failed to grasp the true cause of the reversal of the position of indignation, which was first raised in the person of the subject by the idea of *Entmannung*: it is precisely because in the interval *the subject had died*.

This, at least, was what the voices, always informed by the right sources and always reliable in their information service, made known to him after the event with the date and the name of the newspaper in which the announcement had appeared in the list of recent deaths (S. 81-VII).

Personally, I can content myself with the evidence provided by the

medical certificates, which give us at the right moment the picture of the patient plunged in catatonic stupor.

As usual, his memories of this period are plentiful. Thus we know that, modifying the custom by which one departs this life feet first, our patient, so as to cross it only in transit, was pleased to keep his feet out of it, that is to say, stuck out of the window under the tendentious pretext of getting some fresh air (S. 172-XII), thus renewing perhaps (let us leave this to be appreciated by those who will be interested here only by its imaginary manifestation) the presentation of his birth.

But this is not a career that one takes up in one's late fifties without experiencing some feeling of unfamiliarity. Hence the faithful portrait that the voices, the annalists I would say, gave him of himself as a 'leprous corpse leading to another leprous corpse' (S. 92-VII), a very brilliant description, it must be admitted, of an identity reduced to a confrontation with its psychical double, but which moreover renders patent the subject's regression – a topographical, not a genetic, regression – to the mirror stage, even though the relation with the specular other is reduced to its fatal aspect.

It was also the time at which his body was merely a collection of colonies of foreign 'nerves', a sort of sump for fragments detached from the identities of his persecutors (S. XIV).

The relation of all this to homosexuality, which is certainly manifest in the delusion seems to me to necessitate a more advanced regulation of the use that can be made of this reference in theory.

It has great interest, since it is certain that the use of this term in interpretation may produce serious damage, if it is not illuminated with the symbolic relations that I would say were determinant here.

9. I believe that this symbolic determination is demonstrated in the form in which the imaginary structure is restored. At this stage, this imaginary structure presents two aspects that Freud himself distinguished.

The first is that of a trans-sexualist practice, in no way unworthy of being compared with 'perversion', the features of which have emerged in innumerable cases since.²⁷

Furthermore, I must indicate in what way the structure outlined here may throw light on the strange insistence shown by the subjects of these cases in obtaining for their more radically rectifying demands the permission, even one might say the co-operation, of their father.

In any case, we see our subject abandon himself to an erotic activity,

which he emphasizes as being strictly reserved for solitude, but the satisfactions of which he nevertheless admits to. They are those given him by his image in the mirror, when, dressed in the trinkets of female dress, nothing, he says, in the upper part of his body, seems to him incapable of convincing any possible lover of the female bust (S. 280-XXI).

To which we must link, I believe, the development, alleged to be an endosomatic perception, of the so-called nerves of female pleasure in his own tegument, that is, in those areas in which they are supposed to be erogenous in women.

One remark, namely, that by concerning oneself unceasingly with the contemplation of the image of woman, and never detaching one's thoughts from the support of something feminine, the divine pleasure will be all the more fulfilled, diverts us into the other aspect of the libidinal phantasies.

This aspect links the feminization of the subject to the co-ordinate of divine copulation.

Freud saw very clearly the element of mortification in this when he stressed what linked 'soul-pleasure' (*'volupté d'âme'*) (*Seelenwollust*), which is included in it, with 'bliss' (*béatitude*) (*Seligkeit*), in the sense in which it is the state of souls after death (*abschiedenen Wesen*).

That pleasure, regarded henceforth as blessed, should become the soul's bliss, is, indeed, an essential turning-point, of which Freud, it should be noted, stresses the linguistic motivation when he suggests that the history of his language might throw some light on it.²⁸

This is simply to make a mistake about the dimension in which the letter manifests itself in the unconscious, and which, in accordance with its own agency as letter, is much less etymological (or diachronic, to be precise) than homophonic (synchronic). Indeed, there is nothing in the German language that would enable us to link *selig* and *Seele*, or the bliss that transports the lovers to 'the heavens', even though it is this to which Freud refers when he quotes from the aria in *Don Giovanni*, and that promised to the 'blessed' souls in heaven. The dead are *selig* in German only by virtue of a borrowing from Latin, and because the Latin phrase *beatae memoriae* ('of blessed memory') is translated as *seliger Gedächtnis*. Their *Seelen* has more to do with the lakes (*Seen*) in which they resided for a time than with beatitude. The unconscious, however, is concerned more with the signifier than with the signified and the phrase '*feu mon père*' ('my late father') may mean, as far as the unconscious is concerned, that my father was the fire of God (*'le feu de Dieu'*), or even that I am ordering him to be shot (Fire!)

But this digression apart, it remains that we are here beyond the world, which accommodates itself very well to an endless postponement of the realization of its aim.

Certainly, indeed, when Schreber has completed his transformation into a woman, the act of divine fecundation will take place, in which, of course, God could not commit himself in an obscure passage through the organs (S. 3-Intro.). (We must not forget God's aversion to the living creature.) It is through a spiritual operation, therefore, that Schreber will feel awakening within him the embryonic germ, the stirrings of which he has already experienced in the early stages of his illness.

No doubt the new spiritual humanity of the Schreberian creatures will be entirely engendered through his loins, so that the corrupt, doomed humanity of the present age may be reborn. This is indeed a sort of redemption, since the delusion has been catalogued in this way, but it is a redemption aimed only at the creature of the future, for the creature of the present is struck by a decadence correlative with the capture of the divine rays by the pleasure that rivets them to Schreber (S. 51-2-V).

In this there is adumbrated the dimension of mirage that is even more emphasized by the indefiniteness of the time in which the promise of redemption is suspended, and is profoundly conditioned by the absence of mediation to which the phantasy bears witness. For one can see that it parodies the situation of the couple of ultimate survivors who, following some human catastrophe, would see themselves, with the power to repopulate the earth, confronted by that element of totality that the act of animal reproduction bears within itself.

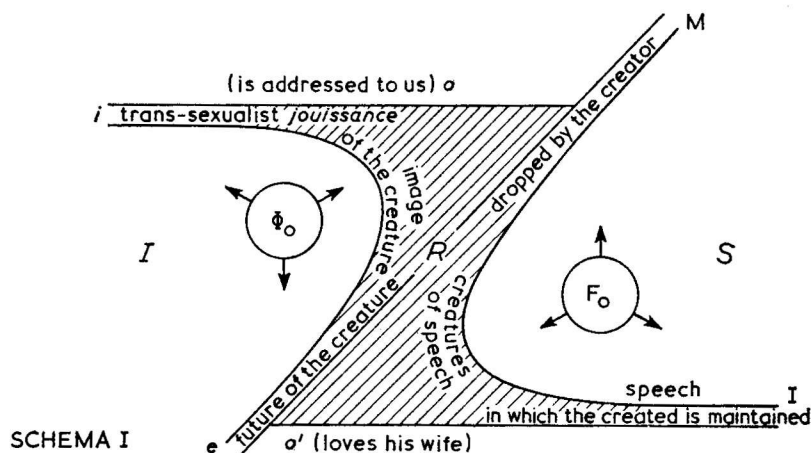
Here again one can place under the sign of the creature the turning-point at which the line divides into its two branches, that of narcissistic pleasure and that of the ideal identification. But it is in the sense in which its image is the trap of imaginary capture in which each is rooted. And there too the line moves around a hole, more specifically the hole in which 'soul-murder' installed death.

Was this other abyss formed simply by the effect in the imaginary order of the vain appeal made in the symbolic order to the paternal metaphor? Or should we conceive it as produced in a second degree by the elision of the phallus, which the subject seems to re-introduce in order to resolve it in the mortifying gap of the mirror-stage? Certainly the link – this time a genetic one – between this stage and the symbolization of the Mother as primordial could not fail to be referred to in motivating this solution.

Can we map the geometrical points of schema R on to a schema of the

structure of the subject at the termination of the psychotic process? This is what I have tried to do in schema I below.

It may well be, of course, that this schema suffers from the excess endemic in any attempt to formalize the intuitive.



SCHEMA I

That is to say, the distortion that it manifests between the functions identified in it by the letters introduced into it from schema R can be appreciated only in a dialectical way.

Let us point out here simply in the double curve of the hyperbola that it forms, at the closest point of these two curves, along one of the directing lines, the link made apparent, in the double asymptote that unites the delusional ego to the divine other, from their imaginary divergence in space and time to the ideal convergence of their conjunction. But it must not be forgotten that Freud himself had an intuition of such a form, since it was he who introduced the term *asymptotisch* in this regard.²⁹

All the density of the real creature, on the other hand, is interposed for the subject between narcissistic *jouissance* of his image and the alienation of speech in which the ego ideal has taken the place of the Other.

The schema shows that the terminal state of the psychosis does not represent the frozen chaos culminating in the débris caused by an earthquake, but rather that bringing to light of lines of efficiency, which causes speech when it is a question of an elegant solution to a problem.

It materializes in a significant way that which lies in the very principle of the effective fruitfulness of Freud's research; for it is a fact that without any other support than a written document, not only evidence, but also the production of this terminal state of the psychosis, Freud first threw

light on the evolution itself of the process, thus making it possible to illuminate its own determination, by which I mean the only organicity that is essentially relevant to this process: that which motivates the structure of signification.

Brought together in the form of this schema, the relations emerge by which the induction effects of the signifier, bearing on the imaginary order, determine this overthrow of the subject that clinical experience designates under the aspects of the twilight of the world, necessitating in order to reply to them new signifying effects.

In my seminar I showed that the symbolic succession of the anterior and posterior kingdoms of God, the lower and the higher, Ahriman and Ormuz, and their shifts of 'policy' (a word of the fundamental language) with regard to the subject, give precisely those answers to the different stages of imaginary dissolution, which, indeed, the patient's memories and the medical certificates connote sufficiently, in order to restore to them an order of the subject.

As for the question that I am proposing here concerning the alienating effect of the signifier, I would refer to that nadir of a July night in 1894 when Ahriman, the lower God, revealing himself to Schreber in the most impressive apparel of his power, called him by that simple word, which, according to the subject, is a common word of the fundamental language: *Luder!*³⁰

To translate the word we must do more than simply look it up in the Sachs-Villate dictionary, which is what the French translator was content to do. M. Nederland's reference to the English *lewd* does not seem to me to be acceptable as an attempt to convey the sense of 'wretch' or 'slut', which is what it means when used as a term of abuse.

But if we take account of the archaism indicated as characteristic of the fundamental language, we may feel justified in linking this term to the root of the French *leurre*, and of the English *lure*, which is certainly the best address *ad hominem* to be expected from the symbolic order: the Other can be very impertinent.

There remains the disposition of the field *R* in the schema, in that it represents the conditions in which reality was restored for the subject: for him a sort of islet the consistency of which is imposed on him after the trial of his constancy,³¹ which for me is linked to that which makes it habitable for him, but also which distorts it, namely, eccentric reshaping of the imaginary *I* and of the symbolic *S*, which reduce it to the field of their staggered shift.

The subordinate conception that we must give ourselves of the function of reality in the process, in its cause as well as in its effects, is important here.

We cannot develop here the admittedly crucial question of knowing what we are for the subject, we, whom he addresses as readers, nor the question of what remains of his relations with his wife, to whom the first draft of his book was dedicated, whose visits during his illness were always welcomed with the most intense emotion, and for whom, he assures us, concurrently with his most decisive avowal of his delusional vocation, he has 'retained his old love' (S. note to p. 179-XIII).

The maintenance in schema I of the trajectory *Soo'O* symbolizes in it the opinion that I have made of the examination of this case, that the relation to the other in so far as it is similar to him, and even a relation as elevated as that of friendship in the sense in which Aristotle sees it as constituting the essence of the conjugal relation, are perfectly compatible with the unbalancing of the relation to the capital Other, and the radical anomaly that it involves, qualified, improperly, but not without some approximation to the truth, in old clinical medicine, as partial delusion.

However, it would be better to confine this schema to the waste-bin, if, like so many others, it was to lead anyone to forget in an intuitive image the analysis on which it is based.

Indeed, one only has to think about it to realize how this would be to the greater credit of the commentator, Mrs Ida Macalpine, whose authentic thinking I should like to praise for the last time, provided one failed to recognize my reasons for introducing this schema.

What I am saying here is that it is the business of reason to recognize the drama of madness, *sua res agitur*, because it is in man's relation to the signifier that this drama is situated.

The notion that one will become as mad as the patient no more intimidates me than it did Freud.

Like Freud, I hold that we must listen to the speaker, when it is a question of a message that does not come from a subject beyond language, but from speech beyond the subject. For only then will one hear that speech, which Schreber captured in the Other, when from Ahriman to Ormuz, from the evil God to the absent God, it brings the seed in which the very law of the signifier is articulated: '*Aller Unsinn hebt sich auf*!' 'All Nonsense is abolished!' (S. 182-3-XIII and 312-P.S. IV).

A point at which I return (leaving to those who will concern themselves with me the trouble of finding out why I have left it in suspense for

ten years) to what I said in my dialogue with Henri Ey:³² 'Not only can man's being not be understood without madness, it would not be man's being if it did not bear madness within itself as the limit of his freedom.'



V *Post-scriptum*

Following Freud I teach that the Other is the locus of that memory that he discovered and called the unconscious, a memory that he regards as the object of a question that has remained open in that it conditions the indestructibility of certain desires. I would reply to this question in terms of the conception of the signifying chain, as inaugurated by the primordial symbolization (made manifest in the game *Fort! Da!*, which Freud revealed as lying at the origin of the repetition compulsion); this chain develops in accordance with logical links whose grasp on that which is to be signified, namely the being (*l'être*) and the existent (*l'étant*) operates through the effects of the signifier, which I describe as metaphor and metonymy.

It is in an accident in this register and in what takes place in it, namely, the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father in the place of the Other, and in the failure of the paternal metaphor, that I designate the defect that gives psychosis its essential condition, and the structure that separates it from neurosis.

This thesis, which I introduce here as the question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis, pursues its dialectic beyond this point: but I shall stop it here and I will say why.

First, because it is worth indicating what can be discovered from my pause.

A perspective that does not isolate Schreber's relationship with God from its subjective relief, the mark of negative features that make it appear rather as a mixture than a union of being and being, and which, in the voracity that is compounded in it with disgust, in the complicity that supports its exaction, shows nothing, to call things by their real names, of the Presence and Joy that illuminate the mystical experience: an opposition that is not only demonstrated by, but which is based on the astonishing absence in this relationship of the *Du*, in French the *Tu*, which in English (Thou) is reserved for the call from God and the appeal to God, and which is the signifier of the Other in speech.

I know the false modesty that is current in science on this subject; it is a fit companion for the false thought of pedantry, when it argues the ineffable nature of lived experience, even of the 'morbid consciousness', in order to disarm the effort that it expends, namely, that required at precisely the point at which it is not ineffable since it (*ça*) speaks, at which lived experience, far from separating, communicates itself, at which subjectivity yields up its true structure, the structure in which what is analysed is identical with what is articulated.

And from the same dramatic viewpoint to which delusional subjectivity has brought us, we will also turn our attention to scientific subjectivity: I mean that which the scientist at work in science shares with the man of the civilization that supports it. I will not deny that in the part of the world in which we reside, I have seen enough of it to question myself as to the criteria by which man with a discourse on freedom that must certainly be called delusional (I have devoted one of my seminars to it), with a concept of the real in which determinism is no more than an alibi that soon arouses anxiety if one tries to extend its field to chance (I have tried this out on my listeners in an experiment), with a belief that gathers men together, for half the world at least, under the symbol of Father Christmas (which can hardly escape anyone), this man would divert me from situating him, by a legitimate analogy, in the category of social psychosis – in the establishment of which Pascal, if I am not mistaken, preceded me.

That such a psychosis may prove to be compatible with what is called good order is not in question, but neither does it authorize the psychiatrist, even if he is a psychoanalyst, to trust to his own compatibility with that order to the extent of believing that he is in possession of an adequate idea of the *reality* to which his patient appears to be unequal.

Perhaps in these conditions it would be better to abandon this idea of his appreciation of the foundations of psychosis: which brings us back to the aim of his treatment.

To measure the path that separates us, we have only to recall all the delays with which its pilgrims have marked it. Everyone knows that no elaboration of the transference mechanism, however skilful it may be, has succeeded in so arranging things that in practice it is not conceived as a relation that is purely dual in its terms and utterly confused in its substratum.

Let us introduce the question of what, to take the transference only for its fundamental value as a phenomenon of repetition, it should repeat in the persecuting persons in which Freud here designates its effects?

I can just hear the feeble reply: following your approach, paternal inadequacy no doubt. In this style, there has been no shortage of accounts of every kind: and the 'entourage' of the psychotic has been the object of a meticulous enumeration of all the biographical and characterological labels that anamnesis enabled them to extract from the *dramatis personae*, even from their 'interhuman relations'.³³

But let us proceed according to the structural terms that we have outlined.

For the psychosis to be triggered off, the Name-of-the-Father, *verworfen*, foreclosed, that is to say, never having attained the place of the Other, must be called into symbolic opposition to the subject.

It is the lack of the Name-of-the-Father in that place which, by the hole that it opens up in the signified, sets off the cascade of reshapings of the signifier from which the increasing disaster of the imaginary proceeds, to the point at which the level is reached at which signifier and signified are stabilized in the delusional metaphor.

But how can the Name-of-the-Father be called by the subject to the only place in which it could have reached him and in which it has never been? Simply by a real father, not necessarily by the subject's own father, but by A-father.

Again, this A-father must attain that place to which the subject was unable to call him before. It is enough that this A-father should be situated in a third position in some relation based on the imaginary dyad *o-o'*, that is to say, ego-object or reality-ideal, that interests the subject in the field of eroticized aggression that it induces.

Let us try to find this conjuncture at the beginning of the psychosis. Whether it occurs, for the woman who has just given birth, in her husband's face, for the penitent confessing his sins in the person of his confessor, for the girl in love in her meeting with 'the young man's father', it will always be found, and be found more easily if one allows oneself to be guided by 'situations' in the sense in which the word is used of the novel. It should be said in passing, however, that for the novelist these situations are his true resource, namely, that which makes possible the emergence of 'depth psychology', where no psychological insight would enable him to penetrate.³⁴

To move on now to the principle of the foreclosure (*Verwerfung*) of the Name-of-the-Father, it must be admitted that the Name-of-the-Father reduplicates in the place of the Other the signifier itself of the symbolic triad, in that it constitutes the law of the signifier.

The attempt will cost nothing, it seems, for those who in the search for the environmental co-ordinates of psychosis wander like lost souls from the frustrating mother to the smothering mother, feeling nevertheless perhaps that in moving towards the situation of the father of the family, they are getting warmer, as one says in the game of hunt-the-slipper.

Again, in this groping search for a paternal inadequacy, whose ceaseless, disquieting hesitation between the dominating father, the easy-going father, the all-powerful father, the humiliated father, the awkward father, the pitiful father, the home-loving father, the father on the loose, would it not be too much to expect some release of tension from the following remark: namely, that the effects of prestige that are involved in all this, and in which (thank heaven!) the ternary relation of the Oedipus complex is not entirely omitted, since the veneration of the mother is regarded as decisive in it, are reduced to the rivalry between the two parents in the subject's imaginary order – that is, to that which is articulated in the question that appears to be normal, not to say obligatory, in any self-respecting childhood: 'Who do you love most, mummy or daddy?'

My aim in this parallel is not to reduce anything: quite the contrary, for this question, in which the child never fails to concretize the nausea that he feels at the infantilism of his parents is precisely that with which those children that the parents really are (in this sense, there are no others in the family but them) try to mask the mystery of their union, or disunion, namely, of that which their offspring knows very well is the whole problem and is posed as such.

It will be said that the accent is placed on precisely the link of love and respect, by which the mother does or does not put the father in his ideal place. Curious, I would reply at first, that one hardly takes account of the same links the other way round, in which it is proved that the theory participates in the veil thrown over the parents' coitus by infantile amnesia.

But what I do wish to insist on is that we should concern ourselves not only with the way in which the mother accommodates herself to the person of the father, but also with the way she takes his speech, the word (*mot*), let us say, of his authority, in other words, of the place that she reserves for the Name-of-the-Father in the promulgation of the law.

Further still, the father's relation to this law must be considered in itself, for one will find in it the reason for that paradox, by which the ravaging effects of the paternal figure are to be observed with particular frequency in cases where the father really has the function of a legislator or, at least has the upper hand, whether in fact he is one of those fathers

who make the laws or whether he poses as the pillar of the faith, as a paragon of integrity and devotion, as virtuous or as a virtuoso, by serving a work of salvation, of whatever object or lack of object, of nation or of birth, of safeguard or salubrity, of legacy or legality, of the pure, the impure or of empire, all ideals that provide him with all too many opportunities of being in a posture of undeserving, inadequacy, even of fraud, and, in short, of excluding the Name-of-the-Father from its position in the signifier.

So much is not needed to obtain this result, and none of those who practise child analysis will deny that dishonest behaviour is totally transparent to them. But who articulates that the lie thus perceived implies a reference to the constituting function of speech?

It thus proves that a little severity is not too much to give to the most accessible experience its true meaning. The consequences that may be expected in their examination and technique are to be judged elsewhere.

I am giving here only what is needed for an appreciation of the clumsiness with which the most inspired authors handle what they find most valuable in following Freud over the terrain of the pre-eminence that he accords to the transference of the relation to the father in the genesis of psychosis.

Niederland provides a remarkable example of this³⁵ when he draws attention to Flechsig's delusional genealogy, constructed with the names of Schreber's real ancestors, Gottfried, Gottlieb, Fürchtegott, and, above all, Daniel, which is handed down from father to son and of which he gives the meaning in Hebrew, to show in their convergence on the name of God (*Gott*) an important symbolic chain by which the function of the father can be manifested in the delusion.

But failing to distinguish in it the agency of the Name-of-the-Father, and it is obviously not enough, in order to recognize it, that it should be visible here to the naked eye, he misses the opportunity of grasping it in the chain in which the erotic aggressions experienced by the subject are formed, and thereby of contributing to putting in its place what should properly be termed delusional homosexuality.

How, then, can he stop at what is concealed in the statement of the sentence quoted above from the first lines of Schreber's second chapter:³⁶ one of those statements so obviously made not to be heard that they must be noted. What, to take it literally, is the meaning of the equal footing on which the author joins the names of Flechsig and Schreber to soul-murder in order to introduce us to the principle of abuse of which he

is the victim? We must leave something for future commentators to penetrate.

As uncertain is the attempt made by Nederland in the same article to specify, this time on the basis of the subject, rather than the signifier (the terms, of course, are not his), the role of the paternal function in the triggering off of delusion.

If, indeed, he claims to be able to designate the occasion of the psychosis in the mere assumption of paternity by the subject, which is the theme of his attempt, it is contradictory to regard as equivalent the frustration noted by Schreber of his hopes of paternity and his appointment as a High Court judge, the title of which (*Senätspräsident*) emphasizes the quality of Father (albeit a conscript father) that it accords him: this for the sole motivation of his second crisis, without prejudice to the first, which can be explained in a similar way by the failure of his candidature for the Reichstag.

Whereas the reference to the third position, to which the signifier of paternity is called in all such cases, would be correct and would resolve this contradiction.

But from the point of view of my thesis it is the primordial foreclosure (*Verwerfung*) that dominates everything with its problem, and the preceding considerations leave me here unprepared.

For to refer to the work of Daniel Gottlob Moritz Schreber, founder of an orthopaedic institute at the University of Leipzig, an educator, or, better still, an 'educationalist' as they say in English, a social reformer 'with an apostolic vocation to bring health, well-being and happiness to the masses' (sic. Ida Macalpine, *op. cit.*: 137) through physical culture, initiator of those garden allotments intended to preserve in the employee a kind of cabbage-patch idealism, which in Germany are still known as *Schrebergärten*, not to mention forty editions of the *Indoor Medical Gymnastics*, of which the roughly sketched little fellows that illustrate it are more or less referred to by Schreber (S. 166-XII), we will be able to regard as past the limits at which the native and the natal extend to nature, to the natural, to naturism, even to naturalization, at which virtue becomes vertigo, legacy the league, salvation saltation, at which the pure touches on the 'impure and the empire' (*malempire*), and at which I will not be surprised if the child, like the cabin-boy of Prévert's famous trawler, throws back (*verwerfe*) the whale of imposture, after piercing, according to the line of this immortal piece, the web from one end to the other (*de père en part*).

There can be no doubt that the face of Judge Flechsig, with its scientist's gravity (Mrs Macalpine's book contains a photograph that shows him

profiled against a colossal enlargement of a cerebral hemisphere), failed to fill the sudden void perceived in the inaugural *Verwerfung* ('*Kleiner Flechsig!*' 'Little Flechsig!' shout the voices).

At least, that is Freud's conception, in so far as it designates in the transference that the subject operated on the person of Flechsig the factor that precipitated the subject into psychosis.

In consideration of which, some months later, the divine voices will make their concert heard in the subject in order to tell the Name-of-the-Father to fuck himself with the Name of God³⁸ in his backside and to found the Son in his certainty that at the end of his trials, he could not do better than 'do' on³⁹ the whole world (S. 226-XVI).

Thus the last word in which 'the internal experience' of our century should have yielded us its computation, is articulated fifty years ahead of its time in the theodicy to which Schreber is exposed: 'God is a tart' (*Dieu est une p . . .*).⁴⁰

The term, in which the process by which the signifier has 'unleashed' itself in the real culminates, after the failure of the Name-of-the-Father was opened up – that is to say, the failure of the signifier in the Other, as locus of the signifier, is the signifier of the Other as locus of the law.

And there for the time being I will leave this question that is preliminary to any possible treatment of the psychoses – a question that introduces, as we see, the conception to be formed of the handling, in this treatment, of the transference.

To say that on this terrain we can do anything would be premature, because it would now be to go 'beyond Freud', and there can be no question of going beyond Freud when post-Freud psychoanalysis has, as I have said, gone back to an earlier stage.

At least that is what separates me from any other object than to restore access to the experience that Freud discovered.

For to use the technique that he established, outside the experience to which it was applied, is as stupid as to toil at the oars when the ship is on sand.

Dec. 1957–Jan. 1958



Notes

1. Roman Jakobson borrows this term from Jespersen to designate those words of the code that take on meaning only from the co-ordinates (attribution, date, place of emission) of the message. In Pierce's classification they are index-symbols. Personal pronouns are the most obvious example: the difficulties involved in their acquisition and their functional deficiencies illustrate the problematic created by these signifiers in the subject. (Roman Jakobson, *Shifters, Verbal Categories and the Russian Verb*, Russian Language Project, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, Harvard University, 1957.)

2. Cf. the seminar of 8 February 1956 in which I developed the example of the 'normal' vocalization of 'la paix du soir'.

3. *Denkwürdigkeiten eines Nervenkranken, von Dr. jur. Daniel-Paul Schreber, Senatspräsident beim kgl. Oberlandesgericht Dresden a-D.*, Oswald Mutze, Leipzig, 1903, the French translation of which I have prepared for the use of my group.

4. This is particularly the opinion expressed by the English translator of these *Memoirs*, which appeared in the same year as this seminar (cf. *Memoirs of my Nervous Illness*, translated by Ida Macalpine and Richard Hunter, London, W. M. Dawson & Sons), in her introduction, p. 25. She also gives an account of the success of the book, pp. 6-10.

5. This was the subject of my thesis for the doctorate in medicine, *De la psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports avec la personnalité*, which my master Heuyer, in a letter to me, judged very pertinently in these terms: 'One swallow doesn't make a spring', adding in connexion with my bibliography: 'If you've read all that, I'm sorry for you'. In fact I had read it all.

6. The brackets around the letter S followed by figures (Arabic and Roman respectively) will be used here to refer

to the corresponding page and chapter of the original edition of the *Denkwürdigkeiten*, the pagination being fortunately retained in the margins of the English translation.

7. It should be noted that my homage here is merely an extension of that of Freud, who was not averse to recognizing in Schreber's delusion itself a foreshadowing of the theory of the Libido (*G.W.*, VIII: 315).

8. Cf. p. 306.

9. English in the original.

10. To attempt to prove too much is to wander from the point. Thus Mrs Macalpine, who otherwise is wise enough to stop at the character, noted by the patient himself as being much too persuasive (S. 39-IV), of the suggestive invigoration in which Judge Flechsig indulges (everything indicates that he was usually more calm) in relation to Schreber on the subject of the promises of a sleep cure that he proposes for him, Mrs Macalpine, I would say, interprets at length the themes of procreation, which she regards as being suggested by this discourse (See *Memoirs* . . . , Discussion, p. 396, lines 12 and 21), basing her case on the use of the verb *to deliver* to designate the effect to be expected from the treatment of his disorders, and on that of the adjective *prolific*, with which she translates, extremely loosely, the German term, *ausgiebig*, applied to the sleep in question.

Now the word *to deliver* is indisputable as a translation, for the simple reason that there is nothing to translate. I looked again and again at the German text. The verb was simply forgotten by either the author or the compositor, and Mrs Macalpine, in an effort to make sense of the translation, has, unknown to herself, restored it. The pleasure that she must later have experienced on rediscovering it so close to her wishes was surely well deserved!

11. Macalpine, *op. cit.*: 361, 379-80.

12. I would ask Mrs Macalpine (see *Memoirs* . . . , pp. 391-2) whether the figure 9, as it is involved in such diverse durations as the delays of 9 hours, 9 days, 9 months, 9 years, which she springs out at us at every point in the patient's anamnesis, only to find it again at the time by the clock at which his anxiety, postponed the beginning of the sleep-cure referred to above, and, again, even in the hesitation between 4 and 5 days that recurs several times in the same period that saw the return of his memory of himself, should be conceived as forming part as such, that is to say, as a symbol of the imaginary relation isolated by it as a procreation phantasy.

The question is of interest to everybody, for it differs from the use Freud, in the Wolf Man Case, makes of the form of the figure V, which is presumed to have been retained from the point of the hand on the clock during a scene witnessed at the age of one and a half, and to reappear in the beating of a butterfly's wings, the open legs of a girl, etc.

13. Cf. her Introduction, pp. 13-19.

14. Before Sunrise, 'Vor Sonnenaufgang', Also Sprach Zarathustra, Dritter Teil. It is the fourth song of this third part.

15. 'Le-pense-sans-rire' - a pun on the phrase 'pincésans rire', 'keeping a straight face' [Tr.].

16. A pun on 'Baudelaire' and the oath 'bordel de Dieu' [Tr.].

17. English in the original [Tr.].

18. The mapping in this schema R of the object (*objet a*) is interesting for the light it sheds on the field of reality (the field that bars it).

I have since laid great stress on the need to develop it - by stating that this field functions only by obturing itself from the screen of phantasy - but this still requires a good deal of attention.

There might be some point in recognizing that, enigmatic as it may then have seemed, but perfectly legible for anyone who knows the outcome, as is the case

if one claims to use it as a support, what schema R shows is a projective plan.

In particular the points, and it is not by chance (or by a sense of play) that I chose the letters that correspond to them - e M, i I - and which are those that frame the only valid cut in this schema

→ →
(the cut ei, MI), are sufficient indication that this cut isolates a Moebius strip in the field.

To say this is to say all, since this field will now be merely the representative of the phantasy of which this cut provides the entire structure.

I mean that only the cut reveals the structure of the entire surface from being able to detach from it those two heterogeneous elements (represented in my algorithm (§◇o) of the phantasy: the §, S barred by the strip to be expected here in fact, that is to say, covering the field R of reality, and the o, which corresponds to the fields I and S.

It is as the representative of the representation in phantasy, therefore, that is to say as the originally repressed subject that §, the barred S of desire, here supports the field of reality, and this field is sustained only by the extraction of the object o, which, however, gives it its frame.

By measuring in stages, all vectorialized by an intrusion into the field R only of the field I, which is well articulated in my text only as the effect of narcissism, it is therefore quite out of the question that I would wish to reintroduce, by some back door, the notion that these effects ('system of identifications', as I would say) may, in some way, theoretically ground reality.

Whoever has followed my topological expositions (which are justified by nothing but the structure of the phantasy to be articulated) must know very well that in the Moebius strip there is nothing measurable to be retained in its structure, and that it is reduced, like the real with which we are concerned here, to the cut itself.

This note is indicative for the present stage of my topological elaboration (July 1966).

19. The title of that seminar.

20. Here is the text: *Einleitend habe ich dazu zu bemerken, dass bei der Genesis der betreffenden Entwicklung deren erste Anfänge weit, vielleicht bis zum 18. Jahrhundert zurückreichen, einertheils die Namen Flechsig und Schreber [my emphasis] (wahrscheinlich nicht in der Beschränkung auf je ein Individuum der betreffenden Familien) und andernteils der Begriff des Seelenmords [in 'Sperrdruck' in the original] eine Hauptrolle spielen.*

21. In particular Dr Ernst Haeckel's *Natürliche Schöpfungsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1872) and Otto Casari's *Urgeschichte der Menschheit* (Brockhaus, Leipzig, 1877).

22. The relation between the proper name and the voice is to be situated in the structure of language, its two sides sloping in the direction of the message and the code respectively, to which I have already referred. See I. 5. It is this structure that decides the witty character of puns on proper names.

23. 'Between Malebranche and Locke the cleverer is the crazier.'

24. Macalpine, *op. cit.*: 398.

25. 'Die symbolische Gleichung Mädchen = Phallus', *Int. Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, XXII, 1936, since translated into English as 'The Symbolic Equation: Girl = Phallus', and published in *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 1949, XX (3): 303-24. In French, the term can be translated more appropriately as 'pucelle'. [*Pucelle* lies somewhere between 'maid' and 'virgin' - Tr.]

26. Cf. W. G. Niederland, 'Three Notes on the Schreber Case', *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* XX: 579 (1951).

27. Cf. Jean-Marc Alby's very remarkable thesis, *Contribution à l'étude du transsexualisme*, Paris, 1956.

28. Cf. Freud, *Psychoanalytische Bemerkungen über einen autobiographisch beschriebenen Fall von Paranoia, G.W.*, VIII: 264, n. 1. ('Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a

Case of Paranoia', *Standard Edition*, XII: 3.)

29. *Ibid.*, 284 and note.

30. S. 136-X.

31. During the acme of imaginary dissolution, the subject displayed in his delusional apperception a strange recourse to this criterion of reality, which is always to return to the same place, and why the stars are the most obvious representation of it: it is the motive designated by his voices as 'tying up lands' (*Anbinden an Erden*, S. 125-IX).

32. *Propos sur la causalité psychique* (Rapport du 28 septembre 1946 pour les Journées de Bonneval).

33. Cf. André Green's thesis, *Le milieu familial des schizophrènes*, Paris, 1957 - a work whose distinct merit would not have suffered if his approach had been more soundly based, in particular in relation to his approach to what he bizarrely terms 'psychotic fracture'.

34. I would wish every success to whichever of my students follows up this remark, in which criticism may be assured of a thread that will not lead it astray.

35. *Op. cit.*

36. Cf. this sentence quoted in note 20 above.

37. In a note on the same page, Ida Macalpine quotes the title of one of this author's books, *Glückseligkeitslehre für das physische Leben des Menschen*, as *How to Achieve Happiness and Bliss by Physical Culture*.

38. S. 194-XIV. *Die Redensart 'Ei verflucht' ... war noch ein Überbleibsel der Grundsprache, in welcher die Worte 'Ei verflucht, das sagt sich schwer' jedesmal gebraucht werden, wenn irgend ein mit der Weltordnung unerträgliche Erscheinung in das Bewusstsein der Seelen trat, z. B. 'Ei verflucht, das sagt sich schwer, dass der liebe Gott sich f. . . lässt'.*

39. I think I can borrow this euphemism from the register of the *Grundsprache* itself - a euphemism that the voices and Schreber himself, unusually, dispense with here.

I think I can better fulfil my duties to scientific rigour by pointing out the hypocrisy which, in this detour as in others, reduces to the benign, not to say to the inane, what the Freudian experience demonstrates. I mean the inexperience use to which references like the following are put: at this stage in his analysis, the patient regressed to the anal phase. It would be good to see the analyst's face if the patient suddenly defecated, or even slobbered, on his couch.

All this is no more than a concealed return to the sublimation that finds shelter in the *inter urinas et faeces nascimur*, with its implication that this sordid origin is of concern only to our bodies.

What analysis uncovers is something quite other. It is not his rags, but the very being of man that takes up its position among the waste matter in which his

first frolics occur, much as the law of symbolization in which his desire must operate catches him in its net by the position of the part-object in which he offers himself on arrival in the world, in a world in which the desire of the Other lays down the law.

This relation, of course, is clearly articulated by Schreber in what he ascribes, to leave no possible ambiguity, to the act of shitting - namely, the fact of feeling the elements of his being, the dispersion of which into the infinity of his delusion constitutes his suffering, gathered together.

40. Under the form: *Die Sonne ist eine Hure* (S. 384-App.). For Schreber, the sun is the central aspect of God. The interior experience referred to here is the title of Georges Bataille's most central work. In *Madame Edwarda*, he describes the strange extremity of this experience.