

Jacques LACAN

# ÉCRITS

The FIRST Complete Edition in English ✿

Translated by BRUCE FINK

---

## The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis

*Paper delivered at the Rome Congress held at the Institute of  
Psychology at the University of Rome on September 26 and 27, 1953*

### *Preface*

In particular, it should not be forgotten that the division into embryology, anatomy, physiology, psychology, sociology, and clinical work does not exist in nature and that there is only one discipline: a *neurobiology* to which observation obliges us to add the epithet *human* when it concerns us.

—Quotation chosen as an inscription for a psychoanalytic institute in 1952

The talk included here warrants an introduction that provides some context, since it was marked by its context.

The theme of this talk was proposed to me and my contribution was intended to constitute the customary theoretical paper given at the annual meeting that the association representing psychoanalysis in France at that time had held for eighteen years, a venerable tradition known as the “Congress of French-Speaking Psychoanalysts,” though for the past two years it had been extended to Romance-language-speaking psychoanalysts (Holland being included out of linguistic tolerance). The Congress was to take place in Rome in September of 1953.

In the meantime, serious disagreements led to a secession within the French group. These disagreements came out on the occasion of the founding of a “psychoanalytic institute.” The team that succeeded in imposing its statutes and program on the new institute was then heard to proclaim that it would prevent the person who, along with others, had tried to introduce a different

conception of analysis from speaking in Rome, and it employed every means in its power to do so.

Yet it did not seem to those who thus founded the new Société Française de Psychanalyse that they had to deprive the majority of the students, who had rallied to their teaching, of the forthcoming event, or even to hold it elsewhere than in the eminent place in which it had been planned to be held.

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

For my part, I considered myself assisted—however unequal I might prove to be to the task of speaking about speech—by a certain complicity inscribed in the place itself.

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

If, then, my talk was to be nothing more than a newborn's cry, at least it would seize the auspicious moment to revamp the foundations our discipline derives from language.

Moreover, this revamping derived too much meaning from history for me not to break with the traditional style—that places a “paper” somewhere between a compilation and a synthesis—in order to adopt an ironic style suitable to a radical questioning of the foundations of our discipline.

Since my audience was to be the students who expected me to speak, it was above all with them in mind that I composed this talk, and for their sake that I dispensed with the rules, observed by our high priests, requiring one to mime rigor with meticulousness and confuse rule with certainty.

Indeed, in the conflict that led to the present outcome, people had shown such an exorbitant degree of misrecognition regarding the students' autonomy as subjects that the first requirement was to counteract the constant tone that had permitted this excess.

The fact is that a vice came to light that went well beyond the local circumstances that led to the conflict. The very fact that one could claim to regulate the training of psychoanalysts in so authoritarian a fashion raised the question whether the established modes of such training did not paradoxically result in perpetual minimization.

The initiatory and highly organized forms which Freud considered to be a guarantee of his doctrine's transmission are certainly justified by the situation of a discipline that can only perpetuate itself by remaining at the level of a complete experience.

But haven't these forms led to a disappointing formalism that discourages initiative by penalizing risk, and turns the reign of the opinion of the learned into a principle of docile prudence in which the authenticity of research is blunted even before it finally dries up?

The extreme complexity of the notions brought into play in our field is such that in no other area does a mind run a greater risk, in laying bare its judgment, of discovering its true measure.

But this ought to result in making it our first, if not only, concern to emancipate theses by elucidating principles.

The severe selection that is, indeed, required cannot be left to the endless postponements of a fastidious cooptation, but should be based on the fecundity of concrete production and the dialectical testing of contradictory claims.

This does not imply that I particularly value divergence. On the contrary, I was surprised to hear, at the London International Congress—where, because we had failed to follow the prescribed forms, we had come as appellants—a personality well disposed toward us deplore the fact that we could not justify our secession on the grounds of some doctrinal disagreement. Does this mean that an association that is supposed to be international has some other goal than that of maintaining the principle of the collective nature of our experience?

It is probably no big secret that it has been eons since this was the case, and it was without creating the slightest scandal that, to the impenetrable Mr. Zilboorg—who, making ours a special case, insisted that no secession should be accepted unless it is based on a scientific dispute—the penetrating Mr. Wälder could reply that, if we were to challenge the principles in which each of us believes his experience is grounded, our walls would very quickly dissolve into the confusion of Babel.

To my way of thinking, if I innovate, I prefer not to make a virtue of it.

In a discipline that owes its scientific value solely to the theoretical concepts Freud hammered out as his experience progressed—concepts which, because they continue to be poorly examined and nevertheless retain the ambiguity of everyday language, benefit from the latter's resonances while incurring misunderstanding—it would seem to me to be premature to break with the traditional terminology.

But it seems to me that these terms can only be made clearer if we establish their equivalence to the current language of anthropology, or even to the latest problems in philosophy, fields where psychoanalysis often need but take back its own property.

In any case, I consider it to be an urgent task to isolate, in concepts that are being deadened by routine use, the meaning they recover when we reexamine their history and reflect on their subjective foundations.

That, no doubt, is the teacher's function—the function on which all the others depend—and the one in which the value of experience figures best.

If this function is neglected, the meaning of an action whose effects derive solely from meaning is obliterated, and the rules of analytic technique, being reduced to mere recipes, rob analytic experience of any status as knowledge [*connaissance*] and even of any criterion of reality.

For no one is less demanding than a psychoanalyst when it comes to what gives his actions their status, which he himself is not far from regarding as magical because he doesn't know where to situate them in a conception of his field that he hardly dreams of reconciling with his practice.

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

Doesn't his conception of his field correspond to a conception of analytic training that is like that of a driving school which, not content to claim the unique privilege of issuing drivers' licenses, also imagines that it is in a position to supervise car construction?

Whatever this comparison may be worth, it is just as valid as those which are bandied about in our most serious conventicles and which, because they originated in our discourse to idiots, do not even have the savor of inside jokes, but seem to gain currency nevertheless due to their pompous ineptitude.

They begin with the well-known comparison between the candidate who allows himself to be prematurely dragged into practicing analysis and the surgeon who operates without sterilizing his instruments, and they go on to the comparison that brings tears to one's eyes for those unfortunate students who are torn by their masters' conflicts just like children torn by their parents' divorce.

This late-born comparison seems to me to be inspired by the respect due to those who have, in effect, been subjected to what, toning down my thought, I will call a pressure to teach, which has put them sorely to the test; but on hearing the quavering tones of the masters, one may also wonder whether the limits of childishness have not, without warning, been stretched to the point of foolishness.

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

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

Perhaps, by reopening a few windows to the broad daylight of Freud's

thought, my paper will allay the anguish some people feel when a symbolic action becomes lost in its own opacity.

Whatever the case may be, in referring to the context of my talk, I am not trying to blame its all too obvious shortcomings on the haste with which it was written, since both its meaning and its form derive from that same haste.

Moreover, in an exemplary sophism involving intersubjective time, I have shown the function of haste in logical precipitation, where truth finds its unsurpassable condition.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing created appears without urgency; nothing in urgency fails to surpass itself in speech.

Nor is there anything that does not become contingent here when the time comes when a man can identify in a single reason the side he takes and the disorder he denounces, in order to understand their coherence in reality [*réel*] and anticipate by his certainty the action that weighs them against each other.

### Introduction

We shall determine this while we are still at the aphelion of our matter, for, when we arrive at the perihelion, the heat is liable to make us forget it.  
—Lichtenberg

"Flesh composed of suns. How can such be?" exclaim the simple ones.  
—R. Browning, *Parleying with Certain People*

Such is the fright that seizes man when he discovers the true face of his power that he turns away from it in the very act—which is his act—of laying it bare. This is true in psychoanalysis. Freud's Promethean discovery was such an act, as his work attests; but that act is no less present in each psychoanalytic experience humbly conducted by any one of the workers trained in his school.

One can trace over the years a growing aversion regarding the functions of speech and the field of language. It is responsible for the "changes in aim and technique" that are acknowledged within the psychoanalytic movement, and whose relation to the general decline in therapeutic effectiveness is nevertheless ambiguous. Indeed, the emphasis on the object's resistance in current psychoanalytic theory and technique must itself be subjected to the dialectic of analysis, which can but recognize in this emphasis the attempt to provide the subject with an alibi.

Let me try to outline the topography of this movement. If we examine the literature that we call our "scientific activity," the current problems of psychoanalysis clearly fall into three categories:

- (A) The function of the imaginary, as I shall call it, or, to put it more directly, of fantasies in the technique of psychoanalytic experience and in the constitution of the object at the different stages of psychological development. The impetus in this area has come from the analysis of children and from the favorable field offered to researchers' efforts and temptations by the preverbal structurations approach. This is also where its culmination is now inducing a return by raising the question of what symbolic sanction is to be attributed to fantasies in their interpretation.
- 243 (B) The concept of libidinal object relations which, by renewing the idea of treatment progress, is quietly altering the way treatment is conducted. The new perspective began here with the extension of psychoanalytic method to the psychoses and with the **momentary receptiveness of psychoanalytic technique to data based on a different principle. Psychoanalysis leads here to an existential phenomenology—indeed, to an activism motivated by charity. Here, too, a clear-cut reaction is working in favor of a return to symbolization as the crux of technique.**
- (C) The importance of countertransference and, correlatively, of analytic training. Here the emphasis has resulted from the difficulties related to the termination of analytic treatment that intersect the difficulties related to the moment at which training analysis ends with the candidate beginning to practice. The same oscillation can be observed here: On the one hand, the analyst's being is said, **not without audacity, to be a non-negligible factor in the effects of an analysis and even a factor whose conduct should be brought out into the open at the end of the game; on the other hand, it is put forward no less energetically that a solution can come only from an ever deeper exploration of the unconscious mainspring.**

Apart from the pioneering activity these three problems manifest on three different fronts, they have one thing in common with the vitality of the psychoanalytic experience that sustains them. It is the temptation that presents itself to the analyst to abandon the foundation of speech, and this precisely in areas where its use, verging on the ineffable, would seem to require examination more than ever: namely, the child's education by its mother, Samaritan-type aid, and dialectical mastery. The danger becomes great indeed if the analyst also abandons his own language, preferring established languages about whose compensations for ignorance he knows very little.

In truth, we would like to know more about the effects of symbolization in the child, and the officiating mothers in psychoanalysis—even those who give our top committees a matriarchal air—are not exempt from the confusion of tongues by which Ferenczi designated the law of the child/adult relationship.

Our wise men's ideas about the perfect object-relation are based on a rather uncertain conception and, when exposed, they reveal a mediocrity that hardly does credit to the profession.

There can be no doubt that these effects—where the psychoanalyst resembles the type of modern hero represented by ridiculous feats in situations of confusion—could be corrected by an appropriate return to the study of the functions of speech, a field the analyst ought by now to have mastered.

But it seems that this central field of our domain has been left fallow since Freud. Note how he himself refrained from venturing too far into its periphery: He discovered children's libidinal stages by analyzing adults and intervened in little Hans's case only through the mediation of his parents; he deciphered a whole section of the language of the unconscious in paranoid delusion, but used for this purpose only the key text Schreber left behind in the volcanic debris of his spiritual catastrophe. Freud rose, however, to a position of total mastery regarding the dialectic of the work and the tradition of its meaning.

Does this mean that if the place of the master remains empty, it is not so much due to his disappearance as to an increasing obliteration of the meaning of his work? To convince ourselves of this, isn't it enough for us to note what is happening in that place?

A technique is being transmitted there, one that is gloomy in style—indeed, it is reticent in its opacity—and that any attempt to let in critical fresh air seems to upset. It has, in truth, assumed the appearance of a formalism that is taken to such ceremonial lengths that one might well suspect that it bears the same similarity to obsessive neurosis as Freud found so convincingly in the practice, if not the genesis, of religious rites.

When we consider the literature that this activity produces for its own nourishment, the analogy becomes even more marked: the impression is often that of a curious closed circuit in which ignorance of the origin of terms generates problems in reconciling them, and in which the effort to solve these problems reinforces the original ignorance.

In order to home in on the causes of this deterioration of analytic discourse, one may legitimately apply psychoanalytic method to the collectivity that sustains it.

Indeed, to speak of a loss of the meaning of psychoanalytic action is as true and futile as it is to explain a symptom by its meaning as long as the latter is not recognized. But we know that, in the absence of such recognition, analytic action can only be experienced as aggressive at the level at which it is situated; and that, in the absence of the social "resistances" which the psychoanalytic group used to find reassuring, the limits of its tolerance toward its own activity—now "accepted," if not actually approved of—no longer

depend upon anything but the numerical percentage by which its presence in society is measured.

These principles suffice to separate out the symbolic, imaginary, and real conditions that determine the defenses we can recognize in the doctrine—*isolation*, undoing what has been done, denial, and, in general, *misrecognition*.

Thus, if the importance of the American group to the psychoanalytic movement is measured by its mass, we can evaluate the conditions one finds there by their weight.

In the symbolic order, first of all, one cannot neglect the importance of the *c* factor which, as I noted at the Congress of Psychiatry in 1950, is a constant that is characteristic of a given cultural milieu: the condition, in this case, of *ahistoricism*, which is widely recognized as the major feature of “communication” in the United States, and which in my view is diametrically opposed to analytic experience. To this must be added a native mindset, known as *behaviorism*, which so dominates psychological notions in America that it clearly has now altogether topped Freud’s inspiration in psychoanalysis.

As for the other two orders, I leave to those concerned the task of assessing what the mechanisms that manifest themselves in the life of psychoanalytic associations owe to relations of standing within the group and to the effects of their free enterprise felt by the whole of the social body, respectively. I also leave to them the task of determining the credence to be lent to a notion emphasized by one of their most lucid representatives—namely, the convergence that occurs between the alien status of a group dominated by immigrants and the distance it is lured into taking from its roots by the function called for by the aforementioned cultural conditions.

In any case, it seems indisputable that the conception of psychoanalysis in the United States has been inflected toward the adaptation of the individual to the social environment, the search for behavior patterns, and all the objectification implied in the notion of “human relations.”\* And the indigenous term, “human engineering,”\* strongly implies a privileged position of exclusion with respect to the human object.

Indeed, the eclipse in psychoanalysis of the liveliest terms of its experience—the unconscious and sexuality, which will apparently cease before long to even be mentioned—may be attributed to the distance necessary to sustain such a position.

We need not take sides concerning the formalism and small-time shop mentality, both of which have been noted and decried in the analytic group’s own official documents. Pharisees and shopkeepers interest us only because of their common essence, which is the source of the difficulties both have with speech, particularly when it comes to “talking shop.”\*

The fact is that while incommunicability of motives may sustain a “grand master,” it does not go hand in hand with true mastery—at least not with the mastery teaching requires. This was realized in the past when, in order to sustain one’s preeminence, it was necessary, for form’s sake, to give at least one class.

This is why the attachment to traditional technique—which is unfailingly reaffirmed by the same camp—after a consideration of the results of the tests carried out in the frontier fields enumerated above, is not unequivocal; the equivocation can be gauged on the basis of the substitution of the term “classic” for “orthodox” that is used to qualify it. One remains true to propriety because one has nothing to say about the doctrine itself.

For my part, I would assert that the technique cannot be understood, nor therefore correctly applied, if one misunderstands the concepts on which it is based. My task shall be to demonstrate that these concepts take on their full meaning only when oriented in a field of language and ordered in relation to the function of speech.

A point regarding which I should note that in order to handle any Freudian concept, reading Freud cannot be considered superfluous, even for those concepts that go by the same name as everyday notions. This is demonstrated, as I am reminded by the season, by the misadventure of Freud’s theory of the instincts when revised by an author somewhat less than alert to what Freud explicitly stated to be its mythical content. Obviously, the author could hardly be aware of it, since he approaches the theory through Marie Bonaparte’s work, which he repeatedly cites as if it were equivalent to Freud’s text—without the reader being in any way alerted to the fact—relying perhaps, not without reason, on the reader’s good taste not to confuse the two, but proving nonetheless that he hasn’t the slightest inkling of the secondary text’s true level. The upshot being that—moving from reductions to deductions and from inductions to hypotheses—the author, by way of the strict tautology of his false premises, comes to the conclusion that the instincts in question are reducible to the reflex arc. Like the classic image of the pile of plates—whose collapse leaves nothing in the hands of the comedian but two ill-matched fragments—the complex construction that moves from the discovery of the migrations of the libido in the erogenous zones to the metapsychological passage from a generalized pleasure principle to the death instinct becomes the binomial of a passive erotic instinct, modeled on the activity of the lice seekers so dear to the poet, and a destructive instinct, identified simply with motor functioning. A result that merits an honorable mention for the art, intentional or otherwise, of taking the consequences of a misunderstanding to their most rigorous conclusions.

I. *Empty Speech and Full Speech in the Psychoanalytic  
Realization of the Subject*

"Put true and stable speech into my mouth and make of me a cautious tongue"  
—*The Internal Consolation*, Chapter XLV: That one should not believe  
everyone and of slight stumbling over words.

*Cause toujours.*  
—Motto of "causalist" thought

Whether it wishes to be an agent of healing, training, or sounding the depths, psychoanalysis has but one medium: the patient's speech. The obviousness of this fact is no excuse for ignoring it. Now all speech calls for a response.

I will show that there is no speech without a response, even if speech meets only with silence, provided it has an auditor, and this is the heart of its function in analysis.

248 But if the psychoanalyst is not aware that this is how speech functions, he will experience its call [*appel*] all the more strongly; and if emptiness is the first thing to make itself heard in analysis, he will feel it in himself and he will seek a reality beyond speech to fill the emptiness.

This leads the analyst to analyze the subject's behavior in order to find in it what the subject is not saying. Yet for him to get the subject to admit to the latter, he obviously has to talk about it. He thus speaks now, but his speech has become suspicious because it is merely a response to the failure of his silence, when faced with the perceived echo of his own nothingness.

But what, in fact, was the appeal the subject was making beyond the emptiness of his words [*dire*]? It was an appeal to truth at its very core, through which the calls of humbler needs vacillate. But first and from the outset it was the call of emptiness itself, in the ambiguous gap of an attempted seduction of the other by means in which the subject manifests indulgence, and on which he stakes the monument of his narcissism.

"That's introspection all right!" exclaims the bombastic, smug fellow who knows its dangers only too well. He is certainly not the last, he admits, to have tasted its charms, even if he has exhausted its benefits. Too bad he has no more time to waste. For you would hear some fine profundities from him were he to come and lie on your couch!

It is strange that analysts who encounter this sort of person early on in their experience still consider introspection to be of importance in psychoanalysis. For the minute you accept his wager, all the fine things he thought he had been saving up slip his mind. If he forces himself to recount a few, they don't amount

to much; but others come to him so unexpectedly that they strike him as idiotic and silence him for quite a while. That's what usually happens.<sup>3</sup>

He then grasps the difference between the mirage of the monologue whose accommodating fancies once animated his bombast, and the forced labor of a discourse that leaves one no way out, on which psychologists (not without humor) and therapists (not without cunning) have bestowed the name "free association."

For it really is work—so much so that some have said it requires an apprenticeship, and have even considered this apprenticeship to constitute its true formative value. But if viewed in this way, what does it train but a skilled worker?

Then what of this work? Let us examine its conditions and fruit in the hope of shedding more light on its aim and benefits.

The aptness of the German word *Durcharbeiten*—equivalent to the English "working through"\*—has been recognized in passing. It has been the despair of French translators, despite what the immortal words of a master of French style offered them by way of an exhaustive exercise: "Cent fois sur le métier, remettez . . ."—but how does the work [*l'ouvrage*] progress here?

The theory reminds us of the triad: frustration, aggressiveness, regression. This explanation seems so comprehensible that it may well spare us the effort to comprehend. Intuition is prompt, but we should be all the more suspicious of something obvious when it has become a received idea. Should analysis ever expose its weakness, it would be advisable not to rest content with recourse to "affectivity." This taboo-word of dialectical incapacity will, along with the verb "to intellectualize" (whose pejorative acceptance makes this incapacity meritorious), remain, in the history of the language, the stigmata of our obtuseness regarding the subject.<sup>4</sup>

Let us ask ourselves instead where this frustration comes from. Is it from the analyst's silence? Responding to the subject's empty speech—even and especially in an approving manner—often proves, by its effects, to be far more frustrating than silence. Isn't it, rather, a frustration that is inherent in the subject's very discourse? Doesn't the subject become involved here in an ever greater dispossession of himself as a being, concerning which—by dint of sincere portraits which leave the idea of his being no less incoherent, of rectifications that do not succeed in isolating its essence, of stays and defenses that do not prevent his statue from tottering, of narcissistic embraces that become like a puff of air in animating it—he ends up recognizing that this being has never been anything more than his own construction [*oeuvre*] in the imaginary and that this construction undercuts all certainty in him? For in the work he

does to reconstruct it *for another*, he encounters anew the fundamental alienation that made him construct it *like another*, and that has always destined it to be taken away from him *by another*.<sup>5</sup>

250 This ego,\* whose strength our theorists now define by its capacity to bear frustration, is frustration in its very essence.<sup>6</sup> Not frustration of one of the subject's desires, but frustration of an object in which his desire is alienated; and the more developed this object becomes, the more profoundly the subject becomes alienated from his jouissance. It is thus a frustration at one remove, a frustration that the subject—even were he to reduce its form in his discourse to the passivating image by which the subject makes himself an object by displaying himself before the mirror—could not be satisfied with, since even if he achieved the most perfect resemblance to that image, it would still be the other's jouissance that he would have gotten recognized there. Which is why there is no adequate response to this discourse, for the subject regards as contemptuous [*mépris*] any speech that buys into his mistake [*méprise*].

The subject's aggressiveness here has nothing to do with animals' aggressiveness when their desires are frustrated. This explanation, which most seem happy with, masks another that is less agreeable to each and every one of us: the aggressiveness of a slave who responds to being frustrated in his labor with a death wish.

Thus we can see how this aggressiveness may respond to any intervention which, by exposing the imaginary intentions of the subject's discourse, dismantles the object the subject has constructed to satisfy them. This is, in effect, what is referred to as the analysis of resistances, and we can immediately see the danger that lies therein. It is already indicated by the existence of the naive analyst who has never seen any manifestations of aggressiveness except for the aggressive signification of his subjects' fantasies.<sup>7</sup>

251 He is the same one who, not hesitating to plead for a "causalist" analysis that would aim to transform the subject in the present by learned explanations of his past, betrays well enough, even in his very tone, the anxiety he wishes to spare himself—the anxiety of having to think that his patient's freedom may depend on that of his own intervention. If the expedient he seizes upon is beneficial at some point to the subject, it is no more beneficial than a stimulating joke and will not detain me any longer.

Let us focus instead on the *hic et nunc* [here and now] to which some analysts feel we should confine the handling of the analysis. It may indeed be useful, provided the analyst does not detach the imaginary intention he uncovers in it from the symbolic relation in which it is expressed. Nothing must be read into it concerning the subject's ego that cannot be assumed anew by him in the form of the "I," that is, in the first person.

"I was this only in order to become what I can be": if this were not the constant culmination of the subject's assumption [*assumption*] of his own mirages, where could we find progress here?

Thus the analyst cannot without danger track down the subject in the intimacy of his gestures, or even in that of his stationary state, unless he reintegrates them as silent parties into the subject's narcissistic discourse—and this has been very clearly noted, even by young practitioners.

The danger here is not of a negative reaction on the subject's part, but rather of his being captured in an objectification—no less imaginary than before—of his stationary state, indeed, of his statue, in a renewed status of his alienation.

The analyst's art must, on the contrary, involve suspending the subject's certainties until their final mirages have been consumed. And it is in the subject's discourse that their dissolution must be punctuated.

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

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

Thus the psychoanalyst knows better than anyone else that the point is to figure out [*entendre*] to which "part" of this discourse the significant term is relegated, and this is how he proceeds in the best of cases: he takes the description of an everyday event as a fable addressed as a word to the wise, a long prosopopeia as a direct interjection, and, contrariwise, a simple slip of the tongue as a highly complex statement, and even the rest of a silence as the whole lyrical development it stands in for.

It is, therefore, a propitious punctuation that gives meaning to the subject's discourse. This is why the ending of the session—which current technique makes into an interruption that is determined purely by the clock and, as such, takes no account of the thread of the subject's discourse—plays the part of a scansion which has the full value of an intervention by the analyst that is designed to precipitate concluding moments. Thus we must free the ending from its routine framework and employ it for all the useful aims of analytic technique.

This is how regression can occur, regression being but the bringing into the present in the subject's discourse of the fantasmatic relations discharged by an ego\* at each stage in the decomposition of its structure. After all, the



regression is not real; even in language it manifests itself only by inflections, turns of phrase, and “stumbings so slight” that even in the extreme case they cannot go beyond the artifice of “baby talk” engaged in by adults. Imputing to regression the reality of a current relation to the object amounts to projecting the subject into an alienating illusion that merely echoes one of the analyst’s own alibis.

This is why nothing could be more misleading for the analyst than to seek to guide himself by some supposed “contact” he experiences with the subject’s reality. This vacuous buzzword of intuitionist and even phenomenological psychology has become extended in contemporary usage in a way that is thoroughly symptomatic of the ever scarcer effects of speech in the present social context. But its obsessive value becomes flagrant when it is recommended in a relationship which, according to its very rules, excludes all real contact.

253 Young analysts, who might nevertheless allow themselves to be impressed by the impenetrable gifts such recourse implies, will find no better way of dispelling their illusions than to consider the success of the supervision they themselves receive. The very possibility of that supervision would become problematic from the perspective of contact with the patient’s reality [*réel*]. On the contrary, the supervisor manifests a second sight—that’s the word for it!—which makes the experience at least as instructive for him as for his supervisee. And the less the supervisee demonstrates such gifts—which are considered by some to be all the more incommunicable the bigger the to-do they themselves make about their secrets regarding technique—the truer this almost becomes.

The reason for this enigma is that the supervisee serves as a filter, or even as a refractor, of the subject’s discourse, and in this way a ready-made stereography is presented to the supervisor, bringing out from the start the three or four registers on which the musical score constituted by the subject’s discourse can be read.

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

There he would find the authentic path by which to reach what is expressed only very approximately by the classic formulation of the analyst’s diffuse, or even absentminded, attention. For it is essential to know what that attention aims at; as all my work shows, it certainly does not aim at an object beyond the subject’s speech the way it does for certain analysts who force themselves to never lose sight of that object. If this had to be the path of analysis, then it

would surely have recourse to other means—otherwise it would provide the only example of a method that forbade itself the means to its own ends.

The only object that is within the analyst’s reach is the imaginary relation that links him to the subject *qua ego*; and although he cannot eliminate it, he can use it to adjust the receptivity of his ears, which is, according to both physiology and the Gospels, the normal use made of them: having ears *in order not to hear* [*entendre*], in other words, in order to detect what is to be understood [*entendu*]. For he has no other ears, no third or fourth ear designed for what some have tried to describe as a direct transaudition of the unconscious by the unconscious. I shall say what we are to make of this supposed mode of communication later.

I have, thus far, approached the function of speech in analysis from its least rewarding angle, that of “empty” speech in which the subject seems to speak in vain about someone who—even if he were such a dead ringer for him that you might confuse them—will never join him in the assumption of his desire. I have pointed out the source of the growing devaluation of speech in both analytic theory and technique, and have had to lift incrementally, as if a heavy mill wheel had fallen on speech, what can only serve as the sails that drive the movement of analysis: namely, individual psychophysiological factors that are, in reality, excluded from its dialectic. To regard the goal of psychoanalysis as to modify their characteristic inertia is to condemn oneself to the fiction of movement, with which a certain trend in psychoanalytic technique seems to be satisfied.

If we turn now to the other end of the spectrum of psychoanalytic experience—its history, casuistry, and treatment process—we shall learn to oppose the value of anamnesis as the index and mainspring of therapeutic progress to the analysis of the *hic et nunc*, hysterical intersubjectivity to obsessive intrasubjectivity, and symbolic interpretation to the analysis of resistance. The realization of full speech begins here.

Let us examine the relation it constitutes.

Let us recall that, shortly after its birth, the method introduced by Breuer and Freud was baptized the “talking cure”\* by one of Breuer’s patients, Anna O. Let us keep in mind that it was the experience inaugurated with this hysteric that led them to the discovery of the pathogenic event dubbed traumatic.

If this event was recognized as the cause of the symptom, it was because putting the event into words (in the patient’s “stories”\*) led to the removal of the symptom. Here the term “*prise de conscience*” (conscious realization), borrowed from the psychological theory that was immediately constructed to explain the fact, retains a prestige that merits the healthy distrust I believe is

called for when it comes to explanations that parade as self-evident. The psychological prejudices of Freud's day were opposed to seeing in verbalization as such any other reality than its *flatus vocis*. The fact remains that, in the hypnotic state, verbalization is dissociated from conscious realization, and this alone is enough to require a revision of such a conception of its effects.

But why don't the valiant defenders of the behaviorist *Aufhebung* set an example here, making their point that they do not need to know whether the subject remembers anything whatsoever? She simply recounts the event. For my part, I would say that she verbalizes it, or—to further exploit this term whose resonances in French call to mind a Pandora figure other than the one with the box (in which the term should probably be locked up)—that she forces the event into the Word [*le verbe*] or, more precisely, into the *epos* by which she relates in the present the origins of her person. And she does this in a language that allows her discourse to be understood by her contemporaries and that also presupposes their present discourse. Thus it happens that the recitation of the *epos* may include a discourse of earlier days in its own archaic, even foreign tongue, or may even be carried out in the present with all the vivacity of an actor; but it is like indirect speech, isolated in quotation marks in the thread of the narrative, and, if the speech is performed, it is on a stage implying the presence not only of a chorus, but of spectators as well.

Hypnotic remembering is, no doubt, a reproduction of the past, but it is above all a spoken representation and, as such, implies all sorts of presences. It stands in the same relation to the remembering while awake of what in analysis is curiously called "the material," as drama—in which the original myths of the City State are produced before its assembly of citizens—stands in relation to history, which may well be made up of materials, but in which a nation today learns to read the symbols of a destiny on the march. In Heideggerian language one could say that both types of remembering constitute the subject as *gewesend*—that is, as being the one who has thus been. But in the internal unity of this temporalization, entities [*l'étant*] mark the convergence of the having-beens [*des ayant été*]. In other words, if other encounters are assumed to have occurred since any one of these moments having been, another entity would have issued from it that would cause him to have been altogether differently.

The reason for the ambiguity of hysterical revelation of the past is not so much the vacillation of its content between the imaginary and reality [*réel*], for it is situated in both. Nor is it the fact that it is made up of lies. It is that it presents us with the birth of truth in speech, and thereby brings us up against the reality of what is neither true nor false. At least, that is the most disturbing aspect of the problem.

For it is present speech that bears witness to the truth of this revelation in

current reality and grounds it in the name of this reality. Now only speech bears witness in this reality to that portion of the powers of the past that has been thrust aside at each crossroads where an event has chosen.

This is why the condition of continuity in the anamnesis, by which Freud measures the completeness of the cure, has nothing to do with the Bergsonian myth of a restoration of duration in which the authenticity of each instant would be destroyed if it did not recapitulate the modulation of all the preceding instants. To Freud's mind, it is not a question of biological memory, nor of its intuitionist mystification, nor of the paramnesia of the symptom, but of remembering, that is, of history; he rests the scales—in which conjectures about the past make promises about the future oscillate—on the knife-edge of chronological certainties alone. Let's be categorical: in psychoanalytic anamnesis, what is at stake is not reality, but truth, because the effect of full speech is to reorder past contingencies by conferring on them the sense of necessities to come, such as they are constituted by the scant freedom through which the subject makes them present.

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

Freud demands a total objectification of proof when it comes to dating the primal scene, but he simply presupposes all the resubjectivizations of the event that seem necessary to him to explain its effects at each turning point at which the subject restructures himself—that is, as many restructurings of the event as take place, as he puts it, *nachträglich*, after the fact.<sup>8</sup> What's more, with an audacity bordering on impudence, he declares that he considers it legitimate, in analyzing the processes, to elide the time intervals during which the event remains latent in the subject.<sup>9</sup> That is to say, he annuls the *times for understanding* in favor of the *moments of concluding* which precipitate the subject's meditation toward deciding the meaning to be attached to the early event.

Let it be noted that *time for understanding* and *moment of concluding* are functions I have defined in a purely logical theorem,<sup>10</sup> and are familiar to my students as having proven extremely helpful in the dialectical analysis through which I guide them in the process of a psychoanalysis.

This assumption by the subject of his history, insofar as it is constituted by speech addressed to another, is clearly the basis of the new method Freud called psychoanalysis, not in 1904—as was taught until recently by an authority who, when he finally threw off the cloak of prudent silence, appeared on that day to know nothing of Freud except the titles of his works—but in 1895.<sup>11</sup>

In this analysis of the meaning of his method, I do not deny, any more than Freud himself did, the psychophysiological discontinuity manifested by the

states in which hysterical symptoms appear, nor do I deny that these symptoms may be treated by methods—hypnosis or even narcosis—that reproduce the discontinuity of these states. It is simply that I repudiate any reliance on these states—as expressly as Freud forbade himself recourse to them after a certain moment in time—to either explain symptoms or cure them.

For if the originality of the method derives from the means it foregoes, it is because the means that it reserves for itself suffice to constitute a domain whose limits define the relativity of its operations.

Its means are those of speech, insofar as speech confers a meaning on the functions of the individual; its domain is that of concrete discourse qua field of the subject's transindividual reality; and its operations are those of history, insofar as history constitutes the emergence of truth in reality [*réel*].

258 First, in fact, when a subject begins an analysis, he accepts a position that is more constitutive in itself than all the orders by which he allows himself to be more or less taken in—the position of interlocution—and I see no disadvantage in the fact that this remark may leave the listener dumbfounded [*interloqué*]. For I shall take this opportunity to stress that the subject's act of addressing [*allocution*] brings with it an addressee [*allocutaire*]<sup>12</sup>—in other words, that the speaker [*locuteur*]<sup>13</sup> is constituted in it as intersubjectivity.

Second, it is on the basis of this interlocution, insofar as it includes the interlocutor's response, that it becomes clear to us why Freud requires restoration of continuity in the subject's motivations. An operational examination of this objective shows us, in effect, that it can only be satisfied in the intersubjective continuity of the discourse in which the subject's history is constituted.

Thus, while the subject may vaticinate about his history under the influence of one or other of those drugs that put consciousness to sleep and have been christened in our day “truth serums”—where the sureness of the misnomer betrays the characteristic irony of language—the simple retransmission of his own recorded discourse, even if pronounced by his doctor, cannot have the same effects as psychoanalytic interlocution because it comes to the subject in an alienated form.

The true basis of the Freudian discovery of the unconscious becomes clear in its position as a third term. This may be simply formulated in the following terms:

The unconscious is that part of concrete discourse qua transindividual, which is not at the subject's disposal in reestablishing the continuity of his conscious discourse.

This disposes of the paradox presented by the concept of the unconscious when it is related to an individual reality. For to reduce this concept to unconscious tendencies is to resolve the paradox only by avoiding analytic experi-

ence, which clearly shows that the unconscious is of the same nature as ideational functions, and even of thought. Freud plainly stressed this when, unable to avoid a conjunction of opposing terms in the expression “unconscious thought,” he gave it the necessary support with the invocation: *sit venia verbo*. Thus we obey him by casting the blame, in effect, onto the Word, but onto the Word realized in discourse that darts from mouth to mouth, conferring on the act of the subject who receives its message the meaning that makes this act an act of his history and gives it its truth.

Hence the objection that the notion of unconscious thought is a contradiction in terms, which is raised by a psychology poorly grounded in its logic, collapses when confronted by the very distinctiveness of the psychoanalytic domain, insofar as this domain reveals the reality of discourse in its autonomy. And the psychoanalyst's *eppur si muove!* has the same impact as Galileo's, which is not that of a fact-based experiment but of an *experimentum mentis*.

The unconscious is the chapter of my history that is marked by a blank or occupied by a lie: it is the censored chapter. But the truth can be refound; most often it has already been written elsewhere. Namely,

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

260 Students who believe that, in order to understand Freud, reading Freud is preferable to reading Fenichel—and this belief is so rare that I try to foster it in my teaching—will realize, once they set about it, that what I have just said is hardly original, even in its verve; indeed, I have not used a single metaphor that Freud's works do not repeat with the frequency of a *leitmotif*, revealing the very fabric of his work.

At every instant of their practice from then on, they will more easily grasp

the fact that these metaphors—like negation, whose doubling undoes it—lose their metaphorical dimension, and they will recognize that this is so because they are operating in metaphor's own realm, metaphor being but a synonym for the symbolic displacement brought into play in the symptom.

After that it will be easier for them to evaluate the imaginary displacement that motivates Fenichel's work, by gauging the difference in the solidity and efficacy of technique generated by referring to the supposedly organic stages of individual development and by searching for the particular events of a subject's history. It is precisely the difference that separates authentic historical research from the supposed laws of history, of which it can be said that every age finds its own philosopher to propagate them according to the values prevalent at the time.

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

If, therefore, their role in scientific progress is rather slight, their interest nevertheless lies elsewhere: in their considerable role as ideals. For it leads us to distinguish between what might be called the primary and secondary functions of historicization.

261 For to say of psychoanalysis and of history that, qua sciences, they are both sciences of the particular, does not mean that the facts they deal with are purely accidental or even factitious, or that their ultimate value comes down to the brute aspect of trauma.

Events are engendered in a primal historicization—in other words, history is already being made on the stage where it will be played out once it has been written down, both in one's heart and outside.

At one moment in time, a certain riot in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine is experienced by its actors as a victory or defeat of the Parliament or the Court; at another moment, as a victory or defeat of the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. And although it is "the common people," to use Cardinal de Retz's expression, who always pay the price, it is not at all the same historical event—I mean that they do not leave behind the same sort of memory in men's minds.

This is because, with the disappearance of the reality of the Parliament and the Court, the first event will return to its traumatic value, allowing for a pro-

gressive and authentic effacement, unless its meaning is expressly revived. Whereas the memory of the second event will remain very much alive even under censorship—just as the amnesia brought on by repression is one of the liveliest forms of memory—as long as there are men who enlist their revolt in the struggle for the proletariat's political ascension, that is, men for whom the keywords of dialectical materialism have meaning.

Thus it would be going too far to say that I am about to carry these remarks over into the field of psychoanalysis, since they are already there, and since the clear distinction they establish between two things that were formerly confused—the technique of deciphering the unconscious and the theory of instincts, or even drives—goes without saying.

What we teach the subject to recognize as his unconscious is his history—in other words, we help him complete the current historicization of the facts that have already determined a certain number of the historical "turning points" in his existence. But if they have played this role, it is already as historical facts, that is, as recognized in a certain sense or censored in a certain order.

Thus, every fixation at a supposed instinctual stage is above all a historical stigma: a page of shame that one forgets or undoes, or a page of glory that obliges. But what is forgotten is recalled in acts, and the undoing of what has been done contradicts what is said elsewhere, just as obligation perpetuates in symbols the very mirage in which the subject found himself trapped.

To put it succinctly, the instinctual stages are already organized in subjectivity when they are being lived. And to put it clearly, the subjectivity of the child who registers as victories and defeats the epic of the training of his sphincters—enjoying in the process the imaginary sexualization of his cloacal orifices, turning his excremental expulsions into aggressions, his retentions into seductions, and his movements of release into symbols—*is not fundamentally different* from the subjectivity of the psychoanalyst who strives to restore the forms of love that he calls "pregenital" in order to understand them.

In other words, the anal stage is no less purely historical when it is actually experienced than when it is reconceptualized, nor is it less purely grounded in intersubjectivity. But officially recognizing it as a stage in some supposed instinctual maturation immediately leads even the best minds off track, to the point of seeing in it the reproduction in ontogenesis of a stage of the animal phylum that should be sought in ascaris, even in jellyfish—a speculation which, ingenious as it may be when penned by Balint, leads others to the most incoherent musings, or even to the folly that goes looking in protista for the imaginary schema of breaking and entering the body, fear of which is supposed to govern feminine sexuality. Why not look for the image of the ego in shrimp, under the pretext that both acquire a new shell after every molting?

In the 1910s and 1920s, a certain Jaworski constructed a very pretty system in which the “biological level” could be found right up to the very confines of culture, and which actually provided shellfish their historical counterpart at some period of the late Middle Ages, if I remember rightly, due to a flourishing of armor in both; indeed, it left no animal form without some human correspondent, excepting neither mollusks nor vermin.

263 Analogy is not the same thing as metaphor, and the use that the philosophers of nature have made of it requires the genius of Goethe, but even his example is not encouraging. No course is more repugnant to the spirit of our discipline, and it was by deliberately avoiding analogy that Freud opened up the path appropriate to the interpretation of dreams and, along with it, to the notion of analytic symbolism. Analytic symbolism, I insist, is strictly opposed to analogical thinking—a dubious tradition that still leads some people, even in our own ranks, to consider the latter to go hand in hand with the former.

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

This mythology of instinctual maturation, built out of bits and pieces selected from Freud’s work, actually engenders intellectual problems whose vapor, condensing into nebulous ideals, in return irrigates the original myth with its showers. The best writers spill their ink positing equations that satisfy the requirements of that mysterious “genital love”\* (there are notions whose strangeness is better placed in the parenthesis of a borrowed term, and they initial their attempt with an admission of a *non liquet*). No one, however, appears to be shaken up by the malaise this results in; and people see it, rather, as a reason to encourage all the Münchhausens of psychoanalytic normalization to raise themselves up by the hair on their head in the hope of attaining the paradise of full realization of the genital object, indeed of the object itself.

The fact that we analysts are in a good position to know the power of words is no reason to emphasize the insoluble character of their power, or to “bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders,” as Christ’s malediction is expressed to the Pharisees in the text of Saint Matthew.

264 The poverty of the terms within which we try to contain a subjective problem may thus leave a great deal to be desired to particularly exacting minds. should they compare these terms to those that structured, in their very confusion, the ancient quarrels over Nature and Grace.<sup>14</sup> This poverty may thus leave them apprehensive as to the quality of the psychological and sociological effects they can expect from the use of these terms. And it is to be hoped that a better appreciation of the functions of the Logos will dissipate the mysteries of our fantastic charismata.

To confine ourselves to a more lucid tradition, perhaps we can understand the celebrated maxim by La Rochefoucauld—“There are people who would never have fallen in love but for hearing love discussed”—not in the romantic sense of a thoroughly imaginary “realization” of love that would make this remark into a bitter objection, but as an authentic recognition of what love owes to the symbol and of what speech brings with it by way of love.

In any case, one need but consult Freud’s work to realize to what a secondary and hypothetical rank he relegates the theory of the instincts. The theory cannot in his eyes stand up for a single instant to the least important particular fact of a history, he insists, and the *genital narcissism* he invokes when summarizing the case of the Wolf Man clearly shows how much he scorns the constituted order of the libidinal stages. Moreover, he evokes instinctual conflict there only to immediately distance himself from it and recognize in the symbolic isolation of the “I am not castrated,” in which the subject asserts himself, the compulsive form to which his heterosexual object choice remains riveted, in opposition to the effect of homosexualizing capture undergone by the ego when it was brought back to the imaginary matrix of the primal scene. This is, in truth, the subjective conflict—in which it is only a question of the vicissitudes of subjectivity, so much so that the “I” wins and loses against the “ego” at the whim of religious catechization or indoctrinating *Aufklärung*—a conflict whose effects Freud brought the subject to realize through his help before explaining them to us in the dialectic of the Oedipus complex.

It is in the analysis of such a case that one clearly sees that the realization of perfect love is the fruit not of nature but of grace—that is, the fruit of an intersubjective agreement imposing its harmony on the rent nature on which it is based.

“But what, then, is this subject that you keep drumming into our ears?” some impatient auditor finally exclaims. “Haven’t we already learned the lesson from Monsieur de La Palice that everything experienced by the individual is subjective?”

Naïve mouth—whose eulogy I shall spend my final days preparing—open up again to hear me. No need to close your eyes. The subject goes far beyond what is experienced “subjectively” by the individual; he goes exactly as far as the truth he is able to attain—which will perhaps come out of the mouth you have already closed again. Yes, this truth of his history is not all contained in his script, and yet the place is marked there in the painful conflicts he experiences because he knows only his own lines, and even in the pages whose disarray gives him little comfort.

The fact that the subject’s unconscious is the other’s discourse appears more clearly than anywhere else in the studies Freud devoted to what he called telepa-

thy, as it is manifested in the context of an analytic experience. This is the coincidence between the subject's remarks and facts he cannot have known about, but which are still at work in the connections to another analysis in which the analyst is an interlocutor—a coincidence which is, moreover, most often constituted by an entirely verbal, even homonymic, convergence, or which, if it includes an act, involves an "acting out"\* by one of the analyst's other patients or by the patient's child who is also in analysis. It is a case of resonance in the communicating networks of discourse, an exhaustive study of which would shed light on similar facts of everyday life.

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

## 16 II. *Symbol and Language as Structure and Limit of the Psychoanalytic Field*

Τὴν ἀρχὴν ὅτι καὶ λαλῶ ὑμῖν  
—Gospel according to Saint John, 8.25

Do crossword puzzles.  
—Advice to a young psychoanalyst

To take up the thread of my argument again, let me repeat that it is by a reduction of a particular subject's history that psychoanalysis touches on relational gestalts, which analysis extrapolates into regular development; but that neither genetic psychology nor differential psychology, on both of which analysis may shed light, is within its scope, because both require experimental and observational conditions that are related to those of analysis in name alone.

To go even further: What separates out from common experience (which is confused with sense experience only by professional thinkers) as psychology in its crudest form—namely, the wonder that wells up, during some momentary suspension of daily cares, at what pairs off human beings in a disparity that goes beyond that of the grotesques of Leonardo or Goya, or surprise at the resistance of the thickness characteristic of a person's skin to the caress of a hand still moved by the thrill of discovery without yet being blunted by desire—this, one might say, is abolished in an experience that is averse to such caprices and recalcitrant to such mysteries.

A psychoanalysis normally proceeds to its end without revealing to us very much of what is particular to our patient as regards his sensitivity to blows or

colors, how quickly he grasps things with his hands or which parts of his body are sensitive, or his ability to retain things or invent, not to mention the vivacity of his tastes.

This paradox is only an apparent one and is not due to any personal failing; if it can be justified by the negative conditions of analytic experience, it simply presses us a little harder to examine that experience in terms of what is positive in it.

For this paradox is not resolved by the efforts of certain people who—like the philosophers Plato mocked for being so driven by their appetite for reality [*réel*] that they went about embracing trees—go so far as to take every episode in which this reality, that slips away, rears its head for the lived reaction of which they prove so fond. For these are the very people who, making their objective what lies beyond language, react to analysis' "Don't touch" rule by a sort of obsession. If they keep going in that direction, I dare say the last word in transference reaction will be sniffing each other. I am not exaggerating in the least: nowadays, a young analyst-in-training, after two or three years of fruitless analysis, can actually hail the long-awaited advent of the object-relation in being smelled by his subject, and can reap as a result of it the *dignus est intrare* of our votes, the guarantors of his abilities.

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

To this end, we can do no better than return to Freud's work. Claiming to be an expert practitioner does not give an analyst the right to challenge Freud III, because he does not understand him, in the name of a Freud II whom he thinks he understands. And his very ignorance of Freud I is no excuse for considering the five great psychoanalyses as a series of case studies as badly chosen as they are written up, however marvelous he thinks it that the grain of truth hidden within them managed to escape.<sup>15</sup>

We must thus take up Freud's work again starting with the *Traumdeutung* [*The Interpretation of Dreams*] to remind ourselves that a dream has the structure of a sentence or, rather, to keep to the letter of the work, of a rebus—that is, of a form of writing, of which children's dreams are supposed to represent the primordial ideography, and which reproduces, in adults' dreams, the simultaneously phonetic and symbolic use of signifying elements found in the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt and in the characters still used in China.

But even this is no more than the deciphering of the instrument. What is important is the version of the text, and that, Freud tells us, is given in the telling of the dream—that is, in its rhetoric. Ellipsis and pleonasm, hyperbaton or syllepsis, regression, repetition, apposition—these are the syntactical

displacements; metaphor, catachresis, antonomasia, allegory, metonymy, and synecdoche—these are the semantic condensations; Freud teaches us to read in them the intentions—whether ostentatious or demonstrative, dissimulating or persuasive, retaliatory or seductive—with which the subject modulates his oneiric discourse.

We know that he laid it down as a rule that the expression of a desire must always be sought in a dream. But let us be sure we understand what he meant by this. If Freud accepts, as the reason for a dream that seems to run counter to his thesis, the very desire to contradict him on the part of a subject whom he had tried to convince of his theory,<sup>16</sup> how could he fail to accept the same reason for himself when the law he arrived at is supposed to have come to him from other people?

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

Indeed, we all know from experience that from the moment an analysis becomes engaged in the path of transference—and this is what indicates to us that it has become so engaged—each of the patient's dreams is to be interpreted as a provocation, a latent avowal or diversion, by its relation to the analytic discourse, and that as the analysis progresses, his dreams become ever more reduced to the function of elements in the dialogue taking place in the analysis.

In the case of the psychopathology of everyday life, another field consecrated by another text by Freud, it is clear that every bungled action is a successful, even "well phrased," discourse, and that in slips of the tongue it is the gag that turns against speech, and from just the right quadrant for its word to the wise to be sufficient.

But let us go straight to the part of the book where Freud deals with chance and the beliefs it gives rise to, and especially to the facts regarding which he applies himself to showing the subjective efficacy of associations to numbers that are left to the fate of an unmotivated choice, or even of a random selection. Nowhere do the dominant structures of the psychoanalytic field reveal themselves better than in such a success. Freud's appeal, in passing, to unknown thought processes is nothing more in this case than his last-ditch excuse for the total confidence he placed in symbols, a confidence that wavers as the result of being fulfilled beyond his wildest dreams.

If, for a symptom, whether neurotic or not, to be considered to come under psychoanalytic psychopathology, Freud insists on the minimum of overtermination constituted by a double meaning—symbol of a defunct conflict beyond its function in a *no less symbolic* present conflict—and if he teaches us

to follow the ascending ramification of the symbolic lineage in the text of the patient's free associations, in order to detect the nodal points [*noeuds*] of its structure at the places where its verbal forms intersect, then it is already quite clear that symptoms can be entirely resolved in an analysis of language, because a symptom is itself structured like a language: a symptom is language from which speech must be delivered.

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

Indeed, if—from the numbers obtained by breaking up the series of digits [*chiffres*] in the chosen number, from their combination by all the operations of arithmetic, and even from the repeated division of the original number by one of the numbers split off from it—the resulting numbers<sup>17</sup> prove symbolic among all the numbers in the subject's own history, it is because they were already latent in the initial choice. And thus if the idea that these very numbers [*chiffres*] determined the subject's fate is refuted as superstitious, we must nevertheless admit that everything analysis reveals to the subject as his unconscious lies in the existing order of their combinations—that is, in the concrete language they represent.

We shall see that philologists and ethnographers reveal enough to us about the combinatory sureness found in the completely unconscious systems with which they deal for them to find nothing surprising in the proposition I am putting forward here.

But should anyone still have reservations about what I am saying, I would appeal once more to the testimony of the man who, having discovered the unconscious, warrants credence when he designates its place; he will not fail us.

For, however little interest has been taken in it—and for good reason—*Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* remains the most unchallengeable of his works because it is the most transparent; in it, the effect of the unconscious is demonstrated in all its subtlety. And the visage it reveals to us is that of wit [*l'esprit*] in the ambiguity conferred on it by language, where the other face of its regal power is the witticism [*pointe*], by which the whole of its order is annihilated in an instant—the witticism, indeed, in which language's creative activity unveils its absolute gratuitousness, in which its domination of reality [*réel*] is expressed in the challenge of nonmeaning, and in which the humor, in the malicious grace of the free spirit [*esprit libre*], symbolizes a truth that does not say its last word.

We must follow Freud, along the book's admirably compelling detours, on the walk on which he leads us in this chosen garden of bitterest love.

Here everything is substantial, everything is a real gem. The mind [*esprit*] that lives as an exile in the creation whose invisible support he is, knows that he is at every instant the master capable of annihilating it. No matter how disdained the forms of this hidden royalty—haughty or perfidious, dandy-like or debonair—Freud can make their secret luster shine. Stories of the marriage-broker on his rounds in the ghettos of Moravia—that derided Eros figure, like him born of penury and pain—discreetly guiding the avidity of his ill-mannered client, and suddenly ridiculing him with the illuminating nonsense of his reply. “He who lets the truth escape like that,” comments Freud, “is in reality happy to throw off the mask.”

It is truth, in fact, that throws off the mask in coming out of his mouth, but only so that the joke might take on another and more deceptive mask: the sophistry that is merely a stratagem, the logic that is merely a lure, even comedy that tends merely to dazzle. The joke is always about something else. “A joke [*esprit*] in fact entails such a subjective conditionality [. . .]: a joke is only what I accept as such,” continues Freud, who knows what he is talking about.

Nowhere is the individual’s intent more evidently surpassed by the subject’s find—nowhere is the distinction I make between the individual and the subject so palpable—since not only must there have been something foreign to me in my find for me to take pleasure in it, but some of it must remain foreign for this find to hit home. This takes on its importance due to the necessity, so clearly indicated by Freud, of a joke’s third person, who is always presupposed, and to the fact that a joke does not lose its power when told in the form of indirect speech. In short, this points, in the Other’s locus, to the amboceptor that is illuminated by the artifice of the joke [*mot*] erupting in its supreme alacrity.

There is only one reason for a joke to fall flat: the platitude of any explanation given of its truth.

Now this relates directly to our problem. The current disdain for studies on the language of symbols—which can be seen simply by glancing at the table of contents of our publications before and after the 1920s—corresponds in our discipline to nothing less than a change of object, whose tendency to align itself with the most undifferentiated level of communication, in order to accommodate the new objectives proposed for psychoanalytic technique, is perhaps responsible for the rather gloomy balance sheet that the most lucid analysts have drawn up of its results.<sup>18</sup>

How, indeed, could speech exhaust the meaning of speech or—to put it better with the Oxford logical positivists, the meaning of meaning\*—if not in the act that engenders it? Thus Goethe’s reversal of its presence at the ori-

gin, “In the beginning was the act,” is itself reversed in its turn: it was certainly the Word that was [*était*] in the beginning, and we live in its creation, but it is our mental [*esprit*] action that continues this creation by constantly renewing it. And we can only think back to this action by allowing ourselves to be driven ever further ahead by it.

I shall try it myself only in the knowledge that this is its pathway . . .

No one is supposed to be ignorant of the law; this formulation, provided by the humor in our Code of Laws, nevertheless expresses the truth in which our experience is grounded, and which our experience confirms. No man is actually ignorant of it, because the law of man has been the law of language since the first words of recognition presided over the first gifts—it having taken the detestable Danaï, who came and fled by sea, for men to learn to fear deceptive words accompanying faithless gifts. Up until then, these gifts, the act of giving them and the objects given, their transmutation into signs, and even their fabrication, were so closely intertwined with speech for the pacific Argonauts—uniting the islets of their community with the bonds [*noeuds*] of a symbolic commerce—that they were designated by its name.<sup>19</sup>

Is it with these gifts, or with the passwords that give them their salutary nonmeaning, that language begins along with law? For these gifts are already symbols, in the sense that symbol means pact, and they are first and foremost signifiers of the pact they constitute as the signified; this is plainly seen in the fact that the objects of symbolic exchange—vases made to remain empty, shields too heavy to be carried, sheaves that will dry out, lances that are thrust into the ground—are all destined to be useless, if not superfluous by their very abundance.

Is this neutralization by means of the signifier the whole of the nature of language? Were this the case, one would find a first approximation of language among sea swallows, for instance, during display, materialized in the fish they pass each other from beak to beak; ethologists—if we must agree with them in seeing in this the instrument of a stirring into action of the group that is tantamount to a party—would then be altogether justified in recognizing a symbol in this activity.

It can be seen that I do not shrink from seeking the origins of symbolic behavior outside the human sphere. But it is certainly not by the pathway of an elaboration of signs, the pathway Jules H. Masserman,<sup>20</sup> following in the footsteps of so many others, has taken. I shall dwell on it for an instant here, not only because of the savvy tone with which he outlines his approach, but also because his work has been well received by the editors of our official



journal, who—following a tradition borrowed from employment agencies—never neglect anything that might provide our discipline with “good references.”

Think of it—we have here a man who has reproduced neurosis experimentally in a dog tied down on a table, and by what ingenious methods: a bell, the plate of meat that it announces, and the plate of apples that arrives instead; I'll spare you the rest. He will certainly not be one, at least so he assures us, to let himself be taken in by the “extensive ruminations,” as he puts it, that philosophers have devoted to the problem of language. Not him, he's going to grab it by the throat.

Can you imagine?—a raccoon can be taught, by a judicious conditioning of his reflexes, to go to his food box when he is presented with a card on which the meal he is to be served is printed. We are not told whether it lists the various prices, but the convincing detail is added that if the service disappoints him, he comes back and tears up the card that promised too much, just as a furious woman might do with the letters of a faithless lover (*sic*).

This is one of the arches supporting the road by which the author leads us from the signal to the symbol. It is a two-way street, and the way back is illustrated by no less imposing structures.

For if, in a human subject, you associate the ringing of a bell with the projection of a bright light into his eyes and then the ringing alone to the order, “contract,”\* you will succeed in getting the subject to make his pupils contract just by pronouncing the order himself, then by whispering it, and eventually just by thinking it—in other words, you will obtain a reaction of the nervous system that is called autonomic because it is usually inaccessible to intentional effects. Thus, if we are to believe Masserman, a certain Hudgkins “had created in a group of people a highly individualized configuration of cognate and visceral reactions to the idea-symbol ‘contract’—a response which could be traced through their special experiences to an apparently remote but actually basic physiologic source: in this instance, simply the protection of the retina from excessive light.” And Masserman concludes: “The significance of such experiments for psycho-somatic and linguistic research hardly needs further elaboration.”

For my part, I would have been curious to know whether subjects trained in this way also react to the enunciation of the same term in the expressions “marriage contract,”\* “contract bridge,”\* and “breach of contract,”\* and even when the term is progressively shortened to the articulation of its first syllable alone: contract, contrac, contra, contr . . . The control test required by strict scientific method would then be supplied all by itself as the French reader muttered this syllable under his breath, even though he would have been subjected

to no other conditioning than that of the bright light projected on the problem by Masserman himself. I would then ask this author whether the effects thus observed among conditioned subjects still appeared to so easily do without further elaboration. For either the effects would no longer be produced, thus revealing that they do not even conditionally depend on the semanteme, or they would continue to be produced, raising the question of the semanteme's limits.

In other words, they would cause the distinction between the signifier and the signified, so blithely confounded by the author in the English term “idea-symbol,”\* to appear in the very word as instrument. And without needing to examine the reactions of subjects conditioned to react to the command “don't contract,” or even to the complete conjugation of the verb “to contract,” I could remark to the author that what defines any element whatsoever of a language [*langue*] as belonging to language is that, for all the users of the language [*langue*], this element is distinguished as such in the supposedly constituted set of homologous elements.

Thus, the particular effects of this element of language are linked to the existence of this set, prior to any possible link with any of the subject's particular experiences. And to consider this last link independently of any reference to the first is simply to deny the characteristic function of language to this element.

This reminder of first principles might perhaps save our author from discovering, with an unequalled naïveté, the verbatim correspondence of the grammatical categories of his childhood to relations found in reality.

This monument of naïveté—of a kind which is, moreover, common enough in these matters—would not be worth so much attention if it had not been erected by a psychoanalyst, or rather by someone who, as if by chance, relates everything to it which is produced by a certain tendency in psychoanalysis—under the heading of the theory of the ego or technique of the analysis of defenses—that is diametrically opposed to Freudian experience; he thereby manifests *a contrario* that a sound conception of language is coherent with the preservation of Freudian experience. For Freud's discovery was that of the field of the effects, in man's nature, of his relations to the symbolic order and the fact that their meaning goes all the way back to the most radical instances of symbolization in being. To ignore the symbolic order is to condemn Freud's discovery to forgetting and analytic experience to ruin.

I declare—and this is a declaration that cannot be divorced from the serious intent of my present remarks—that I would prefer to have the raccoon I mentioned earlier sitting in the armchair to which, according to our author, Freud's shyness confined the analyst by placing him behind the couch, rather than a scientist who discourses on language and speech as Masserman does.

For—thanks to Jacques Prévert (“A stone, two houses, three ruins, four ditch diggers, a garden, some flowers, a raccoon”)—the raccoon, at least, has definitively entered the poetic bestiary and partakes as such, in its essence, of the symbol’s eminent function. But that being resembling us who professes, as Masserman does, a systematic misrecognition of that function, forever banishes himself from everything that can be called into existence by it. Thus, the question of the place to be assigned the said semblable in the classification of natural beings would seem to me to smack of a misplaced humanism, if his discourse, crossed with a technique of speech of which we are the guardians, were not in fact too fertile, even in producing sterile monsters within it. Let it be known therefore, since he also credits himself with braving the reproach of anthropomorphism, that this is the last term I would employ in saying that he makes his own being the measure of all things.

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

For even if there appeared among the sea swallows some kaid of the colony who, by gulping down the symbolic fish from the others’ gaping beaks, were to inaugurate the exploitation of swallow by swallow—a fanciful notion I enjoyed developing one day—this would not in any way suffice to reproduce among them that fabulous history, the image of our own, whose winged epic kept us captive on *Penguin Island*; something else would still be needed to create a “swallowized” universe.

This “something else” completes the symbol, making language of it. In order for the symbolic object freed from its usage to become the word freed from the *hic et nunc*, the difference resides not in the sonorous quality of its matter, but in its vanishing being in which the symbol finds the permanence of the concept.

Through the word—which is already a presence made of absence—absence itself comes to be named in an original moment whose perpetual recreation Freud’s genius detected in a child’s game. And from this articulated couple of presence and absence—also sufficiently constituted by the drawing in the sand of a simple line and a broken line of the *koua* mantics of China—a language’s [*langue*] world of meaning is born, in which the world of things will situate itself.

Through what becomes embodied only by being the trace of a nothingness and whose medium thus cannot be altered, concepts, in preserving the duration of what passes away, engender things.

For it is still not saying enough to say that the concept is the thing itself,

which a child can demonstrate against the Scholastics. It is the world of words that creates the world of things—things which at first run together in the *hic et nunc* of the all in the process of becoming—by giving its concrete being to their essence, and its ubiquity to what has always been: κτήμα ἐς ἀεί.

Man thus speaks, but it is because the symbol has made him man. Even if, in fact, overabundant gifts welcome a stranger who has made himself known to a group, the life of natural groups that constitute a community is subject to the rules of matrimonial alliance—determining the direction in which the exchange of women takes place—and to the mutual services determined by marriage: as the ŠiRonga proverb says, “A relative by marriage is an elephant’s hip.” Marriage ties are governed by an order of preference whose law concerning kinship names is, like language, imperative for the group in its forms, but unconscious in its structure. Now, in this structure, whose harmony or conflicts govern the restricted or generalized exchange discerned in it by ethnologists, the startled theoretician refinds the whole logic of combinations; thus the laws of number—that is, of the most highly purified of all symbols—prove to be immanent in the original symbolism. At least, it is the richness of the forms—in which what are known as the elementary structures of kinship develop—that makes those laws legible in the original symbolism. And this suggests that it is perhaps only our unawareness of their permanence that allows us to believe in freedom of choice in the so-called complex structures of marriage ties under whose law we live. If statistics has already allowed us to glimpse that this freedom is not exercised randomly, it is because a subjective logic seems to orient its effects.

This is precisely where the Oedipus complex—insofar as we still acknowledge that it covers the whole field of our experience with its signification—will be said, in my remarks here, to mark the limits our discipline assigns to subjectivity: namely, what the subject can know of his unconscious participation in the movement of the complex structures of marriage ties, by verifying the symbolic effects in his individual existence of the tangential movement toward incest that has manifested itself ever since the advent of a universal community.

The primordial Law is therefore the Law which, in regulating marriage ties, superimposes the reign of culture over the reign of nature, the latter being subject to the law of mating. The prohibition of incest is merely the subjective pivot of that Law, laid bare by the modern tendency to reduce the objects the subject is forbidden to choose to the mother and sisters, full license, moreover, not yet being entirely granted beyond them.

This law, then, reveals itself clearly enough as identical to a language order. For without names for kinship relations, no power can institute the

order of preferences and taboos that knot and braid the thread of lineage through the generations. And it is the confusion of generations which, in the Bible as in all traditional laws, is cursed as being the abomination of the Word and the desolation of the sinner.

278 Indeed, we know the damage a falsified filiation can do, going as far as dissociation of the subject's personality, when those around him conspire to sustain the lie. It may be no less when, as a result of a man marrying the mother of the woman with whom he has had a son, the son's brother will be his biological mother's half-brother. But if the son is later adopted—and I have not invented this example—by the sympathizing couple formed by a daughter of his father's previous marriage and her husband, he will find himself once again a half-brother, this time of his foster mother; and one can imagine the complex feelings he will have while awaiting the birth of a child who, in this recurring situation, will be his brother and nephew simultaneously.

So too, the mere time-lag produced in the order of generations by a late-born child of a second marriage, where a young mother finds herself the same age as an older brother from the first marriage, can produce similar effects; as we know, this was true in Freud's own family.

This same function of symbolic identification—allowing primitive man to believe he is the reincarnation of an ancestor with the same name, and even determining an alternating recurrence of characteristics in modern man—thus brings about a dissociation of the Oedipus complex in subjects exposed to such discordances in the paternal relation, in which the constant source of its pathogenic effects must be seen. Indeed, even when it is represented by a single person, the paternal function concentrates in itself both imaginary and real relations that always more or less fail to correspond to the symbolic relation that essentially constitutes it.

It is in the *name of the father* that we must recognize the basis of the symbolic function which, since the dawn of historical time, has identified his person with the figure of the law. This conception allows us to clearly distinguish, in the analysis of a case, the unconscious effects of this function from the narcissistic relations, or even real relations, that the subject has with the image and actions of the person who embodies this function; this results in a mode of comprehension that has repercussions on the very way in which interventions are made by the analyst. Practice has confirmed the fecundity of this conception to me, as well as to the students whom I have introduced to this method. And, both in supervision and case discussions, I have often had occasion to stress the harmful confusion produced by neglecting it.

Thus it is the virtue of the Word that perpetuates the movement of the Great Debt whose economy Rabelais, in a famous metaphor, extended to the stars

279 themselves. And we shall not be surprised that the chapter in which he anticipates ethnographic discoveries with the macaronic inversion of kinship names, reveals in the Word the substantific divination of the human mystery that I am trying to elucidate here.

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

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

Servitude and grandeur in which the living being would be annihilated, if desire did not preserve his part in the interferences and pulsations that the cycles of language cause to converge on him, when the confusion of tongues intervenes and the orders thwart each other in the tearing asunder of the universal undertaking.

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

What is at stake in an analysis is the advent in the subject of the scant reality that this desire sustains in him, with respect to symbolic conflicts and imaginary fixations, as the means of their accord, and our path is the intersubjective experience by which this desire gains recognition.

Thus we see that the problem is that of the relations between speech and language in the subject.

Three paradoxes in these relations present themselves in our domain.

In madness, of whatever nature, we must recognize on the one hand the negative freedom of a kind of speech that has given up trying to gain recognition, which is what we call an obstacle to transference; and, on the other, 280 the singular formation of a delusion which—whether fabular, fantastical, or cosmological, or rather interpretative, demanding, or idealist—objectifies the subject in a language devoid of dialectic.<sup>21</sup>

The absence of speech is manifested in madness by the stereotypes of a dis-

course in which the subject, one might say, is spoken instead of speaking; we recognize here the symbols of the unconscious in petrified forms that find their place in a natural history of these symbols alongside the embalmed forms in which myths are presented in our collections of them. But it would be wrong to say that the subject assumes these symbols: the resistance to their recognition is no less strong in psychosis than in the neuroses, when the subject is led to recognize them by an attempt at treatment.

Let it be said in passing that it would be worthwhile noting the places in social space that our culture has assigned these subjects, especially as regards their relegation to the social services relating to language, for it is not unlikely that we find here one of the factors that consign such subjects to the effects of the breakdown produced by the symbolic discordances characteristic of the complex structures of civilization.

The second case is represented by the privileged field of psychoanalytic discovery—namely, symptoms, inhibition, and anxiety in the constitutive economy of the different neuroses.

Here speech is driven out of the concrete discourse that orders consciousness, but it finds its medium either in the subject's natural functions—provided a painful organic sensation wedges open the gap between his individual being and his essence, which makes illness what institutes the existence of the subject in the living being<sup>22</sup>—or in the images that, at the border between the *Umwelt* and the *Innenwelt*, organize their relational structuring.

A symptom here is the signifier of a signified that has been repressed from the subject's consciousness. A symbol written in the sand of the flesh and on the veil of Maia, it partakes of language by the semantic ambiguity that I have already highlighted in its constitution.

But it is fully functioning speech, for it includes the other's discourse in the secret of its cipher [*chiffre*].

It was by deciphering this speech that Freud rediscovered the first language of symbols,<sup>23</sup> still alive in the sufferings of civilized man (*Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* [*Civilization and Its Discontents*]).

Hieroglyphics of hysteria, blazons of phobia, and labyrinths of *Zwangsneurose* [obsessive neurosis]; charms of impotence, enigmas of inhibition, and oracles of anxiety; talking arms of character,<sup>24</sup> seals of self-punishment, and disguises of perversion: these are the hermetic elements that our exegesis resolves, the equivocations that our invocation dissolves, and the artifices that our dialectic absolves, by delivering the imprisoned meaning in ways that run the gamut from revealing the palimpsest to providing the solution [*mot*] of the mystery and to pardoning speech.

The third paradox of the relation of language to speech is that of the sub-

ject who loses his meaning in the objectifications of discourse. However metaphysical its definition may seem, we cannot ignore its presence in the foreground of our experience. For this is the most profound alienation of the subject in our scientific civilization, and it is this alienation that we encounter first when the subject begins to talk to us about himself. In order to eliminate it entirely, analysis should thus be conducted until it has reached the endpoint of wisdom.

To provide an exemplary formulation of this, I can find no more relevant terrain than the usage of everyday speech, pointing out that the expression "*ce suis-je*" ["it is I"] of Villon's era has become inverted in the expression "*c'est moi*" ["it's me"] of modern man.

The me [*moi*] of modern man, as I have indicated elsewhere, has taken on its form in the dialectical impasse of the beautiful soul who does not recognize his very reason for being in the disorder he denounces in the world.

But a way out of this impasse is offered to the subject where his discourse rants and raves. Communication can be validly established for him in science's collective undertaking and in the tasks science ordains in our universal civilization; this communication will be effective within the enormous objectification constituted by this science, and it will allow him to forget his subjectivity. He will make an effective contribution to the collective undertaking in his daily work and will be able to occupy his leisure time with all the pleasures of a profuse culture which—providing everything from detective novels to historical memoirs and from educational lectures to the orthopedics of group relations—will give him the wherewithal to forget his own existence and his death, as well as to misrecognize the particular meaning of his life in false communication.

If the subject did not rediscover through regression—often taken as far back as the mirror stage [*stade*]<sup>25</sup>—the inside of a stadium [*stade*] in which his ego contains his imaginary exploits, there would hardly be any assignable limits to the credulity to which he would have to succumb in this situation. Which is what makes our responsibility so formidable when, with the mythical manipulations of our doctrine, we bring him yet another opportunity to become alienated, in the decomposed trinity of the ego,\* the superego,\* and the id,\* for example.

Here it is a wall of language that blocks speech, and the precautions against verbalism that are a theme of the discourse of "normal" men in our culture merely serve to increase its thickness.

There might be some point in measuring its thickness by the statistically determined total pounds of printed paper, miles of record grooves, and hours of radio broadcasts that the said culture produces per capita in sectors A, B, and C of its domain. This would be a fine research topic for our cultural organizations, and

it would be seen that the question of language does not remain entirely within the region of the brain in which its use is reflected in the individual.

*We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!  
(and so on.)*

283

The resemblance between this situation and the alienation of madness—insofar as the formulation given above is authentic, namely, that the mad subject is spoken rather than speaking—is obviously related to the requirement, presupposed by psychoanalysis, of true speech. If this consequence, which takes the paradoxes that are constitutive of what I am saying here as far as they can go, were to be turned against the common sense of the psychoanalytic perspective, I would readily grant the pertinence of this objection, but only to find my own position confirmed in it—by a dialectical reversal for which there would be no shortage of authorized patrons, beginning with Hegel's critique of "the philosophy of the skull," and stopping only at Pascal's resounding warning, at the dawn of the historical era of the "me" [*moi*], formulated in the following terms: "Men are so necessarily mad that it would be another twist of madness not to be mad."

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

To emphasize the small number of subjects who prop up this creation would be to give in to a romantic perspective by comparing things that are not equivalent. The fact is that this subjectivity, regardless of the domain in which it appears—mathematics, politics, religion, or even advertising—continues to animate the movement of humanity as a whole. Looking at it from another, probably no less illusory, angle would lead us to emphasize the opposite trait: the fact that its symbolic character has never been more manifest. The irony of revolutions is that they engender a power that is all the more absolute in its exercise, not because it is more anonymous, as people say, but because it is reduced more completely to the words that signify it. The strength of churches lies more than ever in the language they have been able to maintain—an instance, it should be noted, that Freud left aside in the article in which he sketches out for us what I call the "collective subjectivities" of the Church and the Army.

Psychoanalysis has played a role in the direction of modern subjectivity, and it cannot sustain this role without aligning it with the movement in modern science that elucidates it.

This is the problem of the foundations that must assure our discipline its place among the sciences: a problem of formalization, which, it must be admitted, has gotten off to a very bad start.

For it seems that, possessed anew by the very shortcoming in the medical mind in opposition to which psychoanalysis had to constitute itself, we were trying to jump back on the bandwagon of science—being half a century behind the movement of the sciences—by following medicine's example.

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

As practitioners of the symbolic function, it is surprising that we shy away from delving deeper into it, going so far as to neglect the fact that this function situates us at the heart of the movement that is establishing a new order of the sciences, with a rethinking of anthropology.

This new order simply signifies a return to a notion of true science whose credentials are already inscribed in a tradition that begins with Plato's *Theaetetus*. This notion has degenerated, as we know, in the positivist reversal which, by making the human sciences the crowning glory of the experimental sciences, in fact subordinates them to the latter. This conception results from an erroneous view of the history of science founded on the prestige of a specialized development of experimentation.

Today, however, the conjectural sciences are discovering once again the age-old notion of science, forcing us to revise the classification of the sciences we have inherited from the nineteenth century in a direction clearly indicated by the most lucid thinkers.

One need but follow the concrete evolution of the various disciplines in order to become aware of this.

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

The form of mathematicization in which the discovery of the *phoneme* is inscribed, as a function of pairs of oppositions formed by the smallest graspable discriminative semantic elements, leads us to the very foundations that Freud's final doctrine designates as the subjective sources of the symbolic function in a vocalic connotation of presence and absence.

And the reduction of any language [*langue*] to a group comprised of a very small number of such phonemic oppositions, initiating an equally rigorous

284

285

formalization of its highest-level morphemes, puts within our reach a strict approach to our own field.

It is up to us to adopt this approach to discover how it intersects with our own field, just as ethnography, which follows a course parallel to our own, is already doing by deciphering myths according to the synchrony of mythemes.

Isn't it striking that Lévi-Strauss—in suggesting the involvement in myths of language structures and of those social laws that regulate marriage ties and kinship—is already conquering the very terrain in which Freud situates the unconscious?<sup>25</sup>

It is thus impossible not to make a general theory of the symbol the axis of a new classification of the sciences where the sciences of man will reassume their central position as sciences of subjectivity. Let me indicate its core principle, which, of course, does not obviate the need for further elaboration.

The symbolic function presents itself as a twofold movement in the subject: man makes his own action into an object, but only to return its foundational place to it in due time. In this equivocation, operating at every instant, lies the whole progress of a function in which action and knowledge [*connaissance*] alternate.<sup>26</sup>

Here are two examples, one borrowed from the classroom, the other from the very pulse of our time:

- The first is mathematical: in phase one, man objectifies two collections he has counted in the form of two cardinal numbers; in phase two, he manages to add the two collections using these numbers (see the example cited by Kant in the introduction to the transcendental aesthetic, section IV, in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*);
- The second is historical: in phase one, a man who works at the level of production in our society considers himself to belong to the ranks of the proletariat; in phase two, in the name of belonging to it, he joins in a general strike.

286

If these two examples come from areas which, for us, are the most highly contrasted in the domain of the concrete—the first involving the ever freer play of mathematical law, the second, the brazen face of capitalist exploitation—it is because, although they seem to come from radically different realms, their effects come to constitute our subsistence, precisely by intersecting there in a double reversal: the most subjective science having forged a new reality, and the shadow of the social divide arming itself with a symbol in action.

Here the distinction people make between the exact sciences and those for which there is no reason to refuse the appellation “conjectural” no longer seems to be acceptable—for lack of any grounds for that distinction.<sup>27</sup>

For exactness must be distinguished from truth, and conjecture does not exclude rigor. If experimental science derives its exactness from mathematics, its relation to nature is nonetheless problematic.

Indeed, if our link to nature incites us to wonder poetically whether it is not nature's own movement that we refind in our science, in

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

it is clear that our physics is but a mental fabrication in which mathematical symbols serve as instruments.

For experimental science is not so much defined by the quantity to which it is in fact applied, as by the measurement it introduces into reality [*réel*].

This can be seen in relation to the measurement of time without which experimental science would be impossible. Huyghens' clock, which alone gave experimental science its precision, is merely the organ that fulfills Galileo's hypothesis concerning the equal gravitational pull on all bodies—that is, the hypothesis of uniform acceleration that confers its law, since it is the same, on every instance of falling.

It is amusing to point out that the instrument was completed before the hypothesis could be verified by observation, and that the clock thereby rendered the hypothesis useless at the same time as it offered it the instrument it needed to be rigorous.<sup>28</sup>

287

But mathematics can symbolize another kind of time, notably the inter-subjective time that structures human action, whose formulas are beginning to be provided by game theory, still called strategy, but which it would be better to call “stochastics.”

The author of these lines has attempted to demonstrate in the logic of a sophism the temporal mainsprings through which human action, insofar as it is coordinated with the other's action, finds in the scansion of its hesitations the advent of its certainty; and, in the decision that concludes it, gives the other's action—which it now includes—its direction [*sens*] to come, along with its sanction regarding the past.

I demonstrate there that it is the certainty anticipated by the subject in the “time for understanding” which—through the haste that precipitates the “moment of concluding”—determines the other's decision that makes the subject's own movement an error or truth.

This example indicates how the mathematical formalization that inspired

Boolean logic, and even set theory, can bring to the science of human action the structure of intersubjective time that psychoanalytic conjecture needs to ensure its own rigor.

If, moreover, the history of the historian's technique shows that its progress is defined in the ideal of an identification of the historian's subjectivity with the constitutive subjectivity of the primal historicization in which events are humanized, it is clear that psychoanalysis finds its precise scope here: that is, in knowledge [*connaissance*], as realizing this ideal, and in efficacy, as finding its justification here. The example of history also dissipates like a mirage the recourse to the "lived reaction" that obsesses both our technique and our theory, for the fundamental historicity of the events we are concerned with suffices to conceive the possibility of a subjective reproduction of the past in the present.

Furthermore, this example makes us realize how psychoanalytic regression implies the progressive dimension of the subject's history—which Freud rightly considered to be lacking in the Jungian concept of neurotic regression—and we see how analytic experience itself renews this progression by assuring its continuation.

Finally, the reference to linguistics will introduce us to the method which, by distinguishing synchronic from diachronic structurings in language, will enable us to better understand the different value our language takes on in the interpretation of resistances and of transference, and to differentiate the effects characteristic of repression and the structure of the individual myth in obsessive neurosis.

The list of disciplines Freud considered important sister sciences for an ideal Department of Psychoanalysis is well known. Alongside psychiatry and sexology we find "the history of civilization, mythology, the psychology of religions, literary history, and literary criticism."

This whole group of subjects, determining the curriculum for instruction in technique, can be easily accommodated in the epistemological triangle I have described, and would provide an advanced level of instruction in analytic theory and technique with its primer.

For my part, I would be inclined to add: rhetoric, dialectic (in the technical sense this term takes on in Aristotle's *Topics*), grammar, and poetics—the supreme pinnacle of the aesthetics of language—which would include the neglected technique of witticisms.

While these subject headings may sound somewhat old-fashioned to certain people, I would not hesitate to endorse them as a return to our sources.

For psychoanalysis in its early development, intimately linked to the discovery and study of symbols, went so far as to partake in the structure of what

was called "the liberal arts" in the Middle Ages. Deprived, like them, of a true formalization, psychoanalysis became organized, like them, into a body of privileged problems, each one promoted by some felicitous relation of man to his own measure, taking on a charm and a humanity owing to this particularity that in our eyes might well make up for their somewhat recreational appearance. But let us not disdain this appearance in the early developments of psychoanalysis; indeed, it expresses nothing less than the re-creation of human meaning in an arid era of scientism.

These early developments should be all the less disdained since psychoanalysis has hardly raised the bar by setting off along the false pathways of a theorization that runs counter to its dialectical structure.

Psychoanalysis can provide scientific foundations for its theory and technique only by adequately formalizing the essential dimensions of its experience, which—along with the historical theory of the symbol—are intersubjective logic and the temporality of the subject.

### III. *The Resonances of Interpretation and the Time of the Subject in Psychoanalytic Technique*

Between man and love,  
There is woman.  
Between man and woman,  
There is a world.  
Between man and the world,  
There is a wall.  
—Antoine Tudal, *Paris in the Year 2000*

*Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent: Σιβύλλα τι θέλεις, respondebat illa: ἀποθανεῖν θέλω.*  
—Petronius, *Satyricon*, XLVIII

Bringing psychoanalytic experience back to speech and language as its foundations is of direct concern to its technique. While it is not situated in the inflexible, we see the one-way slippage that has occurred, distancing interpretation from its core. We are thus justified in suspecting that this deviation in psychoanalytic practice explains the new aims to which psychoanalytic theory has become receptive.

If we look at the situation a little more closely, we see that the problems of symbolic interpretation began by intimidating our little group before becoming embarrassing to it. The successes obtained by Freud now astonish people because of the unseemly indoctrination they appear to involve, and the display thereof—so evident in the cases of Dora, the Rat Man, and the Wolf

Man—strikes us as nothing short of scandalous. Indeed, our clever colleagues do not shrink from doubting whether the technique employed in these cases was actually any good.

This disaffection in the psychoanalytic movement stems, in truth, from a confusion of tongues, about which the most representative personality of its present hierarchy made no secret in a recent conversation with me.

It is well worth noting that this confusion grows when each analyst believes he has been assigned the job of discovering in our experience the conditions of a complete objectification, and when the enthusiasm that greets his theoretical attempts is greater the more detached from reality they prove to be.

It is clear that the principles of the analysis of the resistances, as well-founded as they may be, have in practice occasioned an ever greater misrecognition of the subject, because they have not been understood in relation to the intersubjectivity of speech.

If we follow the proceedings of Freud's first seven sessions with the Rat Man, which are reported to us in full, it seems highly improbable that Freud did not recognize the resistances as they arose—arising precisely in the places where our modern practitioners tell us he overlooked them—since it is Freud's own text, after all, that enables the practitioners to pinpoint them. Once again Freud's texts manifest an exhaustion of the subject that amazes us, and no interpretation has thus far exploited all of its resources.

I mean that Freud not only let himself be duped into encouraging his subject to go beyond his initial reticence, but also understood perfectly well the seductive scope of this game in the imaginary. To convince oneself of this, one need but read the description he gives us of the expression on his patient's face during the patient's painful narrative of the purported torture that supplied the theme of his obsession, that of the rat forced into the victim's anus: "His face," Freud tells us, "reflected horror at a jouissance of which he was unaware." The effect in the present of his repeating this narrative did not escape Freud, no more than did the fact that he identified his analyst with the "cruel captain" who forced this narrative to become etched in the subject's memory, nor therefore the import of the theoretical clarifications the subject required as security before going on with what he was saying.

Far from interpreting the resistance here, however, Freud astonishes us by granting the patient's request, to such an extent that he seems to let himself be roped into the subject's game.

But the extremely approximate character of the explanations with which Freud gratifies him, so approximate as to appear crude, is sufficiently instructive: it is clearly not so much a question here of doctrine or indoctrination as of a symbolic gift of speech—ripe with a secret pact, in the context of the imag-

inary participation which includes it—whose import will be revealed later in the symbolic equivalence the subject establishes in his mind between rats and the florins with which he remunerates the analyst.

We can see therefore that Freud, far from misrecognizing the resistance, uses it as a propitious predisposition for setting in motion the resonances of speech, and he conducts himself, as far as possible, in accordance with the first definition he gave of resistance, by employing it to involve the subject in his message. He later changes tack abruptly when he sees that, as a result of being handled delicately, the resistance is serving to keep the dialogue at the level of a conversation in which the subject tries to continue seducing the analyst by slipping beyond his reach.

But we learn that analysis consists in playing on the multiple staves of the score that speech constitutes in the registers of language—which is where overdetermination comes in, the latter having no meaning except in this order.

And we have simultaneously isolated here the mainspring of Freud's success. In order for the analyst's message to respond to the subject's profound questioning, the subject must understand it as a response that concerns him alone; and the privilege Freud's patients enjoyed, in receiving its good word from the lips of the very man who was its herald, satisfied this demand of theirs.

Let us note in passing that the Rat Man had had a prior taste of it, since he had thumbed through *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, which had just come out.

Which doesn't imply that the book is very much better known today, even among analysts, but the popularization of Freud's concepts and their resorption into what I call the wall of language, would deaden the effect of our speech were we to give it the style of Freud's remarks to the Rat Man.

The point here is not to imitate him. In order to rediscover the effect of Freud's speech, I won't resort to its terms but rather to the principles that govern it.

These principles are nothing but the dialectic of self-consciousness, as it is realized from Socrates to Hegel, beginning with the ironic assumption that all that is rational is real, only to precipitate into the scientific judgment that all that is real is rational. But Freud's discovery was to demonstrate that this verifying process authentically reaches the subject only by decentering him from self-consciousness, to which he was confined by Hegel's reconstruction of the phenomenology of mind. In other words, this discovery renders still flimsier any search for "conscious realization" which, apart from being a psychological phenomenon, is not inscribed within the conjuncture of the particular moment that alone gives body to the universal, and failing which the latter dissipates into generality.

These remarks define the limits within which it is impossible for our tech-



nique to ignore the structuring moments of Hegel's phenomenology: first and foremost, the master/slave dialectic, the dialectic of the beautiful soul and the law of the heart, and generally everything that allows us to understand how the constitution of the object is subordinate to the realization of the subject.

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

Let me simply say that this, in my view, constitutes an objection to any reference to totality in the individual, since the subject introduces division therein, as well as in the collectivity that is the equivalent of the individual. Psychoanalysis is what clearly relegates both the one and the other to the status of mirages.

This would seem to be something that could no longer be forgotten, were it not precisely psychoanalysis that teaches us that it is forgettable—confirmation of which turns out, by a reversal [*retour*] that is more legitimate than one might think, to come from psychoanalysts themselves, their “new tendencies” representing this forgetting.

Now while Hegel's work is also precisely what we need to confer a meaning on so-called analytic neutrality other than that the analyst is simply in a stupor, this does not mean that we have nothing to learn from the elasticity of the Socratic method or even from the fascinating proceedings of the technique by which Plato presents it to us, were it only by our sensing in Socrates and his desire the unresolved enigma of the psychoanalyst, and by situating in relation to Platonic vision our own relation to truth—in this case, however, in a way that respects the distance separating the reminiscence Plato was led to presume to exist in any advent of the ideas, from the exhaustion of being consummated in Kierkegaardian repetition.<sup>29</sup>

But there is also a historical difference between Socrates' interlocutor and ours that is worth weighing. When Socrates relies on an artisanal form of reason that he can extract just as well from a slave's discourse, it is in order to impress upon authentic masters the necessity of an order that turns their power into justice and the city's magic words [*maîtres-mots*] into truth. But we analysts deal with slaves who think they are masters, and who find in a language—whose mission is universal—support for their servitude in the bonds of its ambiguity. So much so that one might humorously say that our goal is to restore in them the sovereign freedom displayed by Humpty Dumpty when he reminds Alice that he is, after all, master of the signifier, even if he is not master of the signified from which his being derived its shape.

We always come back, then, to our twofold reference to speech and language. In order to free the subject's speech, we introduce him to the language of his desire, that is, to the *primary language* in which—beyond what he tells us of himself—he is already speaking to us unbeknown to himself, first and foremost, in the symbols of his symptom.

It is certainly a language that is at stake in the symbolism brought to light in analysis. This language, corresponding to the playful wish found in one of Lichtenberg's aphorisms, has the universal character of a tongue that would be understood in all other tongues, but at the same time—since it is the language that grabs hold of desire at the very moment it becomes humanized by gaining recognition—it is absolutely particular to the subject.

It is thus a *primary language*, by which I do not mean a primitive language, since Freud—whose merit for having made this total discovery warrants comparison with Champollion's—deciphered it in its entirety in the dreams of our contemporaries. The essential field of this language was rather authoritatively defined by one of the earliest assistants associated with Freud's work, and one of the few to have brought anything new to it: I mean Ernest Jones, the last survivor of those to whom the seven rings of the master were passed and who attests by his presence in the honorary positions of an international association that they are not reserved solely for relic bearers.

In a fundamental article on symbolism,<sup>30</sup> Jones points out on page 102 that, although there are thousands of symbols in the sense in which the term is understood in analysis, all of them refer to one's own body, blood relatives, birth, life, and death.

This truth, recognized *de facto* by Jones, enables us to understand that although the symbol, psychoanalytically speaking, is repressed in the unconscious, it bears in itself no mark of regression or even of immaturity. For it to have its effects in the subject, it is thus enough that it make itself heard, since these effects operate unbeknown to him—as we admit in our everyday experience, when we explain many reactions by normal and neurotic subjects as their response to the symbolic meaning of an act, a relation, or an object.

It is thus indisputable that the analyst can play on the power of symbols by evoking them in a calculated fashion in the semantic resonances of his remarks.

This is surely the path by which a return to the use of symbolic effects can proceed in a renewed technique of interpretation.

We could adopt as a reference here what the Hindu tradition teaches about *dhvani*,<sup>31</sup> defining it as the property of speech by which it conveys what it does not say. This is illustrated by a little tale whose naïveté, which appears to be required in such examples, proves funny enough to induce us to penetrate to the truth it conceals.

A girl, it is said, is awaiting her lover on the bank of a river when she sees a Brahmin coming along. She approaches him and exclaims in the most amiable tones: "What a lucky day this is for you! The dog whose barking used to frighten you will not be on this river bank again, for it was just devoured by a lion that roams around here . . ."

The absence of the lion may thus have as many effects as his spring—which, were he present, would only come once, according to the proverb relished by Freud.

The *primary* character of symbols in fact makes them similar to those numbers out of which all other numbers are composed; and if they therefore underlie all the semantemes of a language, we shall be able to restore to speech its full evocative value by a discreet search for their interferences, following the course of a metaphor whose symbolic displacement neutralizes the secondary meanings of the terms it associates.

To be taught and to be learned, this technique would require a profound assimilation of the resources of a language [*langue*], especially those that are concretely realized in its poetic texts. It is well known that Freud was steeped in German literature, which, by virtue of an incomparable translation, can be said to include Shakespeare's plays. Every one of his works bears witness to this, and to the continual recourse he had to it, no less in his technique than in his discovery. Not to mention his broad background in the classics, his familiarity with the modern study of folklore, and his keeping abreast of contemporary humanism's conquests in the area of ethnography.

Analytic practitioners should be asked not to consider it futile to follow Freud along this path.

But the tide is against us. It can be gauged by the condescending attention paid to the "wording,"\* as if to some novelty; and the English morphology here provides a notion that is still difficult to define with a prop that is sufficiently subtle for people to make a big to-do about it.

296 What this notion covers, however, is hardly encouraging when we see an author<sup>32</sup> amazed at having achieved an entirely different success in the interpretation of one and the same resistance by the use, "without conscious premeditation," he emphasizes, of the term "need for love"\* instead of and in the place of "demand for love,"\* which he had first put forward, without seeing anything in it (as he himself tells us). While the anecdote is supposed to confirm the interpretation's reference to the "ego psychology"\* in the title of the article, it refers instead, it seems, to the analyst's ego psychology,\* insofar as this interpretation makes do with such a weak use of English that he can extend his practice of analysis right to the very brink of gibberish.<sup>33</sup>

The fact is that need\* and demand\* have diametrically opposed meanings

for the subject, and to maintain that they can be used interchangeably for even an instant amounts to a radical ignorance of the *summoning* characteristic of speech.

For in its symbolizing function, speech tends toward nothing less than a transformation of the subject to whom it is addressed by means of the link it establishes with the speaker—namely, by bringing about a signifying effect.

This is why we must return once more to the structure of communication in language and definitively dispel the mistaken notion of "language as signs," a source in this realm of confusions about discourse and of errors about speech.

If communication based on language is conceived as a signal by which the sender informs the receiver of something by means of a certain code, there is no reason why we should not lend as much credence and even more to every other kind of sign when the "something" in question concerns the individual: indeed, we are quite right to prefer every mode of expression that verges on natural signs.

It is in this way that the technique of speech has been discredited among us and we find ourselves in search of a gesture, a grimace, a posture adopted, a face made, a movement, a shudder—nay, a stopping of usual movement—for we are subtle and nothing will stop us from setting our bloodhounds on the scent.

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

It is now generally recognized that, when a bee returns to its hive after gathering nectar, it transmits an indication of the existence of nectar near or far away from the hive to its companions by two sorts of dances. The second is the most remarkable, for the plane in which the bee traces out a figure-eight—a shape that gave it the name "wagging dance"\*—and the frequency of the figures executed within a given time, designate, on the one hand, the exact direction to be followed, determined in relation to the sun's inclination (by which bees are able to orient themselves in all kinds of weather, thanks to their sensitivity to polarized light), and, on the other hand, the distance at which the nectar is to be found up to several miles away. The other bees respond to this message by immediately setting off for the place thus designated.

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

But is it a language, for all that? We can say that it is distinguished from language precisely by the fixed correlation between its signs and the reality

they signify. For, in a language, signs take on their value from their relations to each other in the lexical distribution of semantemes as much as in the positional, or even flecational, use of morphemes—in sharp contrast to the fixity of the coding used by bees. The diversity of human languages takes on its full value viewed in this light.

Furthermore, while a message of the kind described here determines the action of the “socius,” it is never retransmitted by the socius. This means that the message remains frozen in its function as a relay of action, from which no subject detaches it as a symbol of communication itself.<sup>34</sup>

The form in which language expresses itself in and of itself defines subjectivity. Language says: “You will go here, and when you see this, you will turn off there.” In other words, it refers to discourse about the other [*discours de l'autre*]. It is enveloped as such in the highest function of speech, inasmuch as speech commits its author by investing its addressee with a new reality, as for example, when a subject seals his fate as a married man by saying “You are my wife.”

Indeed, this is the essential form from which all human speech derives more than the form at which it arrives.

Hence the paradox that one of my most acute auditors believed to be an objection to my position when I first began to make my views known on analysis as dialectic; he formulated it as follows: “Human language would then constitute a kind of communication in which the sender receives his own message back from the receiver in an inverted form.” I could but adopt this objector’s formulation, recognizing in it the stamp of my own thinking; for I maintain that speech always subjectively includes its own reply, that “Thou wouldst not seek Me, if thou hadst not found Me” simply validates the same truth, and that this is why, in the paranoiac refusal of recognition, it is in the form of a negative verbalization that the unavowable feeling eventually emerges in a persecutory “interpretation.”

Thus when you congratulate yourself for having met someone who speaks the same language as you, you do not mean that you encounter each other in the discourse of everyman, but that you are united to that person by a particular way of speaking.

The antinomy immanent in the relations between speech and language thus becomes clear. The more functional language becomes, the less suited it is to speech, and when it becomes overly characteristic of me alone, it loses its function as language.

We are aware of the use made in primitive traditions of secret names, with which the subject identifies his own person or his gods so closely that to reveal these names is to lose himself or betray these gods; and what our patients con-

fide in us, as well as our own recollections, teach us that it is not at all rare for children to spontaneously rediscover the virtues of that use.

Finally, the speech value of a language is gauged by the intersubjectivity of the “we” it takes on.

By an inverse antinomy, it can be observed that the more language’s role is neutralized as language becomes more like information, the more *redundancies* are attributed to it. This notion of redundancy originated in research that was all the more precise because a vested interest was involved, having been prompted by the economics of long-distance communication and, in particular, by the possibility of transmitting several conversations on a single telephone line simultaneously. It was observed that a substantial portion of the phonetic medium is superfluous for the communication actually sought to be achieved.

This is highly instructive to us,<sup>35</sup> for what is redundant as far as information is concerned is precisely what plays the part of resonance in speech.

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

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

I identify myself in language, but only by losing myself in it as an object. What is realized in my history is neither the past definite as what was, since it

is no more, nor even the perfect as what has been in what I am, but the future anterior as what I will have been, given what I am in the process of becoming. If I now face someone to question him, there is no cybernetic device imaginable that can turn his response into a reaction. The definition of “response” as the second term in the “stimulus-response” circuit is simply a metaphor sustained by the subjectivity attributed to animals, only to be elided thereafter in the physical schema to which the metaphor reduces it. This is what I have called putting a rabbit into a hat so as to pull it out again later. But a reaction is not a response.

If I press an electric button and a light goes on, there is a response only to *my* desire. If in order to obtain the same result I must try a whole system of relays whose correct position is unknown to me, there is a question only in relation to my expectation, and there will not be a question any more once I have learned enough about the system to operate it flawlessly.

But if I call the person to whom I am speaking by whatever name I like, I notify him of the subjective function he must take up in order to reply to me, even if it is to repudiate this function.

The decisive function of my own response thus appears, and this function is not, as people maintain, simply to be received by the subject as approval or

rejection of what he is saying, but truly to recognize or abolish him as a subject. Such is the nature of the analyst's *responsibility* every time he intervenes by means of speech.

The problem of the therapeutic effects of inexact interpretation, raised by Edward Glover in a remarkable paper,<sup>36</sup> thus led him to conclusions where the question of exactness fades into the background. For not only is every spoken intervention received by the subject as a function of his structure, but the intervention itself takes on a structuring function due to its form. Indeed, non-analytic psychotherapies, and even utterly ordinary medical "prescriptions," have the precise impact of interventions that could be qualified as obsessive systems of suggestion, as hysterical suggestions of a phobic nature, and even as persecutory supports, each psychotherapy deriving its particular character from the way it sanctions the subject's misrecognition of his own reality.

Speech is in fact a gift of language, and language is not immaterial. It is a subtle body, but body it is. Words are caught up in all the body images that captivate the subject; they may "knock up" the hysteric, be identified with the object of *Penisneid*, represent the urinary flow of urethral ambition, or represent the feces retained in avaricious jouissance.

Furthermore, words themselves can suffer symbolic lesions and accomplish imaginary acts whose victim is the subject. Recall the *Wespe* (wasp), castrated of its initial W to become the S.P. of the Wolf Man's initials, at the moment he carried out the symbolic punishment to which he himself was subjected by Grusha, the wasp.

Recall too the S that constitutes the residue of the hermetic formula into which the Rat Man's conjuratory invocations became condensed after Freud had extracted the anagram of his beloved's name from its cipher, and that, tacked onto the beginning of the final "amen" of his jaculatory prayer, eternally inundated the lady's name with the symbolic ejecta of his impotent desire.

Similarly, an article by Robert Fliess,<sup>37</sup> inspired by Abraham's inaugural remarks, shows us that one's discourse as a whole may become eroticized, following the displacements of erogeneity in the body image, momentarily determined by the analytic relationship.

Discourse then takes on a urethral-phallic, anal-erotic, or even oral-sadistic function. It is noteworthy, moreover, that the author grasps its effect above all in the silences that mark inhibition of the satisfaction the subject derives from it.

In this way speech may become an imaginary or even real object in the subject and, as such, debase in more than one respect the function of language. I shall thus relegate such speech to the parenthesis of the resistance it manifests.

But not in order to exclude it from the analytic relationship, for the latter would then lose everything, including its *raison d'être*.

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

Maintaining this dialectic is directly opposed to any objectifying orientation of analysis, and highlighting this necessity is of capital importance if we are to see through the aberrations of the new trends in psychoanalysis.

I shall illustrate my point here by once again returning to Freud, and, since I have already begun to make use of it, to the case of the Rat Man.

Freud goes so far as to take liberties with the exactness of the facts when it is a question of getting at the subject's truth. At one point, Freud glimpses the determinant role played by the mother's proposal that he marry her cousin's daughter at the origin of the present phase of his neurosis. Indeed, as I have shown in my seminar, this flashes through Freud's mind owing to his own personal experience. But he does not hesitate to interpret its effect to the subject as that of a prohibition by his dead father against his liaison with his lady-love.

This interpretation is not only factually, but also psychologically, inexact, for the father's castrating activity—which Freud affirms here with an insistence that might be believed systematic—played only a secondary role in this case. But Freud's apperception of the dialectical relationship is so apt that the interpretation he makes at that moment triggers the decisive destruction of the lethal symbols that narcissistically bind the subject both to his dead father and to his idealized lady, their two images being sustained, in an equivalence characteristic of the obsessive, one by the fantasmatic aggressiveness that perpetuates it, the other by the mortifying cult that transforms it into an idol.

Similarly, it is by recognizing the forced subjectivization of the obsessive debt<sup>38</sup>—in the scenario of futile attempts at restitution, a scenario that too perfectly expresses its imaginary terms for the subject to even try to enact it, the pressure to repay the debt being exploited by the subject to the point of delusion—that Freud achieves his goal. This is the goal of bringing the subject to rediscover—in the story of his father's lack of delicacy, his marriage to the subject's mother, the "pretty but penniless girl," his wounded love-life, and his ungrateful forgetting of his beneficent friend—to rediscover in this story, along with the fateful constellation that presided over the subject's very birth, the unfillable gap constituted by the symbolic debt against which his neurosis is a protest.

There is no trace here at all of recourse to the ignoble specter of some sort of early "fear," or even to a masochism that it would be easy enough to brandish, much less to that obsessive buttressing propagated by some analysts in the name of the analysis of the defenses. The resistances themselves, as I have

shown elsewhere, are used as long as possible in the direction [*sens*] of the progress of the discourse. And when it is time to put an end to them, we manage to do so by giving in to them.

For this is how the Rat Man is able to insert into his subjectivity its true mediation in a transferential form: the imaginary daughter he gives Freud in order to receive her hand in marriage from him, and who unveils her true face to him in a key dream—that of death gazing at him with its bituminous eyes.

And although it was with this symbolic pact that the ruses of the subject's servitude came to an end, reality did not fail him, it seems, in granting him these nuptial wishes. The footnote added to the case in 1923—which Freud dedicated as an epitaph to this young man who had found in the risks of war “the end that awaited so many worthy young men on whom so many hopes had been founded,” thus concluding the case with all the rigor of destiny—elevates it to the beauty of tragedy.

In order to know how to respond to the subject in analysis, the method is to first determine where his ego\* is situated—the ego\* that Freud himself defined as formed by a verbal nucleus—in other words, to figure out through whom and for whom the subject asks *his question*. As long as this is not known, we risk misconstruing the desire that must be recognized there and the object to whom this desire is addressed.

The hysteric captivates this object in a subtle intrigue and her ego\* is in the third person by means of whom the subject enjoys the object who incarnates her question. The obsessive drags into the cage of his narcissism the objects in which his question reverberates in the multiplied alibi of deadly figures and, mastering their high-wire act, addresses his ambiguous homage toward the box in which he himself has his seat, that of the master who cannot be seen [*se voir*].

*Trahit sua quemque voluptas*; one identifies with the spectacle and the other puts on a show [*donne à voir*].

In the case of the hysterical subject, for whom the term “acting out”\* takes on its literal meaning since he acts outside himself, you have to get him to recognize where his action is situated. In the case of the obsessive, you have to get yourself recognized in the spectator, who is invisible from the stage, to whom he is united by the mediation of death.

It is therefore always in the relation between the subject's *ego* and his discourse's *I* that you must understand the meaning of the discourse if you are to unalienate the subject.

But you cannot possibly achieve this if you cleave to the idea that the subject's ego is identical to the presence that is speaking to you.

This error is fostered by the terminology of the topography that is all too

tempting to an objectifying cast of mind, allowing it to slide from the ego defined as the perception-consciousness system—that is, as the system of the subject's objectifications—to the ego conceived of as the correlate of an absolute reality and thus, in a singular return of the repressed in psychological thought, to once again take the ego as the “reality function” in relation to which Pierre Janet organizes his psychological conceptions.

Such slippage occurred only because it was not realized that, in Freud's work, the ego,\* id,\* superego\* topography is subordinate to the metapsychology whose terms he was propounding at the same time and without which the topography loses its meaning. Analysts thus became involved in a sort of psychological orthopedics that will continue to bear fruit for a long time to come.

Michael Balint has provided a thoroughly penetrating analysis of the interaction between theory and technique in the genesis of a new conception of analysis, and he finds no better term to indicate its result than the watchword he borrows from Rickman: the advent of a “two-body psychology.”\*

Indeed, it couldn't be better put. Analysis is becoming the relation of two bodies between which a fantasmatic communication is established in which the analyst teaches the subject to apprehend himself as an object. Subjectivity is admitted into analysis only as long as it is bracketed as an illusion, and speech is excluded from a search for lived experience that becomes its supreme aim; but its dialectically necessary result appears in the fact that, since the analyst's subjectivity is freed [*délibérée*] from all restraint, this leaves the subject at the mercy [*livré*] of every summons of the analyst's speech.

Once the intrasubjective topography has become entified, it is in fact realized in the division of labor between the subjects present. This deviant use of Freud's formulation that all that is id\* must become ego\* appears in a demystified form: the subject, transformed into an *it*, has to conform to an ego\* which the analyst has no trouble recognizing as his ally, since it is, in fact, the analyst's own ego.\*

It is precisely this process that is expressed in many a theoretical formulation of the splitting\* of the ego\* in analysis. Half of the subject's ego\* crosses over to the other side of the wall that separates the analysand from the analyst, then half of the remaining half, and so on, in an asymptotic progression that never succeeds—regardless of how great the inroads it makes into the opinion the subject will have formed of himself—in crushing his every possibility of reversing the aberrant effects of his analysis.

But how could a subject, who undergoes a type of analysis based on the principle that all his formulations are systems of defense, defend himself against the total disorientation to which this principle consigns the analyst's dialectic?

Freud's interpretation, the dialectical method of which appears so clearly

in the case of Dora, does not present these dangers, for when the analyst's biases (that is, his countertransference, a term whose correct use, in my view, cannot be extended beyond the dialectical reasons for his error) have misled him in his intervention, he immediately pays a price for it in the form of a negative transference. For the latter manifests itself with a force that is all the greater the further such an analysis has already led the subject toward an authentic recognition, and what usually results is the breaking off of the analysis.

This is exactly what happened in Dora's case, because of Freud's relentless attempts to make her think Herr K. was the hidden object of her desire; the constitutive biases of Freud's countertransference led him to see in Herr K. the promise of Dora's happiness.

Dora herself was undoubtedly mistaken [*feintée*] about her relationship with Herr K., but she did not feel any the less that Freud was too. Yet when she comes back to see him, after a lapse of fifteen months—in which the fateful cipher of her “time for understanding” is inscribed—we can sense that she begins to feign to have been feigning. The convergence of this feint, raised to the second power, with the aggressive intent Freud attributes to it—not inaccurately, of course, but without recognizing its true mainspring—presents us with a rough idea of the intersubjective complicity that an “analysis of resistances,” sure of being within its rights, might have perpetuated between them. There can be little doubt that, with the means now available to us due to the “progress” that has been made in our technique, this human error could have been extended well beyond the point at which it would have become diabolical.

None of this is my own invention, for Freud himself recognized after the fact the preliminary source of his failure in his own misrecognition at that time of the homosexual position of the object aimed at by the hysteric's desire.

The whole process that led to this current trend in psychoanalysis no doubt goes back, first of all, to the analyst's guilty conscience about the miracle his speech performs. He interprets the symbol and, lo and behold, the symptom—which inscribes the symbol in letters of suffering in the subject's flesh—disappears. This thaumaturgy is unbecoming to us. For, after all, we are scientists and magic is not a justifiable practice. So we disclaim responsibility by accusing the patient of magical thinking. Before long we'll be preaching the Gospel according to Lévy-Bruhl to him. But in the meantime—behold—we have become thinkers again, and have re-established the proper distance between ourselves and our patients; for we had, no doubt, a little too quickly abandoned the tradition of respecting that distance, a tradition expressed so nobly in the lines by Pierre Janet in which he spoke of the feeble abilities of the hysteric compared to our own lofty ones. “She understands nothing about science,” he confides to us regarding the poor little thing, “and doesn't even

imagine how anybody could be interested in it . . . If we consider the absence of control that characterizes hysterics' thinking, rather than allowing ourselves to be scandalized by their lies, which, in any case, are very naive, we should instead be astonished that there are so many honest ones . . .”

Since these lines represent the feelings to which many of those present-day analysts who condescend to speak to the patient “in his own language” have reverted, they may help us understand what has happened in the meantime. For had Freud been capable of endorsing such lines, how could he have heard as he did the truth contained in the little stories told by his first patients, or deciphered a dark delusion like Schreber's to such a great extent as to broaden it to encompass man eternally bound to his symbols?

Is our reason so weak that it cannot see that it is the same in the meditations of scientific discourse and in the first exchange of symbolic objects, and cannot find here the identical measure of its original cunning?

Need I point out what the yardstick of “thought” is worth to practitioners of an experience that associates the job of thought more closely with a mental eroticism than with an equivalent of action?

Must the person who is speaking to you attest that he need not resort to “thought” to understand that, if he is speaking to you at this moment about speech, it is insofar as we have in common a technique of speech which enables you to understand him when he speaks to you about it, and which inclines him to address those who understand nothing of it through you?

Of course, we must be attentive to the unsaid that dwells in the holes in discourse, but the unsaid is not to be understood like knocking coming from the other side of the wall.

If we are to concern ourselves from now on with nothing but such noises, as some analysts pride themselves on doing, it must be admitted that we have not placed ourselves in the most favorable of conditions to decipher their meaning—for how, without jumping to conclusions about their meaning, are we to translate what is not in and of itself language? Led then to call upon the subject, since it is after all to his account that we must transfer this understanding, we shall involve him with us in a wager, a wager that we understand their meaning, and then wait for a return that makes us both winners. As a result, in continuing to perform this shuttling back and forth, he will learn quite simply to beat time himself; it is a form of suggestion which is no worse than any other—in other words, one in which, as in every other form of suggestion, one does not know who starts the ball rolling. The procedure is recognized as being sound enough when it is a question of going to prison.<sup>39</sup>

Halfway to this extreme the question arises: does psychoanalysis remain a dialectical relation in which the analyst's nonaction guides the subject's dis-

course toward the realization of his truth, or is it to be reduced to a fantastic relation in which “two abysses brush up against each other” without touching, until the whole range of imaginary regressions is exhausted—reduced, that is, to a sort of “bundling”<sup>\*40</sup> taken to the extreme as a psychological test?

In fact, this illusion—which impels us to seek the subject’s reality beyond the wall of language—is the same one that leads the subject to believe that his truth is already there in us, that we know it in advance. This is also why he is so open to our objectifying interventions.

He, of course, does not have to answer for this subjective error which, whether it is avowed or not in his discourse, is immanent in the fact that he entered analysis and concluded the original pact involved in it. And we can still less neglect the subjectivity of this moment because it reveals the reason for what may be called the constitutive effects of transference, insofar as they are distinguished by an indication of reality from the constituted effects that follow them.<sup>41</sup>

Freud, let us recall, in discussing the feelings people relate to the transference, insisted on the need to discern in them a reality factor. He concluded that it would be taking undue advantage of the subject’s docility to try to persuade him in every case that these feelings are a mere transference repetition of the neurosis. Now, since these real feelings manifest themselves as primary and since our own charm remains a matter of chance, there might seem to be some mystery here.

But this mystery is solved when viewed from the vantage point of the phenomenology of the subject, insofar as the subject is constituted in the search for truth. We need but consider the traditional facts—which Buddhists provide us with, although they are not the only ones—to recognize in this form of transference the characteristic error of existence, broken down by Buddhists into the following three headings: love, hate, and ignorance. It is therefore as a counter to the analytic movement that we shall understand their equivalence in what is called a positive transference at the outset—each one being shed light on by the other two in this existential aspect, as long as one does not except the third, which is usually omitted because of its proximity to the subject.

I am alluding here to the invective with which someone called upon me to witness the lack of discretion shown by a certain work (which I have already cited too often) in its insane objectification of the play of the instincts in analysis, someone whose debt to me can be recognized by his use of the term “real” in conformity with mine. It was in the following words that he “unburdened his heart,” as they say: “It is high time we put an end to the fraud that tends to perpetrate the belief that anything real whatsoever takes place during treat-

ment.” Let us leave aside what has become of him, for alas, if analysis has not cured the dog’s oral vice mentioned in the Scriptures, its state is worse than before: it is others’ vomit that it laps up.

This sally was not ill directed, since it sought in fact to distinguish between those elementary registers, whose foundations I have since laid, known as the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real—a distinction never previously made in psychoanalysis.

Reality in analytic experience often, in fact, remains veiled in negative forms, but it is not that difficult to situate.

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

For it is clear that the analyst’s abstention—his refusal to respond—is also an element of reality in analysis. More exactly, the junction between the symbolic and the real lies in this negativity, insofar as it is pure—that is, detached from any particular motive. This follows from the fact that the analyst’s non-action is founded on the knowledge affirmed in the principle that all that is real is rational, and on the resulting motive that it is up to the subject to find anew its measure.

The fact remains that this abstention is not maintained indefinitely; when the subject’s question assumes the form of true speech, we sanction it with our response; but I have shown that true speech already contains its own response—thus we are simply doubling his antiphon with our lay. What can this mean except that we do no more than give the subject’s speech its dialectical punctuation?

Thus we see the other moment—which I have already pointed out theoretically—in which the symbolic and the real come together: in the function of time. It is worth dwelling for a moment on time’s impact on technique.

Time plays a role in analytic technique in several ways.

It presents itself first in the total length of an analysis, and concerns the meaning to be given to the term of the analysis, which is a question that must be addressed prior to examining that of the signs of its end. I shall touch on the problem of setting a time limit to an analysis. But it is already clear that its length can only be expected to be indefinite for the subject.

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

- The first, which is based on the limits of our field, and which confirms my remarks on the definition of its confines: we cannot predict how long a subject’s *time for understanding* will last, insofar as it includes a psychological factor that escapes us by its very nature.

- The second, which is a characteristic of the subject, owing to which setting a time limit to his analysis amounts to a spatializing projection in which he already finds himself alienated from himself: from the moment his truth's due date can be predicted—whatever may become of it in the intervening intersubjectivity—the fact is that the truth is already there; that is, we reestablish in the subject his original mirage insofar as he situates his truth in us and, by sanctioning this mirage with the weight of our authority, we set the analysis off on an aberrant path whose results will be impossible to correct.

311 This is precisely what happened in the famous case of the Wolf Man, and Freud so well understood its exemplary importance that he used the case to support his argument in his article on analysis, finite or indefinite.<sup>42</sup>

Setting in advance a time limit to an analysis, the first form of active intervention, inaugurated (*pro pudor!*) by Freud himself—regardless of the divinity (in the true sense of the term)<sup>43</sup> sureness the analyst may evince in following Freud's example—will invariably leave the subject alienated from his truth.

We find confirmation of this point in two facts from the Wolf Man case:

In the first place, despite the whole network of proofs demonstrating the historicity of the primal scene, and despite the conviction he displays concerning it—remaining imperturbable to the doubts Freud methodically cast on it in order to test him—the Wolf Man never managed to integrate his recollection of the primal scene into his history.

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

It is true that another factor comes in here, through which reality intervenes in the analysis—namely, the gift of money whose symbolic value I shall leave aside for another occasion, but whose import is already indicated in what I have said about the link between speech and the gift that constitutes primitive exchange. In this case, the gift of money is reversed by an initiative of Freud's in which—as in the frequency with which he returns to the case—we can recognize his unresolved subjectivization of the problems this case left in abeyance. And no one doubts but that this was a triggering factor of the Wolf Man's psychosis, though without really being able to say why.

312 Don't we realize, nevertheless, that allowing a subject to be nourished at the expense of the analytic academy in return for the services he rendered to science as a case (for it was in fact through a group collection that the Wolf Man was supported) is also to decisively alienate him from his truth?

The material furnished in the supplementary analysis of the Wolf Man

entrusted to Ruth Mack Brunswick illustrates the responsibility of the previous treatment with Freud by demonstrating my remarks on the respective places of speech and language in psychoanalytic mediation.

What's more, it is from the perspective of speech and language that one can grasp how Mack Brunswick took her bearings not at all badly in her delicate position in relation to the transference. (The reader will be reminded of the very "wall" in my metaphor, as it figures in one of the Wolf Man's dreams, the wolves in the key dream displaying their eagerness to get around it . . .) Those who attend my seminar know all this, and others can try their hand at it.<sup>44</sup>

What I want to do is touch on another aspect of the function of time in analytic technique that is currently a matter of much debate. I wish to say something about the length of sessions.

Here again it is a question of an element that manifestly belongs to reality, since it represents our work time, and viewed from this angle it falls within the purview of professional regulations that may be considered predominant.

But its subjective impact is no less important—and, first of all, on the analyst. The taboo surrounding recent discussion of this element is sufficient proof that the analytic group's subjectivity is hardly liberated on this question; and the scrupulous, not to say obsessive, character that observing a standard takes on for some if not most analysts—a standard whose historical and geographical variations nevertheless seem to bother no one—is a clear sign of the existence of a problem that analysts are reluctant to broach because they realize to what extent it would entail questioning the analyst's function.

Secondly, no one can ignore its importance to the subject in analysis. The unconscious, it is said—in a tone that is all the more knowing the less the speaker is capable of justifying what he means—the unconscious needs time to reveal itself. I quite agree. But I ask: how is this time to be measured? By what Alexandre Koyré calls "the universe of precision"? We obviously live in such a universe, but its advent for man is relatively recent, since it goes back precisely to Huyghens' clock—in other words, to 1659—and the discontent of modern man precisely does not indicate that this precision serves him as a liberating factor. Is this time—the time characteristic of the fall of heavy bodies—in some way sacred in the sense that it corresponds to the time of the stars as it was fixed for all eternity by God—who, as Lichtenberg tells us, winds our sundials? Perhaps we could acquire a somewhat better idea of time by comparing the amount of time required for the creation of a symbolic object with the moment of inattention in which we drop it.

Whatever the case may be, if it is problematic to characterize what we do during this time as work, I believe I have made it quite clear that we can characterize what the patient does during this time as work.



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

We play a recording role by serving a function which is fundamental in any symbolic exchange—that of gathering what *do kamo*, man in his authenticity, calls “the lasting word.”

A witness blamed for the subject’s sincerity, trustee of the record of his discourse, reference attesting to its accuracy, guarantor of its honesty, keeper of its testament, scrivener of its codicils, the analyst is something of a scribe.

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

The ending of a session cannot but be experienced by the subject as a punctuation of his progress. We know how he calculates the moment of its arrival in order to tie it to his own timetable, or even to his evasive maneuvers, and how he anticipates it by weighing it like a weapon and watching out for it as he would for a place of shelter.

314 It is a fact, which can be plainly seen in the study of manuscripts of symbolic writings, whether the Bible or the Chinese canonical texts, that the absence of punctuation in them is a source of ambiguity. Punctuation, once inserted, establishes the meaning; changing the punctuation renews or upsets it; and incorrect punctuation distorts it.

The indifference with which ending a session after a fixed number of minutes has elapsed interrupts the subject’s moments of haste can be fatal to the conclusion toward which his discourse was rushing headlong, and can even set a misunderstanding in stone, if not furnish a pretext for a retaliatory ruse.

Beginners seem more struck by the effects of this impact than others—which gives one the impression that for others it is just a routine.

The neutrality we manifest in strictly applying the rule that sessions be of a specified length obviously keeps us on the path of non-action.

But this nonaction has a limit, otherwise we would never intervene at all—so why make intervening impossible at this point, thereby privileging it?

The danger that arises if this point takes on an obsessive value for the analyst lies simply in the fact that it lends itself to the subject’s connivance, a connivance that is available not only to the obsessive, although it takes on a special force for him, owing precisely to his impression that he is working. The sense of forced labor that envelops everything for this subject, including even his leisure activities, is only too well known.

This sense is sustained by his subjective relation to the master insofar as it is the master’s death that he awaits.

Indeed, the obsessive manifests one of the attitudes that Hegel did not develop in his master/slave dialectic. The slave slips away when faced with the risk of death, when the opportunity to acquire mastery is offered to him in a struggle for pure prestige. But since he knows he is mortal, he also knows that the master can die. Hence he can accept to work for the master and give up *jouissance* in the meantime; and, unsure as to when the master will die, he waits.

This is the intersubjective reason for both the doubt and procrastination that are obsessive character traits.

Meanwhile, all his work is governed by this intention and thus becomes doubly alienating. For not only is the subject’s creation [*oeuvre*] taken away from him by another—the constitutive relation of all labor—but the subject’s recognition of his own essence in his creation, in which this labor finds its justification, eludes him no less, for he himself “is not in it.” He is in the anticipated moment of the master’s death, at which time he will begin to live; but in the meantime he identifies with the master as dead and is thus already dead himself.

315 He nevertheless strives to fool the master by demonstrating his good intentions through hard work. This is what the dutiful children of the analytic catechism express in their crude language by saying that the subject’s ego\* is trying to seduce his superego.\*

This intrasubjective formulation is immediately demystified if we understand it in the analytic relationship, where the subject’s “working through” is in fact employed to seduce the analyst.

And it is no accident that, once the dialectical progress begins to approach the challenging of the ego’s\* intentions in our subjects, the fantasy of the analyst’s death—often experienced in the form of fear or even of anxiety—never fails to be produced.

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

Can there be any doubt, then, about what happens when the master manifests disdain for the product of such work? The subject’s resistance may become completely disconcerted.

From then on, his alibi—hitherto unconscious—begins to unveil itself to him, and we see him passionately seek the why and wherefore of so much effort.

I would not say so much about it if I had not been convinced—in experimenting with what have been called my “short sessions,” at a stage in my career that is now over—that I was able to bring to light in a certain male subject fantasies of anal pregnancy, as well as a dream of its resolution by Cesarean section, in a time frame in which I would normally still have been listening to his speculations on Dostoyevsky’s artistry.

In any case, I am not here to defend this procedure, but to show that it has a precise dialectical meaning in analytic technique.<sup>45</sup>

And I am not the only one to have remarked that it bears a certain resemblance to the technique known as Zen, which is applied to bring about the subject's revelation in the traditional asceticism of certain Far Eastern schools.

Without going to the extremes to which this technique is taken, since they would be contrary to certain of the limitations imposed by our own, a discreet application of its basic principle in analysis seems much more acceptable to me than certain methods of the so-called analysis of the resistances, insofar as such an application does not in itself entail any danger of alienating the subject.

For it shatters discourse only in order to bring forth speech.

Here we are, then, up against the wall—up against the wall of language. We are in our place here, that is, on the same side of the wall as the patient, and it is off this wall—which is the same for him as for us—that we shall try to respond to the echo of his speech.

There is nothing that is anything but outer darkness to us beyond this wall. Does this mean that we thoroughly master the situation? Certainly not, and on this point Freud has bequeathed us his testament regarding the negative therapeutic reaction.

The key to this mystery, it is said, is in the insistence [*instance*] of a primary masochism—in other words, in a pure manifestation of the death instinct whose enigma Freud propounded for us at the height of his career.

We cannot discount it, any more than I can postpone examining it here.

For I note that two different groups join forces in refusing to accept this culminating point of Freud's doctrine: those whose approach to analysis revolves around a conception of the ego\* which I have shown to be erroneous, and those who, like Reich, take the principle of seeking an ineffable organic expression beyond speech so far that, like him, in order to free it from its armor, they might symbolize, as he does, the orgasmic induction that, like him, they expect from analysis in the superimposition of the two vermicular forms whose stupefying schema is found in his book, *Character Analysis*.

Once I have demonstrated the profound relationship uniting the notion of the death instinct to problems of speech, we will see that a rigorous logic governing intellectual productions underlies this joining of forces.

As even a moment's reflection shows, the notion of the death instinct involves a basic irony, since its meaning has to be sought in the conjunction of two opposing terms: "instinct" which, in its broadest acceptation, is the law that regulates the successive stages of a behavioral cycle in order to accomplish a life function; and "death" which appears first of all as the destruction of life.

Nevertheless, the definition of life provided by Bichat at the dawn of biology as the set of forces that resist death, and the most modern conception of life—found in Cannon's notion of homeostasis—as the function of a system maintaining its own equilibrium, are there to remind us that life and death come together in a relation of polar opposites at the very heart of phenomena that people associate with life.

Hence the congruence of the contrasting terms of the death instinct with the phenomena of repetition, Freud in fact relating the former to the latter with the term "automatism," would not cause difficulty were it simply a question of a biological notion.

But, as we all know, it is not, which is what makes the problem a stumbling block to so many of us. The fact that numerous analysts balk at the apparent incompatibility of these terms might well be worth our attention, for it manifests a dialectical innocence that would probably be disconcerted by the classical problem posed to semantics in the determinative statement, "a hamlet on the Ganges," by which Hindu aesthetics illustrates the second form of the resonances of language.<sup>46</sup>

This notion of the death instinct must be broached through its resonances in what I will call the poetics of Freud's work—a first avenue for getting at its meaning, and a dimension that is essential for understanding the dialectical repercussion of its origins at the apogee marked by this notion. It should be recalled, for example, that Freud tells us his vocation for medicine came to him during a public reading of Goethe's famous "Hymn to Nature"—that is, in a text that was brought to light by one of Goethe's friends, which the poet, in the twilight of his life, agreed to recognize as a putative child of the most youthful effusions of his pen.

At the other end of Freud's life, we see in the article on analysis considered as finite or indefinite that he explicitly relates his new conception to the conflict of the two principles governing the alternation of all life according to Empedocles of Agrigento in the fifth century B.C.—that is, in the pre-Socratic era in which nature and mind were not distinguished.

These two facts are a sufficient indication to us that what is at stake here is a myth of the dyad, whose exposition by Plato is, moreover, mentioned in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, a myth that can only be understood in the subjectivity of modern man by raising it to the negativity of the judgment in which it is inscribed.

This is to say that, just as the repetition automatism—which is just as completely misunderstood by those who wish to separate its two terms—aims at nothing but the historicizing temporality of the experience of transference, so the death instinct essentially expresses the limit of the subject's historical func-

tion. This limit is death—not as the possible end date of the individual's life, nor as the subject's empirical certainty, but, as Heidegger puts it, as that "possibility which is the subject's ownmost, which is unconditional, unsurpassable, certain, and as such indeterminable"—the subject being understood as defined by his historicity.

Indeed, this limit is present at every instant in what is finished in this history. It represents the past in its real form; it is not the physical past whose existence is abolished, nor the epic past as it has become perfected in the work of memory, nor the historical past in which man finds the guarantor of his future, but rather the past which manifests itself in an inverted form in repetition.<sup>47</sup>

This is the dead person [*le mort*] subjectivity takes as its partner in the triad instituted by its mediation in the universal conflict of *Philia*, love, and *Neikos*, strife.

Thus there is no further need to resort to the outdated notion of primary masochism to explain repetitive games in which subjectivity simultaneously masters its dereliction and gives birth to the symbol.

These are occultation games which Freud, in a flash of genius, presented to us so that we might see in them that the moment at which desire is humanized is also that at which the child is born into language.

We can now see that the subject here does not simply master his deprivation by assuming it—he raises his desire to a second power. For his action destroys the object that it causes to appear and disappear by *bringing about* its absence and presence in advance. His action thus negativizes the force field of desire in order to become its own object to itself. And this object, being immediately embodied in the symbolic pair of two elementary exclamations, announces the subject's diachronic integration of the dichotomy of phonemes, whose synchronic structure the existing language offers up for him to assimilate; the child thus begins to become engaged in the system of the concrete discourse of those around him by reproducing more or less approximately in his *Fort!* and *Da!* the terms he receives from them.

*Fort! Da!* It is already when quite alone that the desire of the human child becomes the desire of another, of an alter ego who dominates him and whose object of desire is henceforth his own affliction.

Should the child now address an imaginary or real partner, he will see that this partner too obeys the negativity of his discourse, and since his call has the effect of making the partner slip away, he will seek to bring about the reversal that brings the partner back to his desire through a banishing summons.

Thus the symbol first manifests itself as the killing of the thing, and this death results in the endless perpetuation of the subject's desire.

The first symbol in which we recognize humanity in its vestiges is the bur-

ial, and death as a means can be recognized in every relation in which man is born into the life of his history.

This is the only life that endures and is true, since it is transmitted without being lost in a tradition passed on from subject to subject. It is impossible not to see how loftily this life transcends that inherited by the animal, in which the individual fades into the species, since no memorial distinguishes its ephemeral appearance from the appearance that reproduces it in the invariability of the type. Indeed, apart from the hypothetical mutations of the phylum that must be integrated by a subjectivity that man is still only approaching from the outside, nothing, except the experiments in which man uses it, distinguishes a particular rat from rats in general, a horse from horses, nothing except the amorphous passage from life to death—whereas Empedocles, by throwing himself into Mount Etna, leaves forever present in the memory of men the symbolic act of his being-toward-death.

Man's freedom is entirely circumscribed within the constitutive triangle of the following: the renunciation he imposes on the other's desire by threatening to kill the other in order to enjoy the fruits of the other's serfdom, the sacrifice of his life that he agrees to for the reasons that give human life its measure, and the suicidal abnegation of the vanquished party that deprives the master of his victory and leaves him to his inhuman solitude.

Of these figures of death, the third is the supreme detour by which the immediate particularity of desire, reconquering its ineffable form, refinds in negation a final triumph. And we must recognize its meaning, for as analysts we deal with it. It is not, in fact, a perversion of instinct, but rather a desperate affirmation of life that is the purest form we can find of the death instinct.

The subject says "No!" to this darting game of intersubjectivity in which desire gains recognition for a moment only to lose itself in a will that is the other's will. The subject patiently withdraws his precarious life from the churning aggregations of the symbol's Eros in order to finally affirm life in a speechless curse.

When we want to get at what was before the serial games of speech in the subject and what is prior to the birth of symbols, we find it in death, from which his existence derives all the meaning it has. Indeed, he asserts himself with respect to others as a death wish; if he identifies with the other, it is by freezing him in the metamorphosis of his essential image, and no being is ever conjured up by him except among the shadows of death.

To say that this mortal meaning reveals in speech a center that is outside of language is more than a metaphor—it manifests a structure. This structure differs from the spatialization of the circumference or sphere with which some people like to schematize the limits of the living being and its environment: it

corresponds rather to the relational group that symbolic logic designates topologically as a ring.

321 If I wanted to give an intuitive representation of it, it seems that I would have to resort not to the two-dimensionality of a zone, but rather to the three-dimensional form of a torus, insofar as a torus' peripheral exteriority and central exteriority constitute but one single region.<sup>48</sup>

This schema represents the endless circularity of the dialectical process that occurs when the subject achieves his solitude, whether in the vital ambiguity of immediate desire or in the full assumption of his being-toward-death.

But we can simultaneously see that the dialectic is not individual, and that the question of the termination of an analysis is that of the moment at which the subject's satisfaction is achievable in the satisfaction of all—that is, of all those it involves in a human undertaking. Of all the undertakings that have been proposed in this century, the psychoanalyst's is perhaps the loftiest, because it mediates in our time between the care-ridden man and the subject of absolute knowledge. This is also why it requires a long subjective asceticism, indeed one that never ends, since the end of training analysis itself is not separable from the subject's engagement in his practice.

Let whoever cannot meet at its horizon the subjectivity of his time give it up then. For how could he who knows nothing of the dialectic that engages him in a symbolic movement with so many lives possibly make his being the axis of those lives? Let him be well acquainted with the whorl into which his era draws him in the ongoing enterprise of Babel, and let him be aware of his function as an interpreter in the strife of languages. As for the darkness of the *mundus* around which the immense tower is coiled, let him leave to mystical vision the task of seeing the putrescent serpent of life rise up there on an everlasting rod.

Allow me to laugh if these remarks are accused of turning the meaning of Freud's work away from the biological foundations he would have wished for it toward the cultural references with which it is rife. I do not wish to preach to you the doctrine of the *b* factor, designating the first, nor of the *c* factor, designating the second. All I have tried to do is remind you of the neglected *a*, *b*, *c* structure of language, and to teach you to spell once again the forgotten ABC's of speech.

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

Psychoanalytic experience has rediscovered in man the imperative of the Word as the law that has shaped him in its image. It exploits the poetic function of language to give his desire its symbolic mediation. May this experience

finally enable you to understand that the whole reality of its effects lies in the gift of speech<sup>49</sup>; for it is through this gift that all reality has come to man and through its ongoing action that he sustains reality.

If the domain defined by this gift of speech must be sufficient for both your action and your knowledge, it will also be sufficient for your devotion. For it offers the latter a privileged field.

When the Devas, the men, and the Asuras were finishing their novitiate with Prajapati, as we read in the first Brahmana of the fifth lesson of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, they begged him, "Speak to us."

"*Da*," said Prajapati, god of thunder. "Did you hear me?" And the Devas answered, saying: "Thou hast said to us: *Damyata*, master yourselves"—the sacred text meaning that the powers above are governed by the law of speech.

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

"*Da*," said Prajapati, god of thunder. "Did you hear me?" And the Asuras answered, saying: "Thou hast said to us: *Dayadhvam*, be merciful"—the sacred text meaning that the powers below resound [*résonnent*]<sup>50</sup> to the invocation of speech.

That, continues the text, is what the divine voice conveys in the thunder: Submission, gift, grace. *Da da da*.

For Prajapati replies to all: "You have heard me."

### Notes

1. See "Logical Time," *Écrits* 1966, 197–213.

2. Ferenczi, "Confusion of Tongues between the Adult and the Child," *IJP* XXX, 4 (1949): 225–30.

3. (Added in 1966:) The preceding paragraph has been rewritten.

4. (Added in 1966:) Previously I had written: "in psychological matters."

5. (Added in 1966:) The preceding paragraph has been rewritten.

6. This is the crux of a deviation that concerns both practice and theory. For to identify the ego\* with the subject's self-discipline is to confuse imaginary isolation with mastery of the instincts; here one is liable to make errors of judgment in the conduct of the treatment—such as trying to strengthen the ego\* in many neuroses that are caused by its overly strong structure, which is a dead end. Hasn't my friend

Michael Balint written that a strengthening of the ego\* should be beneficial to a subject suffering from *ejaculatio praecox* because it would permit him to prolong the suspension of his desire? But how can we think this, when it is precisely to the fact that his desire depends on the imaginary function of the ego\* that the subject owes the short-circuiting of the act—which psychoanalytic clinical experience clearly shows to be intimately related to narcissistic identification with the partner.

7. This in the same work I praised at the end of my introduction (added in 1966). It is clear in what follows that aggressiveness is only a side effect of analytic frustration, though it can be reinforced by a certain type of intervention; as such, it is not the reason for the frustration/regression pair.

8. *GW* XII, 71; *Cinq psychanalyses* (Paris:

PUF, 1954), 356, a weak translation of the term.

9. *GW* XII, 72, fn1, the last few lines. The concept of *Nachträglichkeit* is underlined in the footnote. *Cinq psychanalyses*, 356, fn1.

10. See *Écrits* 1966, 204–10.

11. Freud uses the term in an article accessible to even the least demanding of French readers, since it came out in the *Revue Neurologique*, a journal generally found on bookshelves in hospital staff rooms. The blunder exposed here illustrates, among other things, how the said authority I saluted on page 246 [in *Écrits* 1966] measures up to his leadership.\*

12. (Added in 1966:) Even if he is speaking to everyone in general and no one in particular [à la cantonade]. He addresses that Other (with a capital O) whose theoretical basis I have since consolidated, and which demands a certain *epoche* in returning to the term to which I limited myself at that time: that of “inter-subjectivity.”

13. I am borrowing these terms from the late and sorely missed Édouard Pichon who, both in the directions he gave for the advent of our discipline and in those that guided him in the murky shadows of persons, showed a divination that I can only attribute to his practice of semantics.

14. (Added in 1966:) This reference to the aporia of Christianity announced a more precise one at its Jansenist climax: a reference to Pascal whose wager, still intact, forced me to take up the whole question again in order to get at what it conceals that is inestimable to psychoanalysts—which is still, at this date (June 1966), unrevealed.

15. (Added in 1966:) This remark was made by one of the psychoanalysts most involved in the debate.

16. See *Gegenwunschräume* in the *Traumdeutung*, *GW* II, 156–57 and 163–64; *SE* IV, 151 and 157–58.

17. (Added in 1966:) In order to evaluate the results of these procedures the reader should become thoroughly acquainted with the notes found in Émile Borel’s book *Le Hasard* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1914), which I recommended already at that time, on the triviality of the “remarkable” results obtained by beginning in this way with just any number.

18. See C. I. Oberndorf, “Unsatisfactory Results of Psychoanalytic Therapy,” *PQ* XIX (1950): 393–407.

19. See, among others, *Do Kamo: Person and Myth in the Melanesian World*, by Maurice Leenhardt [trans. Basia Miller Gulati (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979)], chapters IX and X.

20. Jules H. Masserman, “Language, Behaviour and Dynamic Psychiatry,” *IJP* XXV, 1–2 (1944): 1–8.

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

22. To obtain an immediate subjective confirmation of this remark of Hegel’s, it is enough to have seen in the recent epidemic a blind rabbit in the middle of a road, lifting the emptiness of its vision changed into a gaze toward the setting sun: it was human to the point of tragedy.

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

24. Reich’s error, to which I shall return, caused him to mistake a coat of arms for armor.

25. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, “Language and the Analysis of Social Laws,” *American Anthropologist* LIII, 2 (April–June 1951): 155–63.

26. (Added in 1966:) The last four paragraphs have been rewritten.

27. (Added in 1966:) The last two paragraphs have been rewritten.

28. On the Galilean hypothesis and Huyghens’ clock, see Alexandre Koyré, “An Experiment in Measurement,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* XC VII, 2 (April 1953): 222–37. (Added in 1966:) The last two paragraphs of my text have been rewritten.

29. (Added in 1966:) I have developed these indications as the opportunity presented itself. Four paragraphs rewritten.

30. “The Theory of Symbolism,” *British Journal of Psychology* IX, 2. Reprinted in his *Papers on Psycho-Analysis* (Boston: Beacon, 1961) [the page number given in the text corresponds to this edition]. See [Lacan’s article: “À la mémoire d’Ernest Jones: Sur sa théorie

du symbolisme,” *La Psychanalyse* V (1960): 1–20] *Écrits* 1966, 697–717.

31. I am referring here to the teaching of Abhinavagupta in the tenth century. See Dr. Kanti Chandra Pandey, “Indian Aesthetics,” *Chowkamba Sanskrit Series, Studies*, II (Benares: 1950).

32. Ernst Kris, “Ego Psychology and Interpretation in Psychoanalytic Therapy,” *PQ* XX, 1 (1951): 15–29; see the passage quoted on pages 27–28.

33. (Added in 1966:) Paragraph rewritten.

34. This for the use of whoever can still understand it after looking in the Littré for justification of a theory that makes speech into an “action beside,” by the translation that it gives of the Greek *parabole* (why not “action toward” instead?)—without having noticed at the same time that, if this word nevertheless designates what it means, it is because of sermonizing usage that, since the tenth century, has reserved “Word” [verbe] for the Logos incarnate.

35. Each language has its own form of transmission, and since the legitimacy of such research is founded on its success, nothing stops us from drawing a moral from it. Consider, for example, the maxim I chose as an epigraph for the preface to this paper. [*En particulier, il ne faudra pas oublier que la séparation en embryologie, anatomie, physiologie, psychologie, sociologie, clinique n’existe pas dans la nature et qu’il n’y a qu’une discipline: la neurobiologie à laquelle l’observation nous oblige d’ajouter l’épithète d’humaine en ce qui nous concerne.*] Since it is so laden with redundancies, its style may strike you as a bit lackluster. But lighten it of them and its audacity will arouse the enthusiasm it deserves. Hear ye: “Parfaupe ouclaspá nannanbryle anaphi ologi pssyocline ixispad anlana—égnia kune n’rbiol’ ò blijouter tètumaine ennouconç . . .” Here the purity of its message is finally laid bare. Its meaning raises its head here, the owning of being [*l’aveu de l’être*] begins, and our victorious intelligence bequeaths to the future its immortal stamp.

36. “The Therapeutic Effect of Inexact Interpretation: A Contribution to the Theory of Suggestion,” *IJP* XII, 4 (1931): 397–411.

37. “Silence and Verbalization: A Supple-

ment to the Theory of the ‘Analytic Rule,’ ” *IJP* XXX, 1 (1949): 21–30.

38. Here equivalent to my mind to the term *Zwangsbefürchtung* [obsessive or compulsive fear or apprehension], which should be broken down into its component elements without losing any of the semantic resources of the German language.

39. (Added in 1966:) Two paragraphs rewritten.

40. This term refers to the custom, of Celtic origin and still practiced by certain Bible sects in America, of allowing a couple engaged to be married, or even a passing guest and the family’s daughter, to spend the night together in the same bed, provided that they keep their clothes on. The word derives its meaning from the fact that the girl is usually wrapped up in sheets. (Quincey speaks of it. See also the book by Aurand le Jeune on this practice among the Amish.) Thus the myth of Tristan and Isolde, and even the complex that it represents, now underwrites the analyst in his quest for the soul destined for mystifying nuptials via the extenuation of its instinctual fantasies.

41. (Added in 1966:) What I have since designated as the basis of transference—namely, the “subject-supposed-to-know”—is thus already defined here.

42. This is the correct translation of the two terms that have been rendered, with that unflinching flair for mistranslation I mentioned earlier, by “terminated analysis and interminable analysis.”

43. See Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, II, 4: “In a trial, when it is a question of knowing who shall be given the task of presenting the accusation, and when two or more people volunteer for this office, the judgment by which the tribunal names the accuser is called divination . . . This word comes from the fact that since accuser and accused are two correlative terms that cannot continue to exist without each other, and since the type of judgment in question here presents an accused without an accuser, it is necessary to resort to divination in order to find what the trial does not provide, what it leaves still unknown, that is, the accuser.”

44. (Added in 1966:) Two paragraphs rewritten.

45. (Added in 1966:) Whether a chipped stone or a cornerstone, my forte is that I haven't given in on this point.
46. This is the form called Laksanalaksana.
47. (Added in 1966:) These four words [*renversé dans la répétition*], in which my latest formulation of repetition is found (1966), have been substituted for an improper recourse to the "eternal return" [*toujours présent dans l'éternel retour*], which was all that I could get across at that time.
48. (Added in 1966:) These are premises of the topology I have been putting into practice over the past five years.
49. It should be clear that it is not a question here of the "gifts" that novices are always supposed not to have, but of a tone that they are, indeed, missing more often than they should be.
50. (Added in 1966:) Ponge writes it as follows: *réson*.