

Jacques Lacan

TELEVISION

*translated by Denis Hollier,
Rosalind Krauss, and
Annette Michelson*

A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment

translated by Jeffrey Mehlman

edited by Joan Copjec



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Television

Microscopia:
An Introduction to the Reading of
Television
Jacques-Alain Miller

(The scene takes place in New York)

She: Here's your book back! Don't mention it to me again! (She violently throws the book on the floor.) This man doesn't want people to understand him!

I: Oh! Oh!

She: He doesn't, I'm telling you! I have read it three times since yesterday and could make neither heads nor tails of it! It drove me crazy!

I: Well, that's not bad for starters.

She: You think it suits you to try to be funny? It is not the kind of thing one gives a woman to read when one wants to please her, and you are no better than your master. I could not sleep a wink last night because of it.

I: It certainly doesn't show—anger must suit you quite well.

She: You think you are so gallant! Well, don't think you can assuage me with such inane flattery.

I: I wouldn't dream of it. It is not my fault that you are even more beautiful than usual when irritated.

She: I am not irritated—I am enraged and horrified.

I: That's you on the book cover.

She: How's that?

I: Look for yourself. (He picks up the small book and holds it out to her.) You can't tell what she's looking at, but you can see that she's fending it off.

She: Indeed. (She takes the book and considers the picture.)

I: She's perhaps just thrown this book down; she backs away in horror, and in an instant the veil will fall back over her face and she'll no longer see anything.

She: Who decided to put that picture on the cover?

I: I did. I was expecting you.

Written in August 1987.

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Translated by Bruce Fink.

She: And where does it come from, Mr. Clever?

I: It is rather well-known. It comes from Pompeii. It's one of the most beautiful things there. You enter a huge room and find a fresco taking up three walls whose colors are so fresh that time fades away. It tells a story which no one has ever really been able to decipher, but it does clearly involve an initiation. In the middle, mystical wedding ceremonies are depicted: the hierogamy or sacred marriage of Dionysus and Ariadne. This enchanting place I would like to take you to some day is called the . . .

She: Yes, you would like to be my Dionysus and I your Ariadne.

I: The *Villa of Mysteries*.

She: Well, that is exactly what this *Television* book is to me.

I: But "mystery" means that one eventually sees the truth.

She: And what is that truth?

I: At the end of a "mystery," after having followed out the entire prescribed course of an ascetic program, one was placed before . . . the ultimate truth.

She: Which was?

I: A phallus, I confess.

She: Ah, there we have it: "Woman does not exist" and the truth is the phallus. Let me tell you that I made up my mind a long time ago about this ultimate truth that you and your kind claim to teach the world. You have nothing to teach me, and I led you to this admission just to see if it was still the same old song and dance. Well if that is what one finds at the end, at least we got it out in the open right at the outset. I bid you good evening.

I: So you have found a satisfying flaw in short order—thanks only to a misunderstanding, however. First you complained you did not understand anything, and now you have got it all figured out. You've understood nothing but your fantasy. That is what usually happens.

She: So you are starting in with insults already?!

I: My dear Ariadne, I never said psychoanalysis was an initiation and that at the cost of a few shudders it would lead you to phallic revelation, after which you would have but to be united with God by a sacred bond. The analyst is not Dionysus. He cannot ensure you the peaceful *jouissance* of an accomplished sexual relationship. The first name for *jouissance* in Freud's work is castration—the same castration your Amer-

ican analysts have left by the wayside, and of which they no longer have even the slightest notion.

She: I can make neither heads nor tails of what you say. You speak in aphorisms.

I: If you would be so kind as to give me your hand—there, palm open, fingers straight, a poor hand which doesn't want to know anything—give me your hand, put it in mine, and sit beside me, I could dispel these mysteries. It would suffice for you to lend me a little part of yourself, this small ear, and that would be the thread—yes, the invisible thread, Ariadne—which would allow me, the new Theseus, to kill the Minotaur.

She: And you would thus abandon me on the island of Naxos . . .

I: Where you might be found by your Dionysus.

She: You are asking me to be your patient?

I: No, just to be patient and kind. Let us read together this short book which tormented you so. I will speak for you. If one of us must be in the position of analyst, it won't be me but rather you. I will make you judge or mistress of what I say.

She: Should I be displeased, or should you lose me in the maze of your labyrinth, will you back up and begin afresh?

I: As often as you like. That is what is involved in my speaking for you.

She: While we play this game, must I have confidence in you, believe that you know something I don't, and that there is something to know?

I: No doubt.

She: But that is what I am not sure of.

I: That is the game. As long as you are curious, that will do. But don't expect me to play the scholar. In fact, as I will be speaking for you, as I will be tailoring what I say to what you can understand, in this game, you are the one who knows. Your knowledge here will define the level; the whole of my discourse will be designed for your ears alone; I will be content only if you are; and when I speak your language, as I hope to do, it will be as though it were coming from you.

She: From me?

I: Yes, from you. Thus it will be as if what I transmit to you were coming out of your own mouth—whereas one might think you were but its passive receiver. And when you say, "I've always known that," I won't be angered.

She: Now I am sure you are making fun of me. Or else you are simply trying to disguise with your seductive words the fact that you are the master and I the pupil.

I: Don't believe it. It is true that I want to be in your good graces, and that we will not get far if I am not. But there is more to it than that: I am trying gradually to introduce you to the logic of the locus of the Other; I am placing you in this locus, and its logic implies that the very message one addresses to it comes from it.

She: You don't expect me to say yes to this pretty paradox, do you?

I: Don't say yes—it will suffice for you not to always say no. Don't love me; just try to be unbiased and perhaps just slightly, ever so slightly, kindly disposed. Don't forget that I am at your mercy, and that a word from you could make me return to nothingness. Should you stop up your ear or stand up and leave, I, insofar as I speak, immediately disappear, as I speak but from the place you offer me.

She: As you speak but from the locus of the Other.

I: Exactly.

She: Fine, I accept your "locus of the Other," as you call it in that hyperbolic language of yours I won't ever get used to. But don't dream for a minute that you have won me over. Convoluted sentences have no power over me. I would not even consider being kindly disposed—you can count on me, on the contrary, to be rigorous, ruthless, and merciless.

I: *La Belle Dame sans merci!* Though I may be taken for a masochist, I confess I could not be more pleased. For that situates our discussion in the appropriate register: that of courtly love, not of catechism. Of all women, a poet chooses one single woman and makes of her his Lady [*Dame*], which means—I don't know if you are familiar with the Latin root—she who commands. He dedicates all of his art to her, she alone inspiring his song composed of word games and finds; she is the only reference of his verses and the sole object of his passion. To be worthy of this, she remains in her place, consenting to nothing, suggesting but the *tests* through which the troubadour may prove himself. And all that, in the end, to obtain what from her? A nothing: a sign. Not even a yes, but a response which suffices to reverse his decline, allowing him to escape from nothingness.

She: They don't sleep together?

I: In the end, no doubt, but we don't really know for certain. And even so, it is never said that they screw.

She: We aren't like that anymore nowadays.

I: It marked the style of love in the West for longer than you think. Brought to a climax and historically attested to as a social practice, it is what Freud, in his analysis of love and the lover's dependency resulting therefrom, called *verliebte Hörigkeit*. The merciless lady is a man's fantasy, though it is not necessarily a simple matter to find women willing to play the role.

She: I read something like that in the book you gave me.

I: That's right, and we'll come to it. I mentioned courtly love, so far from us now as a practice, to simply indicate to what lengths men can go to . . . make Woman exist.

She: Oh that is enough of this "Woman"! It is meaningless, and if it is not, its meaning is totally—how shall I say?—unstable.

I: That is how the French proverb goes: "Woman unstable often be, who trusts in her, right mad be he" [*Souvent femme varie, bien fol qui s'y fie*"]. And that's why the troubadour invented an unchanging and impossible woman for himself, who could act as his guiding star. I too need a compass, and it is you who are my Polaris.

She: Here, when one heads off into the unknown, one goes West . . .

I: So be it; be my unexplored frontier.

She: It was the Minotaur you wanted to reach.

I: You are my Minotaur.

She: Well then, I can't be Ariadne, and you will be eaten.

I: Let us set aside ancient mythology—I want to be as American as you. Let's see—if I try to illustrate the Lady, the inhuman partner, by drawing upon your mythology, what do I come across? Moby Dick, of course! And Ahab's leg is not such a bad example to show that castration . . .

She: Oh yes, you're right! I am Ariadne, the Minotaur, Moby Dick—let's have done with it. I observe that you no sooner situate me in the locus of the Other of your invention than you cast me as a whale and imagine I'm going to eat you.

I: That—let us call a spade a spade—is an interpretation. Congratulations. Bravo! I must kiss you.

She: Have you finished, sir, with your exuberance? Coming back to this short book, you proposed to read it with me. That is why I am still at your side, and I fully expect you to engage in its explanation. You were confident you could comment upon it in my language, and in such a way as to make me believe my own words were coming out of your mouth. That is what I expect of you now.

I: At your service. Would you be so kind as to begin by posing me a question?

She: Well, I am curious to know if such an allusive, veiled, opaque text could have been broadcast by French television. For you say in your advertisement simply that its broadcast was "announced."

I: Ah, I see that she who questions me also know how to read me! It is true that when it went to press, we were not sure it would be broadcast: there is a little story I should tell you concerning its broadcast. It all began with a telephone call I received from someone I did not know, a certain Benoît Jacquot, who told me he had gotten the go-ahead from the French Television Research Service to do a program on Jacques Lacan. He wanted to do it with me, so he said, rather than with a specialist in popularization—and you can take my word for it that there were plenty of them around.

She: Which won him, I imagine, your esteem and sympathy?

I: Certainly, but not my approval.

She: You refused?

I: No, I referred him to Dr. Lacan.

She: Dr. Lacan?

I: Yes, that's what I called him during his lifetime.

She: That's strange!

I: No, it's not strange. He was, as you know, a doctor—a psychiatrist—and he had every right to that title. But it is true that I also called him doctor because he seemed to me truly learned [*docte*], a full-fledged doctor like St. Thomas, the Angelic Doctor . . .

She: Lacan, the Satanic Doctor!

I: Lacan agreed to see Benoît. And to my surprise, he accepted on the spot. I understood why when I met Benoît: he was quite young, not a media star, nor looking to make a stepping stone of this project—he was really interested in it. I too immediately took a liking to him. When the program was finished, the research service didn't want to broadcast

it. They thought it would be incomprehensible to the public at large.

She: There you have it!

I: They asked Benoît and me to cut three-quarters of it, and to replace the excisions with explanations I was to give.

She: Which is precisely what you are willing to do for me.

I: Well, there was no question of doing so. What did those impudent people expect from Lacan? Did they think he would speak like them just to please them?

She: But you speak like I do.

I: I don't have to force myself. And I am not Lacan. In any case, it was a test of strength. We would not accept any compromises whatsoever, and the directors of the television station were worried about having a scandal on their hands; they wanted to show how open-minded they were—they had already broadcast programs with Jakobson, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Francois Jacob—but would suffer accusations of obscurantism; the uproar caused by the cancelling of Lacan's seminar at the Ecole Normale Supérieure was still fresh in people's minds. In short, tempers heated up amid pressure, threats, and rage; the president of the television network gave in and the program was broadcast in two installments, the first at the end of January and the second at the beginning of February, both times at ten o'clock in the evening.

She: You want to prove to me that it was a battle?

I: It was a battle. The red carpet was never rolled out for us. Or if it was, we walked alongside it.

She: What is it that you call *manuductio* in the preface?

I: It is the Latin term for the marginal notes designed as a guide for the reader. Would you like to know where I got the idea? *Pilgrim's Progress* which I was rereading at that time—and so much the worse if that leads you to criticize me.

She: I didn't say anything.

I: *Ductio*, is to conduct or lead, and *manu* is by the hand, and it is yours that I am now holding in mine.

She: Couldn't you have said something more about the notes?

I: In providing them, I attested first of all that the text could be followed, indicating as well, most simply, how to read Lacan. For you cannot make anything of it if you try to read it quickly, and besides it can't be done for you end up throwing down the book. You should real-

ize that Lacan is to be read sentence by sentence, that every rhetorical flourish is in fact built upon a structure, and that his playing with language corresponds to lines of reasoning. I showed these marginalia to the doctor one evening at his home in the rue de Lille. For two full hours he poured over them, one by one. When he was through—he had already put on his coat—I was still seated at the worktable—I told him it would be good if he put in a word to distance himself from what was, after all, but my reading, leaving the way open to others. Still standing, he took out his pen again and, without saying a word, wrote this line: “He who questions me also knows how to read me.”

She: You were rather proud of that, I imagine.

I: I was moved, and surprised. I had to bear up under it also, as it didn't exactly win me friends all around. But I didn't take it as destined for me alone—nor did I when he designated me, seven years later, as the “at-least-one who reads him.” It made an example of me, no doubt, the living proof that the set of his readers was not empty—I was thus a witness. Which is not to say that I was the only one. You see here that I am never named; so why not understand it as follows: to question him is to know how to read him. That then applies to you as well. Knowing-how-to-read is required here, but instead of involving saying “yes,” it involves asking questions.

She: Now I am supposed to say “yes”?

I: Yes.

She: So I take up this book which, albeit short, requires a knowing-how-to-read specific to it, and I read. I'll show you right away what is wrong, in the very first paragraph: “I always speak the truth.” That would be fine if it were true, but it seems we are supposed to believe it just because he says so.

I: Exactly!

She: Does he always speak the truth? How can we know? We have to take his word for it . . .

I: That's right!

She: . . . blindly, which doesn't fit in with the spirit of open questioning you seem to recommend. “I always speak the truth” is not a truth confirmed by experience—it's more like a lot of bragging! But at any rate it can be understood without a great deal of academic exegesis—it's written in everyday language. The second sentence is acceptable: “Not

the whole truth, because there's no way, to say it all.” The idea that one is unable to speak the whole truth, that knowledge is always incomplete, seems to me perfectly admissible: it shows a promising modesty which favorably contrasts with the preceding boastfulness.

I: You don't think something other is perhaps at stake here than moral qualities?

She: I continue my reading: “Saying it all is literally impossible”—yes, we got that already, he's repeating himself. But why does he add: “literally impossible”? I can't understand what that “literally” is doing there. And why then the phrase “words fail”? That's not true—the unfinished work will be taken up by others. And, to finish off the paragraph, the last sentence is altogether incomprehensible: “Yet, it's through this very impossibility that the truth holds onto the real.” In the space of a few short lines, starting with the sentence “I always speak the truth”—which, after all, is limpid—he arrives at an obscure aphorism, and I already no longer know what the truth is.

I: It couldn't be put better.

She: The whole of Lacan is in that paragraph.

I: I quite agree.

She: He brags, repeats himself, makes erroneous claims and disappears into the shadows, while shooting off a lot of fireworks.

I: Yes, in a burst of sparks, as if he were taking the commander's hand.

She: The commander?

I: You know, at the end of Don Juan. . . . All of Lacan is, in fact, like that—he always ends up by giving his hand to the powers of shadow and horror. . . . “*Archeronta movebo*” are the words Freud takes from Virgil's mouth at the beginning of the *Traumdeutung*: “I will mobilize Acheron's” infernal gods. Lacan is simpler with his “I always speak the truth,” but that also leads him to his Acheron—what he calls the real.

She: You are as fuzzy a thinker as your master, instead of being clear like me. That doesn't impress me in the least, and I expect you to be as demonstrative as I concerning these three sentences.

I: I drink in your words. Your imperative is mine. I am tired of synopses. Besides, in psychoanalysis, everything comes down to a question of details. Unconscious formations such as slips of the tongue, bungled actions and puns have no being apart from detail. And what would

an interpretation be worth if it could be generalized for everyone? Lacan's style brings you back to matters of detail—so let's go into the details. "The divine details" as Nabokov so justly says.

She: Poe, for his part, doesn't want people to seek "truth in detail" . . .

I: Well, let us look at this book, *Television*, under a microscope.

She: "I always speak the truth"—so what do you have to say about that?

I: Plenty! First of all, when you say "I always speak the truth," I can attribute it to you; for "I," jumping from mouth to mouth, though ever identical, has no other referent than the person who says it at any given moment. "I" is one of the words Roman Jakobson, following Jespersen, calls "shifters," to indicate that they have no meaning but in the actuality of speech. No one ever speaks without at the same time saying "I speak the truth."

She: Except for the person who says "I am lying."

I: You hit the nail right on the head. It is precisely because there can be no speech which is not situated in the dimension of truth that "I am lying" constitutes a real paradox, and that Lacan immediately assumes here the posture—and there is a certain theatricality here, I must confess, or rather spectacularity as we're dealing here with television, as there was at his seminar as well—the posture of Anti-Epimenides. And the latter is truer than Epimenides, for truth and lies are in no way symmetrical.

She: How's that? I can tell the truth or tell a lie, and that alternative clearly defines a symmetrical relationship.

I: There is no doubt a truth which is but the opposite of falsehood, but there is another which stands over or grounds both of them, and which is related to the very fact of formulating, for I can say nothing without positing it as true. And even if I say "I am lying," I am saying nothing but "it is true that I am lying"—which is why truth is not the opposite of falsehood.

Or again we could say that there are two truths: one that is the opposite of falsehood, and another that bears up both the true and the false indifferently. I'm not sure my mentioning Frege and Russell in this context would serve as a guarantee in your eyes.

She: You certainly don't expect me, in any case to take them for Lacanians!

I: Frege invented a little sign, drawn as follows, ∴, which he placed at the beginning of his conceptual writing formulas to mean "it is thusly" or "it is to be understood." As for Russell, read the lecture in *Meaning and Truth* on the primary character of affirmation and the derivative character of negation. Freud says as much in his article "*Die Verneinung*" where, when a patient, discussing a dream, claims "It was *not* my mother," the analyst is called upon to make the interpretation that it was indubitably her, for the word is present, and the negation beside it is the mark of repression.

She: But look now, he who says "It was *not* my mother" when it was is not telling the truth.

I: As concerns the level at which the sentence is enunciated, you are right. But as concerns the level we call enunciation, you are wrong: "mother," the word "mother," was said, and that is enough.

She: Oh, the idea is that "I always speak the truth" at the level of enunciation, even if, at level of the enunciated, "I am lying"?

I: Exactly, and that is precisely what founds "the locus of the Other" as the locus of truth—the truth which has no opposite.

She: Thus you have a notion of truth which includes both true and false?

I: Indeed I do, like speech itself. So much so that Lacan wrote a fine prosopopeia of the truth, which you can read whenever you like, wherein you will find these words: "I, the truth, am speaking." For your part, you say: "It was *not* my mother." But the truth, for its part, speaks through what you say, and says something else to which you simply lend your mouth. It is the truth—that no degree of mastery can domesticate—which whirls and wanders about, captivates you, throws you off track, and makes you slip up; it is the Freudian truth, that of slips of the tongue and puns, that one cannot catch: " 'You see, you are already ruined,' it says; I take back what I've said, I defy you, I run for cover, and you say I'm being defensive."

She: If that is the truth, I no longer understand how lacking the words stops us from speaking the whole truth. On the contrary, I always find the words I need.

I: My friend, *the* truth and the *whole* truth are not the same thing. How could you make a whole of vagabond truth? It doesn't allow itself to be shut up in such a prison. There is always more (*Encore*) to be said. The truth shuns as much the Whole as the One, and that is why it is Other. If you are not tired of my appeals to logicians, I would suggest you read Tarski's "The Notion of Truth in Formalized Languages"; for he demonstrates therein that truth is undefinable within the language one speaks. To define it, one must step outside of that language, as is done in formalized languages which are numbered and hierarchized; at the $n + 1$ level, you establish the n -level truth; this uncoupling of levels, termed "metalanguage" by Carnap, cannot be carried out in the case of the language we speak, for it is not formalized. And that is the meaning of Lacan's aphorism that there is no such thing as a metalanguage: there is no other language than the language, or at any rate the mother-tongue [*la langue*], we speak. To name that language, Lacan coined the term "*lalangue*"; we'll come across it again further along.

She: Well, I let you vaticinate to your heart's delight, but right-mindedness must nonetheless object to your concept of truth. I call "true" a statement which says what is the case, and "false" one which says what is not. And I'll stick to my guns.

I: I don't know if that is what right-mindedness involves, but "what is the case" comes right out of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. You know its memorable conclusion: "what cannot be said must be passed over in silence." That is unacceptable in psychoanalysis, which espouses a thoroughly antithetical ethic, as it is precisely about what cannot be said that one *must* speak—which provides an occasion to prove that words do not suffice to say everything. We must here establish something, failing which we will be unable to agree on anything further, and that is that what is said is not to be measured against what is.

She: Could you say that again? I got the impression you accept no reality outside of language, and if that is the case, well, good evening; I will leave you to your reveries.

I: One can, however, by means of something which is not reverie but rather a metaphysical method, suspend one's belief in external reality, lending credence to an entirely inner one—that of Descartes' *cogito*. And in fact it was upon the basis of this *cogito*, the residue of this hyperbolic disaster, that Lacan came up with the idea of grounding the subject

to which psychoanalysis applies: the subject of the unconscious. But we are getting ahead of ourselves here, and to reply to what you said, this time I'll refer to Freud and his practice. You recall that, confronted with the Wolf man, Freud stubbornly tried to coordinate statements with facts; indeed, he wanted to establish what was the case, and hone in on—in external reality—the primal scene in which he saw what his patient could not say. But hasn't it been established that he gave up that method? and that no analyst since has had recourse to it? and that if there is such a thing as verification in analysis, it is within the patient's statements? This accounts for the fact that the kind of speech involved in the experience which stems from Freud's work has no outside.

She: So, it certainly is simple: one can say whatever one likes!

I: Analytic experience has no other principle—that's what Freud called free association. Say everything! What one finds, however, is that "one is unable to do so." A logic is at work which prohibits it. That is the very meaning, if I dare say, of the unconscious. That's what leads Freud to speak, in *Inhibition, Symptom and Anxiety*, of primal repression, which is as such impossible to eliminate. It is not a question of simple incapacity, but rather of impossibility. Incapacity can be sensed; impossibility takes the form of a conclusion—derived from the whole course of an analysis. And when you thus encounter impossibility, you encounter reality—not "external reality," but a reality in some sense within discourse which results from its impasses. This impasse-reality is what Lacan, in his terms, calls the "real." Let us grant him that much: the real is the impossible. When discourse runs up against something, falters, and can go no further, encountering a "there is no" [*il n'y a pas*—and that by its own logic—that's the real. According to antiquity's definition, truth is related to the real as *adequatio rei intellectus*, correspondence of the thing to the mind. But if the truth is not that at all, nor exactitude, either truth is not related to any real whatsoever, or it is related to the real but by the impossible-to-say.

She: This real of Lacan's which cannot be said but about which one must speak—isn't it what Freud simply called "trauma"?

I: Lacan's real is always traumatic; it is a hole in discourse; Lacan said "*trou-matique*" [literally "hole-matic"]; in English one could perhaps say "no whole without a hole"? I would be inclined to translate Lacan's "*pas-tout*"—one of his categories—by (*w*)hole.

She: The real is not at all reality as it is usually understood.

I: No, not at all. The real depends upon the logic of discourse, the latter delimiting or closing in on the real with its impasses; thus the real is not a “thing-in-itself,” nor does it constitute a whole; for Lacan there are only “bits-of-real.”

She: You have said nothing of the adverb “literally.”

I: Indeed, I was hoping to spare you its explanation. This is how I understand it: you may well intend to say the whole truth—that makes sense. But the signs slip away; they create obstacles. Permit me some more logic here: as you know, at the turn of the century, set-theoretical paradoxes were discovered; their effect was to shake the hitherto established belief in the foundations of mathematics; in order to deal with them, Hilbert forged the concept of formal systems. A system is called formal when it allows one to reason, at an elementary and supposedly intuitive level, with signs or materials. As a mathematical domain, it is thus translated into a system, S; and one proceeds to demonstrate that it is consistent—i.e. that one cannot demonstrate therein both A and not-A. This ambition implies that S includes everything needed to carry out such demonstrations, as well as the definition of truth which is valid therein. Surprise! “One is unable to do so.” Barely formulated, this program was undermined by Gödel’s incompleteness theorems, which provide, for any and every system which would attempt to formalize arithmetic, an undemonstratable formula. No discovery since 1931 has been more important in mathematical logic than that impossibility, related to the handling of signs which are entirely material. Gödel adapted, and he says as much explicitly, the ancient paradox “I am lying.” A fine English edition of his complete works is undergoing preparation, the first volume of which came out last year¹; see page 149 and pages 362–363.

She: All of that is behind the word “literally” here?

I: Lacan often referred to this example of Gödel’s.

She: You hand me up, my dear, a whole shelfful of mathematical logic to explain three sentences of this book. It’s all out of proportion.

I: Ah, but these three sentences are very dense. . . . What knowledge must one assume one’s public to have? Lacan asks the question a bit

further on. He answers by saying that, for his part, he speaks to those in the know, to the *cognoscenti*.

She: Well, it seems to me that at least on television, where he could reach the most people, he should have spoken to those not in the know. But he not only doesn’t speak to them, he insults them by calling them—calling us—*idiots*. His approach is haughty, contemptuous, anti-pedagogical, and downright anti-democratic.

I: It’s a lot more complicated than that. In any case it is not my approach.

She: Yes, you, right, you converse with an idiot!

I: No, I converse with the truth!

She: I am the truth?

I: At least, as long as you are dissatisfied with me! You are seeking the weak point in the knowledge I offer up; I am working for you, you make me trip up—it’s never quite right! So I have to re-explain. But your argument does affect me. Who do you think Lacan has in mind when he says the idea was suggested to him that he “speak in such a way that idiots understand me”?

She: You?

I: I am convinced of it.

She: You should know if you suggested it.

I: Ah, I don’t believe I did so. But that would not have stopped Lacan from thinking I had, and to hand me over this . . . interpretation. What is true is that I wanted, as I declare further on, to ask him *the least substantial questions*. I would have liked him, I admit—I too always speak the truth—to take the occasion to lay out his doctrine in a popular form. My reference was and still is the Enlightenment. That was Lacan’s reference as well, but in his own way. “Everyman,” the cultivated interlocutor representing humanity reduced to its rational aspect, supposed to know how to think, as Kant says, as anyone else would, is the idiot. The universal man is in fact *idiotês*²—the Greek term for particular. Diderot is cleverer than that, taking as his interlocutor Rameau’s Nephew, the most singular of men, and endowing himself with common sense. What happens if you take someone who is not in the know as your Other? For, if according to our initial convention you receive from him the message you

1. *Collected Works of Kurt Gödel, Volume 1*, edited by Solomon Feferman et al., Oxford University Press, 1986.

2. Derived meanings: “foreign to such or such profession, ignorant.”

send him, you are thus worth nothing more and teach nothing to anyone, regardless of what you think. You manage only to be understood by idiots.

She: Well that's not so bad for starters!

I: To make oneself understood is not the same as teaching—it is the opposite. One only understands what one thinks one already knows. More precisely, one never understands anything but a meaning whose satisfaction or comfort one has already felt. I'll say it to you in a way you won't understand: one never understands anything but one's fantasies. And one is never taught by anything other than what one doesn't understand, i.e., by nonsense. If the psychoanalyst holds in abeyance his understanding of what you say, that gives you the chance to do the same, and it is from that you may learn something—to the extent to which you take a distance from your fantasies.

She: And despite all that, you at first pushed Lacan towards popularization until he himself stopped short?

I: It didn't happen quite like that. And despite what may seem to have been the case upon first glance, this beginning was truly a *captatio benevolentiae*, as the ancient orator recommended, an exordium designed to ensure the public's goodwill. Lacan makes an avowal—he says “I confess” in the second paragraph—which at first calls for one to “tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” which in France is the oath required of a witness testifying before the tribunal; Lacan goes on to correct this in the digression we have already examined. This avowal aims at justifying the style he adopted in his television appearance: the same as at his seminar.

She: Why does he say “the present comedy”?

I: Every interview is a comedy, as is perhaps every bond built up by speech—including even analysis, Freud's reference to tragedy notwithstanding. In any case, it is theater. Lacan never shied away from theatrics—it goes hand in hand with the use of discourse. The bores reproached him for it; they reason badly. What we agreed upon beforehand was that I would converse with Lacan in front of the cameras. But that was not possible, for after every cut, when it was time to start up again, Lacan shifted a bit—in his discourse. Each time he gave an additional twist to his reflexions which were unfolding there, under the spotlights, thwarting any chance of bridge-building. We stopped after two hours; I gave

him in writing a list of questions; and he wrote this play, *Television*, in about two weeks' time; I saw him every evening and he gave me the day's manuscript pages; then he read or acted out—with a few improvised variations—the written text you have before you. He made a springboard of this false start.

She: Why does he say “a failure then, but thereby, actually, a success”?

I: In psychoanalysis bungled actions are the successful ones. They are failures as far as meaning is concerned, i.e., in terms of their signifying intention, but they are successful as far as the truth—arising from misunderstanding—is concerned. A slip of the tongue is as good as a pun.

She: Why does Lacan prefer erring [*errement*] to error [*erreur*]?

I: It is not simply that he prefers the former, for he exhibits this choice: instead of crossing it out, he leaves both. Stress is thereby placed on the erring one finds in the title of the seminar he began at the end of 1973, *les Non-dupes errent*, a homophonous retake of the seminar title he had announced in 1963, *les Noms-du-Père*, but definitively decided not to give after the first lesson. An error, Lady Truth, is local, whereas erring goes straight to principles. Let us get some perspective on the question: the subject is naturally erring—in speech certainly, like the truth which I qualified as vagabond; discourse structures alone give him his moorings and reference points; signs identify and orient him; if he neglects, forgets, or loses them, he is condemned to err anew. He must thus allow himself to be fooled by these signs to have a chance of getting his bearings amidst them; he must place and maintain himself in the wake of a discourse and submit to its logic—in a word, he must be its dupe.

She: A minute ago you were talking about the truth, and now you say one must let oneself be taken in by signs and become the dupe of a discourse.

I: You are forgetting that truth is not exactitude, nor has it any existence apart from signs. These signs are no doubt fictions, organized into a discourse, but truth itself has a fictional structure, being but the effect of discourse.

She: Do you expect an idiot like me to understand what you are saying? Phrase it differently. I no longer know what you mean by “discourse.”

I: Ah, that would be grand if you were *the idiot* [*l'Idiote*] for me, such that there would be no other like you—that is how it is for every woman! You are right, for I neglected to introduce the concept of discourse—distinct from that of speech—and we won't get far in our reading of *Television* if I am unable to give you at least an idea of it. The word “discourse” nowadays has a general, vague, common use, which is why I took it for granted in speaking with you; Lacan uses it too, but be careful, for starting in the seventies, Lacan gives it an unusual meaning—technical, as it were, or in any case constructed. He creates four schemas of discourse which constitute the determinate modes of enunciation. I will not burden you with the list right away; don't forget that I am taking you by the hand and that I promised you a stroll along these cliffs, not a rude climb up them. We will go step by step, and that is only appropriate in the case of discourse as it can be taken apart. If I tell you that every kind of discourse involves and prescribes a hierarchy of values, you think you understand. Well that to me is adequate, and I will further simplify by positing that every discourse institutes one value as supreme. If you admit that you understand that as well, I ask you to take but one additional step in considering that this value is incarnated in a sign. Yes, a sign. I can help you picture it with the example of Constantine who saw in a dream . . . well, but you know all that.

She: Not so very well that it would be pointless to refresh my memory.

I: Constantine saw in a dream the sign of the cross, and received the promise that he would be victorious if he placed it on his banners: “*In hoc signo vinces*” [“with this sign you will vanquish”]. We owe the Christian Empire to that. You will agree that the image is a beautiful and memorable one; let us transpose it for the case of discourse. Every discourse, or at least every discourse which recruits, thus proposes its Constantinian sign—in a word, that *in the name of which* one speaks. Have I sufficiently prepared you now for the concept “master signifier”?

She: I didn't see that term anywhere in this book.

I: You saw its converse. I've introduced discourse, in Lacan's sense, by the “master's discourse”; indeed, it furnishes the matrix; the subject therein calls upon a master, and . . .

She: How do you understand that?

I: Truth is not (w)hole, and as it is ungraspable, the erring subject is

fundamentally feeble; he always requires a master, an Other who will be the master.

She: Well sir, that is not psychoanalysis, it is political philosophy, and hardly salubrious at that. I'd much rather believe in man's natural goodness.

I: I beg to differ: it is psychoanalysis, and it happens to formalize Freudian identification. Why do you thus think the subject is a subject who identifies if not because in and of himself, so to speak, he is lacking in identity? That is what Lacan writes with the following symbol—lend me your pen— $\$$, a capital S crossed out, which he undoubtedly borrows from Heidegger; the latter, in his essay *Die Linie*, crosses out the word “being.” This is also what makes the subject depend upon the “master signifier,” S_1 , which identifies him and tells him who he is; he pays for it with the repression of his truth; and that's why, lacking understanding, he stands under the master signifier: $\frac{S_1}{\$}$. I have begun writing for you the master's discourse; you perhaps already see, as I'm using the words “identification” and “repression,” that it is also the discourse of the unconscious.

She: You ask me to see, but I don't see at all.

I: You don't see anything, but it is perhaps beginning to look at you. You rise up in the name of freedom. For the moment, I will show you the discourse of which the master's is the converse. Lacan in no way presents himself as the herald of the master's discourse, but rather of the analyst's. The analyst's discourse is not what the analyst says; it condenses the structure of analytic experience, laying down the coordinates of the enunciation created therein. This discourse is different from the other, firstly, in that it situates at the place of the “master signifier” something which does not identify and is not by nature a sign, namely an object.

She: I have seen that term: “I expect of supposed analysts nothing more,” says Lacan, “than their being this object thanks to which what I teach is not a self-analysis.” He adds, furthermore, that concerning that point, these “supposed analysts” alone can understand him. I am no analyst—not even a supposed one—and this “object” means nothing to me.

I: This object is called “small *a*” by Lacan. It will require a bit of patience on your part to grasp the basic elements of this concept. Let me first explain why the master and the analyst give their names to two op-

posite discourses. What is the fundamental mode of enunciation to which analysis introduces the subject? This mode gets its name from Freud: free association. Free association goes against repression to the extent to which it unleashes the identifications which stabilize the subject in his symptom; it puts repression to the test of the truth one always says, regardless of what one says, and which is, notwithstanding, not (w)hole, which is an impasse, and which is related to the real by its impossibility. The analyst consequently does not identify, he de-identifies, and there is no need to seek elsewhere the principle behind Lacan's critique of so-called "orthodox" analyses, these latter projecting no other end for an analysis than identification with the analyst.

She: Yet the analyst is certainly the master in his "discourse"—he is the one who commands.

I: He occupies that place, but he neither governs nor educates—he doesn't propose any ideals. As soon as Freud offered up his *Massenpsychologie*, his followers—Rado and then Strachey—hastened to make of the analyst a new ego ideal, going against both the letter and spirit of Freud's work. This was not altogether un-insightful, for there is no discourse which lacks the place of the master. But an analyst's job is not to occupy it as a master, nor as a signifier—by that I mean an identificatory factor—nor even as a subject, for he does not give himself over to any drift in speaking, and he shuns interlocution. What is he? He is that silence in the name of which the patient speaks. But he must be there; he provides his body; and he holds the place of what cannot be said. In short, he incarnates the impossible.

She: You mean to say that he is . . . the real?

I: As a fiction, of course.

She: The real as a fiction—what a paradox!

I: That is what the Master says to Jacques in Diderot's novel: "There is perhaps no other head under the sun which contains as many paradoxes as does yours." To which Jacques replies: "A paradox is not always a falsehood." The master place is never occupied but by what Lacan called a *semblant*,³ which one might translate in your language as a "make-believe."

3. *Translator's note: Semblant* was still in currency in English in Carlyle's time; cf. *Heroes v.* (1841) 284, "Thou art not true; thou art not extant, only semblant." It took on the meanings of "seeming," "apparent," and "counterfeit."

She: If I follow you—and make no mistake about it, I do not agree with any of it, I am simply playing along with your paradox—it is the analyst who occupies this place in the analyst's discourse. But you have not told me what he makes believe he is.

I: I had to prepare you for it first: he is the make-believe of the lost object. That is the function Freud discovered in the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, and that Karl Abraham made the crux of his theory of development from which he derived the first premises of the "partial object"; Melanie Klein, his student, located the partial object at the center of psychic economy, going so far as to show that at the end of analysis, in separating from his analyst, an analysand has to mourn the loss of this object. And hence it was that Winnicott glimpsed the transitional object. That is what Lacan sums up, condenses, justifies and constructs with object *a*. To be fair, something Georges Bataille contributed in "Heterology" is at work there as well—I imagine you read the translation of his work in the spring 1986 issue of *October*.⁴

She: Lacan was thus a Kleinian? Is that the secret to this whirlwind of references which has left me, I confess, rather dizzy?

I: No, Lacan was not a Kleinian, though he was the first in France, during the Second World War, to decipher and praise her work; nor was he Winnicottian, though he was the first to have published Winnicott in French. The fact, if you can believe it, is that "Ego-psychology"—stemming from the work of Anna Freud and Heinz Hartmann—still predominates in America; as a Chicago analyst was telling me yesterday, it has become like wallpaper for American analysts: it's so much in evidence that no one pays attention to it anymore. Ego-psychology so thoroughly deflected Freud's work from its authentic perspective that it is currently suffering the return of what it rejected in the guise of "object relations theory," which is no less partial. Crossing one with the other in varying quantities, as is now done in your country, is no substitute for Lacan's "return to Freud."

She: Lacan! Lacan! Lacan! Do something for me now!

4. No. 36, translated by Annette Michelson.

Prefatory Note

1. "A broadcast on Jacques Lacan," was what the Service de la Recherche de l'O.R.T.F. wanted.¹ Only the text here published was broadcast. To be aired in two parts under the title *Psychoanalysis at the end of January*. Director: Benoît Jacquot.

2. I asked the person who replied to you to sift through what I heard of what he had said to me. The flour has been gathered in the margin, in the form of *manuductio*.

J.-A. M., Christmas 1973

He who interrogates me
also knows how to read me.

J. L.

1. O.R.T.F., at the time, named the French national broadcasting agency (Office de la Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française), a special department of which, the Service de la Recherche, is dedicated to cultural and experimental programs. [Footnotes for *Television* are by Denis Hollier.]

I.

I always speak the truth. Not the whole truth, because there's no way, to say it all. Saying it all is literally impossible: words fail. Yet it's through this very impossibility that the truth holds onto the real. S (A)

I will confess then to having tried to respond to the present comedy and it was good only for the wastebasket.

A failure then, but thereby, actually, a success when compared with an error, or to put it better: with an aberration.

And without too much importance, since limited to this occasion. But first of all, which?

The aberration consists in this idea of speaking so as to be understood by idiots.

An idea that is ordinarily so foreign to me that it could only have been suggested to me. Through friendship. Beware.

For there's no difference between television and the public before whom I've spoken for a long time now, a public known as my seminar. A single gaze in both cases: a gaze to which, in neither case, do I address myself, but in the name of which I speak. (a ◇ §)

Do not, however, get the idea that I address everyone at large.² I am speaking to those who are savvy, to the nonidiots, to the supposed analysts.

2. The expression Lacan uses is *à la cantonade*, which, to reinforce the pun on his own name, he had allowed the transcription of his XIth seminar to read as, *à la cantonade*. See *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan, New York, Norton, 1978, p. 208.

If we consider only the overcrowding, experience shows that what I say there engages many more people than those whom with some reason I suppose to be analysts. So why then should I use a different tone here than for my seminar?

Besides, I may reasonably suppose there to be analysts listening now also.

$\frac{a}{S_2}$ I will go further: I expect of the supposed analysts nothing more than their being this object thanks to which what I teach is not a self-analysis. On this point, they alone, among those who are listening, are sure to understand [*entendre*] me. But even in understanding nothing an analyst plays this role I have just defined, and as a consequence television thus assumes it just as well.

I would add that these analysts who are such only insofar as they are object—the object of the analysand—it happens that I do address them, not that I am speaking to them, but that I speak about them: if only to disturb them. Who knows?

$S_1 - S_2$ This could have some effects of suggestion.

Would you believe it? There is one situation in which suggestion is powerless: when the analyst owes his default to the other, to the person who has brought him to “the pass,” as I put it, of asserting himself as analyst.

Happy are those cases in which fictive “passes” pass for an incomplete training; they leave room for hope.

II.

— *I think, my dear doctor, that I am here not to trade witticisms with you . . . , but only to give you the occasion to reply. Therefore all you will get from me are the thinnest, the most elementary, even commonplace, of questions. I'll throw one out at you. "The unconscious — what a strange word!"*

— Freud didn't find a better one, and there's no need to go back on it. The disadvantage of this word is that it is negative, which allows one to assume anything at all in the world about it, plus everything else as well. Why not? To that which goes unnoticed, the word *everywhere* applies just as well as *nowhere*.

It is nonetheless a very precise thing.

[There is no unconscious except for the speaking being.]
The others, who possess being only through being named — even though they impose themselves from within the real — have instinct, namely the knowledge needed for their survival. Yet this is so only for our thought, which might be inadequate here.

"The precondition of the unconscious is language," . . .

This still leaves the category of *homme-sick* animals, thereby called domestics [*d'hommestiques*], who for that reason are shaken, however briefly, by unconscious, seismic tremors.

[It speaks, does the unconscious, so that it depends on language, about which we know so little: despite what under the term linguistery I group whatever claims — and this is new —



... which ex-sists
through *lalangue*:

to intervene in men's affairs in the name of linguistics.] Linguistics being the science that concerns itself with *lalangue*,³ which I write as one word, so as to specify its object, as is done in every other science.

analytic hypothesis

This object is nonetheless eminent, since the very Aristotelian notion of the subject comes down to that more legitimately than to anything else. Which allows for the grounding of the unconscious in the ex-sistence of one more subject for the soul. For the soul as the assumed sum of the body's functions. A most problematic sum, despite the fact that from Aristotle to Uexküll, it has been postulated as though with one voice, and it is still what biologists presuppose, whether they know it or not.

i(a)

[In fact the subject of the unconscious is only in touch with the soul via the body, by introducing thought into it:] here contradicting Aristotle. Man does not think with his soul, as the Philosopher imagined.

The only relation
thought has to the
soul-body is one of
ex-sistence.

[He thinks as a consequence of the fact that a structure, that of language—the word implies it—a structure carves up his body, a structure that has nothing to do with anatomy. Witness the hysteric. This shearing happens to the soul through the obsessional symptom: a thought that burdens the soul, that it doesn't know what to do with.]

[Thought is in disharmony with the soul.] And the Greek *voūs* is [the myth of thought's accommodating itself to the soul, accommodating itself in conformity with the world, the world (*Umwelt*) for which the soul is held responsible, whereas the world is merely the fantasy through which thought sustains itself—"reality" no doubt, but to be understood as a grimace of the real.]

The little that reality
derives from the real

— It's still a fact that one comes to you, the psychoanalyst, in order,

3. *Lalangue*, as one word (without an article or with the article soldered onto the substantive; instead of *la langue*): general equivocation, universal babble, or "Babelian."

within this world that you reduce to fantasy, to get better. The cure—is that also a fantasy?

— The cure is a demand that originates in the voice of the sufferer, of someone who suffers from his body or his thought. The astonishing thing is that there be a response, and that throughout time medicine, using words, has hit the bull's-eye.

Power of words

How did this happen before the unconscious was located? In order to work, a practice doesn't have to be elucidated; this is what can be deduced from that.

— Analysis would only be distinguished from therapy, then, by "being enlightened"? This isn't what you mean. Let me phrase the question like this: "Both psychoanalysis and psychotherapy act only through words. Yet they are in conflict. How so?"

— These days there is no psychotherapy that is not expected to be "psychoanalytically inspired." My intonation is to indicate the quotation marks the thing deserves. The distinction maintained there—is it not based solely on the fact that in the one you don't hit the mat . . . I mean the couch?

This gives a running start to those analysts who have stayed in their "institutes"—same quotation marks here—waiting for a "pass," who, because they don't want to know anything about it—I mean the "pass"—compensate for it with formalities of rank, an elegant way for them to establish themselves—those who demonstrate more cunning in their institutional relations than in their analytical practices.

I will now show why this analytical practice is prevalent within psychotherapy.

There are, insofar as the unconscious is implicated, two sides presented by the structure, by language.

The side of meaning, the side we would identify as that of

There is no structure
except through
language.

analysis, which pours out a flood of meaning to float the sexual boat.

It is striking that this meaning reduces to non-sense: the non-sense of the sexual relation, something that love stories have, throughout time, made obvious. Obvious to the point of stridency; which gives a lofty picture of human thought.

There is, moreover, meaning that is taken for good sense, that even asserts itself as common sense. This is the high-point of comedy, except that in comedy awareness of the nonrelation involved in getting it off, getting it off sexually, must be included. Thereby our dignity is recharged, even relieved.

Good sense is the form suggestion takes, comedy, that of laughter. Setting aside their quasi-incompatibility, does this mean that they are the whole story? That's the point at which psychotherapy, in any form, breaks down, not that it doesn't do some good, but it's a good that's a return to what's worse.

[Whence the unconscious, namely the insistence through which desire manifests itself, in other words the repetition of the demand working through it] isn't that what Freud says of it at the very moment he discovers it?

whence the unconscious, if it is true that the structure—recognized as producing, as I say, language out of *lalangue*—does indeed order it,

reminds us that to the side of meaning that fascinates us in speech—in exchange for which being—this being whose thought is imagined by Parmenides—acts as speech's screen—

reminds us, I conclude, that to the side of meaning the study of language opposes the side of the sign.

How is it that even the symptom, or that which is so called in analysis, failed to mark out a path in this matter? Such was the situation until Freud, whose docility before the hysteric was needed for him to read dreams, slips, even jokes, as one decipheres a message in code.

—Prove that that is actually what Freud says, and all he says.

—Let one simply go to Freud's texts grouped under those three headings—their titles are now trivial—and one will see that it is about nothing other than a deciphering of pure signifying di-mention [*dit-mension*].

Namely that one of these phenomena is naively articulated: articulated means verbalized, naively means according to vulgar logic, *lalangue's* usage as it is commonly received.

To see also that by making his way through a tissue of puns, metaphors, metonymies, Freud evokes a substance, a fluidic myth titrated for what he calls *libido*.

But what he is really performing, there right before our very eyes glued to the text, is a translation which reveals that the *jouissance* that Freud implies through the term primary process properly consists in the logical straits through which he so artfully leads us.

Freud's practice

All you have to do, as the wisdom of the Stoics had achieved so early on, is to distinguish the signifier from the signified (to translate, as did Saussure, their Latinized names), so as to witness phenomena of equivalence appearing there in such a way that one can understand how, for Freud, they could provide the figure of the machinery of an energetics.

An effort of thought is needed to found linguistics out of that. Out of its object, the signifier. There is no linguist who isn't attached to the project of detaching it, as such, and in particular, from meaning.

I've talked about a side of the sign in order to mark within it its association with the signifier. But the signifier differs from the sign in that its inventory is already a given of *lalangue*.

To speak of a code doesn't work, precisely because it presupposes meaning.

The signifying inventory of *lalangue* supplies only the cipher of meaning. According to context, each word takes on an enormous and disparate range of meaning, meaning whose heteroclitite condition is often attested to by the dictionary.

This is no less true for whole parts of organized sentences.

$\frac{S}{s}$

Lalangue is the precondition of meaning.

As in this sentence: *les non-dupes errent*,⁴ with which I've geared myself this year.

L'objet (a)

No doubt their grammar is buttressed by writing, and it bears witness, for all that, to a real, to a real which remains, as we know, an enigma as long as in analysis the pseudo-sexual spring doesn't pop out: that real which, capable only of lying to the partner, is marked as neurosis, perversion, or psychosis.

"I do not love him [or her]," is sustained, Freud teaches us, within this series by reverberating against the real.

In fact, it is because every signifier, from the phoneme to the sentence, can serve as a coded message (a "personal," as the radio was wont to say during the war), that it emerges as object and that one discovers that it is what determines that in the world—the world of the speaking being—One occurs [*il y a de l'Un*], that is to say, element occurs, the Greek *στοίχεῖον*.

What Freud discovers [in the unconscious]—here I've only been able to invite you to take a look at his writings to see if I speak truly—is something utterly different from realizing that broadly speaking one can give a sexual meaning to everything one knows, for the reason that [knowing has always been open to the famous metaphor (the side of meaning Jung exploited)]. It is the real that permits the effective unknotting of what makes the symptom hold together, namely a knot of signifiers.

[Where here knotting and unknotting are not metaphors, but are really to be taken as those knots that in fact are built up through developing chains of the signifying material.

For these chains are not of meaning but of enjoy-meant [*jouis-sens*]⁵ which you can write as you wish, as is implied by the punning that constitutes the law of the signifier.]

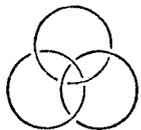
I think I have given to the specific recourse of psychoanal-

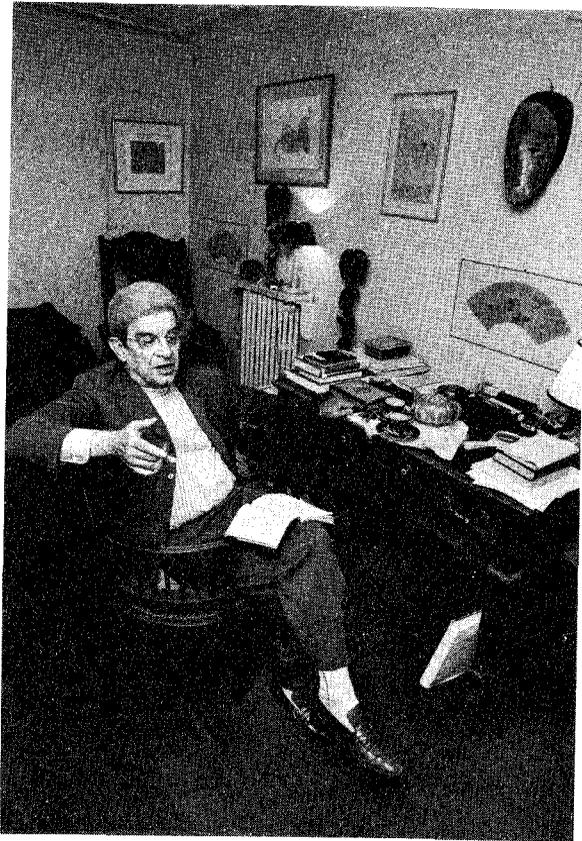
4. The title Lacan gave to his 1972-73 seminar—his XX1st—was "*Les non-dupes errent*" (the non-dupes err), a homophonic play on *les noms du père* (the names of the father), which was the title he had announced ten years earlier for what was to become in 1963, his last seminar at Sainte-Anne. A seminar of only one meeting, its transcript is published on pp. 81-95.

5. *Jouis-sens*, homonym of *jouissance*.

ysis quite another dimension than that of the general confusion we're used to.

Is one signifier enough
to found the signifier
One?





Jacques Lacan at his desk, 1971

III.

— *The psychologists, the psychotherapists, the psychiatrists, all the mental-health workers — it's the rank and file, those who are roughing it, who are taking all the burdens of the world's misery onto their shoulders. And the analyst, meanwhile?*

— One thing is certain: to take the misery onto one's shoulders, as you put it, is to enter into the discourse that determines it, even if only in protest.



Merely to say this puts me in a position that some will locate as a condemnation of politics. That, so far as I'm concerned, I take to be out of the question for anyone.

Anyway, the psycho-so-and-soes, of whatever sort they may be, busying themselves at your supposed burdening, oughtn't to be protesting, but collaborating. Whether they know it or not, that's what they're doing.

It's rather convenient — though I may be offering an easy means of retaliation against myself — all too convenient, this idea of discourse, for reducing judgment to its determinants. I'm struck by the way in which they actually find nothing better to oppose me with; "intellectualism," they say. This carries no weight, when one wants to know who's right.

Even less, because in relating this misery to the discourse of the capitalist, I denounce the latter.

Only, here, I point out that in all seriousness I cannot do

this, because in denouncing it I reinforce it—by normalizing it, that is, improving it.

At this point I will interject a remark. I do not base this idea of discourse on the ex-sistence of the unconscious. It is the unconscious that I locate through it—it ex-sists only through a discourse.

Only analytic discourse gives ex-sistence to the unconscious, as Freudian, . . .

You understand this so clearly that you've annexed, to this project I've acknowledged as a vain one, a question concerning the future of psychoanalysis.

The unconscious thereby ex-sists all the more in that since it is witnessed clearly only in the discourse of the hysteric, what's to be found everywhere else is just grafted onto it: yes, even, astonishing as it may seem, in the discourse of the analyst, where what is made of it is culture.

By way of a parenthesis here: does the unconscious imply that it be listened to? To my mind, yes. But this surely does not imply that, without the discourse through which it ex-sists, one judges it as knowledge that does not think, or calculate, or judge—which doesn't prevent it from being at work (as in dreams, for example). Let's say that it is the ideal worker, the one Marx made the flower of capitalist economy in the hope of seeing him take over the discourse of the master; which, in effect, is what happened, although in an unexpected form. There are surprises in these matters of discourse; that is, indeed, the point of the unconscious.

. . . which was listened to before, but as something else.

This knowledge is at work . . .

. . . without a master: S₂ // S₁.

What I call the analytic discourse is the social bond determined by the practice of an analysis. It derives its value from its being placed amongst the most fundamental of the bonds which remain viable for us.

— But you yourself are excluded from that which makes for social bonds between analysts, aren't you . . .

—The Association—so-called International, although

that is a bit of a fiction, having been for so long now limited to a family business—I still knew it in the hands of Freud's direct and adopted descendants; if I dared—but I warn you that here I am both judge and plaintiff, hence partisan—I would say that at present it is a professional insurance plan against analytic discourse. The PIPAAD.

Damned PIPAAD!

They want to know nothing of the discourse that determines them. But they are not thereby excluded from it; far from it, since they function as analysts, which means that there are people who analyze themselves *by means of* them.

So they satisfy this discourse, even if some of its effects go unrecognized by them. On the whole, they don't lack prudence; and even if it isn't the true kind, it might be the do-good kind.

Besides, they are the ones at risk.

So let's turn to the psychoanalyst and not beat about the bush. Though what I am going to say is to be found under that bush just as well.

Because there is no better way of placing him objectively than in relation to what was in the past called: being a saint.

During his life a saint doesn't command the respect that a halo sometimes gets for him.

No one notices him as he follows Balthasar Gracian's Way of Life—that of renouncing personal brilliance—something that explains why Amelot de la Houssaye thought he was writing about the courtier.

A saint's business, to put it clearly, is not *caritas*. Rather, he acts as trash [*déchet*]; his business being *trashitas* [*il décharite*]. So as to embody what the structure entails, namely allowing the subject, the subject of the unconscious, to take him as the cause of the subject's own desire.

The objet (a) incarnate

In fact it is through the abjection of this cause that the subject in question has a chance to be aware of his position, at least within the structure. For the saint, this is not amusing, but I imagine that for a few ears glued to this TV it converges with many of the oddities of the acts of saints.

That it produces an effect of *jouissance*—who doesn't "get" the meaning [*sens*] along with the pleasure [*joui*]? The saint alone stays mum; fat chance of getting anything out of him. That is really the most amazing thing in the whole business. Amazing for those who approach it without illusions: the saint is the refuse of *jouissance*.

Sometimes, however, he takes a break, which he's no more content with than anyone else. He comes [*jouit*]. He's no longer working at that point. It's not as if the smart alecks aren't lying in wait hoping to profit from it so as to pump themselves up again. But the saint doesn't give a damn about that, any more than he does about those who consider it to be his just deserts. Which is too sidesplitting.

Because not giving a damn for distributive justice either is where he most often started from.

The saint doesn't really see himself as righteous, which doesn't mean that he has no ethics. The only problem for others is that you can't see where it leads him.

I beat my brain against the hope that some like these will reappear. No doubt because I, myself, didn't manage to make it.

The more saints, the more laughter; that's my principle, to wit, the way out of capitalist discourse— which will not constitute progress, if it happens only for some.

IV.

— *For the twenty years that you have been putting forward your phrase—the unconscious is structured like a language⁶—what is said in opposition to you, in various forms, is: "Those are merely words, words, words. And what do you do with anything that doesn't get mixed up with words? What of psychic energy, or affect, or the drives?"*

— You are now imitating the gestures with which one puts on the appearance of an heir in the PIPAAD.

Because, as you know, at least in the Paris PIPAAD, the only elements of sustenance come from my teaching. It filters through from everywhere; it's a draft, which becomes a blizzard when it blows too strongly. So you revive the old gestures, you get warm by snuggling together and calling that a Congress.

Because I'm not just thumbing my nose today for the fun of it, pulling out the PIPAAD story to make people laugh at the TV. It's the way Freud purposely conceived of the organization to which he bequeathed this analytic discourse. He knew that it would be a hard test; the experience of his first followers had already been edifying in that regard.

6. This phrase first appeared in Lacan's Report to the Rome Congress of 1953, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis." See *Ecrits*, trans. Alan Sheridan, New York, Norton, 1977, pp. 30-113.

—Let's take the question of natural energy first.

—Natural energy—that's another medicine ball used to prove that on that point as well one's got ideas. Energy—it's you who added the tag *natural*, because in what they say, it goes without saying that energy is natural: something to be expended, insofar as a dam can store it and make it useful. However, it's not because the dam looks picturesque in a landscape that energy is natural.

That a "life force" should constitute that expenditure is a crude metaphor. Because energy is not a substance, which, for example, improves or goes sour with age; it's a numerical constant that a physicist has to find in his calculations, so as to be able to work.

To work in accordance with what has been fostered, from Galileo to Newton, as a purely mechanical dynamics—with what forms the core of that which is called, more or less correctly, a physics—something strictly verifiable.

Without this constant, which is merely a combination of calculations . . . you have no more physics. It's generally thought that that's the physicists' business and that they adjust the equivalences between masses, fields, and impulses so that a number gets pulled out that complies with the principle of the conservation of energy. But still, such a principle has to be stated in order for a physics to meet the requirement of verifiability; it is, as Galileo put it, a fact experimentally produced by a theory. Or, to put it better: the condition that the system be mathematically closed prevails even over the assumption that it is physically isolated.

That's not just of my own devising. Each and every physicist knows clearly, that is to say, in a readily articulated manner, that energy is nothing other than the numerical value [*chiffre*] of a constant.

Now, what Freud articulates as primary process in the unconscious—and this is me speaking here, but you can look it up and you'd see it—isn't something to be numerically ex-

pressed [*se chiffre*], but to be deciphered [*se déchiffre*]. I mean: *jouissance* itself. In which case it doesn't result in energy, and can't be registered as such.

The schemas of the second topography through which Freud tries his hand at it, the celebrated chicken's egg, for example, are on the order of a "pudendum" and would deserve analysis, if one were to analyze the Father. Now, I hold that it is out of the question to analyze the real Father; far better the cloak of Noah when the Father is imaginary.

So that I prefer to ask myself what distinguishes scientific discourse from the hysteric's discourse, in which it must be said that Freud, in gathering her honey, was not out of the picture. Because what he invents is the work of the bee, who does not think, nor calculate, nor judge—namely, what I've already referred to here; when, after all, that might not be what von Frisch thinks about it.

I conclude that scientific discourse and the hysteric's discourse have *almost* the same structure, which explains our error, induced by Freud himself, in hoping that one day there would be a thermodynamic able to provide—within the future of science—the unconscious with its posthumous explanation.

We can say that after three-quarters of a century, there is not the slightest hint of such a promise's bearing fruit, and even that the very idea recedes of backing the primary process up with the principle which, if pleasure were its only claim, would demonstrate nothing, save that we cling to the soul like a tick to a dog's hide. Because what else is the famous lowering of tension with which Freud links pleasure, other than the ethics of Aristotle?

This cannot be the same hedonism as that which the Epicureans used as their insignia. To be insulted and called swine for this insignia, which now means only the psyche, they must have had something quite precious to hide, more secret even than the Stoics had.

However that may be, I've limited myself to Nicomachus and Eudemus, that is to Aristotle, so as strongly to distinguish

No means of establishing an energetics of jouissance



Being Well-spoken doesn't say where the Good is.

from it the ethics of psychoanalysis—a path I spent a whole year clearing.

It's the same old thing when it comes to the story of my supposed neglect of affect.

I just want an answer on this point: does an affect have to do with the body? A discharge of adrenalin—is that body or not? It upsets its functions, true. But what is there in it that makes it come from the soul? What it discharges is thought.

So you have to consider whether my idea that the unconscious is structured like a language allows one to verify affect more seriously—than the idea that it is a commotion from which a better arrangement emerges. Because that's what they oppose me with.

Does what I say about the unconscious go further than expecting affect to fall, adequate, into your lap? This *adaequatio*, being even more grotesque by coming on top of yet another one—really stacked—this time conjoining *rei*—of the thing—with *affectus*—the affect whereby it will get repigeonholed. We had to make it into our century for doctors to come up with that one.

All I've done is rerelease what Freud states in an article of 1915 on repression, and in others that return to this subject, namely that affect is displaced. How to appreciate this displacement, if not so the basis of the subject, which is presupposed by the fact that it has no better means of occurring than through representation?

All that business I explain in reference to his “gang”—to pinpoint it the way he did, since I'm forced to recognize that I'm also dealing with the same one. Except I've demonstrated, by turning to his correspondence with Fliess (in the expurgated edition of this correspondence, the only one we have) that the said representation, specifically repressed, is nothing less than the structure, and precisely insofar as it is linked to the

No harmony for the being in the world . . .

. . . if it speaks.

For the body, metonymy is the rule . . .

. . . because the subject of thought is metaphorized.

postulate of the signifier. Cf. letter 52: this postulate is written there.⁷

To accuse me of neglecting affect, so as to puff oneself up as the one who stresses it—could you make the claim unless you'd forgotten that I'd devoted one year, the last year of my commitment at Sainte-Anne, to dealing with anxiety?⁸

Some people know the constellation in which I placed it. Flutter, blockage, distress, differentiated as such and from each other, prove sufficiently that affect is not something I make light of.

It is true that it was forbidden to analysts in training in the PIPAAD to listen to me at Sainte-Anne.

I don't regret it. Indeed, I affected my world so deeply that year, by founding anxiety on the object to which it relates—far from being objectless (which is what psychologists have stuck to, unable to go further than its distinction from fear)—founding it, as I was saying, on the abject [*abjet*] that I have come to call my object *petit a*⁹—so deeply that someone from my circle got dizzy to the point (a repressed dizziness) of almost dropping—in the form of such an object—me.

Reconsidering affect on the basis of my sayings leads one back in any case to the secure part of what has been said about it.

The mere subsectioning of the passions of the soul, as Saint Thomas more accurately names these affects, the subsectioning since Plato of these passions on the model of the body:

7. Now unexpurgated in J. M. Masson, ed., *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 207, letter dated December 6, 1896.

8. Sainte-Anne is the psychiatric hospital where Lacan gave his seminars until the 1963 break (see note 4). The 1962-63 seminar (the Xth) was devoted to “Anxiety.”

9. *Objet petit a*: the object small *a*. Since the letter *a* stands for the initial letter of *autre* (the small other as opposed to the big one, the Other), *objet a* has been anglicized by some translators as object *o*. Phonetic considerations, however, led us to retain the French: *objet a*'s becoming *abject*; the privative function of the prefix *a*; the homonymy with *petit tas*, little pile.

head, heart, even, as he says *ἐπιθυμία*, or over-heart; doesn't this already testify to the need to approach them via the body, a body which is, I say, affected only by the structure?

I shall indicate from which end one could project a serious follow-up, understood as serial, to what can be claimed by the unconscious in such an effect.

For example, we qualify sadness as depression, because we give it soul for support, or the psychological tension of Pierre Janet, the philosopher. But it isn't a state of the soul, it is simply a moral failing, as Dante, and even Spinoza, said: a sin, which means a moral weakness, which is, ultimately, located only in relation to thought, that is, in the duty to be Well-spoken, to find one's way in dealing with the unconscious, with the structure.

And if ever this weakness, as reject of the unconscious, ends in psychosis, there follows the return to the real of that which is rejected, that is, language; it is the manic excitation through which such a return becomes fatal.

In contrast with sadness there is the Gay Science [*gay savoir*],¹⁰ which is a virtue. A virtue absolves no one from sin—which is, as everyone knows, original. The virtue that I designate as the Gay Science exemplifies it, by showing clearly of what it consists: not understanding, not a diving at the meaning, but a flying over it as low as possible without the meaning's gumming up this virtue, thus enjoying [*jouir*] the deciphering, which implies that in the end Gay Science cannot but meet in it the Fall, the return into sin.

Where in all this is what makes for good luck [*bonheur*]?¹¹ Strictly speaking everywhere. The subject is happy-go-lucky [*heureux*]. It is his very definition since he can owe nothing if not to luck, to fortune in other words, and any piece of luck is good as something to maintain him, insofar as it repeats itself.

What is astonishing is not that he is happy without

10. Provençal troubadours used the expression *gai savoir* [gay science] to designate their poetry.

11. For this homophonic play on *bonheur* (happiness), see Lacan's VIIth *Séminaire: L'éthique de la psychanalyse*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1986, p. 22, "Happiness, after all, that's also *happen*, an encounter."

There is no ethic beside that of the Well-spoken, . . .

. . . no knowledge besides that of non-sense.

In the "rendez-vous" with the (a), . . .

suspecting what reduces him to this state—his dependence on the structure—but that he gets an idea of beatitude, an idea which is forceful enough for him to feel himself exiled from it.

Happily, on this point we have the poet giving the game away: Dante, whom I've just cited, and others, apart from those sluts who use classicism to fill their piggy-banks.

A gaze, that of Beatrice—that is to say, three times nothing, a fluttering of the eyelids and the exquisite trash that results from it—and there emerges that Other whom we can identify only through her *jouissance*: her whom he, Dante, cannot satisfy, because from her, he can have only this look, only this object, but of whom he tells us that God fulfills her utterly; it is precisely by receiving the assurance of that from her own mouth that he arouses us.

To which something in us replies: annoyance [*ennui*]. A word from which, by making the letters dance as in the cinematograph until they resettle in a line, I've composed the term: "oneyance" [*unien*]. By which I designate the identification of the Other with the One. I would say: the mystical One whose crude equivalent is given to us through its comical other—Aristophanes, to name him, strutting his stuff in Plato's *Symposium*—presenting the beast-with-two-backs that he accuses Zeus, who is not responsible for it, of bisecting: it's rather wicked; I've already said that this is not done. One doesn't involve the real Father in such unseemly behavior.

Still, Freud also stumbles on this point: because his allegation with respect to Eros, insofar as he opposes it to Thanatos, as the principle of "life," is that of unifying, as if, apart from a brief coiteration, one had ever seen two bodies unite into one.

Affect, therefore, befalls a body whose essence it is said is to dwell in language—I am borrowing plumage which sells better than my own¹²—affect, I repeat, befalls it on account of

12. The plumage is Heidegger's. See his "Letter on Humanism," *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Kress, New York, Harper & Row, 1977, p. 204, "Only from this dwelling 'has' he 'language' as the home that preserves the ecstatic for his essence"; or, p. 239, "Language is at once the house of Being and the home of human beings."

. . . if it's woman's jouissance, . . .

. . . the Other finds ex-sistence, . . .

. . . but not substantial Oneness.

Because "nothing is everything" in the defiles of the signifier, . . .

its not finding dwelling-room, at least not to its taste. This we call moroseness, or equally, moodiness. Is this a sin, a grain of madness, or a true touch of the real?

You see that with regard to affect they would have done better, the PIPAAD, if that's the tune they wanted to play, to use my old fiddle. That would have got them farther than standing around gaping.

Your inclusion of the drives among the confusion of gestures used in defense against my discourse lets me off so easily as to preclude my feeling grateful. For, as you well know — you who transcribed my XIth seminar with an impeccable brush¹³ — who else other than myself managed to take the risk of even talking about it?

For the first time, and particularly with you, I felt I was being listened to by ears that were other than morose: namely, ears that didn't hear me Otherizing [*Autrifiatis*] the One, as even the person who had invited me to teach at the Ecole, allowing me to be heard by you, hastened to think.¹⁴

Who, upon reading chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, and 13, 14 of this Seminar XI, does not sense the advantage of not translating *Trieb* by instinct, of keeping close to this drive by calling it drift, of dismantling and then reassembling its oddity, sticking, all the while to Freud?

If you follow along with me there, won't you feel the difference between energy — which is a constant that can be marked each time in relation to the One, on the basis of which what is experimental in science is constructed — and the *Drang* or drive

of the drive which, *jouissance* of course, only derives its permanence from the rims — I went so far as to give them their mathematical form — of the body? A permanence that consists solely in the quadruple agency by which each drive is sustained through coexistence with three others. It is only as power that four opens onto the disunion that must be warded off, for those whom sex is not sufficient to render partners.

What I've just done here is not, of course, the mapping through which I would distinguish neurosis, perversion, and psychosis.

That I've done elsewhere, proceeding only according to the detours that the unconscious, in retracing its own steps, transforms into direct routes. Little Hans's phobia I showed as precisely that: the lane down which he took Freud and his father for a walk, but where, ever since, it's the analysts' turn to be frightened.

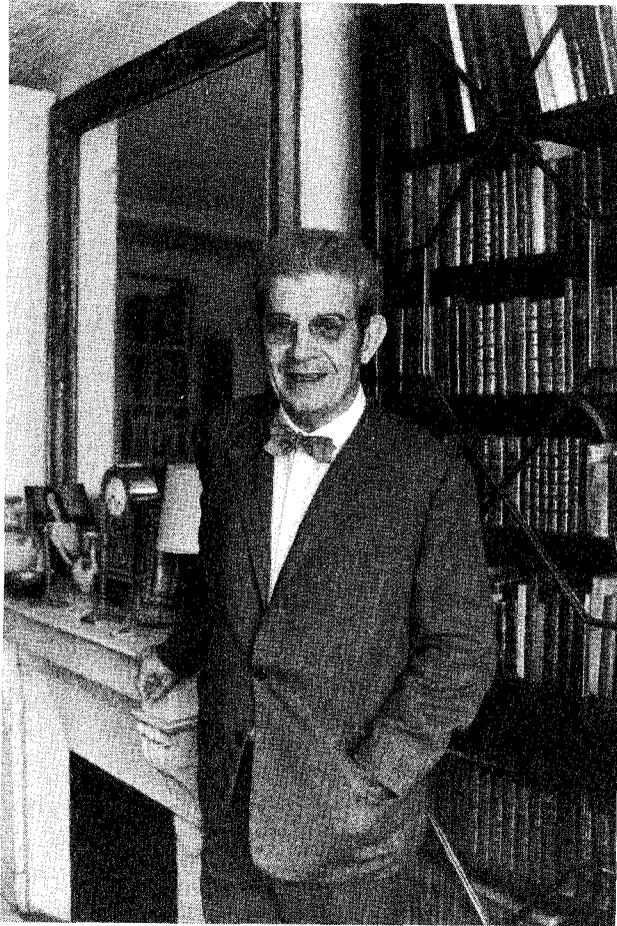
Therefore I can't say what you are for me.

13. Lacan's 1964 seminar, his XIth, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, which was also the first to be given after his leaving Sainte-Anne, had been published by J.-A. Miller in early 1973, a few months before the *Television* interview.

14. "Ecole" is not to be confused with "my Ecole" (see pp. 96–105 below), which is the Ecole Freudienne. Here it refers to the Ecole Normale Supérieure (also E. N. S. or, metonymically, "Rue d'Ulm") which, following Lacan's departure from Sainte-Anne, housed his seminar (from then on institutionally sponsored by the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes). At about the time of *Television*, difficulties with Robert Flacellière, Director of the E. N. S., obliged Lacan to find yet another dwelling for his seminar, this time in the Law School buildings (see Lacan's letter to *Le monde*, pp. 114–115). In 1964, J.-A. Miller was a student at the Ecole Normale.

the affect is discord, . . .

and the drive drift.



Jacques Lacan about 1960

V.

— *There's a rumor afoot: if we have such bad sex, it's because sex is suppressed, and that's the fault, in the first place, of the family, and in the second, of society, and especially of capitalism. This requires an answer.*

— That's a question — I've been told when chatting about your questions — that might well be understood as being about your wanting to be able to answer it, yourself, eventually. That is: if you were asked it, by a voice rather than by an individual, a voice inconceivable except as arising from the TV, a voice that doesn't exist, because it doesn't say anything, the voice nonetheless, in the name of which I make this answer exist, an answer that is interpretation.

To put it bluntly, you *know* that I've got an answer to everything, in consideration of which you credit me [*vous me prêtez*] with the question: you place your faith in the proverb that one lend only to the rich. And with good reason.

Who doesn't know that it's with the analytic discourse that I've made it big. That makes me a *self-made man*.¹⁵ There have been others, but not in our lifetime.

Freud didn't say that repression *comes from* suppression: that (to paint a picture) castration is due to what Daddy bran-

15. English in the original.

dished over his brat playing with his wee-wee: "We'll cut it off, no kidding, if you do it again."

Primary repression

Naturally enough, however, it occurred to him, to Freud, to start with that for the experiment—as understood through the terms of definition of analytic discourse. Let's say that as he progressed there, he leaned more toward the idea that repression was primary. That, on the whole, is what tipped the scales toward the second topography. The greediness by which he characterizes the superego is structural, not an effect of civilization, but "discontent (symptom) in civilization."

So that's why we have to reexamine the test case, taking as a starting point the fact that it is repression that produces suppression. Why couldn't the family, society itself, be creations built from repression? They're nothing less. That, however, may be because the unconscious ex-sists, is motivated by the structure, that is, by language. Freud is so far from excluding this solution that it's in order to come to some decision on it that he works so hard on the case of the Wolf Man, a man who ends up in rather bad shape. Still it would seem that this failure, failure of the case, is relatively unimportant when compared with his success: that of establishing the real within the facts.

If this real remains enigmatic, must we attribute this to the analytic discourse, itself an institution? To get to the bottom of sexuality, we have no recourse other than the project of science, sexology being still only a project in which, as Freud insists, he has every confidence. A confidence that he admits is gratuitous, which says a lot about his ethics.

The latest in love

Now this analytic discourse implies a promise: to promote a novelty. And that, awesomely enough, into the field from which the unconscious is produced, since its finesses [*impasses*]—among other situations to be sure, but it is still the main one—come into play in the game of love.

Not that everyone isn't alerted to this novelty that is the talk of the town—but it doesn't rouse anybody, for the reason that this novelty is transcendental: the word is to be taken

under the same sign that it constitutes for the theory of numbers, namely mathematically.

It is not without reason, then, that it takes support in the name of transference.

In order to rouse people around me, I articulate this transference with "the subject supposed to know." This contains an explication, an unfolding of what the name only dimly pins down. Namely: that through the transference the subject is attributed to the knowledge that gives him his consistency as subject of the unconscious, and it is that which is transferred onto the analyst, namely, this knowledge inasmuch as it does not think, or calculate, or judge, but carries with it nonetheless the work-effect.

This new path is worth whatever it's worth, but it's as if I were whistling in the . . . no, worse: as if I were scaring them out of their wits.

Sancta PIPAADic simplicitas.¹⁶ they don't dare. They dare not follow where that leads.

It's not as if I don't turn myself inside-out! I declaim, "No one authorizes the analyst but himself." I institute "the pass" in my Ecole, namely the examination of what decides an analyst to assert himself as analyst—forcing no one through it. It hasn't been heard outside yet, I admit, but here inside we're busy with it, and as for my Ecole, I haven't had it that long.

It is not that I'm hoping that outside of here the transference will cease being viewed as a return-to-sender. That is the attribute of the patient, a singularity that touches us only in that it demands our prudence, in evaluating it, first, even more than in handling it. In the former we can adjust to it, but in the latter who knows where we'd be going?

What I do know is that the analytic discourse cannot be sustained by one person only. It is my good fortune to have followers. Thus the discourse has a chance.

The transfinite of discourse

16. Lacan's acronym is SAMCDA (Société d'assurance mutuelle contre le discours analytique) which, in French, sounds close enough to sancta to prompt the "sancta simplicitas."

*The impossibility of
the Well-spoken
concerning sex, . . .*

No amount of excitement — which it stirs up as well — can lift away the evidence of a curse on sex, which Freud evokes in his *Discontents*.

If I've talked of annoyance, of moroseness, in connection with the "divine" approach of love, how can one not recognize that these two affects are betrayed — through speech, and even in deed — in those young people dedicated to relations without repression — the most extraordinary thing being that the analysts whom they claim as their impetus stare back at them tight-lipped.

Even if the memories of familial suppression weren't true, they would have to be invented, and that is certainly done. That's what myth is, the attempt to give an epic form to what is operative through the structure.

*. . . it's in the
structure, . . .*

The sexual impasse [*impasse*] exudes the fictions that rationalize the impossible within which it originates. I don't say they are imagined; like Freud, I read in them the invitation to the real that underwrites them.

*. . . read the myth
of Oedipus.*

The familial order is nothing but the translation of the fact that the Father is not the progenitor, and that the Mother remains the contaminator of woman for man's offspring; the remainder follows from that.

It's not that I value the craving for order we find in this offspring, expressed when he says, "Personally (*sic*) I loathe anarchy." The definition of order, as soon as there is the least little bit, is that you don't have to crave it, since there it is: established.

The fact that it already happened somewhere is our good fortune, a fortune good for nothing more than demonstrating that things are going badly there for liberty even in its sketchiest form. That's simply capitalism set straight. Back to zero, then, for the issue of sex, since anyway capitalism, that was its starting point: getting rid of sex.

You've given in to leftism, but not, so far as I know, to

sexo-leftism.¹⁷ That's because the latter relies solely on analytic discourse, such as it ex-sists at the moment. It ex-sists badly, managing simply to redouble the curse on sex. In which it shows itself to be in dread of this ethic that I located in being well-spoken.

— Isn't that just the recognition that one must expect nothing from psychoanalysis so far as learning how to make love goes? So that, understandably, hopes are directed toward sexology.

— As I've just suggested, it is actually sexology that you can't expect anything from. There is no way, on the basis of observing just what crosses our senses, namely perversion, that anything new in love will ever be constructed.

God, however, has ex-sisted so well that paganism has peopled the world with him without anyone's being aware of what it was about. That's what we're coming back to.

Thank God!, as we say, other traditions allow us to believe that there have been more sensible people, in Tao for example. It is a pity that what was meaningful for them is without impact for us, leaving our *jouissance* cold.

Wisdom?

There's nothing surprising in that, if the Way, as I've said, passes through the Sign. If some finesse [*impasse*] can be demonstrated along the way — and I mean: asserted through this demonstration — there lies a chance for us to be in touch with the real pure and simple — as that which prevents one from saying the *whole* truth about it.

17. Four years after the May '68 student riots, leftism was still quite strong among intellectuals. During his stay at the Rue d'Ulm, J.-A. Miller was one of the founders of the Cercle d'épistémologie de l'École Normale Supérieure. The cover of their journal, *Les cahiers pour l'analyse*, bore Lenin's phrase "Marx's theory is omnipotent because it is true." Lacan commented on this sentence in "La science et la vérité" (his opening seminar for 1965-66), which was published in the journal's first issue.

Th-s-ayology There will be no eros-th-s-ayism [*di-eu-re de l'amour*]¹⁸ until this score is settled, the complex term of which can only be uttered after being twisted.

— *You don't oppose the young, tight-lipped, as you put it. Certainly not, since you fired on them one day at Vincennes with, "What you, as revolutionaries, aspire to is a Master. You will have one."*¹⁹ Frankly, you are discouraging the young.

— They got on my back, which was the fashion at the time. I had to take a stand.

A stand whose truth was so clear that they've been crowding into my seminar ever since. Preferring my cool, after all, to the crack of the whip.

— *From another direction, what gives you the confidence to prophesy the rise of racism? And why the devil do you have to speak of it?*

— Because it doesn't strike me as funny and yet, it's true.

With our *jouissance* going off the track, only the Other is able to mark its position, but only insofar as we are separated from this Other. Whence certain fantasies — unheard of before the melting pot.

Leaving this Other to his own mode of *jouissance*, that would only be possible by not imposing our own on him, by not thinking of him as underdeveloped.

Given, too, the precariousness of our own mode, which from now on takes its bearings from the ideal of an over-coming [*plus-de-jour*],²⁰ which is, in fact, no longer expressed

18. An amalgam of "God" [*Dieu*] and "what's said" [*dire*]. The marginal note "*Th-s-ayology*" is a rendering of Lacan's "*Dieu est dire.*"

19. See "Impromptu at Vincennes," pp. 116–127.

20. Both "end-of-coming/enjoying" and "excess-of-coming/enjoying."

in any other way, how can one hope that the empty forms of humanhysterianism [*humanitairerie*] disguising our extortions can continue to last?

Even if God, thus newly strengthened, should end up existing, this bodes nothing better than a return of his baneful past.

VI.

— Three questions summarize for Kant (see the Canon of the First Critique) what he calls “the interest of our reason”: “What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope for?” A formula which, as you yourself are not unaware, is derived from medieval exegesis, specifically from Agostino de Dacie. Luther cites it in order to criticize it. Here’s the task I am setting you: reply to this in your own turn, or find a way of putting it differently.

— The phrase “those who understand me” should, for those ears concerned by it, take on another ring, from the very fact that your questions are echoing there, a tone so different, that the extent to which my discourse doesn’t reply to them may become clear.

And even if I were the only one on which they have such an effect, even then this effect would still be an objective one, since I am the one whom they make into an object, by being what is dropped out of this discourse, to the point of understanding that it excludes such questions. All of this gives me the gain (for me, a quite secondary gain: “it is true”) of understanding what racks my brain every time I am in the midst of this discourse: why it gathers a crowd, which in my eyes is out of all proportion to it. For the crowd, the benefit is one of no longer hearing them.

There’s enough here in your Kantian flotilla to tempt me

to embark, in order that my discourse expose itself to the test of another structure.

— *Well, what can I know?*

"I already know it," . . .

— My discourse doesn't allow the question of what one is able to know, since it begins by presupposing this as the subject of the unconscious.

Obviously I am not unaware of the shock that Newton delivered to the discourses of his time, and I know that Kant and his cogitatory follow from that. He almost pushes things to the limit, a limit that is a precursor of analysis, when he uses it to deal with Swedenborg. However, in giving Newton a try, he falls back into the old ruts of philosophy, seeing Newton as only another exemplum of philosophy's stalemate. But had Kant started with Newton's commentary on the Book of Daniel we're still not certain that he would have found the source of the unconscious there. It was a matter of having the right stuff.

Well, after all, I'll spill my gut about the analytic discourse's response to the incongruity of the question: what can I know? Reply:

. . . because "a-priori" is the language, . . .

nothing in any case that doesn't have the structure of language; whence it follows that the distance I can go *within* this limit is a matter of logic.

This is expressed through the fact that scientific discourse was able to bring about the moon landing, where thought becomes witness to a performance of the real, and with mathematics using no apparatus other than a form of language. It's this that Newton's contemporaries couldn't swallow. They asked how each mass knew the distance of the others. To which Newton replied, "God, he knows it"—and does what's necessary.

But note that once political discourse enters the picture, you have the advent of the real, that is, the moon landing, and

without the philosopher (for the newspaper makes every man a philosopher) caring about it, except perhaps in some vague way.

What's at stake now is what we can escape with the help of the real-of-the-structure: what in language is not a number [*chiffre*], but a sign to decipher [*déchiffrer*].

My reply, then, only repeats Kant, except for two points: the facts of the unconscious have been discovered since then, and even before that, a logic had been developed through mathematics, instigated—it would almost seem—by "the return" of these facts. It happens, in fact, despite their well-known titles, no critique in his works develops a judgment of classical logic. He thereby merely reveals himself as the plaything of his unconscious, which does not think and therefore can neither judge nor calculate in the work that it blindly produces.

. . . but not the logic of classes.

The subject of the unconscious, on the contrary, gears into the body. Must I repeat that it is only in relation to a discourse that such a subject can be truly located, namely in relation to something whose artificiality concretizes it . . . and how much so!

There's no discourse that is not make-believe.

What can be said with all that as its premise, with the premise of knowledge ex-sisting—according to us—in the unconscious (but one such that only a discourse can articulate it), what real can be said, if its realness has to come to us through this discourse? That is how your question gets translated in my context, which is to say that it seems crazy.

That, nonetheless, is how we must have the courage to put it if we want to suggest how, in following the instituted experiment, there could arise some propositions—still to be demonstrated—able to sustain it. Let's go.

Can one say, for example, that, if Man [*L'homme*] wants Woman [*La femme*],²¹ he cannot reach her without finding

21. *La femme n'existe pas*, says Lacan. Earlier translations chose to retain the French article and to render his formula, "The Woman does not exist." But since Lacan does not comment specifically on this article, there was no need to keep in English such a non-English way of expressing a category.

himself run aground on the field of perversion? That is what is precipitated as a formula through the experiment instituted by psychoanalytic discourse. If it's verified, can it be taught to everyone, that is to say, is it scientific, since it's on the basis of this postulate that science developed?

The matheme

I say that it is and all the more so since, like Renan's hope for "the future of science," it is of no consequence because

The woman

Woman [La femme] doesn't ex-sist. But the fact that she doesn't ex-sist doesn't stop me from making her the object of one's desire. Quite the opposite, whence the consequences.

In return for which Man [L'homme], in fooling himself, encounters a woman, with whom everything happens: namely that usual misfiring, of which the successful sexual act consists. Its protagonists are capable of the most lofty deeds, as the theater teaches us.

The noble, the tragic, the comic, the farcical (to be plotted on a Gaussian curve), in brief, the full range of what is produced in the scene through which it is staged—the scene that severs love relations from every social bond—the full range, then, is realized—producing the fantasies through which speaking beings subsist in what they call—who knows why?—"life." For their only notion of "life" comes by way of the animal world, where their knowledge is pointless.

As the poetic dramatists realized, the famous you-end-me-baby [tu-émoigne] is our clearest evidence that their life, their's as speaking beings, is not a dream, nothing besides their you-logizing [tu-ent] of these animals: Baby-I'd-kill-for-you [tu-é-à-toi—même];²² if there was ever a time to use *lalangue*—always amenable to my mind to be my ene-me [m'est amie d'être mi(enne)].

"You are . . ."

For after all friendship, or rather Aristotle's φιλία (Aristotle, whom I esteem no less for parting with him), is really the point where this spectacle of love shifts into the conjugation of

22. The whole paragraph involves puns related to the destructive nature of love as narcissistic identification, and expressed in the homonymy in French of *tu* [you] and *tue* [kill], generating the following variations; *tu es moi* [you are me]; *tuer* [to kill]; *à tu et à toi* [we say *tu* to each other]. At the end of the paragraph the *mi(enne)* should be heard as *mi-haine*.

the verb *to love*, including all that it implies in the economic term *husbandry*, that is, the law of the dwelling.

As we know, man is he who dwells and, if he knows not where, he dwells *on* it out of habit nonetheless. The *ἔθος*, as Aristotle says, has no more in common with ethics than the conjugal tie has, despite the homonymy that he notes, unable though he is to sever the two.

With no idea of the pivotal object in all this (not *ἦθος* but *ἔθος*), without the object *petit a* (to name it) how could you establish the science of it?

True, you will still face the problem of calibrating this object with the matheme that Science—Physics, the sole science that ex-sists as yet—has found in the use of number and demonstration. But how could a better fit be found for it than this object I've mentioned, if it be the very product of this matheme whose site is related to the structure, as long as the latter be language [*l'en-gage*], the language pawned [*l'en-gage*] to the mute by the unconscious?

To be convincing about that, do we have to go back to what's already set out in the *Méno*, namely that the particular has access to truth?

It's by coordinating the paths traced by a discourse, that (although it may proceed merely from the one to the one—that is, from the particular) something new can be conceived, and is able to be transmitted as incontestably by this discourse as is the numerical matheme.

This requires only that somewhere the sexual relation cease not being written, that contingency be established (so to speak), so as to make headway on that which will later be completed by demonstrating such a relation to be impossible, that is by instituting it in the real. *Love*

The possibility of that's befalling us can be anticipated, through recourse to the axiomatic: a logic of the contingent for which we are prepared by that which the matheme—or the mathematician as determined by it—senses as necessary: to allow oneself a free-fall from any recourse to evidence.

We'll go on, then, starting off from the Other, the radical Other, evoked by the nonrelation embodied by sex—for anyone who can perceive that One occurs, perhaps, only through the experience of the (a)sexed.

For us the Other is as entitled as the One to generate a subject out of an axiom. Hence, here is what the experiment suggests: first, that women cannot escape the kind of negation that Aristotle discards for the reason that it would apply to the universal; namely, they are the not-all, *μη πάντες*. As if by protecting the universal from its negation, Aristotle didn't simply render it futile: the *dictus de omni et nullo* guarantees no ex-sistence, as he himself demonstrates, when attributing this ex-sistence to the particular, but without—in the strong sense of the term—accounting for it, that is to say, giving a full account: the unconscious.

It follows that a woman—since we cannot speak of more than one—a woman only encounters Man [L'*homme*] in psychosis.

Let's state the axiom, not that Man [L'*homme*] doesn't exist, which is the case for Woman [La *femme*], but that a woman forbids Him for herself, not because He would be the S (A) Other, but because "there is no Other of the Other," as I put it.

Hence the universal of what women desire is sheer madness: all women are mad, they say. That's precisely why they are not-all, that is to say not-at-all-mad-about-the-whole [*folles-du-tout*]; accommodating rather: to the point where there is no limit to the concessions made by any woman for a man: of her body, her soul, her possessions.

Powerless with respect to her fantasies which are less easy for her to control.

Rather, she is a party to the perversion which is, I maintain, Man's [L'*homme*]. Which leads her into the familiar masquerade that is not just the lie of which some ingrates, themselves clinging to the role of Man [L'*homme*], accuse her. Rather, she prepares herself on-the-off-chance, so that her inner fantasy of Man [L'*homme*] will find its hour of truth. That's not ex-

cessive, since truth is already woman insofar as it's not-all, unable, in any case, to be wholly-spoken.

But that is why truth is more often than not standoffish, demanding of love sexual pretenses that it can't fulfill, misfiring—sure as clockwork.

Let's leave that as shaky as it is. But you can't apply M. Fenouillard's celebrated axiom to woman: once you've gone too far, there's still the limit—this must be kept in mind.²³

Thus it follows that in love it is not the meaning that counts, but rather the sign, as in everything else. In fact, therein lies the whole catastrophe.

And you can't say, in translation through analytic discourse, love slips away as it does elsewhere.

However, until it is shown that it is via this thing that is by its very nature senseless that the real enters the world of man—namely the various paths, science and politics included, that Man [L'*homme*], even Man-the-moon-lander, is brought to an impasse—until then, there's still some room for manoeuvre.

Because there one must assume that the real forms a whole, which would first have to be proved, since one can never assume a subject except for a reasonable being. *Hypotheses non fingo* means that only discourses ex-sist.

— *What must I do?*

—I can only take up that question as anyone else would: by posing it to myself. And the reply is simple. It is what I am doing, deriving from my practice the ethic of the Well-Spoken, which I've already stressed.

Take a leaf out of this book if you think it could do well in other kinds of discourses.

23. Lacan is referring to *La famille Fenouillard*, a series of cartoon-style books from the 1870s which, to the immense enjoyment of the very victims of its wit, held French middle-class family life up to ridicule.

"There is no sexual relation"

Although I doubt it. Because an ethic is relative to a discourse. Let's not keep going over this.

The Kantian idea that a maxim be put to the test of the universality of its application is only the grimace by which the real manages to save its skin, by being approached only from one side.

*Ask "what to do?"
only of someone
whose desire is fading*

It means merely thumbing your nose in reply to the nonrelation to the Other, when you take it literally and go no further.

In a word, it's a bachelor's ethic, that ethic embodied in our own time by Montherlant.

May my friend Claude Lévi-Strauss give structure to Montherlant's example in his speech of admission to the Academy,²⁴ since fortunately, to comply honorably with his post, the academician need only titillate the truth.

It appears that thanks to your kindness that's my position, too.

— Your dig's a good one. But if you've not denied yourself this exercise — and it is, indeed, that of an academician — it's because you're titillated by it, too. And I'll prove it to you, since you'll reply to the third question.

As to "what may I hope for?" I'm turning this question back on you, which is to say, this time I understand it as coming from you. What I make of it for myself, I've already told you.

How could it concern me without its telling me what to hope for? Do you conceive of hope as without an object?

You, then, like everyone else whom I would address with

24. Lévi-Strauss succeeded to Montherlant's chair in the French Academy after Montherlant's suicide; acceptance speeches are at the same time eulogies of the predecessors. Lacan refers to Montherlant's novel, *Les célibataires*.

this formal you, it's to you that I reply, hope for whatever you want.

I just want you to know that more than once I've seen hope — what they call bright new tomorrows — drive people I've valued as much as I value you to kill themselves, period.

And why not? Suicide is the only act that can succeed without misfiring. If no one knows anything about it, that's because it stems from the will not to know. Montherlant again, to whom, without Claude, I wouldn't have given a thought.

So that Kant's question may have meaning, I'm going to transform it into: from where do you hope? You'd then want to know what analytic discourse can promise *you*, since for me it's already all sewn up.

Psychoanalysis would allow you, of course, the hope of refining and clarifying the unconscious of which you're the subject. But everyone knows that I don't encourage anyone into it, anyone whose desire is not resolute.

*Do you want to know
nothing of the fate the
unconscious prepares
you?*

Furthermore — and I am sorry to refer to some ill-bred you's — I think the analytic discourse should be withheld from the rabble: surely that is what's behind Freud's so-called criterion of culture. Ethical criteria are unfortunately no more reliable. They, in any case, may be judged by other discourses, and if I dare to pronounce that analysis should be withheld from the rabble, it's because it renders them dumb — certainly an improvement, but without hope, to go back to your term.

Anyway, the analytic discourse excludes the you who's not already in transference, since it exposes this relation to the subject supposed to know — which is a symptomatic manifestation of the unconscious.

For this I'd require as well the demonstration of a gift of the same kind as is used to screen one's entry into mathematics, if such a gift existed; it's a fact, however, that since no *matheme* other than those I've formulated seems to have been produced by this discourse, there's still no testing for the gift.

No chance for it to ex-sist except through good luck, by which I mean that hope won't change anything, which makes it futile, namely, by not allowing that to happen.

VII.

—Now let's see you, please, titillate the truth which Boileau versifies as follows: "What is well conceived can be clearly stated." Your style, etcetera.

—I'll reply to you tit-for-tat. Ten years is enough for everything I write to become clear to everyone; I saw that happen with my thesis even though my style hadn't yet become crystalline. So that is a fact of experience. Nonetheless I won't put you off until leap year in July.

*For he who plays
with the crystal of
language, . . .*

I invert it to read: what is well-spoken, one conceives clearly—clearly means that it makes its way. There is something even discouraging in this promise of success to a rigorous ethics, in its market success, at least.

This brings home to us at what cost neurosis sustains itself, about which Freud reminds us that it's not evil, but good, that engenders guilt.

You can't get your bearings here without at least suspecting what castration means. And this clarifies the gossip about it that Boileau did nothing to suppress, "clearly" so as to fool us, to encourage belief.²⁵

*. . . there's always a
gander to bite his
"gender"*

25. After the publication of Boileau's misogynistic satire against women, an anecdote circulated about his presumed impotence caused by his having been bitten on the genitals by either a gander or a turkey, when he was a child (making the theoretician of French classical poetry into a negative Leda). The efforts of Dr. Gendron, from Montpellier's faculty of medicine, were deployed in vain.

The slander [*médit*] clothed in its proverbial yellow-ochre: "There's no degree of difference between the medi-ochre [*médi-ocre*] and the worst."²⁶ This I find hard to attribute to the author of the verse that plays so wittily with this word.

All that is easy, but to hear me restoring it in my flat-footed way to what is a better fit with what transpires: a joke that nobody noticed.

Surely we know that the joke is a calculated slip, one which takes the trick from the unconscious? You can find that in Freud on jokes.

[And if the unconscious does not think, nor calculate, etc., it makes it all the more thinkable.]

You will catch it by surprise, in rehearing, if you can, what I was modulating for fun in my example of what can be known. Better, still—relying less on the good luck of *lalangue* than bidding it up into language. . . .

It even needed a little push for me to see it, and that's where the site of interpretation appears, in all its precision.

If, when confronted with the glove turned inside-out, you assume that the hand knew what it was doing, are you not throwing the gauntlet back to someone tolerable to La Fontaine and Racine?

The interpretation must be prompt in order to meet the terms of the interloan [*entreprêt*]—

—between that which perdures through pure dross, and the hand that draws only from Dad to worse [*De ce qui perdure de perte pure à ce qui ne parie que du père au pire*].

A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment

26. The verse reads, "*Dans l'art dangereux de rimer et d'écrire, / Il n'est point de degré du médiocre au pire.*" [In the dangerous art of writing and rhyming/There's no degree of difference between the mediocre and the worst.]

Dossier on the Institutional Debate: An Introduction

The title of the film and video whose text we publish here is not, in fact, *Television*, but *Psychoanalysis*. Thus it is by the name of the cultural apparatus which first disseminated the interview with Jacques Lacan that *Psychoanalysis* is popularly known. If this small fact seems to have a significance beyond the information it imparts, this is because we can recognize it as a metaphor for the reception of Lacan's work in general. It is principally through his contributions to cultural theory—to theories of film, television, literature, and art—that his reputation has been established in this country. In France, too—as elsewhere—a large part of the audience “tuned in” to Lacan has always been composed of nonanalysts. But while the expansion of this audience beyond simply the clinical community has sparked the vigorous and enthusiastic retheorization of disparate disciplines, it has also occasioned a global fear: that each individual discipline is thereby reduced to some supposed lowest common denominator—language—and submitted to a master discourse—psychoanalysis. That which is feared to be lost is not only the specificity of disciplines, but also (although these should not be considered completely separate issues) the political force of analysis.

There are numerous arguments which may be summoned against what we might call this “televsual” fear that psychoanalysis addresses all in general in order to say nothing in particular. All we can hope to do here, however, is to highlight the relation of Lacan's theorization of language to the political question of the institution, or of disciplines. This dossier on the “institutional debate” is offered not merely to give a brief history of Lacan's struggle with the specific institution of psychoanalysis, but also to make available, through translation, additional texts in which Lacan's definition of the relation of language to institution is shown to be consequential.

Lacan does not present his “materialist” theory of language in answer to a question about ultimate elements; it is therefore a distortion to characterize his position as the assumption that “everything is language.” His theory answers different questions, among them those raised by the Soviet linguistic debate about the place of language in the base/superstructure model of social relations.

As Lacan reminds us in his "Responses to Students in Philosophy . . .," the materialist position was fixed in 1928 by N. Y. Marr, who concluded that language was a part of the superstructure, that is, that it was a direct reflection of class struggle, of the social determinations of the base. Rather than a national language, then, there were thought to be class languages, just as in Lysenko's account there were thought to be class sciences. Twenty-two years later, this solution was emended by Stalin, who pointed matter-of-factly for counterproof to the continuity of the Russian language despite the social changes brought about by the Revolution. Having removed language from the superstructure, Stalin was prohibited, nevertheless, from assigning it to the base, since he believed that language was in itself incapable of producing anything. Defined as neither superstructure nor base—the only available alternatives in this schema—language was emptied of all attributes and became in theory a purely transparent instrument of communication. Against these problematic stances, Lacan argues (and he is not alone in this) that language has its own level of determinacy, that it is itself productive of effects.

It follows from this that an analysis of language, of any system of representation, must proceed not by referring to some prior conditions of existence whose expression the representation is taken to be. Rather the analysis proceeds from the representation to a description of its determined effects. This is, in fact, the way Lacan works, analyzing the unconscious not as an extradiscursive force which governs the production of dreams, works of art, or everyday speech, but as an ex-centric effect of these representations. Nor is an institution conceived as an extradiscursive structure which controls the production of films, for example, or literature, or legal documents, but as itself composed in part of these texts, as a system of relations discursively ordered.

It would be precipitous to conclude from this that language has been redefined as the base, that the base/superstructure model has simply been inverted. Of all those analyses which retain the subject as a unified field of the structure's effects, this conclusion will be accurate. In Lacan's theory, however, the base/superstructure model no longer holds sway. The notion of strict determinism which binds the model in place is routed by the serious attention given by Lacan to the ineliminable opacity of language. The nondeterminist concept of cause which he develops by means of the object *petit a* is one of his most important and difficult concepts. In marking the point of the subject's relation to the signifying chain of social relations, it underscores the observation made by Bachelard that "duplicité is maladroit in its address." Where others will make the subject the predetermined point, the addressee, of a socially established meaning, Lacan will speak of the causation (not determination) of the subject by social relations which fail to be reducible to the clarity of meanings and which therefore raise the suspicion of subterfuge. Suspicion is not fact, and those who confound the two in order not to be duped by language err by eliminating the complexity of signifying relations and their effects.

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When, in July 1953, the International Psycho-Analytical Association decides not to recognize Lacan, Lagache, Dolto, Favez-Boutonnier, Reverchon-Jouve (the analysts who have seceded from the Société Psychanalytique de Paris) as members of their institution, it depends for its justification on a metaphor of the family; of the ills which befall the children of divorced parents. One sees how quickly Lacan, in his "Rome Report" of September 1953, retaliates against this metaphor, and with which weapon: the function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis. To find the terms institution and family commutable is to presume that the one duplicates in miniature or in large the structure of the other. It is to subscribe to the belief that the function of the family in society can be read off from its form, that family and social institutions, in fact, conform to one another. For this to be so, at least one of the terms would have to be denied its productivity, since it would have to have acquired its form either from the other or from some third structure which fully contains and determines both. This image of containment is shattered by the recognition of the rhetorical force of language, which in denying all claims of a metalanguage (that is, of a language which would signify nothing, nothing more than itself) denies to no institution its own level of determinacy. Psychoanalysis, then, is a system of relations which does not borrow its form from the family. As a way of avoiding the structural determination it implies, Lacan shifts his focus away from the Oedipus complex by grounding his definition of psychoanalysis in the signifying relation of the transference.

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When Lacan makes his impromptu remarks to the students of the experimental university at Vincennes, he comes fresh from his 1969 seminar *L'envers de la psychanalyse*, on the four discursive relations to knowledge: those of the master, the university, the hysteric, and the analyst. This is his most overtly political seminar. The students have only recently participated in the struggles of May '68, and are in the midst of that period of *établissement* in which all intellectual discourse began to be considered, by many students, dishonest and oppressive, as opposed to the "authentic" discourse, the truth, spoken by the working class. To counter the romantic assumption that all institutions are necessarily confining and the voluntarist notion that the imagination would be free outside them, Lacan warns that the structures of institutions are not merely imposed on otherwise freely existing practices. All practices are always part of some institutional structure beyond which no practice, no critique, no speech is possible. Institutions, as *signifying practices*, are much more extensive structures than romantic notions allow and they thus implicate us in ways which narrower definitions cannot recognize; they also cast doubt on the notion of class essen-

tialism which would seek truth in some “innocent” group of people and the naive notion of identification which imagines the possibility of emulating them.

It is to extend their scope that we wish to introduce Lacan's theory into current discussions emerging from critiques of specific institutions. Lacan raises serious questions for those critiques which take institutions—whether museums, urban planning, television, or film—as social spaces in which already existing antagonisms are played out, interests are denied or fulfilled, values upheld or denigrated. No institution can be reduced to a mere reflection or tool of prior intersubjective struggles. For such a reduction would fail to take account of the determining action of the institution itself and of the way its operations exceed any intersubjective intention or effect. Ironically, many current critiques of institutions steer clear of psychoanalytic investigation, in order, one suspects, to avoid the “privatized” realm of human intersubjectivity. They thus deprive themselves of the most rigorous and sustained attempt to theorize a nonpsychological, nonformal subject and end by subscribing to a belief in an ahistorical subject with fixed values, interests, and battles to fight. In opposition to the essentialism of a “will to power” implied by these other analyses, Lacan insists on the constitution of a “desire not to know”; and thus of a subject at odds with itself. In opposition to the unity—if not always *per se*, at least, *per accidens*—of the “subject effect,” Lacan elaborates a theory of a subject split between conscious and unconscious, effect not merely of an institution's meaning, but also of its complex failures of meaning, its accidents.

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Questioned about whether his admission that science always necessarily relied on institutionally endorsed conventions of falsification made us prisoners of these conventions, Karl Popper replied that we were prisoners only “in the Pickwickian sense; if we try we can break out of our framework at any time.” By this he meant that conventions were “user friendly,” and that we could, with conscious effort, always change our minds about them and remake them to our needs. It is what we might call, in a slightly different sense, Lacan's “Pickwickian” recognition of the instability of language which warns us that, though we are not prisoners of signifying conventions, revolution is nevertheless not permanent; it involves the change of much more than our minds.

Joan Copjec

Most of the following documents were previously published, along with others, as supplements to Ornica?, the journal of the Champ freudien: La scission de 1953 appeared in October 1976 as supplement to no. 7 and L'excommunication in January 1977 as supplement to no. 8. The “Introduction to the Names-of-the-Father Seminar” is published here for the first time. We wish to thank Jacques-Alain Miller for permission to publish these documents.

My dear Loew,¹

If I have not written you earlier concerning the—(literally) extravagant—events that our group² has just traversed, it is for reasons of solidarity which governed my behavior for as long as I belonged to the group. That bond, as you know, is now broken. I have let a few days elapse, as much in order to allow the veritable sense of release brought by that break to produce its effects as in order to devote myself, first off, to setting up a working community that promises to be most auspicious:³ unexpectedly so, I would say, had we not rediscovered precisely the fruit of our effort these last years, the meaning of our work, the principles of our teaching, in brief, everything that we thought for long months was going to be stolen from us and that *would* have been, in the most pernicious manner, for those whom we introduced to the discipline of psychoanalysis.

Let it suffice for me to tell you that I inaugurated the scientific life of the new Société Française de Psychanalyse last Wednesday in the amphitheater of the Clinic which you know, dear Loew, with a talk on “the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real,” before an audience of 63 individuals, of whom 45 have already declared their adherence, as candidates, to our teaching and our works.

Lagache,⁴ whose rigorous conduct since the beginning of our crisis has not faltered, presided over the session. Should anyone tell you that we represent the clan of psychologists, don't believe a word of it: we will show you, list in

1. Loewenstein, who was Lacan's training analyst from 1932 to 1938, was also the analyst of the two other principles referred to in this letter, Sacha Nacht and Daniel Lagache. Born in Poland, Loewenstein would emigrate to New York during the War, where he would be a principal proponent of ego psychology.

(The footnotes in this dossier, except those in brackets, were contributed by Jeffrey Mehlman.)

2. Société Psychanalytique de Paris

3. Société Française de Psychanalyse

4. Daniel Lagache, a psychoanalyst and Sorbonne professor, was a proponent of integrating psychoanalysis into a general theory of psychology. He saw in the University the institutional ethos best suited for guiding the organization of the practice of psychoanalysis.

hand, that we have as our students more physicians than the former Société, and among the most qualified of them. It's not for us, moreover, to take sole credit for it. For to be fair, one would have to take into account the insane behavior of that crew which saw in the founding of the Institute⁵ the opportunity to confiscate for its advantage the truly enormous authority that the former Société had taken on in relation to the students. That authority, based on the good faith of people who found in the very experience of their own analysis and of their supervision the wherewithal to justify the grounds of the commitments and rules imposed on them, was suddenly presented to them in the most autocratic and disagreeable guise. Instead of a college of respected elders, among whom each according to his affinities found his masters and channels of recourse, they saw emerge the sole silhouette of our former comrade Nacht,⁶ concerning which you know that it was never distinguished by its grace, but which, faced with unanticipated difficulties, manifested itself through a lack of tact and decorum, a brutality of speech, a contempt for individuals that I would not mention here if it were not destined to be the object of student fabrication for years to come. Supporting him were two newcomers without training experience: Lebovici,⁷ whose nervousness, the result of the daily mistreatment to which he is subject in his service at the hospital (I think you know enough about the kind of relation that occasionally is established between a student and his patron for me not to need to expatiate on it), always made the most disagreeable impression on the students, to whom he seemed a rather "bad egg." The other one, Bénassy, a fellow who is not uncultivated, who suddenly showed himself (to the stupefaction of all) to be possessed of the mentality of a sergeant, the promoter of the most meddlesome and cantankerous of measures, instituting a roll call in courses attended by people whose hair was already gray, confronting the general insurrection with the most ludicrous confessions—"I must admit that in founding this Institute, we had forgotten about you"—only to conclude, moreover: "now it's too late: enjoy your oblivion." And to top the whole thing off, a post of general coordinator placed in the hands of a young man⁸ chosen by Nacht for his notorious mediocrity, and whose name won't mean anything to you since he was not even a member of the Society when he was promoted to the post. He suddenly found himself with the function of assigning to analysts in training their supervisors, and even—to those already accepted—their analysts. Absurd in his initiatives, bombarding the students with

the most disconcerting administrative notes (even though they were, alas, secretly in accordance with Nacht's directives), he drove their disarray to a pitch and must be considered one of the causes of the failure of the Institute (for can there be any other term for a situation in which there remain approximately 25 students of the 83 called on to enroll).

That is where we are.

In order to analyze for you the inner mechanism of things, I must grant Nacht the justice of acknowledging that he never wavered or flinched in the pursuit of his design. And that if he still groups around him a majority of our former colleagues, he owes it to a consistency in his policies that would be worthy of our respect did they not proceed no less constantly through the most utterly unscrupulous of means.

If he thought that he would win me over to his game by patiently courting me over the years, I can agree that his disappointment must have been severe. And yet from that relationship he derived only benefits: information, ideas, readings for which he was poorly prepared for lack of grounding. He was welcomed by my wife and found in my brother-in-law, the painter Masson, the hospitality that permitted him to remarry at a remove from the anonymity of the big city, in the cordial atmosphere of a little Provençal village.⁹ It was precisely last July, and my wife and I were witnesses.

Already at the time, however, he could sense my disapproval of the quite improper manner in which he had managed to get himself elected—and for five years—to the position of director of an Institute that did not yet exist. Without the Assembly's having been forewarned by an agenda, the principle, the length of the term, and his own proposal of himself as sole candidate were carried off by a voice vote, concerning which the best among his supporters were agreed only a few months ago that it was a "fascist" procedure. On that occasion once again, I had concluded the year with an address that was followed by a discussion of great warmth. And the proposals came as a surprise to the Assembly. I must confess that I voted for the first, although a bit vexed, but was literally stupefied when I saw that the second followed immediately thereafter. Nacht did not appear to me to be unworthy of exercising the functions of director, but at the time we did not even know in what they were to consist. For at the time there was not yet anything of the Institute, neither program nor statutes, only a building suddenly found by him and adopted as an emergency measure despite its inconveniences, whereas all the objections, obstacles, and finally the refusals (which until then had eliminated—we have written proof—all the choices proposed for a foundation whose delay had impeded our work for years) had previously stemmed from him. The vote for his name, nevertheless, was far from

9. In Le Tholonet, outside Aix-en-Provence, at the home of André Masson, Sylvia Bataille's brother-in-law.

5. The Institute was to be the teaching arm of the Société Psychanalytique de Paris, and potentially the locus of its real power.

6. Sacha Nacht, elected president of the Société Psychanalytique de Paris in 1949, was a leading French advocate of the "medicalization" of psychoanalysis, the elimination of all but licensed physicians from the profession.

7. In 1975, Serge Lebovici became the only Frenchman ever to serve as president of the International Psychoanalytic Association.

8. Henri Sauguet

unanimous, others, and specifically Lagache, who were more astute than I, having abstained.

My confidence in him on essential matters was, I should say, intact, and when, thanks to his efforts, the Institute was physically ready in November, it was shattering for me to hear from his own mouth with what cynicism he planned to make a purely political use of it: "giving loads of courses," for example, to those whose action he planned to neutralize; abandoning completely the question of the defense of nonphysicians whom we had welcomed in large numbers among our students, despite their vulnerability in a certain number of lawsuits then underway; proposing as a slogan destined to win over a small group the officialization of the diploma of psychoanalysis in France, concerning which he knew quite well that without an entirely unexpected success in some political procedure which would even then be subject to caution, the Council of the *Ordre des Médecins* would always be opposed to it; domesticating, thanks to that lure, the rather impressive numbers of those who had had recourse to us since the war, attesting to their immense need of a truly comprehensive technique for the mentally ill—and organizing on those bases what the adherents of his group admitted out loud when they deemed themselves masters of the situation: a "roadblock" destined to submit to the authority of a small team access to the exercise of the profession.

Teaching was thus not the aim of the Institute, but the means of domination over the very individuals awaiting it with a hope whose manifestations were quite moving. And they were going to pay dearly for it (which I mean quite literally, as you will see in a moment).

I did not conceal from Nacht my disapproval, whose nature he at first did not understand. "It's in your interest." "You've got a golden situation in this; why do you want to spoil it?" How many times did I hear that appeal each time, during those months of sordid struggle, that my support, still withheld, would have caused the balance to shift in their favor.

The opposition, unfortunately for us, was initiated on rather wobbly grounds. Nacht, sure of his position, thought he could get rid of the person of the Princess,¹⁰ who was at the time quite committed to the defense of Madame Williams,¹¹ of whom he dared to say publicly that it was regrettable that she had been acquitted by the court: he dismissed the Princess symbolically from our counsels by refusing to receive her.

10. Marie Bonaparte, Princess of Greece, the French psychoanalyst closest to Freud personally, was a fervent adversary of Lacan's. In *La Dernière Bonaparte* (Paris, Perrin, 1982), Célia Bertin has determined that she was the mistress of Loewenstein, a circumstance of which Lacan was apparently not aware.

11. Margaret Clark-Williams was a lay analyst sued by the French medical guild for the illegal practice of medicine. She was first acquitted (1952), then found guilty (1953) in a trial in which Nacht had testified rather ambiguously.

To be sure, the activities of that person may be considered as having always been nefarious in our group. The social prestige she represents can only falsify relationships, that which she derives from her role with Freud allows her to be listened to by all with a patience resembling approval; the respect due an elderly woman brings with it a tolerance for her views which demoralizes the young in whose eyes we appear in a ludicrous posture of submissiveness.

At the time I did not know what I have learned since about her incessant maneuvers in the past to preserve her privileges within the group.

She availed herself—in order to make her way back in—of the first of the extravagances to which Nacht and his adherents have ceaselessly devoted themselves, and which, nevertheless, have led them only, after long months, to their downfall, so great is the power of a coherent minority.

The Educational Committee was informed one day, forty-eight hours in advance, that it was to receive important advice at its next meeting from the Directorial Committee (a committee of which no one had as yet heard that it was functioning). It turned out that it was to receive a curriculum that was not only remarkably weak, but which had plainly been made in order to relegate to the shadows all that had been done until then through the initiative of individuals, and specifically my own seminar of texts that twenty-five students, under no obligation whatsoever, had been attending for a year and a half with unflinching faithfulness—all to the sole benefit of Nacht's so-called technical seminar, which turned out, by absorbing on its own the activity of the "third year," to be the crowning experience of psychoanalytic training. In order to underscore for you the thrust of the thing: my seminar restricted to the "first year" was scheduled for the same time (a unique occurrence in the curriculum) as a seminar attributed to Lagache under the same heading (with the single difference that the texts assigned to Lagache were inaccessible to readers of French).

To the dish that had been served up to us in a tone of "Don't you find it excellent?" by the accomplices (or jokers) who had cooked it up in private, there was added a dessert in similar taste: it was, we were told, a matter of political urgency that Nacht (whose term had already been extended three times beyond the statutory limit) be maintained as President of the Society until the vote on the statutes of the Institute, which remained in an undetermined state, and of which we were led to understand that they would have to undergo a long period before reaching fruition.

I must say that I returned home in a state of prodigious gaiety and remained for fifteen days without revealing anything to anyone. I will skip the fact that Nacht, in whose house I had lunched the day before that first memorable day, had assured me of his intention of finally leaving the presidency to me—a curious move for which he never found any other excuse than that his wife had advised him against troubling me by speaking to me of what would be proposed

the next day!! Most remarkable of all is that he appears to have actually held her responsible for having thus "altered our relationship."

All of this, of course, was used by the Princess in order to agitate the group. In the meanwhile, Lagache came to see me in order to argue how regrettable it was that we had abandoned for so long to Nacht a representative function for which the very neutrality, if not the nullity of his doctrinal positions had appeared to us to render him particularly well suited, and which he had held, in fact, with dignity, by concluding every discussion that was the slightest bit stimulating with comments amounting to regarding the object as a matter of indifference, all things considered, in the light of his experience—all spoken in a tone whose benignness might pass as happily appropriate to his function.

A change of style might be favorably anticipated, now that the foundation of the Institute was theoretically to return to the Society a greater availability for doctrinal work. My designation for the presidency was to meet with the agreement of all.

At an exceptional session, obtained by the Princess, Lagache thus lanced the abscess with great courage, on the theme: "Work cannot go on in this manner in the Society, since the majority of its members are unhappy with it." The confluence of those remarks with the attacks of the Princess (whose style you are acquainted with) set off a powder keg, but served, alas!, to crystallize around Nacht a "medical" core, concerning which one can only regret that it was in the minority, since Nacht availed himself of it in order to nurse within it a siege mentality which gave it a coherence that it had absolutely not had on any level—be it of doctrine, of technique, or even of friendship.

With utter hypocrisy, Nacht chose to see in it the mark of a mission conferred on him by the group. His technique was consistent: any manifestation coming from the other side, no matter how innocent (Favez's candidacy as a titular member,¹² for example) was presented to his partisans as a sign of a plot.

The weeks of crisis that followed were characterized by commitments that he managed to have *signed* by the eight grouped around him. The principle of the matter was that for him to be able to succeed in pursuing the task of the Institute, he had to be "master in his own house," that is, to remain president of the Educational Committee at the same time that he was director of the Institute, since it had to be admitted that he could not be kept longer in a presidency that would revert to me (which was agreed), but to which had been joined until then the function of presiding over the Committee.

It was on that point that the battle was joined.

During all that time, and from the very first session, I had refrained from

any personal attack against Nacht and limited my opposition to my votes. I constrained myself—which was sufficiently indicated by the functions entrusted to me with the consent of all—to play the role of a mediator.

At meetings in the Princess's home, I maintained against all and without faltering the principle that the Directorship of the Institute had to be reserved for he who had taken the initiative to found it—all the witnesses of my action will confirm as much for you—and despite all pressures, I never accepted that I might replace him, except in case of ultimate necessity.

It was quite in spite of myself that I was witness to the astonishing telephone calls from the Princess to Anna Freud, in which our adversaries were described by her as gangsters and in which she raised the question of whether or not she knew if the International Association would recognize their group in the event of a secession (to which she received the answer that they would certainly be recognized, as had occurred in the case of other splits on a national scale).¹³

Secession was, in fact, from the beginning the vehicle of blackmail of what was at the time the Nacht group, and it was ceaselessly bandied about until it itself became a majority.

Here is how the thing came about. Resignation as a tool of blackmail could not be pursued by the Directorial Committee of the Institute without their ultimately being forced into it. Normally, the Educational Committee should have picked up the charge and it was again the partisans of Nacht who created an obstruction.

At that point, I felt that I should accept it, believing myself to be alone able to implement an arbitrage. I was indeed elected to the post, did not take on any scientific Secretary, although both Lagache and Bouvet¹⁴ would certainly have agreed to offer me their help, and immediately declared that I considered myself to be no more than temporary director with the aim of arriving at statutes that might meet with the agreement of all, and the following day I convoked the eight members of the Nacht group to meet with me in order to study the situation. They all accepted individually, only subsequently to decline on orders from Nacht.

I then undertook what seemed to me to be the only effort that might have a sane outcome. I withdrew for eight days (it was the Christmas vacation), far from all contact with anyone, and elaborated the principles of an Institute of the sort that seemed to me to ensure instruction open to the diversity of minds that we must satisfy and to prolong the tradition of the Society.

There was in that proposal—which all acknowledged to contain ideas for

13. This information turned out to be incorrect; see the Report of the XVIIIth Congress of the IPA reprinted below, pp. 72-75.

14. Maurice Bouvet; his writings on libidinal phases of development are the object of a sustained critique in Lacan's seminar of 1956-1957, "La relation d'objet et les structures freudiennes."

12. "Titular members" were empowered to perform training analyses; "adhering members" could conduct only "therapeutic" analyses.

the future—nothing that resembled a compromise motion. If I took into account the present situation, it was solely in the form I wanted to retain for it: being as close as possible to the proposal already presented—all this in order to avoid the conflict of vanities that might have erupted at the idea that I was introducing “my statute.” To the delicate problem of the presidency of the commission I brought a solution that was, to be sure, a bit complex, but which, given the stiffening of minds, appeared to me to be the only one that might make them listen to reason. In sum, I hoped to bring the opponents back to notions of principle.

That was where I failed: it was objected to me that the form of the so-called statutes was not juridical. That was true and I had never hoped that they would be voted on as they were, but that they would be the starting point for a state of harmony at last restored, with a perspective placing the accent on teaching itself and not on its political incidences.

The mere fact that I failed to mention either the Princess or her honorary functions was sufficient to decide everything.

In a personal interview that she had requested with Nacht, and which upon leaving dinner at my house she had the effrontery to announce to us (Lagache, Bouvet, and myself), she carried on with him for an hour and a half, with the entire Society marking time while waiting for them, and concluded a treaty with Nacht, whose terms were revealed to us only by the subsequent sequence of events.

One of its first effects was that she found me among her followers who would permit her to assure Nacht of his majority [an illegible word], a rival for the post of president in the person of Cénac, you may imagine with what entirely disinterested intention of “conciliation” he accepted the role. I was nevertheless elected president.¹⁵

And thereby I became the symbol of a resistance to a long process whose stages will be indicated to you by a report of Lagache’s,¹⁶ and through which Nacht achieved point by point what had been his intention (those who supported me knew it from the beginning): ensuring, through a massive entry of the directorial committee (including the administrative secretary!) into the Educational Committee, a permanent majority in the ordinary and extraordinary functioning of that Committee: that is, having the subjects examined at every stage by a commission of four members only, the director of the Institute being the sole permanent element having, to be sure, a preponderant voice, which, given the fact that it is his secretary who designates the three others, assures him, you can understand this, I think, of a rather handsome probability that he will never be countered, etc.

15. Lacan defeated Michel Cénac in the third round of balloting on January 21, 1953.

16. Lagache’s report appears in *La scission de 1953*, a supplement to *Œuvres*, no. 7, 1976.

The success of those proposals—concerning each of which I had on a previous occasion heard one or several members of his own group affirm that it was an excess to which he would never lend his support—was obtained, nevertheless, in every case thanks to an expertly calculated technique that consisted of the Princess’s reintroducing the previously rejected proposal under circumstances in which, given the fact that the entirety of those present had not been forewarned, the majority revealed itself to be favorable.

This little game, which was demoralizing for the opposition itself, took four months before coming to an end and was crowned by a special session devoted to bestowing on Princess Marie Bonaparte the reward for her good and loyal services (which she had been obliged to wait for until then) by definitively including her—for life—among the number of the members of the Administrative Council of the (medical) Institute of Psychoanalysis, an organ which, as we learned from dispatches to the press, definitively unburdens the Société Psychanalytique de Paris of everything dealing with the instruction and licensing of psychoanalysts.

You will be able to see from an open letter written by Juliette Boutonnier what the standard of existence of the unfortunate Society had become during this time and how the “gang” (*dixit* the Princess) busied itself with secret meetings in the directorial chambers of the Institute, from which it emerged, at whatever time the futile “works” to which it had henceforth consigned the Society came to an end, for the administrative session at which serious matters could begin to be discussed.

The last of these, as you know, consisted in finally removing the President of the Society¹⁷ so that the blunder of his unexpected election might at last be corrected, and replacing him, according to M. Lebovici’s very words, with an even more insignificant (and consequently more docile) personality than the one who had been unsuccessful the first time in opposing him.

It’s at this juncture that we reencounter the notorious students, who had been forgotten in the whole affair.

The students, indeed, who had been asked, as soon as the Institute opened in March, to pay absolutely exorbitant enrollment fees, at this time—that is, during this ongoing struggle, of which none of us defending the students, throughout the entire year, had made the slightest mention in their presence—had dared to issue a number of demands (and did so, moreover, in the most respectful manner vis-à-vis their directors and teachers), and it was in the form of their response that the latter, in turn, began to lose face. One of them did not hesitate to tell the students that he was losing 200,000 francs every month in this little operation; the same one went further, saying, in effect, that if they were being asked for a lot of money, psychoanalysis, on the other hand, was a profession that allowed one to earn a lot later on.

17. Lacan himself.

The very same one did not hesitate to say to the face of one of the delegates presenting him with the griefs of his comrades that the role he was playing augured rather poorly for his analytic future. For every demonstration the standard response was: "You are revealing to what an extent you are poorly analyzed" (it was a question, by the way, of their own students).

Under those circumstances, one need not be surprised that the unsuccessful petitioners came to believe that they were making a displacement, and they were put on the track of a more adequate interpretation of their reactions by the tenor of the commitments to the Institute which they were asked to sign a second time, after they had already done so quite willingly in relation to the good old Société. That awakened their suspicions and they asked to see the statutes.

The effect produced was indescribable. This was the moment chosen by the group of our increasingly flustered colleagues (who refused to understand anything of what was transpiring) to make an example. They had tried to intimidate the students by announcing to them that a Disciplinary Commission was to be formed and by proposing to name a former magistrate (sic!) to head it. That had a certain effect. But it would have been hard for that effect to be definitive on individuals who had not yet formally committed themselves to the Institute. How could they think that by striking on high, the intimidation would be decisive? A certain Pasche, a former existentialist turned Jacobin of the new institution, who, from the very first conflicts, told me that what was at stake was having in hand a power whose effects were to be pressed "to their ultimate consequences," let me know — with all the esteem in which he held both my person and my teaching, whose terms had often proved illuminating for him — that my very presence in the position I occupied was at the origin of the students' resistance, that it was because they knew themselves to be supported by me from within that their resistance continued unabated and that it would be appropriate to separate us.

I will remember all my life, through the comments of that Robespierre (which retained a certain decorum in their madness), the convulsed faces of those participating in that bizarre manhunt. It was not a pretty sight and, resisting their barks, I accorded myself the luxury of seeing it a second time.

To tell the truth, the second time was far calmer. The motion of lack of confidence proposed by Madame Odette Codet on behalf of the Princess, who was sure of her course, was passed. But a certain number of those, in whom the previous spectacle had stirred in their fiber a human horror, left definitively in order to found a new Society and I immediately joined them.

You now know the whole story of the affair. And you can imagine what an experience it was for me. I was subjected to the ordeal of the most thoroughgoing and wrenching betrayal. An individual, Nacht, whom I had admitted to my friendship, behaved in such a manner that every time his wife, who was, by the way, overwhelmed by the affair, telephoned mine, I was able to find in the

circumstance an unmistakable clue that within 48 hours a new blow was to follow.

Nothing was spared by him in his attacks on me. An old discussion engaged on the terrain of theory and practice — and which bore on a technique that (be it justified or not) I had defended publicly, to wit: the systematic use of shorter sessions in certain analyses, and in particular in training analyses, in which the specific nature of the resistances seemed to me to justify the technique. This was revived by him even though I had publicly declared that since we were beginning to organize the profession, I would submit to the standards of a professional ruling and not revert to the practice no matter what interest I regarded it as having, and even though I had gradually adjusted to the rule the previous year and definitively conformed to the regulation time all my training analyses since the end of that year; it was impossible to find since then the slightest failing in that regard.

He recalled an alleged commitment made in February 1951, precisely concerning a particularly successful training analysis, to restrict myself to the commonly held standard, without attempting to remember that I had been authorized again in the month of December 1951 to present before the Society the reasons for that technique which I had in fact been pursuing in full sight and with the full knowledge of all.

The number of my students was turned into an objection against me by claiming that that was the sole motivation for the reduction in the time devoted to each one and by failing to recall that all those who had previously taken the Committee's examination had been able to speak individually of the benefits they had derived from their training and to show in their supervision the sterling quality of that training.

Nacht, by reporting a comment alleged to have been made by one of our colleagues, a physician in a hospital (Madame Roudinesco,¹⁸ to give her name), concerning these facts — in a form that turned out to be false upon inquiry, to wit: that he, Nacht, had lied — succeeded, by conveying the allegation to each of our colleagues on the Committee in the course of a round of visits that took up a whole afternoon, in convincing several of them to sign an affidavit to the effect that I would indeed have taken the commitment in question during the meeting of the Committee in February 1951. All this done with the sole aim of producing it in that form the following day at a meeting of students on whom, by the way, it had no effect.

Everything was put to work so that my students might leave me. And after my departure from the Society, those students in analysis alleged to be

18. Jenny Roudinesco, a pediatrician and psychoanalyst in training, was the mother of the future historian of psychoanalysis in France, Elisabeth Roudinesco. After writing an open letter to Nacht and Lacan on the malaise among analysts in training, she was accused by the Nacht group of plotting with Lacan.

suspect for having suffered defects in their initiation were informed that they could henceforth spontaneously apply (that is, without my authorization) to be accredited for supervision before the Educational Committee.

Not one left me, nor even dreamed of it. And I dare say that my analyses continued without being appreciably affected by the whole tornado raging outside.

I can also tell you that what this ordeal has taught me of the maneuvers and the weaknesses of men is such that a page of my life has now been turned. I have seen how a friend is pressured step by step in a direction against you by a force stronger than himself, to what abdications the best come to advise you to yield (while taking your own good as their pretext), the frivolity with which each sees what does not affect his immediate interests, and how an honest and generous man may be won over to such enterprises, how, because of his fatigue, one might obtain from him the first concession made to the desire for peace, an infamy.

I have seen what can happen in a society of "analyzed" individuals, and I knew from Freud himself that it goes beyond anything one might imagine: and indeed I would never have imagined *that*. I now see, having brought a few of its features back to life for you, what these nightmarish months may have been for me, and that, in truth, I have been able to survive them only by virtue of continuing, through all the frightful emotions these months afforded me, my seminars of reading and supervision, without having either missed them a single time or, I believe, having allowed their inspiration and quality to wane. Quite to the contrary, this year has been particularly fruitful, and I believe I have brought genuine progress to the theory and techniques specific to obsessional neurosis.

Yes, I have managed to live thanks to that labor, which was at times executed in true despair—and also thanks to a presence whose succor did not wane for an instant, even though she (yes, she is my wife) was not shielded from the attempts to unsettle the firmness which I have seen her to possess at certain moments. Yes, believe me, Loew, I don't want to tell you about the most abject part, but that too existed.

What is most wrenching for me is perhaps the attitude of a certain number of titular and adhering members. Thank God, the youngest of them showed themselves to be of a different stamp, as I told you. But among those who knew the Occupation and the years preceding it, I observed with terror a conception of human relations revealed in the style and forms that can be seen flourishing in the people's democracies. The analogy was striking, and the group effects resulting from it have taught me more about the problem, which has always fascinated me, of the so-called Prague-type trial than all my reflections—which had advanced rather far, all the same—on the subject.

I think of the kind of faith which carries me now beyond all that, which almost makes me forget it; yes, it is composed of a capacity for forgetting which

is a function of that precious audience of those who followed me—who would never have forgotten me, even if I had been alone in walking out—of what I am going to write for Rome, my report on the function of language in psychoanalysis, of the fact that I know better and better what it is mine to say about an experience which I have only these last years been able to recognize and solely thereby truly to master.

I hope to see you in London. Whatever happens, rest assured that you will encounter there a man more convinced of his duties and his destiny.

Lagache will bring the file on the affair there: and you will see from it that it was not we who were engaging in divisiveness.

These pages were not written in order to add to that file—but in order to transmit to you, in the frank tone that our particular relationship allows us, the kind of living testimony without which a history cannot be written. No objectivity can be achieved in human matters without that subjective basis.

That is why I am authorizing you to make use of it with whomever you believe capable of understanding it—and specifically Heinz Hartmann,¹⁹ to whom, moreover, I shall send a message.

You know, Loew, that if you come to France before or after the Congress, my wife and I will be happy if you come with your wife for the visit at our country house to which you have long been invited. I could tell you much more about what we are all expecting from the future of our work. We have given ourselves over to it in a manner sufficiently wholehearted to find ourselves, in our relations with you, to be very tardy indeed.

Rest assured, though, that our loyalty to your person remains unchanged.

Jacques Lacan
July 14, 1953

Second Manuscript

We will indeed come there with our files, and prepared to support our position.

Despite formal appearances, we have not engaged in any secession.

The members who were obliged to break away from the Society were for years the object of an insulting attitude on the part of a group in the Society pretending to possess in relation to them I know not what position of scientific superiority, and we will give you proof of that veritable rejection. They nevertheless remained, patiently, in a position of loyal collaboration. But the intimation that they should leave was formally made to them by the aforementioned Pasche as well as to the president then in office.

As for the latter, to wit your servant Lacan, his situation, as you have just

19. Prominent ego psychoanalyst and president of the IPA from 1953 to 1959.

seen, was different. Accorded star-billing during recent years by the group in question, who were deriving a certain lustre as well as advantage from the success of his teaching, he dissented from them over questions of principle, and thereafter his very desire to maintain a bond among all the elements of the Society was held to be criminal. I have proof of this as well.

Moreover, the time had come when Nacht could no longer assume the mediating function that had suited him during the period in which the Society was being reconstituted. The absolute lack of doctrinal and technical coherence in the group had seemed to dictate leaving to him a position for which he seemed designated by his very unimpressiveness. He thus managed to transform the service he was rendering into a hegemony. But already the wind was changing, the very style of the debates on matters of doctrine (at the last Congress, for example) allowed for the emergence of a certain number of new personalities, the bearers of an authentic experience and a true power of expression.

Given that situation, since he was going to have to hand over his function of leadership, it was clear that he would no longer be anything at all. The comment comes from one of his own friends, who admits to having supported him for that very reason.

In fact he would have found his precise task had he consented to fulfill it within his own limits.

On the contrary, he perceived in all this an opportunity to stifle the life of the reemerging Society beneath the demands of a bureaucratic apparatus that was suddenly deemed worthy of grabbing hold of all our efforts. And this in order to benefit a clique he constituted expressly to that end, whose leading members he had until then astutely kept at a distance from the teaching experience. Which is what one of them expressed gloriously in these terms: "Until now I was an undesirable; now I am here for life."

Loew, I am telling you, no one was more careful in gauging his actions in relation to the rhythm of the group's progress.

For years, I maintained at a certain esoteric remove whatever might confound those minds still hesitating as to the value of psychoanalysis.

And it was just when an authentic life became possible that they decided to deny us access to it.

The thing was possible solely thanks to the contribution of that floating group for whom these questions have no meaning, the group marching to the orders of the Princess, whose sole true concern is maintaining her privileged position. It was arranged through a cynical deal, entirely worthy of those whom Lagache quite rightly designated by the term "a divisive faction without principles."

Divisiveness indeed is what was practiced by them, and from the very beginning of the crisis — in the form of openly blackmailing us with the threat of secession.

As incredible as it may now seem, it was in order to prevent them from

walking out that we went from concession to concession, to the point of losing, through fatigue with the whole game, someone who was initially quite loyal and devoted to us by virtue of the very affinities of his sensitive personality, but who, being physically too frail, ended up wearing himself out and not wanting to hear anything more of the tensions that were causing his deterioration.

Rest assured that the future will return to us many a one who is truly with us.

With us, who represent whatever there is of real — and not counterfeit — teaching in the Society.

For there is where the ordeal is turning increasingly in our favor. Believe me: Nacht's inaugural lecture on the history of psychoanalysis revealed to the students a level of ignorance that they are nowhere near forgetting. And it will soon be seen if, in the presence of an active rival Society, a teaching institute can maintain itself in the service of no other end than prestige.

For us, I can tell you, the break that was finally imposed on us was a liberation — and a happy one, since we were able to see, from the maturity with which the generation of analysts currently in training reacted, that the future was secure — and the delivery, however forced it may have appeared, was a salutary one.

Pardon me if I have gone on a bit, my dear Loew. The essential matter of these last lines could not be understood without the sketch I have given you of a story that has taken away long hours of our work this year.

I wanted you to feel how bitter this experience has been for us, and how crucial as well.

I am authorizing you to convey this, whatever its confessional tone, which was authorized by our particular relationship, to Heinz Hartman, whose person I have always held in particular esteem.

I fear that some misunderstanding may remain between us because of the talk (which was strangled by time: they reduced my 20 minutes to 12 in extremis) I gave at Amsterdam. To tell the truth, that was why I preferred not to publish it even though it would take on its meaning in the context of what can now appear and will allow the relation between our positions to be clearly established. He will then see how little they are opposed to each other.

The contrary would have astonished you, dear Loew, since those positions are yours and that is where your pupil started out.

I hope to see you soon, and should you come to France either before or after London, Sylvia and I renew to you and your wife that invitation to come see us in our country house to which we had so hoped you would come at the time of the penultimate Congress of Psychoanalysis in the French Language.

Convey my respects to your wife — and we say to you, in all faithfulness, "we'll see you soon."

Letter to
Heinz Hartmann

Dear Heinz Hartmann,

I wrote Loewenstein the letter of unadorned testimony I felt I owed to him who trained me, and I authorized him to convey it to you as well as to any individual in a position to gauge the precise bearing of such a document.

You know, I believe, that I did not initiate the secession, that I followed those witnesses of and participants in what has been going on here for years who understood that it was necessary and placed their confidence in 45 candidates who had themselves rebelled at the manner in which the team at the newly founded Institute conceived the relation between masters and students.

The members of that team have admitted for months to whoever wanted to hear it that that Institute had been made against us, that is against those whom they finally forced to take leave of them.

I have always collaborated loyally with my colleagues and ordered my activity and my utterances for the good of the community. They derived advantage and prestige from that circumstance during the years of our rebirth after the war, a rebirth concerning which it may be judged just how much effort was required of us once one considers how few of us there were who were able to be effective. And in order to strike down those who had given the most to both the training and the scientific life of the Society, our adversaries did not hesitate to make use of the group of those very individuals of whom they spoke only a few months prior to that, in their customary style, as the dead wood of the Society.

If they now reproach me with alleged freedoms taken with analytic technique, they were always in a position to control their effects, and did not judge them to be unfavorable. And it is at the very time that I have for months been in conformity with the common rule on the accepted principle of professional supervision that they make use of it as a weapon against me.

But in order to understand it, you have only to see what is transpiring: those who are being promoted to replace me at the Rome Congress designate themselves: it is they who for months have been directing the operation.

I am not speaking of Nacht, and I will never speak of him again. I have

given myself over entirely to teaching and the training of students. I have given them a love for our technique and I have helped them in my supervisions and my seminars by responding to a need to know and to understand which elsewhere encountered only suspicion and inane irony.

If you are unable to inquire at the source to find out what I have brought to each of our students, you are able to realize that the two-thirds majority which is our following is not due solely to the errors of those whom we are indeed obliged to call our adversaries.

Dear Heinz Hartmann, I may regret, no doubt, that the chaotic events of these last years, then the extreme isolation that is a condition of our professional life, have prevented me from making myself better known to you.

But I am counting on your authority in order that the genuine labor—so deeply concerned with maintaining Freud's teaching alive—that is ours be respected, that a tone of reason be restored to a struggle that is as sterile in its forms as it is base in its motivations, and that it be brought to an equitable measure of restraint in order to preserve the public that psychoanalysis is currently in the process of conquering in France and to whom this struggle can only be a disservice.

Kindly extend my respects to your wife, and rest assured of my trust and my faithfulness.

J. L.
July 21, 1953

XVIIIth Congress of the
International Psycho-Analytical
Association. Report from the
President, Dr. Heinz Hartmann*

In France, the *Paris Psycho-Analytical Society*, owing to the intense energy of some of its members, has made an important step forward in reestablishing, after an interval of many years, an Institute in 1953. As to its organization, this Institute is partly independent of the Society. We wish to congratulate our French colleagues on their achievement. Unfortunately I have to inform you that even more recently a division has come about in this Society. A few weeks ago five members resigned. . . . By this act they have also lost membership in the International Association. They are: Drs. Lagache, Lacan, Dolto, Favez-Boutonnier, and Reverchon-Jouve. This question has been widely discussed. The resignations occurred after a meeting of the Paris Society at which Dr. Lacan, then president, had received a vote of no-confidence in the society. The doubts concerned serious deviations of training practices counter to the experiences and convictions of the majority. On the one hand, the members who resigned have now formed a new group and asked for recognition. They claim that it was rather incompatibilities of character that caused the difficulties and induced them to move. The Central Executive feels that before any decision can be reached the situation ought to be more thoroughly clarified than could be done at the Congress and it has nominated a committee to ascertain the facts and report them. The committee consists of Dr. K. R. Eissler, Dr. Greenacre, Mrs. H. Hoffer, Dr. Lampl-de Groot, Dr. Winnicott.

Dr. Loewenstein stresses the fact that, according to information received by him, the majority of students followed the split-off group. He points to the dangers inherent in such a split to students and patients. He pleads for tolerance on both sides and for the safeguarding of the training of students and the analyses of their patients irrespective of the side to which the students adhere.

Dr. Hartmann: Thank you, Dr. Loewenstein, a very important suggestion.

Mme. Bonaparte is in favor of studying the situation carefully. She affirms that the split occurred because of divergence in technique. She considers the

* This report first appeared in the *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, vol. XXXV (1954), pp. 272-278. We wish to thank the International Psychoanalytical Association for permission to reprint the following excerpt.

question of technique a fundamental one in analysis in general, and in the training of analysts in particular. Therefore, she thinks that a careful examination of the technique used by the members of the new group is required, particularly in view of the fact that one of these members two years ago promised to change his technique, but did not keep his promise.

Dr. Nacht corrects *Dr. Loewenstein* as to the number of students who left the Institute. Fifty per cent of the students are in analysis with members of the Paris Psycho-Analytical Society. In answer to *Dr. Loewenstein's* plea for tolerance towards students and their patients, he reads the following letter sent to *Dr. Lagache* on June 18, 1953: "The Members of the Council, seeing that your collaboration should no longer be accepted, has to find someone else for the classes and courses you were going to direct, and in order to avoid hardship for both trainees and patients, the members of the Council asked that an arrangement might be arrived at by which full freedom will be left to the trainee and that no pressure will be exercised on him from whatever side it may be. . . ."

Dr. Loewenstein expresses his pleasure about this letter, but states that he heard from two students that their supervision had been cancelled the day after they left the Institute. He hopes that his was only an isolated incident and appreciates *Dr. Nacht's* and the Educational Committee's decision not to let students and patients suffer from the split among the "parents."

Miss Freud states that as a child analyst she had often been asked by parents to save children from the consequences of divorce, and has never been able to do so. The second point concerns what *Dr. Nacht* said about the gesture extended toward students of the other side being made in the right spirit. It is a well-known fact that it is nearly impossible to supervise the work of a candidate whose training analysis for some reason or another is incomplete, insufficient, or carried on on different grounds. There has to be some form of harmony between the work of training analyst and supervisor. It is exactly the complexity of these questions which has determined the Central Executive's recommendation that this matter should not be thrashed out here, which would not give insight into all points, but to entrust it to a committee which consists of purely objective people well versed in the matters of psycho-analytical training.

Dr. Zilboorg refers to the splits of the New York Society where neither group lost membership in the International Association and advocates that the members who resigned from the Paris Society should retain membership in the International Association during the period of investigation.

Dr. Hartmann: In the case of the split of the New York Society, those who left remained members of the International Association because they were members of the American Association and the American Association is a Component Society of the International. When *Dr. Lagache* and the others left the Paris Society, they did not retain their membership in the International Association, because the Paris Society is the only Component Society of the International in France.

Dr. Jones reminds *Dr. Zilboorg* that the Rado group was recognized by the American Association and therefore retained membership in the International Association. He also points out that the Central Executive is the proper body to deal with applications for membership of people outside the Society and that it is proper that they should investigate this new Society coming from outside before accepting it.

Dr. Atkin emphasizes the importance of the resolutions just adopted by Congress, namely, that matters of groups splitting off should be very carefully studied by the Executive Council of the International Psycho-Analytical Association, and secondly, the resolution of principle against the too ready fragmentation of various groups in the International. He states that in conversations with some of the members and students who resigned, the problem concerning training had not been mentioned at all, but the split had been explained by incompatibilities of personalities. He professes himself against splits for such reasons, although a number of members of the International Psycho-Analytical Association seemed to find it justified to split off because of personal disagreements. The function of the International Association should be to propound and maintain policy and even to exercise authority in such matters. The French group should be asked to reconsider and to postpone any action until after the investigation of the Committee. If a split is unavoidable, it should be undertaken in the course of several years so that, in accordance with *Dr. Loewenstein's* suggestion, it will not be too traumatic for students and patients.

Miss Freud thinks that the Congress should be informed that an unfortunate step has already been taken by the leaving members of the French group. They have informed the non-analytic professional environment of their step in a circular which carries the quarrel, without giving reasons for it, into the outer world. Therefore, pacifying comes too late.

Dr. de Saussure expresses his pleasure at the adoption of the resolution concerning splits and thinks that this measure could have prevented the present situation in Paris. Since he used to be a member of the Paris Society, he feels most sympathetic with their recent troubles and hopes that, if no spirit of revenge prevails, a unity can be restored without sacrifice of standards. The objective Committee that has been appointed might be of help in unifying the two groups.

Dr. Loewenstein appeals again to the French colleagues to reduce damage as much as possible.

Dr. Hartmann: I am in favor of limiting this discussion because it involves a question that without intimate knowledge of facts cannot be decided and the Committee was appointed for that purpose.

Dr. Clifford Scott suggests provisional membership for the split-off group, since he assumes that they were not aware of the consequences of their action.

Dr. Benassy repudiates this assumption by referring to the public statement, which *Miss Freud* mentioned, in which they state that they do not see

why the International should not recognize them; this means that when they resigned they knew that by that fact they were resigning from the International Association. He believes that the students might suffer from internal dissensions as much as or more than from a definite split.

Dr. Balint suggests several different procedures for keeping the members of the split-off group in the International Association; e.g., membership at large; provisional recognition of the whole group; or individual membership in other Component Societies.

Mme. Bonaparte comes back to the problem of deviation in technique used by the dissenting members and emphasizes the necessity of the Committee's investigation of these problems, since the question of standards is of great importance for the development of psycho-analysis in France.

Dr. Hartmann: I am in favor of closing the discussion. I want your opinion. (*All were in favor of closing the discussion.*)

Dr. Loewenstein points to the fact that the members of the split-off group could not participate in this discussion, because they had lost membership in the International Association, which he considers as anomalous and unfair.

Dr. Hartmann: I feel we should leave all these questions to the Committee; its investigation will not take place until the next Congress. We shall ask this Committee to interview both sides and to report as soon as possible to the Central Executive. (*A motion was proposed and seconded to leave the discussion to an impartial Committee; they should hear both sides and report back to the Central Executive as soon as possible.*)

(*From the audience*): What is the status of the French colleagues pending investigation?

Miss Freud: The status is the one they created themselves by resignation. (*Motion passed; two against.*)

July 26, 1953

Letter to
D. W. Winnicott¹

Villa La Brigada — Parcs de Saint-Tropez — Saint-Tropez — Var

My very dear friend,

I have been carrying your letter *on me* since the 11th of February (let's say the 12th) when I received it. It is only now, after a few days of vacation, that I feel I have sufficient leisure to answer you as I would like (spare yourself—and myself as well—imagining what kind of lack of respite that represents).

Here I am rereading it and savoring as though afresh its kindness. Let us put an end to the shame that I feel at the erroneous alteration of your name, and not only in a textual citation, but also as an author honoring our table of contents.² An error indeed: the person who corrected the proofs, despite knowing your name as well as your articles, did not notice the typesetter's mistake. The ridicule is all ours; don't hold it against us.

As for the offer you have made me to come speak at the London Society, how can I not be touched by it when it comes accompanied by such deeply benevolent explanations? Presented as they are, how would I even dream of taking umbrage at those conventions, even if they recall to me what constantly wounds me?

I had too much to do to respond to your invitation before the vacation (I received your letter upon my return from Brussels, where I gave two lectures). But I shall come at the start of the new season whenever you like and under conditions that you will determine.

I devoted my year's seminar to attempting to posit the grounds for an Ethics of psychoanalysis. You will credit me, I think, sufficiently to imagine that I gauged the difficulties and audacity of the subject. The passion for work does not leave me time for any vain regrets.

1. [A photograph of this letter, written in Lacan's hand to Winnicott, was sent to me by Ellie Ragland-Sullivan, to whom I would like to convey my gratitude here. Gloria Gonzalez and M. Russell Grigg have been good enough to transcribe the text for publication. —J.-A. Miller]

Donald Winnicott had served on the first committee of the IPA evaluating the situation of the Société Française de Psychanalyse.

2. [One of the *t*'s in Winnicott had been dropped in the table of contents of *La Psychanalyse*, V, 1959, which contained a translation of Winnicott's "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena."]

I might perhaps nevertheless be harboring one today at your telling me of having been able neither to assimilate the meaning of my article nor to gauge its bearing.³

It is there that I can feel what my teaching loses at not having its normal diffusion within our community. And it is all the more perceptible to me when it concerns you, with whom I feel I have so many reasons to agree on things.

May I specify that I have chosen, for the memorial to Jones, to speak on his theory of symbolism—

1. because I consider thoroughly well-founded in principle his effort to situate in relation to metaphor, that is, to a figure of speech, the effects of so-called symbolism in analysis (regretting that that effort should have remained without sequel, before me);

2. because his failure is instructive, as are the failures of vigorous minds. The holes revealed by his undertaking designating the places where it ought to be rectified;

3. because I find in it a confirmation of my theses concerning the privileged function of the phallus: the way in which I derive it from its relations with the signifier is illustrated in a manner that is all the more striking in that it is without the author's awareness, by virtue of the fact that none of the examples that he is led to posit in order to satisfy his theory is anything other than a phallic symbol.

This, however, can be well understood solely by those who know how decisively I make things turn (for the thought of our action as well as for its technique) on the signifier's relations with the real. A position summarized (p. 9) in the affirmation that the "relation of the real to what is thought is not that of the signified to the signifier, and that the primacy that the real has over what is thought is inverted from the signifier to the signified."⁴

Let us say that the passivity implied in the verb *to signify* must be reversed, and it must be imagined that the signifier marks the real as much and more than it represents it.

Don't be mistaken. There is no idealism in this, nor even simple philosophy, but solely an effort to overthrow a prejudice whose sham plausibility may fuse with everything that creates the greatest obstacle to our experience, with everything that diverts us from the path in its exact configuration, with everything that leads us to camouflage it in order to get it accepted on the outside.

I admire in Jones a profound perception of the true contours of that experience, and I would have been able to find many another original term in his work, aphanisis, or the notion of privation as distinct from frustration, in which I would have been able to demonstrate what it is they contribute to what

3. [The article referred to (in *La Psychanalyse*, V) is "A la mémoire d'Ernest Jones: sur sa théorie du symbolisme." It was reprinted in *Écrits*, Paris, Seuil, 1966.]

4. [*Écrits*, p. 705.]

I myself teach. I have chosen the article on symbolism because it allowed me to clarify for my students certain difficult points of analytic theory and history.

That is what always guides me in my choice. Everything that I have written in the last seven years takes on value solely in the context of my teaching.

On the outside, you cannot know all that I have built on the basis of a distinction as simple, trenchant, and fundamental as that between desire and demand. It will appear with a few years delay in the form of a recasting of my communication at Royaumont (1958) in the next issue of *La Psychanalyse* (perhaps you recall the title: "The rules of the Cure and the lures of its power").

And yet how I do feel myself supported by and in agreement with your inquiries, in their content and in their style. Does not the "transitional object," all of whose merits I have shown to those close to me, indicate the site at which, precociously, that distinction of desire in relation to need is marked?

Now, however, it seems to me that I must reassemble all that effort in a work that captures what is essential in it. Even if I did not have the time to do it, I know that an impetus is given to a group by which a direction is maintained for sufficiently long to be transmitted even if its origin be forgotten.

How all that shall have been forged in this relative isolation is not a question that particularly concerns me. The confusion of tongues within the International Association relieves me of much regret at having pursued my career on the outside.

You perhaps know that this year we are conducting a small Congress with the Dutch in Amsterdam on feminine sexuality. Another subject neglected since Jones that I have felt obliged to place on the agenda. I am abstaining this time from offering a communication. I shall open the Congress and be less interested in intervening than in seeing what will be contributed to it by those whom I have trained.

I am here with my wife and my younger daughter. The other one, Laurence, my wife's daughter, whom you evoke with such kindness on the subject of the broken bottle in the kitchen, has given us much torment (of which we are proud) this year, having been arrested for her political relations. She is free now, but we nevertheless remain preoccupied with a matter that is not yet over.

We also have a nephew, who lived in my home during his studies as though he were a son, who has just been sentenced to two years in prison for his resistance to the Algerian war.

Let that complete for you the picture of what has been occupying an overly long silence. Let it help you to forgive me if I add that my thoughts have often gone out toward you and your wife, with all the friendship that we have pledged to you at this end *forever*.

J. Lacan
August 5, 1960

The International
Psycho-Analytical Association
Minute
The Study Group SFP

1. The Central Executive takes note that since the Edinburgh Congress:
 - a) The Study Group has gone to considerable lengths in putting its administration in order;
 - b) The Council and Training Committee of the Study Group are seeking to implement the Edinburgh Requirements.
2. In respect of the above matters, the Central Executive congratulates Dr. Leclaire as Secretary and President on the results achieved so far.
3. The Central Executive, however, also notes, concerning Dr. Lacan, that:
 - a) He continues to have a voice in training matters;
 - b) He does not observe the Edinburgh Requirements in his analytic practice with candidates in training;
 - c) He has hindered the Advisory Committee in its work with the Council.
4. The Central Executive Committee considers that Dr. Lacan cannot any longer be accepted as a training analyst for the Study Group, and that the Edinburgh Requirement that he be progressively withdrawn from training needs to be strictly defined and enforced.
5. In consequence, the Central Executive informs the Société Française de Psychanalyse, through Dr. Leclaire its President, that the measures set out in paragraph 6 below are essential. Unless, therefore, they are explicitly implemented, continued sponsorship of the Study Group is jeopardized.
6. The following measures are essential for continued sponsorship of the Study Group:
 - a) All Members, Associate Members, Stagiaires, and Candidates of the SFP should be informed that Dr. Lacan is no longer recognized as a training analyst. This notification should be completed by October 31, 1963.

b) All candidates in training analysis with Dr. Lacan are asked to inform the Training Committee whether or not they wish to continue training, with the understanding that a further period of training analysis with an analyst acceptable to the Training Committee will be required. This notification should be completed by December 31, 1963.

c) The Training Committee, in consultation with the Advisory Committee, will interview those candidates who have expressed their wish to continue training, in order to determine their suitability. These interviews should be completed by March 31, 1964. In all these matters, the Advisory Committee will offer advice both in respect to candidates' suitability and also on the choice of a second training analyst.

7. The Central Executive has invited the Advisory Committee as currently constituted to continue to act on its behalf. Completion of the various steps outlined above should therefore be communicated to Dr. Turquet, Secretary of the Advisory Committee, in order that he can make the necessary arrangements with the Training Committee.

8. The Central Executive recognizes that in exceptional circumstances individual candidates may not be able to conform to the timetable outlined above. In such circumstances, candidates may be considered on an individual basis.

9. Copies of this Minute are being sent to the Council and Training Committee of the SFP and to the Members of the Study Group who are Members-at-Large of the International Psycho-Analytical Association.

Stockholm
August 2, 1963

Introduction to the Names-of-the-Father Seminar

I don't intend to engage in anything in the order of a theatrical ploy. I shall not wait until the end of this seminar to tell you that this will be the last that I shall conduct.

For some, apprised of things that have been occurring, that will not be a surprise. It is for the others, out of respect for their presence, that I am making this declaration.

I request that absolute silence be maintained during the session.

Up until sometime quite late last night, when a certain bit of news was delivered to me, it was my belief that I would be giving you this year what I have been dispensing for ten years now.¹ My seminar for today was prepared with the same care as I have always devoted to it, every week, for the last ten years. I don't think I can do any better than offer it to you as it is, with my apologies for the fact that it will have no sequel.

I

I announced that I would speak this year of the Names-of-the-Father. It will not be possible for me, in the course of this single presentation, to convey to you the reason for the plural. At the least, you will perceive the beginning of an advancement I intended to introduce on a notion already initiated in the third year of my seminar, when I dealt with the Schreber case.

I will perhaps be more careful than ever before — since today it has been decided that I shall stop here — in punctuating for you, in my past teaching, the coordinates which allow the lineaments of this year's seminar to find their grounding. I wanted to link together the seminars of January 15, 22, 29 and February 5, 1958, concerning what I have called the paternal metaphor, and

1. On the night of November 19, 1963, Serge Leclaire informed Lacan that the S.F.P. had voted, in a complicated procedure, to refuse not to ratify the motion striking Lacan's name from the list of training analysts.

those following it, the seminars of December 20, 1961 and those following it, concerning the function of the proper name, the seminars of May 1960 concerning everything bearing on the drama of the father in Claudel's trilogy, and finally the seminar of December 20, 1961, followed by the seminars of January 1962.

One finds there a direction which has already advanced quite far in its structuration, which would have allowed me this year to take the next step. That next step follows from my seminar of last year on anxiety, and that is why I intend to show you wherein the relief it brought was necessary.

In the course of that seminar on anxiety, I was able to accord their full weight to formulae such as the following: *anxiety is an affect of the subject*—a formula which I did not put forward without subordinating it to the functions that I have long established in the structure of the subject, defined as the subject that speaks and is determined through an effect of the signifier.

At what time—if I may say *time*, let us say that that infernal term, for the while, refers only to the synchronic level—at what time is the subject affected with anxiety? That is what the framed diagram I put on the blackboard is intended to recall for you. In anxiety, the subject is affected by the desire of the Other. He is affected by it in a nondialectizable manner, and it is for that reason that anxiety, within the affectivity of the subject, is what does not deceive. In that *what does not deceive* you can see in outline at just how radical a level—more radical than anything hitherto designated thereby in Freud's discourse—its function as a signal is inscribed. That characterization is in conformity with the first formulations Freud gave concerning anxiety as a direct transformation of the libido.

Moreover, I have opposed the psychologizing tradition that distinguishes fear from anxiety by virtue of its correlates in reality. In this I have changed things, maintaining of anxiety—*it is not without an object*.

What is that object?: the object *petit a*, whose fundamental forms you have perceived sketched out as far as I have been able to take them. The object *petit a* is what falls from the subject in anxiety. It is precisely the same object that I delineated as the cause of desire. For the subject, there is substituted, for anxiety which does not deceive, what is to function by way of the object *petit a*. Thereupon hinges the function of the act.

This development was reserved for the future. And yet, I give you my word, it will not be totally lost for you, since, as of this moment, I have introduced it into the—written—part of a book I have promised for six months from now.²

Last year, I restricted myself to the function of the *petit a* in fantasy. There it takes on its function as support of desire, in so far as desire is the most intense

2. This book was never published.

of what the subject can attain in his realization as subject at the level of consciousness. It is by way of that chain that, once again, the dependencies of desire in relation to the desire of the Other are affirmed. These conceptions of the subject and the object have a radical, restructuring character which, as I leave you, I am tempted to recall for you.

To be sure, we have long since taken our distance from any conception that would make of the subject a pure function of intelligence, correlative of the intelligible, such as the *νοῦς* of antiquity. At this juncture, anxiety is revealed as crucial. Not that *ἀγωνία* is not in Aristotle, but for ancient thought, it could only be a question of a local *πάθος* pacified within the passibility of the whole. Of that passibility or susceptibility to suffering of antiquity, there remains something even in what seems farthest from it—so-called psychological science or thought.

There is assuredly something well-founded in the correspondence between intelligence and the intelligible. Psychology shows us without doubt that human intelligence is none other in its foundation than animal intelligence, and this is not without reason. From that dimension of the intelligible, assumed to be a given and a fact, we can, using evolution as a guide, deduce the progress of intelligence, or its adaptation, indeed even imagine that such progress is reproduced in each individual. This is all fine—except that a hypothesis has gone unacknowledged, which is precisely that facts are intelligible.

From the positivist perspective, intelligence is no more than one affect among others, based on the hypothesis of intelligibility—and that justifies that psychology for fortune-tellers which is capable of developing in what are seemingly the most liberated spheres, from the height of academic chairs.³ Affect, inversely, is then no more than obscure intelligence. What nevertheless escapes whoever is receiving such teaching is the obscurantist effect to which he is being submitted. One knows, however, where it leads: to the increasingly intentional undertakings of a technocracy, the psychological standardization of unemployed subjects, the entering into the framework of existent society, head bowed beneath the psychologist's standard.

I say that the meaning of Freud's discovery is in radical opposition to all that. It was in order to make you feel this that the first steps of my teaching trod the paths of Hegelian dialectic. When pondered in its basis, that dialectic has logical roots, and may be reduced to the intrinsic deficit of the logic of predication. Namely that the universal, once examined—and this has not escaped the contemporary school of logic—may be grounded only by way of aggregation, and that the particular, alone in finding its existence therein, thereby appears

3. The attack on academic psychology seems aimed particularly at Lagache, who abandoned Lacan in 1963. In an unsent letter of June 27, 1963, Lacan wrote to Paula Heimann: "A society of neo-Lacanian beneath the banner of that stuffed dolly from the Sorbonne will live as a body of the IPA at the cost of my social and moral ruin." Quoted in Elisabeth Roudinesco, *La bataille de cent ans: Histoire de la psychanalyse en France*, Paris, Seuil, 1986, p. 724.

as contingent. The entirety of Hegelian dialectic is made to stop that gap and show, in a prestigious act of transmutation, how the universal, by way of the scansion of the *Aufhebung*, can come to be particularized.

Whatever the prestige of Hegelian dialectic, whatever the effects, seen by Marx, through which it entered into the world, thus completing that whose meaning Hegel was, namely: the subversion of a political order founded on the *Ecclesia*, the Church, and on that score, whatever its success, whatever the value of what it sustains in the political incidences of its actualization, Hegelian dialectic is false and contradicted as much by the testimony of the natural sciences as by the historical progress of the fundamental science, mathematics.

It is here that anxiety is for us a sign, as was immediately seen by the contemporary of the development of Hegel's system, which was at the time quite simply The System, as was seen, sung, and marked by Kierkegaard. Anxiety is for us witness to an essential breach, onto which I bring testimony that Freudian doctrine is that which illuminates.

The structure of the relation of anxiety to desire, the double breach of the subject in relation to the object fallen from itself, where, beyond anxiety, it must find its instrument, the initial function of that lost object—there is the fault which does not allow us to treat desire within the logically oriented immanence of violence alone, as the dimension forcing the impasses of logic. It is there that Freud brings us back to the very foundation of the illusion of what he called—in accordance with the world of his time, which is that of an alibi—religion, and that I, for my part, call the Church.

On that very ground, which is that through which the Church persists intact, and in all the splendor one sees in it, against the Hegelian revolution, Freud advances with the enlightenment of reason. It is there, at the foundation of the ecclesiastic tradition, that he allows us to trace the cleavage of a path going beyond—deeper and more structural than the milestone that he placed there in the form of the myth of the death of the father. It is there, on that shifting and oh so scabrous terrain—and not without flattering myself at having an audience worthy of understanding it—that this year I intended to advance.

In so far as the Father—their father, of the fathers of the Church—is concerned, may they permit me to tell them that I have not found them sufficient. Some may know that I have been reading Saint Augustine ever since the age of puberty. It was, nevertheless, rather late, about ten years ago, that I became acquainted with the *De Trinitate*. I have reopened it lately only to be astonished at the extent to which, in the final analysis, it says so little about the Father. To be sure it has enough to say to us about the Son, and how much about the Holy Ghost—but I won't say the illusion of I know not what evasion or flight occurs beneath the author's pen, through a kind of *automaton*, when it is a question of the father. And yet, his is a mind so lucid that I rediscovered with joy his radical protest of any attribution to God of the term *causa sui*, a concept which

is, in fact, totally absurd, but whose absurdity may be demonstrated only by way of the bringing into relief that I punctuated before you, namely that there are causes only after the emergence of desire, and that what is a cause, a cause of desire, can in no way be considered an equivalent of the antinomian conception of self-causation.

Augustine himself, who is able to formulate the thing in opposition to every form of intellectual piety, flinches nonetheless, to the point of translating *Ehieh asher ehieh*—which I have long since taught you to read—by an *Ego sum qui sum: I am the one who am*. Augustine was a very good writer, but in Latin as in French, that sounds false and awkward. That God affirms himself as identical to Being leads to a pure absurdity. I had intended, concerning this, to bring you all kinds of examples of other uses of analogous formulae in the Hebrew texts.

I am first going to recall briefly for you the meaning of that function of *petit a* in the various forms I recalled to you last year, and concerning which those who follow me were able to see where they stopped—in anxiety.

The *a*, the object, falls. That fall is primal. The diversity of forms taken by that object of the fall ought to be related to the manner in which the desire of the Other is apprehended by the subject.

That is what explains the function of the oral object. That function may be understood—as I have insisted at length—only if the object being detached from the subject is introduced into the Other's demand, into the call to the mother, and it delineates that space beyond in which, beneath a veil, lies the Mother's desire. That act, in which the child, in a sense astonished, throws his head back while removing himself from the breast, shows that it is only apparently that the breast belongs to the mother. The biological reference is in this case enlightening. The breast is indeed part of the feeding complex which is structured differently in different animal species. At this point it is a part stuck onto the mother's thorax.

The second form: the anal object. We know it by way of the phenomenology of the gift, the present offered in anxiety. The child releasing his feces yields them to what appears for the first time as dominating the demand of the Other, to wit: his desire. How is it that authors have not grasped better than they have that it is at the anal level that the support for what is called generosity is to be located? It is through a veritable sleight of hand, itself indicative of who knows what panic in the face of anxiety, that the posture of generosity has been situated at the level of the genital act.

It is, however, at that level that Freudian teaching, and the tradition that has maintained it, situates for us the gaping chasm of castration. Psycho-physiologists who were Freud's contemporaries reduced its obstacle to what they called the mechanism of false detumescence. Last year, I thought it my obligation to show that Freud, for his part, from the very beginning of his teaching,

articulates that aspect of orgasm which represents precisely the same function as anxiety in relation to the subject. Orgasm is in itself anxiety, to the extent that forever, by dint of a central fault, desire is separated from fulfillment.

Let no one offer as an objection those moments of peace, of fusion of the couple, in which each can view him or herself truly happy with the other. We analysts ought to look at matters more closely in order to see the extent to which those moments are marked by a fundamental alibi, a phallic alibi, in which form is sublimated to its function as a sheath, but in which something that goes beyond remains infinitely excluded. It was in order to demonstrate this to you that I commented at length on Ovid's fable based on the myth of Tiresias. Indication should also be given of what is perceptible as a trace of the unbroached realm of woman's bliss [*jouissance*] in the male myth of her alleged masochism. I have led you further.

Symmetrically, and as though on a line no longer descending but curved in relation to that peak occupied by the chasm desire/fulfillment at the genital level, I have gone so far as to punctuate the function of *petit a* at the level of the scopophilic drive. Its essence is realized in so far as, more than elsewhere, the subject is captive of the function of desire. It is here that the object is strange. In a first approximation, it is that eye which, in the myth of Oedipus, fulfills so well the role of equivalent for the organ to be castrated. But it is not quite that which is at stake in the scopophilic drive, in which the subject encounters the world as a spectacle that he possesses. He is thus victim of a lure, through which what issues forth from him and confronts him is not the true *petit a*, but its complement, the specular image: *i (a)*.

His image, that is, what appears to have fallen from him. He is taken, rejoices, vents his glee in what Saint Augustine, in so sublime a manner—I would have liked to go through the text with you—denounced and designated as a lust of the eyes. He believes he desires because he sees himself desired, and because he doesn't see that what the other wants to snatch from him is his gaze. The proof of this is what transpires in the phenomenon of the *Unheimlich*. That is what appears every time that, suddenly, through some accident more or less fomented by the Other, that image of himself within the Other appears to the subject as shorn of his recourse. Here the entire chain in which the subject is held captive by the scopophilic drive comes undone. The return to the most basal mode of anxiety is there, once again if it be needed, registered by the Aleph of anxiety, since it is today that I am introducing the sign in order to symbolize it, in accordance with our needs this year. Such is that to which, in its most fundamental structure, the relation of the subject to *petit a* bears a resemblance.

Without yet having gone beyond the scopophilic drive, I pause here to mark what in the order of clearing an obstacle will occur, for it is there that I am obliged to designate what will discomfit, precisely on time, the imposture in that fantasy which we analysts should know quite well in the form that I ar-

ticated for you, during the year of my seminar on the transference, by way of the term *ἀγάλμα* (*agalma*).

The peak of the obscurity into which the subject is plunged in relation to desire, *agalma* is that object which the subject believes that his desire tends toward, and through which he presses to an extreme the misperception of *petit a* as cause of his desire. Such is the frenzy of Alcibiades, and the dismissal Socrates subjects him to: *Concern yourself with your soul* means: *Acknowledge that what you are pursuing is nothing other than what Socrates will later turn into your soul, to wit: your image. See then that the function of that object is in the order not of a goal, but rather of a cause of death, and prepare your mourning as a function of it. Then will you know the paths of your desire. For I, Socrates, who know nothing, that is the only thing that I know—the function of Eros.*

Thus it was that I brought you last year to the gate where we now arrive—the fifth term of the function of *petit a*, through which will be revealed the gamut of the object in its—pregenital—relation to the demand of the—post-genital—Other, to that enigmatic desire in which the Other is the site of a decoy in the form of *petit a*. In the fifth term, we shall see the *petit a* of the Other, sole witness, in sum, that that site is not solely the site of a mirage.

I have not named that particular *petit a*, and yet, in other circumstances, I could have shown you its singular lighting. During a recent meeting of our Society, concerning paranoia, I abstained from speaking on what was at issue, to wit: voice. The voice of the Other should be considered an essential object. Every analyst is solicited to accord it its place. Its various incarnations should be followed, as much in the realm of psychosis as at that extremity of normal functioning in the formation of the superego. Through seeing the *petit a* source of the superego, it is possible that many things will become more clear.

The relation of voice to the Other is solely a phenomenological approach. If it is truly, as I say, *petit a* as fallen from the Other, we can exhaust its structural function only by bringing our inquiry to bear on what the Other is as a subject, for voice is the product and object fallen from the organ of speech, and the Other is the site where "it"—*ça*—speaks.

Here we can no longer elude the question: beyond he who speaks in the place of the Other, and who is the subject, what is it whose voice, each time he speaks, the subject takes?

II

If Freud places at the center of his teaching the myth of the Father, it is for reason of the inevitability of the question I have uttered.

The entirety of analytic theory and praxis appear to us at present to have come to a halt for not having dared, on the subject of that question, to go further than Freud. That is in fact why one of those whom I have trained as best I

could have spoken, in a work that is not without merit, of the *question of the father*.⁴ That formulation was bad. It was even a misinterpretation, without there being grounds for reproaching him for it. There can be no question of the question of the father, for the reason that there we are beyond what may be formulated as a question. I want merely to attempt to situate how today we might have delineated an approach to the problem that has been introduced at this juncture.

It is clear that the Other should not be confused with the subject who speaks from the place of the Other, even if through its voice. If the Other is as I say, the place where "it"—*ça*—speaks, it can pose only one kind of problem, that of the subject prior to the question. And Freud intuited this admirably.

Since as of today I am to return to a certain style, I shall not fail to indicate to you that someone who is not one of my students, Conrad Stein (to mention his name), has traced the path in this realm. Were I not obliged to cut things short, I would have requested that you consult his work, since it is sufficiently satisfying to spare me the task of showing you how, despite the error and confusion of the times, Freud put his finger on what deserves to remain in the work of Robertson Smith and Andrew Lang, after the critique—which is no doubt well founded from the specialist's point of view—of the function of the totem conducted by my friend Claude Lévi-Strauss. Freud is the living demonstration of the extent to which whoever is functioning at the level of the pursuit of truth can completely make do without the advice of the specialist. For what would be left of it, should nothing else be left than *petit a*, since what is to be at stake is the subject prior to the question? Mythically, the father—and that is what *mythically* means—can only be an animal.

The primordial father is the father from before the incest taboo, before the appearance of law, of the structures of marriage and kinship, in a word, of culture. The father is the head of that hoard whose satisfaction, in accordance with the animal myth, knows no bounds. That Freud should call him a *totem* takes on its full meaning in the light of the progress brought to the question by the structuralist critique of Lévi-Strauss, which, as you know, brings into relief the classificatory essence of the totem.

We thus see that as a second term what is needed at the level of the father is that function whose definition I believe I developed further in one of my seminars than had ever been done until now—the function of the proper name.

The name, I demonstrated to you, is a mark already open to reading—for which reason it will be read identically in all languages—imprinted on something that may be, but not at all necessarily, a speaking subject. The proof

4. See Jean Laplanche, *Hölderlin et la question du père* (Paris, P.U.F., 1961), an analysis of Hölderlin's psychosis in terms of the Lacanian category of foreclosure. Laplanche had cut short his analysis with Lacan on November 1, 1963, and declared his solidarity with the majority position asking that Lacan's name be struck from the list of training analysts.

is that Bertrand Russell can make a mistake and say that one could name a geometrical point on the blackboard John. Now, we know Bertrand Russell to have indulged in many a strange caper, which are not without their merit, moreover, but surely, at no moment, has he questioned a point marked in chalk on a blackboard in the hope that said point would answer back.

I had also observed, as a reference, the variously Phoenecian (or other) characters that Flinders Petrie discovered in Upper Egypt on pottery dating from a few centuries prior to the use of those characters as an alphabet in the Semitic region. Which illustrates the fact that the pottery never had the occasion, subsequently, to speak up and say that that was its trademark. The name is situated at that level. Pardon me for moving a bit more rapidly than I would have wanted to under other circumstances.

Can we ourselves not move beyond the name and the voice?—and take our bearing from what the myth implies in that register accorded us by our progress, that is: on the three themes of erotic bliss [*jouissance*], desire, and the object? It is clear that, in his myth, Freud finds a singular balance, a kind of co-conformity—if I may be allowed to thus double my prefixes—of Law and desire, stemming from the fact that both are born together, joined and necessitated by each other in the law of incest and what?—the supposition of the pure erotic bliss of the father viewed as primordial.

Except, if that is alleged to give us the formation of desire in the child, ought we not—I have insisted on this at length for years—to pose the question of knowing why all this yields neuroses?

It is here that the accent I allowed to be put on the function of perversion in its relation to the desire of the Other as such takes on value. To wit: that it represents a backing up against the wall, a strictly literal interpretation of the function of the father, of the Supreme Being, of Eternal God. He is taken in a strictly literal interpretation of the letter, not of his bliss, which is always veiled and inscrutable, but of his desire, as interested in the order of the world—and that is the principle through which the pervert, moulding his own anxiety, installs himself as such.

Thus are posited two of the prime blind arcades through which may be seen contrasting and fusing the foundation of normal desire and that of perverse desire, which is located at the same level. One must take possession of that gnarled axis in order to understand that what is at stake is a totality, a gamut of phenomena that go from neurosis to perversion.

Neurosis is inseparable in our eyes from a flight from the term of the father's desire. That is what mysticism replaces with the term of demand. Mysticism, throughout every tradition, except the one that I am about to introduce, which is quite vexing, is a construction, search, *askesis*, assumption—anything you like—plunged toward the bliss of God. That is what leaves a trace in mysticism—and even, and more still, in Christian mysticism. As in the case of neurosis, the insistence of God's desire functions as a pivot.

I apologize for not being able to pursue that indication any further. But I don't want to leave you without having at least pronounced the name, the first name through which I wanted to introduce you to the specific incidence of the Judeo-Christian tradition. That tradition, in fact, is one not of erotic bliss, but of the desire of a God who is the God of Moses.

III

It was before the God of Moses, in the last analysis, that Freud's pen stopped writing. But Freud is surely beyond what his pen transmits to us.

The name of that God is the name *Shem*, which, for reasons I explained to you, I would never have pronounced, although some do know its pronunciation. We have a number of others, for example those given us by the *Ma'asot*, and which have varied over the centuries. In Chapter 6 of *Exodus*, *Elohim*, who speaks from the burning bush—which should be conceived of as his body, *kavod*, which is translated as *glory*, and concerning which I would have liked to show you that it is a matter of something quite different—says to Moses: *You will go unto them and say unto them that my name is Ehieh asher ehieh*. Which means nothing other than *I am what I am*. The property of the term, moreover, is designated by nothing other than the letters composing the Name, always a few letters chosen from the consonants.

Last year, I worked up a bit of Hebrew on your behalf. The vacation I am about to give you will spare you a similar effort. *Je suis*: I am [or, I follow] the procession. There is no other meaning to be given that *I am* other than its being the name *I am*. *But it is not by that name*, says *Elohim* to Moses, *that I revealed myself to your ancestors*, and that is what brought us to the point at which I proposed that we meet.

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not of the philosophers and the scientists, writes Pascal at the head of the manuscript of his *Pensées*. Concerning which may be said what I have gradually accustomed you to understand: that a God is something one encounters in the real, inaccessible. It is indicated by what doesn't deceive—*anxiety*. The God who manifested himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but first of all to Abraham, manifested himself by a name by which the *Elohim* of the burning bush calls him, and that I have written here. It is read: *El Shadday*.

The Greeks who did the translation of the Septuagint were much better informed than we are. They didn't translate *Ehieh asher* as *I am the one who am*, as did Saint Augustine, but as *I am the one who is*. That's not quite it, but at least it has a meaning. They thought like the Greeks that God is the supreme Being. *I equals Being*.

People are not freed like that from their mental habits from one day to the next, but one thing is sure: they did not translate *El Shadday* as the Allmighty, but, prudently, as *Theos*, which is the name they give to everything that they don't translate as (. . .), which is reserved for the *Shem*, that is, the name I do

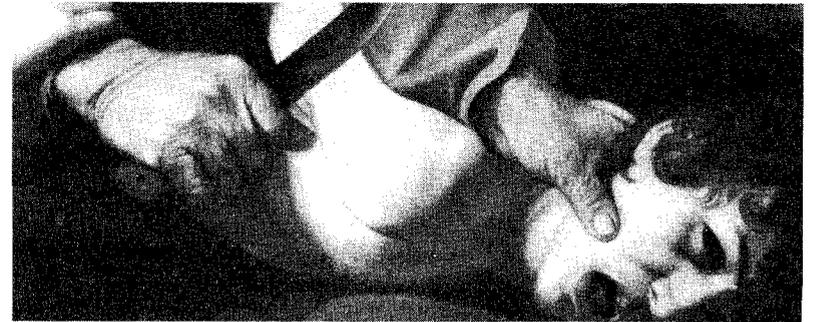
not pronounce. What is *El Shadday*? Well, even if I were to see you again next week, it was not on the schedule for me to tell you today, and I shall not be breaking down any doors, be they even those of Hell, in order to tell you.

I was intending to introduce what I would manage to tell you by means of something essential, whereby we meet up again with our Kierkegaard of a while ago—to wit, what is called in the Jewish tradition the *Akedah*, or in other words: the sacrifice of Abraham.

I would have presented to you Abraham's sacrifice in the form in which painterly tradition has figured it in a culture in which images are not forbidden. It was, moreover, rather interesting to know why they are so for the Jews and why, from time to time, Christianity has been taken with a fever to rid itself of them. Were they even reduced to cut-out figures, I am giving them to you, in order to show you what may be seen in images, which is necessary, ultimately, not in order to make up for this year's seminar, for assuredly, the names, in so far as they are concerned, are not there, but the images, in so far as *they* are, are there in full array, so that you may rediscover in them all that I have announced since the paternal metaphor.

There is a boy, his head blocked out against a small stone altar. Take one of the two paintings of the scene by Caravaggio. The child is suffering, he grimaces, and Abraham's knife is raised above him. The angel, the angel is there, the presence of him whose name is not pronounced.

What is an angel? That is another question that we will not have to deal with together. It would, however, have rather amused me to have you laugh at my last dialogue with Father Teilhard de Chardin. *Father, concerning those angels, how do you arrange to remove them from the Bible, what with your ascent of consciousness, and all that follows from it? I thought it would make him cry. But come now, are you really speaking seriously to me? I take account of the texts, especially when it is a question of the Scriptures on which, in theory, your faith is based.* As for that angel, here he is



Caravaggio. The Sacrifice of Isaac. c. 1595-1600, (Detail.)

now, accompanied or not by Father Teilhard's consent, restraining Abraham's arm. Whatever be the case with that angel, it is indeed in the name of *El Shadday* that he is there. It is in that name that he has been seen traditionally. And it is in that name that the pathos of the drama into which Kierkegaard draws us ensues. For consider that prior to that restraining gesture, Abraham has brought a boy to the site of a mysterious encounter, and once there, he has bound his hand to his feet like a ram for the sacrifice.

Before waxing emotional, as is customary on such occasions, we might remember that sacrificing one's little boy to the local *Elohim* was quite common at the time—and not only at the time, for it continued so late that it was constantly necessary for the Angel of the Name, or the prophet speaking in the name of the Name to stop the Israelites, who were about to start it up again.

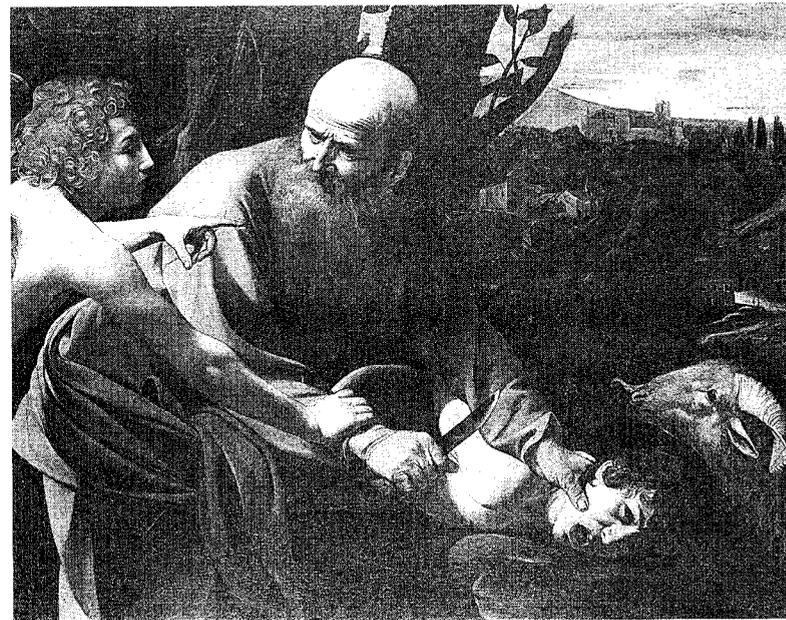
Let us look at things further on. The son, we are told, is his only son. It's not true. There is Ishmael, who is already fourteen at the time. But it is a fact that Sarah, until she reached age 90, revealed herself to be infertile, and that was the reason that Ishmael was born from the patriarch's cohabitation with a slave. *El Shadday's* power is proven by the fact that he was the one who drew Abraham out of the world of his brothers and his peers—it's quite amusing upon reading to realize, once one calculates the years, that many were still alive. Since Sem had had his children at the age of thirty and lived five hundred years, and since in his lineage, children were had at age thirty, they had just reached no more than the four-hundredth birthday of Sem at the time that Abraham had Isaac. Well, not everyone likes reading the way I do.

Whatever the case, *El Shadday* has indeed also had something to do with this child of a miracle, for, after all, Sarah has said as much: *I am withered*. It is clear that menopause exists, Isaac is thus the child of the miracle, of the promise. It's thus easy to imagine that Abraham holds him dearly. Sarah dies a short while afterwards. At that time, there are a lot of people surrounding Abraham, in particular Ishmael, who happens to be there for reasons which are unexplained. The patriarch shows himself to be a formidable progenitor. He marries another woman, Ketorah. If my memory serves me well, he has six children with her; he doesn't lose any time. Only those children have not received the *brachah*, like the child of she who carried him in the name of *El Shadday*.

El Shadday is not almighty; I could show you a thousand demonstrations of it in the Bible. At the borders of the territory of his people, should a different *Elohim* from Moab come up with the right trick allowing his subjects to repel their assailants, it works, and *El Shadday* decamps with the tribes that brought him along for the attack. *El Shadday* is he who chooses, he who promises, who causes a certain covenant—which is transmissible in only one way, through the paternal *brachah*—to pass through his name. He is also he who makes one wait, who makes a son be awaited for up to ninety years, who makes one wait for many another thing more. I would have shown you.

Don't reproach me for having made too short shrift a while ago of Abraham's feelings, for, upon opening a little book that dates from the end of the eleventh century by one Rashi, otherwise known as Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes, an Ashkenaze of France, you would be able to read some strange commentaries. You know that this Rashi doesn't read a text line by line, but rather point by point. You would be quite astonished to hear him give voice to a latent dialogue sung between Abraham and God, who is what is at stake in the angel. When Abraham learns from the angel that he is not there in order to immolate Isaac, Rashi has him say: *What then? If that is what is going on, have I thus come here for nothing? I am at least going to give him a slight wound to make him shed a little blood. Would you like that?* This is not my invention. It comes rather from an extremely pious Jew, whose commentaries, in the tradition of the Mishnah, are held in high regard. So there we are with one son and then two fathers.

Is that all there is? Fortunately our cutout figure is there in order to remind us—in the more sumptuous form of the Caravaggio painting—that that is not all there is. There is one such painting in which he is to the right, and in



Caravaggio. The Sacrifice of Isaac.

which you will find that head that I introduced here last year, invisibly, in the form of the *Shofar*, the ram's horn, which has been undeniably torn from him.

I won't have the opportunity to examine symbolic values in any depth for you, but I would like to conclude with what that ram is. It is not true that it figures as a metaphor of the father at the level of phobia. Phobia is no more than its return, which is what Freud said referring to the totem. Man has not all that much reason to be proud at being the last to appear in creation, the one who was made out of mud, something no other being was worthy of, and so he searches for honorable ancestors, and that is where we still are—as evolutionists, we need an animal ancestor.

I won't tell you the passages I have consulted, be it in the *Mishna*, specifically the *Guirgueavotchi*—I mention it for those whom it may interest, since it is not as big as the *Talmud*, and you can consult it, it's been translated into French—then in *Rashi*. Those are the only two references I wanted to give today. *Rashi* is briefest in explaining that according to Rabbinic tradition, the ram in question is the primeval ram. It was there, he writes, as early as the seven days of creation, which designates it as what it is, that is, an *Elohim*—for it is not only he whose name is unpronounceable who was there, but in the clearest fashion, all the *Elohim*. The latter is traditionally recognized as the ancestor of the race of Sem, he who links Abraham, through a rather short path, to origins. That ram with tangled horns rushes into a thicket—I would have liked to show you in that site of the thicket something which is the object of extensive commentary elsewhere—, it rushes onto the site of the sacrifice, and it is worth noting what it comes to graze on when he whose name is unpronounceable designates it for the sacrifice that Abraham is to perform in place of his son. It is his eponymous ancestor, the God of his race.

Here may be marked the knife blade separating God's bliss from what in that tradition is presented as his desire. The thing whose downfall it is a matter of provoking is biological origin. That is the key to the mystery, in which may be read the aversion of the Jewish tradition concerning what exists everywhere else. The Hebrew hates the metaphysico-sexual rites which unite in celebration the community to God's erotic bliss. He accords special value to the gap separating desire and fulfillment. The symbol of that gap we find in the same context of *El Shadday's* relation to Abraham, in which, primordially, is born the law of circumcision, which gives as a sign of the covenant between the people and the desire of he who has chosen them what?—that little piece of flesh sliced off.

It is with that *petit a*, to whose introduction I had led you last year, along with a few hieroglyphics bearing witness to the customs of the Egyptian people, that I shall leave you.

In closing, I shall say to you only that if I interrupt this seminar, I don't do so without apologizing to those who, for many years, have been my faithful audience here. And yet it is certain individuals from among its ranks who are now

turning that impress against me, fed on the words and concepts I have taught them, learned on the paths and ways on which I have led them.

In one of those occasionally confused discussions in the course of which a group, our own, found itself tossed this way and that midst its eddies, an individual, one of my students, felt himself obliged—I apologize to him for having to deprecate his effort, which assuredly could have had echoes, and bring the discussion back to an analytic level—felt himself obliged to say that the meaning of my teaching would be that the veritable import of the truth is that one can never get hold of it.

What an incredible misinterpretation! What childish impatience! Must I indeed have people who are designated—one can only wonder why—as cultured among those most immediately within reach of following me! Where can you find a science—and even mathematics—in which each chapter does not lead on to the next one! But is that the same thing as justifying a metonymic function of truth? Could you not see that as I advanced, I was perpetually approaching a specific point of density to which, without the preceding steps, you could not arrive? At hearing such a rejoinder, are there not grounds for invoking the attributes of infatuation and stupidity, the kind of mind composed of the litter that one picks up working in editorial committees?

Concerning the praxis which is analysis, I have sought to articulate how I seek it, and how I lay hold on it. Its truth is mobile, disappointing, slippery. Are you not up to understanding that this is because the praxis of analysis is obliged to advance toward a conquest of the truth *via* the paths of deception? For the transference is nothing else—the transference into what has no name in the place of the Other.

For a long time now, the name of Freud has not stopped becoming increasingly nonfunctional. So that, if my itinerary is progressive, and even if it is prudent, is it not because that which I have to encourage you against is that toward which analysis constantly risks sliding—namely, imposture.

I am not here in a plea for myself. I should, however, say, that—having, for two years, entirely confided to others the execution, within a group, of a policy, in order to leave to what I had to tell you its space and its purity—I have never, at any moment, given any pretext for believing that there was not, for me, any difference between yes and no.⁵

November 20, 1963

Text established by Jacques-Alain Miller

5. The failed policy of seeking integration into the IPA had been implemented by three analysts—Serge Leclair, Wladimir Granoff, and François Perrier—known as the "troika." It was Granoff himself who ultimately penned the motion to deny Lacan his status as "titular" member. The affirmation of the difference between yes and no is intended to underscore the absurdity of Lacanian analysts joining to eliminate Lacan from their ranks.

I hereby found—as alone as I have always been in my relation to the psychoanalytic cause—the Ecole Française de Psychanalyse,¹ whose direction, concerning which nothing at present prevents me from answering for, I shall undertake during the next four years to assure.

That title, in my understanding, represents the organism in which a labor is to be accomplished—a labor which, in the field opened up by Freud, restores the cutting edge of his discovery—a labor which returns the original praxis he instituted under the name of psychoanalysis to the duty incumbent upon it in our world—a labor which, through assiduous criticism, denounces the deviations and compromises that blunt its progress while degrading its use.

This working objective is inseparable from a training to be dispensed within that movement of reconquest. Which is to say that therein those whom I myself have trained will be fully empowered and that invitation is extended to all those who can contribute to substantiating the ordeal of that training.

Those who will enter the Ecole will commit themselves to fulfilling a task subject to both internal and external supervision. In exchange, they are assured that nothing will be spared in order that anything valid they do be given the repercussions it deserves, and in the place appropriate to it.

For the execution of the work, we shall adopt the principle of an elaboration sustained in a small group. Each of them (we have a name for designating the groups) will be composed of at least three individuals, five at most, four being the proper measure. PLUS ONE charged with selection, discussion, and the outcome to be accorded the efforts of each.

After a certain period of functioning, the elements of a group will be invited to shift to a different group.

The task of directing will not constitute a form of leadership whose service rendered might be capitalized into access to a higher rank, and no one will be inclined to regard himself demoted for entering at a rank of base-level work.

1. [Three months later, the Ecole Freudienne de Paris.—J.-A. Miller]

For the reason that every personal endeavor will place its author in conditions of criticism and supervision to which every work pursued will be subject in the Ecole.

This in no way implies an inverted hierarchy, but a circular organization whose—easy to program—functioning will take on consistency with experience.

We constitute three sections, whose progress I shall undertake to ensure along with two collaborators who will second me in each:

I. *Section for Pure Psychoanalysis*, or praxis and doctrine of psychoanalysis properly speaking, which is and is nothing but—something to be established in its place—the training psychoanalysis.

The urgent problems to be raised concerning all the issues of the training analysis will have to make their way here through a sustained confrontation between individuals having had an experience of it and candidates in training. Its *raison d'être* being based on what there is no reason to conceal: to wit, the need resulting from professional exigencies every time they entail for the analysand in training the incurring of a responsibility construable, if ever so slightly, as analytic.

It is within that problem and as a special case that the entry into the supervisory phase is to be situated. A prelude to defining that case according to criteria other than those of the impressions of all and the prejudices of each. For it is known that such is at present its only law, when the violation of the rule implicit in the observance of its forms is permanent.

From the start and in every case qualified supervision will be within this framework assured to every practitioner trained in our Ecole.

There will be proposed for the thus established course of study the characteristics by which I myself break with the promulgated standards of training practice, as well as the effects imputed to my teaching on the course of my analyses when it is the case that, as students, my analysands are in attendance. Included therein, if necessary, will be the sole impasses to be retained from my position in such a School, to wit: those that the very induction toward which my teaching aims would engender in its work.

These studies, whose point is the calling into question of the established routine, will be gathered and compared by the directorate of the section, which will oversee the most propitious ways of sustaining the effects of their solicitation.

Three subsections:

1. doctrine of pure psychoanalysis
2. internal criticism of its praxis as training
3. supervision of psychoanalysts in training

Finally, I posit as a doctrinal principle that this section, which is the first, as well as that whose destination I shall indicate in Part 3, will not be limited in

its recruitment to the medical degree, pure psychoanalysis not being in itself a therapeutic technique.

II. *Section for Applied Psychoanalysis*, which means therapeutics and clinical medicine.

To which will be admitted medical groups, whether or not they be composed of psychoanalyzed subjects, to the extent that they are capable of contributing to the psychoanalytic experience; through the criticism of its indications in its results; through the testing of the categorical terms and structures that I have introduced as sustaining the undeviating course of Freudian praxis, this in clinical examinations, in nosographical definitions, in the very positing of therapeutic projects.

Here too three subsections:

1. doctrine of therapy and its variations
2. casuistry
3. psychiatric information and medical exploration

A directorate for authenticating each work as part of the school, and such that its composition excludes all preconceived conformism.

III. *Section for Taking Inventory of the Freudian Field*

It will first of all be responsible for the summarizing and critical censuring of everything offered in this field by publications claiming to be so authorized.

It will undertake to publish those principles from which analytic praxis is to receive its statute within science. A statute which, however idiosyncratic it must be recognized to be, cannot be that of an ineffable experience.

Finally, it will call for the instruction of our experience as for its communication, in whatever coefficient of structuralism in specific sciences can cast light on that whose function I have demonstrated in our own, — and inversely in what in our subjectivation those same sciences can receive as a complementary inspiration.

In the last analysis, a praxis of theory is required, without which the order of affinities delineated by the sciences we call conjectural will remain at the mercy of that political drift which rises by dint of the illusion of universal conditioning.

Thus, again three subsections:

1. continuous commentary of the psychoanalytic movement
2. articulation with related sciences
3. ethics of psychoanalysis, which is the praxis of its theory

The financial holdings constituted initially by the contributions of the members of the Ecole, by the funding it will eventually receive, indeed by the services it will render as a school, will be entirely reserved for its publishing efforts.

In the first rank, an annual will gather the titles and abstracts of works—

wherever they have appeared—of the Ecole, an annual in which will appear, at their mere request, all those who will have been functioning therein.

Membership in the Ecole will entail presenting oneself in a work-group constituted as we have said.

Admission initially will be decided by myself without taking any account of positions taken by anyone toward my person in the past, sure as I am of those that left me that it is not I who begrudge them it, but they who will begrudge me still more their not being able to come back.

My answer, moreover, will concern only what I am able to presume or observe from evidence of the value of the group and the place it is initially intent on filling.

The organization of the Ecole on the rolling principle I indicated will be determined by the efforts of a commission approved by a first plenary assembly to be held a year from now. That commission will elaborate it based on the experience completed at the end of the second year, at which time a second plenary assembly will have to approve it.

It is not necessary for members to implement the entirety of this plan for it to work. I don't need a numerous list, but determined workers, such as I already know.

Adjoining Note

This founding act holds simple habits as nil. It nevertheless appeared to leave some questions open to those who continued to be governed by those habits.

A user's guide, in seven parts, herewith gives the most asked for answers (from which the questions they dissipate may be supposed).

I. Concerning the Trainer

A psychoanalyst is a trainer, for having conducted one or several analyses which proved to be of a didactic nature.

Such empowerment is *de facto*, and has always in fact transpired in such manner, being referable to an annual confirming such facts without even having to claim to be exhaustive.

The custom of peer consent is rendered null for having allowed the very recent introduction of what is called "the list" to the extent that a society has been able to use it to ends that misconstrue in the most glaring manner the very conditions of analyses to be undertaken as well as of analyses in progress.

Conditions of which the essential one is that the analysand be free to choose his analyst.

II. Concerning Candidacy to the Ecole

Candidacy for the Ecole is one thing; qualification for a training analysis another.

Candidacy to the school requires selection procedures to be regulated according to its working goals.

The initial charge will be held by a simple admissions committee, to be called *Cardo*, that is: *hinge* in Latin, which indicates in what spirit it is to operate.

Let us recall that a training analysis is required only for the Ecole's first section, even if it be desirable for all.

III. Concerning the Training Analysis

The qualification of a psychoanalysis as didactic (or in the order of training) has been exercised until the present according to a procedure concerning which it is sufficient, in order to judge it, to observe that it has not allowed for an articulation of any of its principles for as long as it has lasted.

None has any chance of being evolved in the future, unless it first break with a custom open to derision.

The sole sure principle to be posited—and this all the more to the extent that it has been misconstrued—is that a psychoanalysis is constituted as didactic by the will of the subject, and that he be advised that the analysis will contest that will to the very extent that the desire it conceals is approached.

IV. Concerning the Training Analysis within Participation in the Ecole

Those who undertake a didactic (or training) analysis do so by their own choice and on their own responsibility.

Section I of this note even implies that they can be in a position to authorize their psychoanalyst as a trainer.

But admission to the Ecole imposes on them the condition that they have committed themselves to the undertaking—where and when.

For the Ecole, at whatever moment the subject enters into analysis, must place that fact into the balance with the responsibility that it cannot refuse its consequences.

It is a constant that psychoanalysis has effects on every practice of the subject committed to it. When that practice proceeds, however slightly, from psychoanalytic effects, he finds himself engendering them at the very spot at which he is to acknowledge them.

How can one not see that a control is required at the very moment of those effects, and first of all in order that he who comes to these effects in the position of a patient be protected from them?

At stake here is a responsibility which reality imposes on the subject, when he is a practitioner, to be assumed at his own risk.

Pretending not to know this fact is the incredible function that is maintained in the practice of the training analysis: the subject is alleged not to be a practitioner, or held to be violating on his own a rule of prudence, indeed of honesty. That by observing that rule, the subject comes to be deficient in relation to his function is not beyond the bounds of what transpires, as is known, moreover.

The Ecole, by virtue of the very work it has been made to ensure, can in no way remove itself from that disastrous state of things.

That is why it will ensure the supervision appropriate to the situation of each individual, while confronting a reality of which the analyst's agreement forms part.

Inversely, an insufficient solution will be able to motivate a breaking of the contract.

V. *Concerning Joining the School*

There are at present two ways of joining the Ecole.

1. The group (which will be called a *cartel*) constituted by mutual choice in accord with the founding act presents itself to my discretion along with the work that each individual plans to pursue.
2. Those individuals wishing to make themselves known for whatever project will be advised to consult a member of the *Cardo*: the names of the first to have accepted the charge at my request will be published before July 20. I will myself direct to one of these, whoever should request it of me.

VI. *Concerning the Statute of the Ecole*

My personal role as director is provisional, although promised for four years. They seem to us necessary for starting up the Ecole.

If its statute is henceforth that of an association as promulgated according to the law of 1901, we feel it necessary first of all to enter into its movement the internal statute which will be, in a brief while, proposed for approval to all.

Let us recall that the worst objection that can be made to Societies in the form in which they currently exist is the slacking off of work—manifest even in quality—that they cause among the best.

The Ecole's success will be measured by the appearance of works that are receivable in their place.

VII. *Concerning the Ecole as an Inaugural Experience*

This aspect is sufficiently called for, we think, in the founding act, and we leave it to individuals to discover the promises and obstacles entailed.

To those who are able to pose the question of what it is that guides us, we shall unveil its reason.

The teaching of psychoanalysis can be transmitted from one subject to another only by way of a transference.

The "seminars," including our course at Hautes Etudes, will found nothing if they don't refer back to that transference.

No doctrinal apparatus, and in particular our own, however propitious it be in the orientation of one's work, will be able to prejudice the conclusions which will be its issue.

PREAMBLE

The question may first be raised concerning the relation between the decision of this act of foundation to the teaching which does not leave this act without guarantee.

It shall be posited that however qualified those within it will be to discuss that teaching, the Ecole is not dependent on nor does it dispense that teaching, since it is pursued on the outside.

If, indeed, the existence of an audience—which has not yet taken its full measure—for that teaching was revealed at the same juncture as that which imposed the very existence of the Ecole, it is all the more important to underscore what separates them.

Ecole Freudienne de Paris—that title, which was kept in reserve in the founding act, clearly announces to whoever limits himself to its terms the intentions from which we proceed.

Let us pass by the site from which we reclaim, not without being entitled to do so, along with the original shield, the act of defiance already saluted by Freud that it entails: the Ecole affirms itself to be first of all Freudian, for the reason that—if there were ever a truth undoubtedly sustained by a presence patient in its reiteration, but which by dint of that effect has become the conscience, as it were, of the French soil—it is that the Freudian message, in its radical thrust, goes far beyond the use to which it is put by practitioners of Anglophonic obedience.

Even if one lends a hand in France, as elsewhere, to a practice mitigated by the unfurling of a form of psychotherapy associated with the needs of social hygiene,—it is a fact that no practitioner can fail to manifest his discomfort or aversion, indeed his derision or horror, in proportion to the opportunities he affords himself to dip into the open space in which the practice hereby denounced enters its imperialist phase: conformist in its aims, barbarous in its doctrine, a complete regression to psychologism, pure and simple,—the whole thing poorly compensated for by the promotion of a clerisy it would be easy to caricature, but which in its solemnity is indeed the residue bearing witness to the training through which psychoanalysis does not come totally undone in what it is propagating.

An image of that discord may be derived from the evidence that springs forth upon asking if it is not true that in our era psychoanalysis is everywhere, and psychoanalysts elsewhere.

For it is not a vain matter that astonishment may greet the fact that the name of Freud alone, by virtue of the hope of truth it bears with it, is of an order to confront the name of Marx, the still undissipated suspicion, even though it is plain that its abyss is unfillable, that in the path opened up by Freud might be perceptible the reason why Marxism fails to account for an increasingly immoderate and insane power insofar as politics is concerned, unless what is in play is a reverse effect of its contradictions.

That psychoanalysts are poorly situated to judge the ills in which they are immersed, but that they feel themselves to be missing therein is sufficient to explain why their response has been an encystment of thought. An abdication that opens the way to a false complacency, affording its beneficiary the same effects as the genuine kind; in this case, the authenticating mark — they sully — of terms whose keep is vouchsafed them for an enterprise which does not at all fall within the province of the prevailing economy, but the conditioning of those it employs is convenient, and even in its highest reaches: psychological orientation and its various offices.

Thus psychoanalysis is too expectant and psychoanalysts too overextended for the suspense to be resolved from any other site than the very point at which they separated: to wit, in the training of the psychoanalyst.

It's not that the Ecole does not dispose of what assures it of not breaking any continuity: to wit, psychoanalysts who are irreproachable from whatever point of view they be regarded, since it would have been enough for them, as it was for the rest of the subjects trained by Lacan, to forsake his teaching in order to be recognized by a certain "Internationale," and that it is a matter of notoriety that they owe it solely to their own choice and discernment to have forsaken that recognition.

It is the Ecole which calls back into question the principles of an investiture, and with the consent of those who are known to have received it.

Wherein it proves to be still Freudian, the term *school* comes now under our scrutiny.

It is to be taken in the sense in which in ancient times it meant certain places of refuge, indeed bases of operation against what might already be called the discontents of civilization.

Limiting ourselves to the discontent within psychoanalysis, the Ecole intends to accord its space not only to a labor of criticism: to the opening up of the grounds of our experience, to the questioning of the manner of life to which it leads.

Those who commit themselves herewith feel themselves to be sufficiently solid to articulate the manifest situation: that psychoanalysis at present has nothing more sure to put forth to its credit than the production of psycho-

analysts — even if the bottom line should appear to leave something to be desired.

Not that one need yield to any self-accusation. For it is understood that the results of psychoanalysis, even in the dubious truth that is their status, are of a more worthy cast than the fluctuations of fashion and the blind premises on which so many types of therapy rely in that domain in which medicine is as yet not finished seeking its bearings in regard to its criteria (are those of social adaptation isomorphous with those of the cure?) and seems even to have retreated insofar as nosography is concerned: we are speaking of psychiatry's having become a question for all.

It is even rather curious to see how psychoanalysis at this point plays the role of a lightning rod. Without it, how would those who have invested their worth in opposing it manage to have themselves taken seriously? Whence a status quo in which the psychoanalyst draws comfort from the gratitude he receives for his own insufficiency.

And yet the original distinction of psychoanalysis lay in giving access to the notion of a cure within its domain, to wit: restoring to symptoms their meaning, according a place to the desire they mask, rectifying in an exemplary mode the apprehension of a privileged relation, — and it would still have been necessary to be able to illustrate it with the distinctions of structure required by the forms of illness, and to recognize them in the relations of the being who demands, and who identifies with that demand and with that identification itself.

It would further be necessary for the desire and the transference animating them to raise those experiencing them to the point of finding intolerable concepts perpetuating a construction of man and God in which understanding and will are distinguished by an alleged passivity of the first mode and an arbitrary activity attributed to the second.

The revision of thought called for by the connections with desire that Freud imposes on it seems to be beyond the means of the psychoanalyst. No doubt, they are eclipsed because of the accommodation deflecting them toward the weakness of those he assists.

There is one point, however, at which the problem of desire cannot be eluded — when what is at stake is the desire of the psychoanalyst himself.

And nothing is more exemplary of sheer chatter than what has gained currency on that score: that that is what conditions the sureness of his intervention.

To pursue in its alibis the misprision sheltering itself with false papers requires the encounter between what is most valid in a personal experience with those that would call on it to confess, regarding it as a commonly held good.

The scientific authorities themselves at this point are the hostages of an insolvent pact with the result that it is no longer from without that a requisite control — that would be on the agenda anywhere else — may be awaited.

It is the affair solely of those, be they psychoanalysts or not, who take an interest in psychoanalysis in the act.

It is to them that the Ecole is opened, that they may put their interest to the test—it not being forbidden them to elaborate its logic.

June 21, 1964

I. Consciousness and the Subject

You have spoken of the mirage engendered by a confusion between consciousness and the subject, a mirage denounced by the experience of psychoanalysis. Now philosophy speaks of consciousness (the Cartesian cogito, transcendental consciousness, Hegelian self-consciousness, Husserl's apodictic cogito, Sartre's prereflexive cogito . . .): how does the psychoanalytic experience account for the misprision engendered within a subject by the fact of identifying with one's consciousness?

What is consciousness for a psychoanalyst?

Is it possible to get someone to "step out" of his consciousness? Is not the subject of (a) consciousness condemned to it?

*

That concerning which you say I spoke seems to me rather to have been excerpted by you from a text that I wrote in homage to the memory of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the only one, I hope, to lend to a confusion that I must clarify first in your reading.

I write that "the 'I think' to which presence (according to the preceding: that of the phenomenological subject) would be reduced does not cease implying . . . all the powers or reflection through which subject and consciousness are fused." This does not mean that there is anything in the nature of a confusion involved. At a crucial point of the Cartesian *askesis*, precisely the one I am invoking here, consciousness and the subject coincide. It is holding that privileged moment as exhaustive of the subject which is misleading—making of it the pure category that the presence of a gaze (as a mode of opaqueness within

1. See "Maurice Merleau-Ponty" in *Les Temps modernes*, 1961, nos. 184–185.

the visible) would come to make flesh with its vision (the context of my sentence).

It is, on the contrary, at that moment of coincidence itself, in so far as it is grasped by reflection, that I intend to mark the site through which psychoanalytic experience makes its entrance. At simply being sustained within time, the subject of the "I think" reveals what it is: the being of a fall. I am that which thinks: "Therefore I am," as I have commented on elsewhere, noting that the "therefore," the causal stroke, divides inaugurally the "I am" of existence from the "I am" of meaning.

That rift or split (*refente*) is precisely that whereof psychoanalysis affords us a daily experience. I have castration anxiety at the same time as I regard it as impossible. Such is the crude example with which Freud illustrates that split, reproduced at all levels of subjective structure.

I say that it ought to be held as primordial and as the first cast of primary repression.

I say that the philosophical "consciousnesses" you have lined up on the skewer right up to Sartre at the tip have no other function than to suture that cleavage of the subject, and the analyst recognizes what is at stake in this bolting shut of the truth (for which the perfect instrument would plainly be the ideal promised to us by Hegel as absolute knowledge).

The pretext with which that operation always disguises itself is betrayed by the style of the good apostle, which is illustrated particularly well in the discourse of Leibniz. It is in order to "save the truth" that the door is shut on it.

That is why the question of an initial error in philosophy imposes itself as soon as Freud has produced the unconscious on the stage he assigned to it ("the other stage," as he calls it) and accords it the right to speak.

That is what Lacan comes back to, because the lifting of the seal is so threatening that its very practitioners dream of nothing else than relegating it elsewhere. That right, I say, is held by the unconscious by dint of what it structures as language, and I would clarify the illumination without end with which Freud allows that fact to reverberate if you had asked me the question organized around the terms: the unconscious and the subject.

I would then have been able to add to it this complement: that that very reason is not sufficient to establish that right, and that what is needed, as in the establishment of any right, is a transition to action, and that it is in the presence of that that the psychoanalyst today is in retreat.

That is why what I teach is not addressed in its initial impetus to philosophers. It is not, if I may say so, on your front that I am fighting.

For it is remarkable that you are asking me questions without troubling yourselves about wherein I am authorized to sustain positions that you attribute to me with more or less exactitude. The site of the utterance, be it known, is essential in not being elided from any statement.

Distrust, then, your own precipitousness: for a while yet, nourishment will not be lacking for philosophical grazing. But it is simply that a psychoanalytic acting out—or transition to action—might prompt it to recognize substance on the side of penury.

It is not up to psychoanalysis to account for philosophical error for the benefit of philosophy, as though philosophy thereafter would be able to "realize" or account for it itself. There can be no such thing, since to imagine it is precisely philosophical error itself. The subject is not wrong to identify with his consciousness, as you have me put it, God knows why, but in being compelled to miss the topology which makes a fool of him in that identification.

I have said: topology. For that is what prevails here. I mean that without structure, it is impossible to grasp anything of the *real* of the economy: of the cathexis or investment, as one says, even without knowing what one is saying.

It is for having lacked the elaboration prepared at this juncture by linguistics that Freud hesitated to decide as to the origin of the charge, which he distinguished in consciousness, quite perspicacious in recognizing it to be excessive in relation to the epiphenomenal slimness to which a certain physiology was intent on reducing it, and freeing himself therefrom, indicating to his followers the phenomenon of attention in order to cross swords.

An apparently insufficient clue: psychoanalysts have rarely known how to make use of a key when Freud did not teach them how it opens. Perhaps the advance I am making this year toward a certain object called "*petit a*" will permit some progress on this score.

I hope, then, to have restored to its proper place the function of a confusion which was first of all in your question.

The remainder of the text, if it is indeed the one you are referring to, shows precisely that what it is aiming at, at this juncture, is the danger of a reduction of the subject to the *ego*. It is that recentering, during a period of psychoanalytic slumber, of psychoanalytic theory on the ego that I was obliged to denounce at length in order to render possible a return to Freud.

By what trick of fate was that disaffected accessory, to wit: the ego—which served as no more than a label for psychology itself, once that discipline was intent on being a bit more objective—elevated precisely at the time when one would have expected its critique to be taken up anew from the perspective of the subject?

This can be conceived solely by way of the slippage undergone by psychoanalysis at being confronted with the managerial exploitation of psychology, particularly in its use for job recruitment.

The *autonomous ego*, the conflict-free sphere proposed as a new Gospel by Mr. Heinz Hartmann to the New York circle is no more than the ideology of a class of immigrants preoccupied with the prestigious values prevailing in cen-

tral European society when with the diaspora of the war they had to settle in a society in which values sediment according to a scale of *income tax*.

I thus anticipated the requisite warning signal by proposing as early as 1936, with the "mirror stage," a model that is already structural in essence, which recalled the true nature of the ego in Freud, namely: an imaginary identification, or more exactly, an enveloping series of such identifications.

Note for your purpose that I recall on this occasion the difference separating the image from the illusory (the "optical illusion" begins only with judgment; prior to that, it is a gaze objectivated in a mirror).

Heinz Hartmann, quite cultivated in such matters, was able to hear that call as early as the Marienbad Congress at which I issued it in 1936. But one is simply helpless against the attraction of diversifying the forms of the concentration camp: psychologizing ideology is one of them.

You philosophers don't seem to me to need this register of my remarks unless Alain has not been sufficient for you.

Are you sufficiently edified to free me from answering as to the way to "get somebody to step out of his consciousness." I am not Alphonse Allais, who would answer you: flay him.

It is not to his consciousness, that the subject is condemned, but to his body, which in many ways resists actualizing the division of the subject.

That such resistance has served to lodge all kinds of errors (including the soul) does not prevent that division from achieving effects of truth within it, such as what Freud discovered under the name over which his disciples still vacillate in assenting: castration.

II. Psychoanalysis and Society

What is the relation between the subject of a revolutionary praxis aiming at going beyond its alienated labor and the subject of alienated desire?

What is, according to you, the theory of language implied by Marxism?

What do you think of the recent remark by Dr. Mannoni, who, speaking (at a recent meeting of institutional psychotherapists) of psychoanalytic therapy, characterized it as "the intervention of one institution within another institution."

That raises the question of the social function of "mental illness" and of psychoanalysis. What is the social significance of the fact that the psychoanalyst must be paid by the analysand? Need psychoanalysis take into account the fact that it is a class therapy?

The subject of alienated desire — you mean no doubt what I articulate as: the desire of — is the desire of the Other, which is correct, with the sole modification that there is no subject of desire. There is the subject of the fantasy, that is: a division of the subject caused by an object, that is: stopped up by it, or more exactly, the object for which the category of cause occupies the place in the subject.

That object is the one lacking in philosophical consideration in order to situate itself, that is: in order to know that it is nothing.

That object is the one to which we come in psychoanalysis in that it leaps from its place, like a ball that escapes during the fray in order to score a goal on its own.

That is the object after which we run in psychoanalysis, even as we apply all conceivable awkwardness toward seizing it in theory.

It is only once the status of that object — the one I call "*petit a*," and with which I have entitled my course this year as the object of psychoanalysis — has been acknowledged that we will be able to give a meaning to the alleged impetus you attribute to the subject's revolutionary praxis of going beyond his alienated labor. In what way can one go beyond the alienation of his labor? It is as though you wanted to go beyond the alienation of discourse.

All I can see as transcending that alienation is the object sustaining its value, what Marx, in a homonym singularly anticipatory of psychoanalysis, called the fetish, it being understood that psychoanalysis reveals its biological significance.

Now, that causal object is the one whose regulated exclusion (*coupe*) assumes its ethical shape in the *embourgeoisement* which gives a planetary dimension to the fate of what is called in French, not without reason, *cadres* — white-collar workers.

See there a lineament of what might bring your question to the state of a rough sketch.

But in order to avoid any misunderstanding, note that I maintain that psychoanalysis does not have the slightest right to interpret revolutionary practice — which will be motivated further on — but that on the contrary, revolutionary theory would do well to hold itself responsible for leaving empty the function of truth as cause, when therein lies, nevertheless, the first supposition of its own effectiveness.

It is a matter of calling into question the category of dialectical materialism, and it is a matter of common knowledge that Marxists are not very adept at doing it, even though they are, on the whole, Aristotelians, which is already not too bad.

Only my theory of language as structure of the unconscious can be said to be implied by Marxism, if, that is, you are not more demanding than the material implication with which our most recent logic is satisfied, that is, that my

theory of language is true whatever be the adequacy of Marxism, and that it is needed by it, whatever be the defect that it leaves Marxism with.

So much for the theory of language implied logically by Marxism.

As for the one it has implied historically, I have barely but to offer you, given the modest limits of my information as to what goes on beyond a certain doctrinal curtain, thirty pages by Stalin that put an end to the frolics of *Marrism* (from the name of the philologist Marr, who considered language to be a "superstructure").

Statements of rudimentary common sense concerning language and specifically concerning the point that it *is not* a superstructure, whereby the Marxist, on the subject of language, situates himself far above the logical positivist.

The least you can accord me concerning my theory of language is, should it interest you, that it is materialist.

The signifier is matter transcending itself in language. I leave you the choice of attributing that sentence to a Communist Bouvard or a Pecuchet exhilarated by the marvels of D.N.A.

For you would be wrong to think that I care enough about metaphysics to make a trip to meet it.

I have it at home, that is, in my practice where I entertain it in terms which allow me to answer you in lapidary fashion as to the social function of mental illness: its *social* function, as you in fact put it, is irony. When you have experienced a schizophrenic, you will know the irony that arms him, working at the root of every social relation.

When, however, the illness is neurosis, the irony misses its function, and it is Freud's find to have recognized it there nevertheless, in which manner he restored it therein to its full rights, which is tantamount to a cure of the neurosis.

Psychoanalysis has now taken over the role of neurosis: it has the same social function, but it too misses it. I attempt to reestablish irony with its rights, in which manner perhaps we too will cure the psychoanalysis of today.

That a psychoanalysis must be paid for does not imply that it is a class therapy, but the two things are all that remain of irony in it at present.

That may seem an overly ironic answer. If you reflect on it, it will certainly seem more authentic to you than if I had referred you to what I said above about the function of the fetish.

I see that I have left aside Mannoni, for failure to know exactly what it was that he said. We will find out shortly in *Les Temps modernes*.

III. Psychoanalysis and Philosophy

To what extent can psychoanalysis account for philosophy and in what sense is it authorized to say that philosophy is paranoia (in an unpublished text by Freud commented on by Kaufmann)?

If illusion is the endpoint of sublimation, what is its relation to ideology? Is sublimation not a form of alienation?

Within the teaching of philosophy, how do you conceive of that of psychoanalysis?

*

I have already said enough to be brief, for all this is giving me no pleasure.

That philosophy is a variety of paranoia is a variety of Freud's irony in its savage phase. It is certainly not by chance that Freud consigns it to the unpublished (the Alphonse Allais reference here, too, would not be out of place; we should not be surprised to encounter Kaufmann—who is familiar with irony—here).

I regret that you believe that sublimation is an illusion. The slightest reading of Freud would convince you that he says exactly the opposite.

Religion, yes, an illusion, says Freud, but that's because he sees a neurosis in it.

I don't know what can be expected from within the teaching of philosophy, but I have recently had an experience of it that has left me prey to a doubt: which is that psychoanalysis can contribute to what is called hermeneutics only by restoring philosophy to its links with obscurantism.²

For to depend on the economics of the matter, that is, on what is obscure (since at the same time, one prides oneself on not having had any experience of it) at the very moment that, as a philosopher, one should be confronting the stumbling of the subject is of the same order as the celebrated fantasy of the Rat Man, who placed two packets of shit on eyes which, as if by chance, were those of Anna Freud, the daughter of his psychoanalyst.

Thus would the philosopher operate in regard to truth when *it* runs the risk of seeing him in his particular poverty.

But all this is not that serious, and the religious aspirations in this case are sufficiently acknowledged for one to be able to say that psychoanalysis has no interest in it.

IV. Psychoanalysis and Anthropology

Can there be or is there a fundamental discipline that would account for the unity of the human sciences?

Can psychoanalysis serve as the basis for an anthropology?

2. The reference is to Paul Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation: essai sur Freud*, Paris, Seuil, 1965.

*

The best anthropology can go no further than making of man the speaking being. I myself speak of a science defined by its object.

Now the subject of the unconscious is a *spoken* being, and that is the being of man; if psychoanalysis is to be a science, that is not a presentable object.

In point of fact, psychoanalysis refutes every idea heretofore presented of man. It should be said that all of them, however many there were, were no longer in touch with anything, even before psychoanalysis.

The object of psychoanalysis is not man; it is what he lacks—not an absolute lack, but the lack of an object. Even then agreement must be reached as to the lack in question—it is that which excludes the possibility of naming its object.

It is not to scarce bread, but to cake that the Queen sent her peoples in time of famine.

Therein lies the unity of the human sciences, if you like, which is to say that it provokes smiles if one fails to recognize in it the function of a limit.

It provokes smiles at a certain use of interpretation, as the sleight of hand of comprehension. An interpretation whose effects are understood is not a psychoanalytic interpretation. It is enough to have been analyzed or to be an analyst to realize that.

That is why psychoanalysis as a science will be structuralist, to the point of recognizing in science a refusal of the subject.

February 19, 1966

We have received the following letter from Dr. Jacques Lacan:

In conformity with my right, kindly publish these lines in their entirety. *Le Monde* appearing Thursday, June 26, in its final edition modified its format in order to add in boldface to the account of the incidents caused at the Ecole Normale Supérieure by the interruption of my lectures the remarks of the "administration" of that school.

My lectures, it is said, "are social events, incomprehensible for anyone who is normally constituted," a comment sufficiently dubious to elicit laughter, not necessarily at my expense.

That very day, under the sway of reactions on which light will be cast, Monsieur Flacelière retracted the statements of the administration of the Ecole, for which I recall that in his role as director he is responsible.¹ He did so with an alleged denial in which he replaced them with an aggravated bit of defamation to which *Le Monde* accorded space the following day, Friday.

To convey that what is in question is a fabrication is not, in fact, to disavow its content, but the publication of the text.

It is, on the contrary, libel to speak of provocation by the adversary and, worse still, to posit thefts committed in the private apartment of the director of the Ecole Normale by those he calls my disciples for that very reason.

Le Monde, to whom Monsieur Flacelière is known better than he is elsewhere (without prejudging what it was that its agent heard on the spot) did not doubt the authenticity of the comments that were thus withdrawn (dare I add

1. Invoking the reorganization of the Ecole Normale's curriculum, Robert Flacelière, the school's director, wrote to Lacan in March 1969 that he would not be free to teach there the following year. Lacan reserved the news for his final seminar on June 26, after which a number of those present occupied the director's apartment—while waiting vainly for an explanation—until they were removed by police.

[Flacelière was a classicist whose special field of study was the sexual practices of the Greeks. His *L'amour en Grèce* was translated as *Love in Ancient Greece* (New York, Crown Publishers, 1960). One finds in this book the same interest in differentiating normally from abnormally constituted practices as that suggested in his comment quoted above. Homosexuality he defines as a "vice encouraged by abnormal social conditions" (p. 215) and as "less prolific in a spiritual sense" than heterosexual love. —J. C.]

that I am told that they were deemed “too beautiful” to be in need of confirmation?).

It was not only at *Le Monde* that it was maintained that the comments were indeed his.

Agreeing subsequently that it had been somewhat hasty in its investigation, did *Le Monde* not owe it to itself not to publish the declaration that had been received, this time, in Monsieur Flacelière’s own name without asking him to specify with which thefts, and with what variety of stolen object, he intended to besmirch the presence in his home of individuals who were asking him for an explanation which he refused to give?

Monsieur Flacelière would thus justify his call to the police, followed by the immediate effect of their armed presence.

I call on Monsieur Flacelière through your channels to declare the extent of the thefts for which he is holding his indiscreet visitors accountable.

[Who said what: that is now the principal aspect of the polemic. We ourselves specified that the commentary on the incomprehensible character of Dr. Lacan’s lectures did not emanate from the director of the Ecole Normale Supérieure, but from another member of its administration. Dr. Lacan’s affirmation that we would be convinced of the contrary is entirely incorrect.

Moreover, we have not at all admitted to having been hasty in our investigation. We simply published in *Le Monde* of June 27 the declaration that a member of the Ecole’s administration had made to us, and on June 28 a clarification by its director denying it. — B. G. A.]

July 5, 1969

Jacques Lacan: (a dog passing by the platform on which he is standing) I shall speak of my muse, who is of that sort. She is the only person I know who knows what she is speaking—I don’t say: what she is saying—for it is not that she doesn’t say anything: she doesn’t say it in words. She says something when she is anxious—it happens—she places her head on my knees. She knows that I am going to die, a fact which a certain number of individuals know also. Her name is Justine . . .

Intervention: Hey! Is this possible? He’s talking to us about his dog!

Jacques Lacan: She is my bitch, she is very beautiful and you would have heard her speak . . . the only thing she lacks relative to the individual strolling there is not to have gone to the University.

Here I am then, officially a guest at the Experimental Center of said University, an experience that seems to me to be rather exemplary. Since it is a question of experience, you might ask yourselves what use you are. If you ask me, I will make you a diagram—I will try to—because after all, you know, the University is very strong, it has deep foundations.

I have reserved for you the announcement of the title of one of the four discursive positions that I have announced elsewhere; I began my seminar with the discourse of the master, as I called it, since you are accustomed to hearing about him. And it’s not easy to give an example, as someone quite intelligent remarked last night. I shall try, nevertheless: quite simply, that is the point I’ve reached, leaving the matter in suspense in my seminar. And to be sure, it is not a question of continuing here. An impromptu, I have said. You can see that that thing with the lowered tail provided me with one a few minutes ago. I shall continue in the same tone.

Secondly, the discourse of the hysteric. That one is very important, because with it the discourse of the psychoanalyst takes shape. Except that what is needed is that there be psychoanalysts . . . That is what I have made my business.

Intervention: There are no psychoanalysts at Vincennes, at any rate.

Jacques Lacan: You said it, not at Vincennes.

Intervention: Why is it that Vincennes students, at the conclusion of the teaching they are said to receive, can't become psychoanalysts?

Jacques Lacan (speaking in falsetto): That is precisely what I shall explain, Made-moiselle. That is precisely what is in question. Because psychoanalysis is not something that can be transmitted like any other form of knowledge.

The psychoanalyst has a position which happens to be able ultimately to be that of a discourse. He doesn't transmit a body of knowledge with it, not that there isn't anything to be known, contrary to what is imprudently advanced, since that is what is called into question: the function in society of a certain knowledge, one which is transmitted to you. It exists.

Intervention: Could you speak more slowly since some students are having trouble taking notes?

Intervention: You have to be weak in the head to take notes and to understand nothing about psychoanalysis nor about Lacan in particular.

Jacques Lacan (turning toward the blackboard): This is a sequence, an algebraic sequence . . .

Intervention: Man cannot be solved like an equation.

Jacques Lacan: . . . whose consistency lies in constituting a chain whose starting point is in this formula:

$$\frac{S^2 \text{ a S S}}{S^1 \text{ S S a}}$$

A signifier is defined as representing a subject for another signifier. That is quite a fundamental notation. It can in any event be taken as such. Through my offices, an attempt has been elaborated, one to which I have devoted sufficient time to allow me to give it form, and which I am now bringing to completion, an attempt to institute what necessitated the manipulation of a notion while encouraging subjects to trust him, to work with it. That is called a psychoanalytic patient.

I initially wondered what the result might be for the psychoanalyst, where he was in all of this. For on that score, it is plain that the current notions are not

clear. Since Freud—who knew what he was saying—said that the psychoanalyst's was an impossible function—which was nevertheless fulfilled every day. If you reread the text you will see that it is not a question of the function but of the being of the psychoanalyst. What is it that happens such that one fine day a psychoanalytic patient commits himself to being one: a psychoanalyst?

That is what I attempted to articulate when I spoke of the psychoanalytic act. I interrupted my seminar that year (it was '68) before the end, like that, in order to show my sympathy for what was astir and which continues . . . moderately. Contestation makes me think of something that was invented one day, if my memory is right, by my (late) good friend, Marcel Duchamp: "the bachelor prepares his chocolate by himself." Watch out lest the demonstrator prepare his chocolate by himself. In brief, the psychoanalytic act was left out in the cold, if I may say so. And I have not had time to return to it—even less in that examples of what you get that way have been proliferating all around me.

Intervention: Namely, a bit of deafness.

Jacques Lacan: Something like that came out; it is called *Etudes Freudiennes*. I cannot recommend your reading it too highly, having never recoiled from proposing bad readings to you which themselves are in the nature of best-sellers. If I recommend it to you, it is because they are very, very good texts. These are not like that grotesque little text of comments about my style which had quite naturally found its place in the arena vacated by Polan's non-sense [*Polânerie*]. This is something else. You will derive the greatest profit from it. Aside from an article by the person directing it and about which I cannot say too much good, you have statements incontestably and universally contesting the institution of psychoanalysis. There is a charming, solid, and likable Canadian who says things, my Lord, that are quite pertinent; there is someone from the Institut Psychanalytique de Paris, holding a very important position there in the Educational Committee, who undertakes a critique of the psychoanalytic institution as such in so far as it is in strict contradiction with what is required by the very existence of the psychoanalyst, which is a marvel. I can't say that I would sign it, since I have already signed it: the comments are my own. In any event, in my case, the critique has a sequel, a certain proposal that draws conclusions from the impasse that is so magisterially demonstrated. One might say somewhere, in a very short article, that there is an extremist in a certain place who attempted to work that into a proposal which radically renews the selection process in psychoanalysis. It is clear that it is not being done. And this is really not to complain since in the opinion of the very individuals concerned, that act of contestation is up in the air, entirely gratuitous: there is absolutely no question of its modifying anything at all in the present functioning of the institute in which the authors are participants.

Intervention: Ah, he really speaks well!

Intervention: Up until now, I haven't understood a thing. So maybe we can begin by knowing what a psychoanalyst is. For me he is a kind of cop. People who get psychoanalyzed don't talk and are concerned only with themselves.

Intervention: We already had the priests, but with them, it didn't work. Now we have the psychoanalysts.

Intervention: Lacan, we have been waiting for an hour for what you have been announcing obliquely: a critique of psychoanalysis. That's why we're being quiet, because that would be your self-criticism as well.

Jacques Lacan: But I am not at all criticizing psychoanalysis; there is no question of criticizing it. He doesn't understand very well. I am not at all engaging in contestation.

Intervention: You said that at Vincennes they didn't train psychoanalysts and that it was a good thing. In point of fact, a body of knowledge is dispensed, but you haven't said what it is. In any event, it wouldn't be a body of knowledge. So?

Jacques Lacan: A little patience. I'll explain it to you. I am the guest, I'll have you know. All this is splendid, great, and generous. But I am the guest.

Intervention: Lacan, is psychoanalysis revolutionary?

Jacques Lacan: There's a good question.

Intervention: Is it a form of knowledge or isn't it? You're not the only paranoia here.

Jacques Lacan: I shall speak of a certain aspect of things where I am not today, namely, the Department of Psychoanalysis. There is the delicate question of course credits [*unités de valeurs*].

Intervention: The question of course credits is settled, and this is not the moment to bring it up. There has been a whole maneuver by the instructors in the Department of Psychoanalysis to drag them out over the whole year. But we don't give a damn about course credits. What we're talking about is psychoanalysis. You understand? We don't give a damn.

Jacques Lacan: I don't at all feel that nobody gives a damn about course credits.

On the contrary, course credits are something people care a lot about . . . It's a habit. Since I have put on the blackboard the diagram of the fourth discourse, the one that I didn't name last time and that is called academic discourse, here it is. Here, in the master position, as it's called, S², knowledge. I explained . . .

Intervention: Whom are you taking for a ride here? Academic discourse is in course credits. That is a myth and what you are asking for is for us to believe in a myth. The people who invoke the rules of the game that you are imposing, they stink. So don't try to make us believe that academic discourse is on the board. Because that is just not true.

Jacques Lacan: Academic discourse is on the board because it occupies, on the board, the upper left-hand space . . .

Intervention: Up there to the right of God, that's Lacan.

Jacques Lacan: . . . already designated in a previous discourse. For what is important in what is written are the relations; that is where it gets across or doesn't. If you begin by putting in its place what essentially constitutes the discourse of the Master . . .

Intervention: What is a Master? It's Lacan.

Jacques Lacan: . . . to wit: that he orders, that he intervenes in the system of knowledge. You may ask yourselves what it means when the discourse of knowledge, through this displacement of a quarter of a circle, does not need to be on the board because it is in the real. In that displacement, when knowledge gets hold of the handle, at the very moment at which you are, there is where the result, fruit and fallout of the relations of the master and the slave have been defined. Namely, in my algebra, what is designated by a letter, the object *petit a*. The object *petit a*, last year, when I took the trouble to announce something called "from an other to the Other." I said that it was the place revealed and designated by Marx as surplus value.

You are the products of the University and you prove that you are surplus value, if only in this: what you not only consent to but actually applaud—and I don't see why I would object to it—is that you yourselves emerge from it, equal to more or less credits [*unités de valeur*]. You come here to turn yourselves into units of credit: you leave here stamped "Units of Credit."

Intervention: The moral being that one would do better to come out of here stamped by Lacan.

Jacques Lacan: I don't stamp anyone. What is this? Why do you presume that I want to stamp you. What a story!

Intervention: No, you won't stamp us, don't worry. What I mean is that the people here are stamped by the fact that although they want to sustain the discourse that you sustain for them, they cannot do it in a way compatible with their presence here. Some people want to speak in the name of a contestation that you describe as vain. Others go play Tralala, Boom-Boom in their corner; that's what makes for trends of public opinion. No one says this, pretending that it is for you to say it. What I would like is for you to have the desire to keep quiet.

Jacques Lacan: But they are really very good! They think that I would say it much better than they (*resorting, as is his wont, to a high-pitched voice*). As for me, I'm going back home. That's what they reproach me with.

Intervention: Oh! Lacan, stop making fun of people, O.K.!

Jacques Lacan: You bring to bear a discourse with such demands . . .

Intervention: For my part, what I propose is that people not be made fun of when they ask a question. One doesn't adopt a high-pitched voice as you just did on three occasions: one answers and that's it. So then, what was the question you asked?

And then, there's something else. Since some people here think that psychoanalysis is about getting enough ass, all we have to do is stage a love-in. Anyone want to turn this into a wild love-in? (beginning to undress, he stops after taking off his shirt).

Jacques Lacan: Listen, my friend, I already saw that last night; I was at the Open Theater; there is a guy who did that, but he had a little more nerve than you. He stripped till he was completely naked. Go ahead, I mean why don't you continue! Shit!

Intervention: All the same, let's not kid ourselves. Why is Lacan satisfied with so limited a criticism of the comrade's practice. To bang on the table and say of the comrade that he can't undress may be very funny, but it's also very simplistic.

Jacques Lacan: But I am simplistic!

Intervention: And that makes them laugh. It's interesting.

Jacques Lacan: But I don't see why all of a sudden they wouldn't laugh.

Intervention: As for me, I'd like them to laugh at that moment.

Jacques Lacan: This is sad!

Intervention: Just as it's sad to see people coming out of here as though out of a subway at six P.M.

Jacques Lacan: So where are we now? It appears that people can't talk about psychoanalysis, because they're waiting for me to be the one to do it. Well, let me tell you they're right, because I can do it much better than they can.

Intervention: That's not exactly it, since they feel the need to speak among themselves.

Jacques Lacan: That's been demonstrated.

Intervention: There are a certain number of individuals, the same ones who are taking notes and laughing, who, whenever Lacan gets hold of his audience, tell each other a certain number of things without rising from their seats, and what is at stake here is a certain topology. Well those are the people I'd like to hear.

Intervention: Come on, let Lacan speak!

Jacques Lacan: In the meanwhile, you are not saying a thing.

Intervention: L-A-C-A-N with us!

Jacques Lacan: I am with you.

Well, the hour is getting late. Let's try, nevertheless, to give you some idea of what I'm trying to do.

It is a matter of articulating a logic, which, however feeble it may appear to be (my four little letters that don't look like anything except that the rules according to which they function must be known) is still strong enough to include the sign of that logical strength, to wit: incompleteness . . .

It makes them laugh! Except that it has a very important consequence, particularly for revolutionaries, which is that No Thing is All.

Intervention: Oh! Fine!

Jacques Lacan: From whatever angle you take things, and however you may turn them, the property of each of these four-legged little diagrams is to allow

each its cleft. At the level of the discourse of the master, it's precisely that of the retrieval of surplus value; at the level of academic discourse, it's another one. And that's the one that torments you. Not that the knowledge transmitted to you is not structured and solid and you have but one thing to do, which is to weave yourselves in with those who are working—that is, those who are teaching you—as means of production and, as a result, of surplus value.

At the level of the discourse of the hysteric, which is the one that enabled a decisive transition by giving its meaning to what Marx articulated historically. Namely, that there are historical events that can be judged only in terms of symptoms. No one saw how far that went until the day there appeared the discourse of the hysteric in order to effect the transition to something else, which is the discourse of the psychoanalyst. The psychoanalyst at first had but to listen to the discourse of the hysteric.

Intervention: Consequently, the hysteric is the master of the psychoanalyst . . .

Jacques Lacan: I want a man who knows how to make love . . . Well, indeed, that's where man stops. He stops in that he is indeed someone who knows. As for making love, we'll get back to you later on that. No Thing is All, and you can always indulge in your little jokes, but there is one that is not funny, and it's castration.

Intervention: While this lecture is droning peacefully on, there are 150 comrades from Beaux-Arts who have been arrested by the cops, and who have been at Beaujon since yesterday, because *they* don't teach courses about the object *petit a*, like the mandarin in our presence about whom nobody gives a damn. They went to teach a "wild cat" seminar at the Ministry of Equipment on the subject of slums and the policies of Monsieur Chalandon. So I think that the drone of this magisterial lecture conveys rather well the present state of decay of the University.

Intervention: Because frankly, everything that he says is bullshit, no?

Jacques Lacan: You bet!

Intervention: If nobody wants to let me speak, plainly, it's because nobody knows just how loud I can yell. Lacan, I'd like to tell you some things.

It seems to me that we have come to the point where it is clear that some form of contestation can possibly take shape in this auditorium. It is clear that we can sound a few shrill cries, make a few good puns, but it is also clear—and perhaps quite evidently so today—that we can never arrive at a critique of the University if we remain within it, within its courses and within the rules that it established prior to our intervention.

I think that what the comrade just said about the Beaux-Arts students who went to teach a "wild cat" seminar on the subject of slums and Chalandon's policies outside the University is a very important example. It allows us to find an outlet for our will to change society and, among other things, to destroy the University. And I would like Lacan to give us his opinion on that in a little while. For the University will not be destroyed by a majority of students working within it, but more likely on the basis of a union that we students should forge, on revolutionary grounds, with the workers and the peasants. I am well aware that no relation exists between this and what Lacan was just saying . . .

Jacques Lacan: But not at all, not at all. It does exist . . .

Intervention: It may perhaps exist, but not in any clear fashion. The relation between the actions that we ought to take on the outside and Lacan's discourse (if that's what it is) is manifestly implicit. And it would be good if Lacan told us now what he thinks of the necessity of stepping out of the University and stopped screwing around with words, challenging some professor about one quotation or another from Marx. Because we have had it up to here with academic Marxism. We've been hearing people drool over the subject on this campus for a year now. We know that it's shit. To do academic Marxism is to serve the bourgeois University. If we are to overthrow the University, it will be from the outside, with others who are on the outside.

Intervention: So why are you inside?

Intervention: I am inside, comrade, because if I want people to leave, I have to come in and tell them.

Jacques Lacan: Ah! you see . . . everything is there, my friend, in order to get them to go out, you come in . . .

Intervention: Lacan, let me finish. Everything is *not* there, because certain students still think that by listening to the discourse of Monsieur Lacan they will find in it the elements that will allow them to contest his discourse. I say that they are letting themselves be had.

Jacques Lacan: Quite right.

Intervention: If we think that it's by listening to the discourse of Lacan, Foucault, Doummegues, Terray, or anyone else that we'll be able to criticize the ideology that they're making us swallow, we're looking up our own asses. I say that we have to look outside for the means to overthrow the University.

Jacques Lacan: I didn't say that knowledge was king. I didn't say that. No?

Intervention: So?

Jacques Lacan: And so that has certain consequences, that is, my dear follow, you would not be very comfortable there.

Intervention: We asked a question concerning one society and you answer about another society. What you have to say is why you think it's inevitable.

Jacques Lacan: I quite agree. For there are limits that shouldn't be transgressed in a certain logic which I have called feeble, though it's still strong enough to allow you a bit of incompleteness, to which you are attesting quite perfectly.

Intervention: As for me, I wonder why this amphitheater is jammed with 800 people. It's true that you are a fine and famous clown, and that you have come to speak. A comrade also spoke for ten minutes in order to say that militant groups couldn't work their own way out of the University. And everyone recognizing that there is nothing to be said, speaks in order to say nothing. Well, if there is nothing to be said, nothing to understand, nothing to know, nothing to do, why is there this crowd here? And why, Lacan, are you staying here?

Intervention: We are a bit lost here amidst a false problem. And all because the comrade said that he came to the University in order to leave again with other comrades.

Intervention: There is talk of a new society. Will psychoanalysis play a role in that society, and what will it be?

Jacques Lacan: A society is not something that can be defined just like that. What I am attempting to articulate, because analysis gives me the evidence, is what dominates it—to wit: the practice of language. Aphasia means that there is something that has broken down in that area. Imagine that there are guys to whom stuff happens in their brain and who can no longer in any way manage to make do with language. It leaves them rather infirm.

Intervention: One could say that Lenin almost became an aphasiac.

Jacques Lacan: If you had a little patience, and if you were willing for our impromptus to continue, I would tell you that the aspiration to revolution has but one conceivable issue, always, the discourse of the master. That is what experience has proved. What you, as revolutionaries, aspire to is a Master. You will have one.

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Intervention: We already have him. We've got Pompidou.

Jacques Lacan: You actually think you have a master with Pompidou! Well? But what are you talking about . . . I too would like to ask some questions. For whom here does the word "liberal" have a meaning?

Intervention: Pompidou is a liberal, Lacan too.

Jacques Lacan: I am liberal, like everyone else, only in so far as I am anti-progressive. With the single modification that I am caught in a movement which deserves to be called progressive, for it is progressive to see the discourse of psychoanalysis achieve its foundation in so far as it completes the circle that might perhaps allow you to situate what precisely is at stake, what it is that you are rebelling against. Which will not at all prevent it from continuing, smashingly well. And the first to collaborate with it, and right here at Vincennes, are you, for you fulfill the role of the helots of this regime. You don't know what that means either? The regime puts you on display; it says: "Watch them fuck . . ."

Well. There it is. So long for today. Bye.
It's over.

December 3, 1969

I speak without the slightest hope—specifically of making myself understood.

I know that I do so—by adding thereto whatever it entails of the unconscious.

That is my advantage over the man who thinks and does not perceive that, to start with, he speaks. An advantage which I owe solely to my experience.

For in the interval between the word that he misconstrues and what he believes he renders as thought, man gets bogged down in confusion, which is no encouragement to him.

So that man thinks *feebly*, and all the more feebly in that he rages . . . precisely at getting bogged down in confusion.

There is a problem with the Ecole. It's no mystery. Consequently, I am addressing it, none too early.

The problem is revealed as such, at having a solution: which is a *dis*—a dissolution.

To be understood as from the Association which gives that Ecole its juridical status.

That it be enough for one to go away for all to be free is, according to my Borromean knot, true of each, but must be so of myself in my Ecole.¹

I resolve myself to it since it would function, were I not to put myself in its way, contrary to that for which I founded it.

Namely for a labor, I have said as much—which in the field opened up by Freud restores the cutting edge of his truth—which brings the original praxis he instituted under the name of psychoanalysis back to the duty incumbent upon it in our world—which, through an assiduous critique, denounces the deviations and compromises blunting its progress while degrading its use. An objective that I maintain.

1. The Borromean knot is a topological structure on which Lacan speculated toward the end of his career: three rings are interconnected in such manner that if one is broken, the other two are set free.

That is why I am dissolving. And am not complaining about the so-called "members of the Ecole"—whom I rather thank, for having been taught by them, whereof I failed—that is, got bogged down in confusion.

That teaching is precious to me. I am profiting from it.

*

In other words, I persevere.

And call to an association once again those who, this January 1980, want to go with Lacan.

Let a written candidacy allow them to be known forthwith by me. In ten days, in order to cut short the prevalent feebleness, I shall publish the first adherents to which I shall agree, as commitments to "assiduous criticism" of whatever in the order of "deviations and compromises" the EFP [Ecole Freudienne de Paris] has nourished.

Demonstrating through acts that it is not of their doing that my Ecole would be an Institution, the effect of a consolidated group, at the expense of the discursive effect expected from an experiment, when it is Freudian. One knows what price was paid for Freud's having permitted the psychoanalytic group to win out over discourse, becoming a Church.

The International, since such is its name, is no more than the symptom of what Freud expected of it. But *it* is not what weighs in the balance. It's the Church, the true one, which supports Marxism insofar as it gives the Church new blood . . . of renewed meaning. Why not psychoanalysis, when it veers toward meaning?

I am not saying that out of vain banter. The stability of religion stems from the fact that meaning is always religious.

Whence my obstinacy on the path of mathemes—which doesn't stop a thing, but bears witness to what would be needed to bring the analyst to the heel of his function.²

If I persevere [*père-sévère*: severe-father], it is because the experiment completed calls for a compensatory counter-experiment.

I don't need many. And there are many whom I don't need.

I am abandoning them here so that they may show me what they can do, aside from burden me and turn to water a teaching in which everything has been carefully weighed.

Will those whom I admit with me do any better? At least they can avail themselves of the fact that I am giving them the chance.

*

The Directorate of the EFP, as I composed it, will expedite whatever current business continues to drag on until an extraordinary—because final—meeting, called at the proper legal time, precedes to the devolution of its property, as appraised by the treasurers.

Guitrancourt, January 5, 1980

2. "Matheme"—echoing in part Lévi-Strauss's mytheme, in part the Greek *mathema* (knowledge)—was the unstable term around which Lacan organized his reflections on the extra-analytic transmissibility of what is otherwise ineffable in psychoanalytic experience.

I am within the work of the unconscious.

What it shows me is that no truth reponds to malaise other than one particular to each of those whom I call *parlêtres*.

There is no common impass to be found there, since nothing allows one to presume that they are all funneled into a common flow.

The use of the one we find solely in the signifier does not at all found the unity of the real. Unless it be to furnish us with the image of the grain of sand. It cannot be said that even in piling up, they form a whole. An axiom is needed, that is: a position for saying so.

That it might be counted, as Archimedes says, is but a sign of the real, not of any particular universe.

*

I have no more School. I have lifted it from the resting point (Archimedes again) that I took from the grain of sand of my utterance.

Now I have a pile—a pile of people who want me to take them. I am not going to make a totality out of them.

No whole.

I don't need many, I said, and it's true—but of what use is it to say so, if there are many who need me?

At least who believe it (that they need me). Who believe it enough to tell me so in writing.

And why shouldn't I myself believe it too? Since I count myself among the number of dupes, as everyone knows.

I expect nothing from individuals, and something from a functioning. Consequently, I am obliged to innovate, since I have missed the boat with the School, for having failed to produce Analysts within it who would be of the requisite level.¹

1. Analyst of the School, as opposed to Analyst Member of the School, was the highest rank in the Ecole, the result of successfully completing the ritual of the "passe." In the "passe," the can-

Which of those selected for my jury would I have counseled to vote for himself should he by chance have presented his candidacy today?

Wherefore I have no haste in reforming a school.

But, "without my taking into account positions taken in the past concerning my person,"—a quotation from 1964—he who, having declared to me that he is continuing with me, does so in terms that do not, to my mind, contradict the assertion in advance, is accepted by me to associate with whoever does the same.

I in no way prejudge who is who, but entrust it to the experiment—Freudian, if possible—to be performed.

As in the celebrated tryst of the lovers at an Opera ball. Horror when they let slip their masks: it was not at all he; she neither, for that matter.

An illustration of my failure at this *Hétérité*—pardon my Hubris—which disappointed me sufficiently for me to deliver the statement that there is no sexual relation.

*

Freud, for his part, takes off from his phallic cause, in order to deduce castration from it. Which does not take place without smudges that I am undertaking to mop up.

Contrary to what is said, concerning phallic bliss [*jouissance*], Woman, if I may so speak, since she doesn't exist, is not deprived of it.

She does not have any less of it than the man to whom her instrument (organon) is hooked. However little she herself is endowed with it (for let us acknowledge that it is slim), she none the less obtains the effect of what limits the other edge of that bliss, namely, the irreducible unconscious.

It is even for that reason that women—who do indeed exist—are the best analysts—and occasionally, the worst.

It is on the condition of not getting carried away by the idea of an anti-phallic nature, of which there is no trace in the unconscious, that they can hear what in that unconscious is not intent on being uttered, but attains what is elaborated from it, as procuring them a properly phallic bliss.

*

The Other is missing. It seems funny to me too. I can take the blow though, which gives you a thrill of sorts, but I'm not doing it for that.

didate (*passant*) discusses his training and the conclusion of his analysis with two members-in-analysis (*passseurs*) of a jury. They in turn transmit that testimony to three Analysts of the School on the jury, who, along with the Director (Lacan), decide on whether or not to admit the candidate as an Analyst of the School.

I aspire, to the day when the misunderstanding will so thrill me at coming from you that I will be pathic to the point of no longer insisting on it.

If it should happen that I go away, tell yourselves that it is in order to be Other at last.

One can be satisfied with being Other like everyone else, after a lifetime spent being it in spite of the Law.

January 15, 1980

The text of this seminar appeared in Le Monde of January 26, 1980, preceded by the following letter:

I am submitting to *Le Monde* the text of this letter, with my seminar of the 15th, if it is willing to publish it in its entirety.

So that it be known that no one has learned anything from me in order to aggrandize himself for it.

Yes, the psychoanalyst holds his act in *horror*. This, to such an extent that he negates, disavows, and renounces it—and curses whoever reminds him of it, Lacan Jacques, lest his name be mentioned, even calls for the scalp of Jacques Alain Miller, odious for having shown himself to be the at-least-one to have read him. Without any more attention than needed to established "analysts."

Does my pass grip them too late, that I should emerge therefrom with nothing of value? Or is it for having entrusted its care to someone who gives signs of not having perceived anything of the structure motivating it?

Let the psychoanalysts not grieve over what I am alleviating them of. As for the experience, I am not abandoning it. As for the act, I am giving them the chance to face up to it.

January 24, 1980