

The *Us[ages]* of the *Laps[e]*

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First meeting of the *Course*
(Wednesday, November 17, 1999)

I

THE *US[AGES]* OF THE *LAPS[E]*

“THE US OF THE LAPS” will be the title of my *Course* for the year 1999-2000, the one in which we – humanity – will enter into the third millennium, although some purists, of the priggish pedant type, have made us pay attention to the fact that the event – if it is one – will only be produced a year later, in 2001.

This remark, besides being formally exact, can do nothing against a fact of arithmetical order, which is that 2001 does not differ from 2000 except by a single number – everything is there. This changing of one number happens every year. It is only every ten years that two numbers change. It is only once a century that three numbers change, and it is only once every thousand years that four numbers are destined to change. Once every thousand years! And, besides, to be more exact, the time before, I do not know if you were there (*laughter*), we passed from three numbers to four, from 999 to 1000. The plus 1 of the year 999 added one number and the plus 1 of the year 1999 is the first to modify the four numbers.

The most remarkable thing is the equanimity with which one prepares oneself for this sensational entry into the third millennium. A thousand years ago, this crossing was haunted by dreams of apocalypse. Today, all we have is the *bug* (*laughter*), one only expects accidents – there will be some. This is to say that the event is not the end of the world; it is not at the level of God, but of machines. How surprised we would be if on January 1st, 2000, the Angel Gabriel (*laughter*) came to announce that the Good Lord, after a nonetheless prolonged experiment, considered that this sufficed and that the final judgment had arrived.

It is remarkable that no one expects this and that every-

thing one expects is at the level of machines, and because of what? Because of a careless mistake, a concern for economy, which has made it so that people have coded machines with only two numbers instead of four; briefly put, because of a failure of anticipation, very singular in itself, and which one could qualify as a globalized formation of the unconscious.

If this is an event, it is purely conventional, since this counting, even of years, is a convention. This is to say that there are other conventions. The Jewish year, since last September, is marked 5760, ladies and gentlemen, which is to say that the 2000 of the year of the *goyim* – they can keep it for themselves.

The notion of the conventional character of this detailed reckoning of the years is widespread enough to make us neither hot nor cold. To tell the truth, it is a triumph of the *Lumières*, the Enlightenment thinkers that we are witnessing; we could even say that this is the proof that we are all postmodern, and there is an obscurantist side of postmodernism and a side inherited from the Enlightenment thinkers, a multiplicity of conventions.

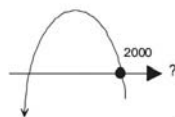
It would be possible, besides, that the year to watch is not the year 2000, but the year 2012, which, if you do not know this, is the end of the present grand cycle of the years according to the Mayan calendar: 2012.

This calendar, ours, is a triumph of Catholic counting and, at the same time, it is the defeat of Catholicism by the complete emptying-out of its meaning. It is the triumph of the Gregorian calendar, globalized today, which was only adopted in 1582, which was only accepted by Protestant Germany three centuries ago, in 1700, with some reservations, which, moreover, were only raised in 1775. It was adopted by Great Britain in 1752, by Japan in 1873 – according to our calendar, of course – by Russia in 1917 – which is, moreover, the most notable realization of Communist power (*laughter*)– and likewise in China in 1949. I evoke the calendar because the calendar has a fascinating history; it is an epic of the signifier that must be followed; we will perhaps have occasion this year to comment on how the signifier has taken over time, how the signifier has structured time, the real of time, and through this has structured

the world.

No one contests it any more – especially since our time, the time of everyone, became atomic, in 1972. There have been some philosophers, of course, who have raised the objection of the *Lebenswelt*, of the lived world which would not know the time of the signifier. The *Lebenswelt*, perhaps we will come to that this year, why not in Husserl's *Lessons on the Intimate Consciousness of Time*, and in those that follow? Lived time has not remained indifferent to, unperturbed by, the *signification* of time.

Bergson was able to make some wailings heard over the fact that mechanical time betrayed lived duration. But we have a completely different conception of time than that. Two thousand, that makes a round number and it is a *point de capiton* [a quilting point] which invites us to look backward, and also to anticipate.



At Buenos-Aires, where I was recently, I was invited by my friend Germán Garcia to give a lecture whose title was proposed to me in Spanish as “*Al fin y al cabo?*” which would translate into French as something like “At the end of ends,” definitively, all counts rendered, and I believed – but this was not necessarily his intention. He had invited me to give a panorama of the last millennium from the XIth to the XXth century. So, I tried to do that (*laughter*), as a kind of practical joke. But one perceives when one considers the last millennium, that there is a cut between the XIth to the XVth centuries – when not too much happened – and the XVIth –XXth, where the rhythm of the period is completely different.

The cut that passes between the XVth and the XVIth centuries is marked by the Renaissance, for us. If one asks oneself which events have truly counted during the last millennium, obviously there are a certain number of regional events that have seemed important at the moment, but what has truly been important, at the global level? – I was forced to take this line of reasoning in Buenos-Aires where I did not have a single book at hand. The events that have truly counted, definitively, *al fin y al cabo*, are those that concern knowledge [*savoir*]. The rest are anecdotes.

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If one takes this conception, what truly counted between the XIth and the XVth centuries was the invention, between the XIIth and the XIIIth centuries, the discourse of the university, which spread after that across the globe and, then, in the second half of the XVIIth century, the discourse of science – mathematical physics, and so on – and its reworkings from Galileo and Descartes to Newton and to Einstein.

And it is also the discourse of capitalism whose globalization has been established, made manifest since the year 1989. Obviously, one would like to add that of psychoanalysis to this list [made up] of the discourse of the university, of science, and of capitalism, but one does not have much distance from it [*on n'a pas beaucoup de recul*], from the millennial ladder [*à l'échelle du millénaire*].

And, from the millennial ladder, the XXth century is very remarkable, a great century of massacres, but also of a startling acceleration of time in terms of what concerns science. There are more knowledgeable people (*savants*) in the XXth century than there have been in any millennium and the rhythm of inventions that have proceeded from the discourse of science has known— from the last century, from its last half or from its last quarter— an absolutely startling acceleration, especially if one compares it with the tranquility of existence in the XIth century, something about which one does not think enough!

These circumstances have contributed to making me give to the *Course* of this year the title “THE USAGES OF TIME.” Finally, I have said “LAPS.”

The *us*, we know them, the word in the expression *Les us et coutumes*, [The usages and customs¹], an expression from the XIIth century which qualifies habits, the traditional way of doing things, but *us* is a word that can be used alone, as is attested to by only the best authors, still in the XXth century. And since it comes from *usus*, even as does the word *d'usage* [usual, customary], one must hear “the usage” and especially the old usage, the one that has become habitual. Let us point out that it only exists in French in the plural and it is on account of this [*à ce titre*] that it will figure in my title [*dans mon titre*].

As for *laps*, it is from the XIVth century and comes from the Latin too, *lapsus*, which means *écouler* [to flow, to sell, to dispose of] and which gave us, only in the 19th century, moreover, before Freud, *lapsus*, and behind the verb *labi*, the words *s'écouler*; *tomber* [to flow (out), to fall].

It is true that we only seem to know it up to now in the expression *laps de temps* [lapse of time]. The lapse is especially attendant on time, except in canon law where the expression *laps et relaps* [lapse and relapse] stigmatizes the one who has willingly embraced the Catholic religion only to abandon it.

This is the only moderate abuse I permit myself; I use lapse all alone because to the ear, the *us du laps* [usages of the lapse] shows that one must not waste time. One could say the usages of time, and that is the current question, that of the good use of time: how does one make use of time? This has been the material of long philosophical reflections: to what must one devote one's life, what is the right way to spend one's life, which is nothing more than a lapse of time allotted to each of us, an indeterminate quantity.

But the question, obviously, for us, falls upon [*tombe sur*] the practice of psychoanalysis. What does one do with time in psychoanalysis? Essentially, one does sessions, which are so many lapses of time, distributed over the unit of the week, the month, the year, the decade, and it is remarkable, after all, that a psychoanalysis operates in the form of sessions.

That is one of the questions that this title calls forth and which is consonant with another title, that of the next international *Rencontre* of the Freudian Field, which is quite crudely: "The Analytic Session," with a subtitle that makes more precise and more complex, and, perhaps, more opaque, the logics of the treatment and of the unforeseen event.

But, finally, the usages of the lapse are also the usage that one makes in analysis of what slips, what falls, what lapses; one interprets the lapse. And I said to myself, in writing this title, that the lapse would not be a bad way to say the unconscious, for which Lacan looked for a new word – the lapse.

It is also the question introduced in this title, whose

words appear truncated, rushed, amputated, as fallow suffixes: what is the unconscious? This is, indeed, what I intend to take on, the relation of the unconscious and the session. What kind of relation is this? Contingent? Necessary? What can be said of the operation of an analysis in the form of sessions? Is there an essential relationship between the unconscious and the session and the series of sessions? And, then, what is the relation of unconscious and time, this time about which Freud said – this is in any case what is echoed – that the unconscious does not know it [time].

That, then, is my beginning. And to advance in the relations of the unconscious and of time, I will begin by orienting myself by Lacan's well-known expression, which has been much commented on, and which is that of the subject-supposed-to-know, because to consider it closely, it is the expression that brings us closest to the problematic of the unconscious and of time.

To tell the truth, the subject-supposed-to-know is a multifaceted expression. First, one can understand it, which is rare with Lacan, they say. Everybody understands it in the form of: one of whom others suppose that he or she knows. It is a familiar signification and one can say that it arises as soon as one simply asks a question to learn what the questioner [*le locuteur*] does not know and what he supposes the one he questions [*l'interlocuteur*] knows. A question suffices to give rise to the instance of the subject-supposed-to-know.

Certainly, there are questions and there are questions. There are the questions that one asks to verify that the interlocutor knows what one knows oneself, supposedly. These are the questions of the examiner and, then, there are rhetorical questions, false questions, which are asked only to provoke a denial, to arouse the indignation of the interlocutor, to bring out the obvious, or even to give the status of the obvious to what is put into question.

But finally, whatever the modality of the question, when there is a question, there is on the horizon, somewhere, the subject-supposed-to-know. But again, the subject-supposed-to-know, as everyone understands it, is not the subject-supposed-to-know in the technical sense, the one that comes for Lacan

with a matheme that a certain number of you know very well.

$$\frac{S^t \longrightarrow S^q}{}$$

In that matheme, the signifier of the transference— whichever signifier—the subject-supposed-to-know is written in this form; it is not exactly the familiar signification that is understood, however.

$$s (S^1, S^2 \dots S^n)$$

It is the subject supposed to a signifier, supposed by a signifier. But there is no need to go into detail to grasp that, precisely, the expression subject-supposed-to-know, with its familiar side and its technical side, is indeed made for confronting us with the obviousness of the disjunction of the signification; that, precisely, there are levels of comprehension, and this distinction of level is the subject-supposed-to-know itself.

This expression is indeed made to make us glimpse that there is a semantic depth, that signification is not a punctual entity, which would be superficial and transparent, but that it has some facets, that it offers some perspectives, that it has, if one can say this, three dimensions. And, then, thirdly, there are indeed other readings and usages given rise to by the subject-supposed-to-know: some plays on signifiers, the subject-supposed, the knowledge supposed – because knowledge can be either a verb or an adjective – and then, why not, the subject knowledge, and the knowledge subject, and the subject-supposed-to-knowledge – thousands and thousands of readings propose themselves.

Let us take, nonetheless, the subject-supposed-to-know at its purest, which stems simply from the fact that there is a signifier about which one asks oneself what it means. Certainly, one must first have it identified as a signifier. And when one asks oneself what that means, that calls for an Other, very simply, an Other that one expects will make the sense [*sens*] of the first appear.



In other words, it is from the fact alone of the articulation, of the connection, of the relation, of the rapport, that the sense has a chance of appearing. Now, one can also ask: what does the sense mean? The paradox is that sense is all the more

present, all the more instant, all the more insistent, when one does not know what it is. It is in this sense that Lacan can say that the height of sense is the enigma, that is to say, precisely the sense of which one does not know what it is, hence, the equivalence proposed between sense and not-knowing. This equivalence already puts on the horizon of the simplest articulation the supposition of knowing, of knowing what it means. Sense is an effect attached to a wanting to say [*vouloir dire*], which one can take at the lowest level as introducing a translation, a substitution, an equivalence, a synonymy; one can say that two plus two means [*veut dire*] four, four being no more the signifying abbreviation of the three preceding symbols. But meaning [*vouloir dire*] conceals other powers. Meaning, this wanting to say already present in the question— “What does that mean [*Qu’est-ce ça veut dire*]?”— once one has identified a signifier, this wanting to say there, if one does not make it settle for the simple quest for a synonym, imposes the presence of a will, imposes the phantom of an intention and of the subject of this intention.

And one can already suppose that this intention, this will to say[ing] that gives rise to the question “What does that mean?,” that this will, indeed, always runs the risk of being bad; and, besides, if one asks what this means, it is because the enunciator has not said it, has, perhaps, hidden it – and with what intentions? Not the best, certainly.

Already in hysteria, which is this affliction of the inauthenticity of sense, one clearly sees circulating the notion that with sense, something false is introduced into the world. And it happens that the subject takes charge of it, of this badness, but indeed it is also from there that the paranoid accent of hysteria arises: the Other hides me, the Other lies to me.

This is the everyday effect of the subject-supposed-to-know, without the letter, before the letter², based simply on the fact that there is some signifier, that there are some things identified as signifiers and that are to be deciphered.

Let us take up the *question* business again. When you ask yourself a question, it can happen that these are questions whose answer you might expect from an encyclopedia. Today, encyclopedias are on the internet. Very recently, before the

beginning of the next millennium, The *Encyclopedia Britannica* itself – the favorite reading, the principle inspiration [*le principe*] of the work of Jorge Luis Borges – the *Encyclopedia Britannica* itself gave up selling its volumes and committed hara-kiri by placing itself on the Internet.

You are going to a place that flaunts *I know everything*. Can one say there is a subject-supposed-to-know there? It is not clear that a subject is supposed there, even in the measure where everything is there, and no doubt it would be necessary to distinguish the anticipation of finding an answer there from what the supposition is. In any case, it is not enough for there to be a reserve of available knowledge for one to be able to speak of a subject-supposed-to-know. Supposing that the answer is in the encyclopedia does not constitute a subject-supposed-to-know.

Okay, let us take the question from another angle: [let us say] that the question is a demand for knowledge, a demand for knowledge addressed to someone who has this knowledge. It suffices to say things that way, for that to invite us to reformulate it, in our discourse, like this: that knowledge is an object of demand; saying it this way suffices to take it in the dialectic of the object of the demand.

In fact, knowledge can be an object of need. In any case, one pretends so: “I need to know,” knowledge as information. But knowledge is eminently, in this dialectic which takes the different objects of demand, an object of love. Giving an answer is a testimony of love. It is already to recognize the one who asks, it is to give to him or her a gift, it is to establish a link; and not giving knowledge is a means of power.

Historians study the networks of the elaboration of knowledge, of its affiliation, of its retention, of its distribution; historians who are like management specialists. It is an object about which one studies its circulation and its effects, its incidences, in relation to power. I said something about that when I was in Argentina. Being in this country, I read *the Match*, the *Buenos Aires Match*, where the current President, who will yield his place sometime, gave an interview; he is a controversial man, but a very capable one, who cited a proverb, which he presented as Biblical and which inspired him in his

life as a politician: “Man is master of his silences and slave of his words.” He talks a lot.

It is certain that the analyst all the better occupies the place of the master in analytic discourse, if he silences himself. And to silence oneself is not to give knowledge. Hence the reproach, “You Say Nothing,” that we had previously made the title of one of the “Days [*Journées*] on Interpretation,” and which is echoed in the form of “I need a word, I need a word from you.” Silence does not annul knowledge, it annuls exposed knowledge and it produces the supposition of knowledge, the supposition that he or she has it and that he or she does not want to give it. And that suffices to constitute an object of knowledge, a hidden object, an object preserved under a veil. In the series of the objects, oral, anal, and so on, one could call it the epistemological object.

Certainly, it would not be without affinities with the anal object, from the fact alone that it gives rise to the demand of the Other, the demand to give what is at the interior, or also, one can say that it is given rise to by the demand of the Other.

The one about whom one supposes that he or she has this object, one can say that one falls under his or her power. In any case, politics manipulates this supposition to create hope, anticipation. But it is necessary, nevertheless, to distinguish the relation of knowledge and of power and of knowledge and love.

The definition we use for love is that in love, one gives what one does not have. And precisely, there is a relation of knowledge and love, when one gives a knowledge one does not have, that is to say, when one betrays oneself, when one reveals oneself.

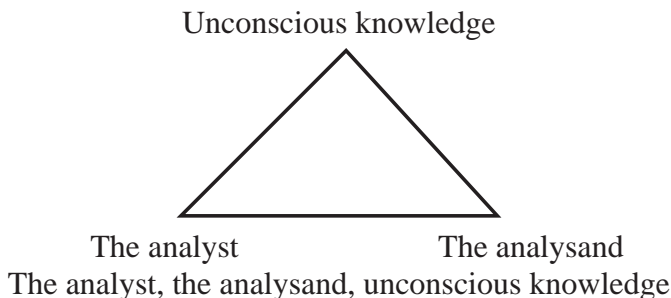
It is here that one must distinguish what happens in analysis. No doubt, the analysand seeks to obtain from the analyst – that is, when he or she is not Kleinian, that is to say, when he does not speak so much as the analysand – when he seeks to get the analyst, master-of-his-silence, to say something, to give an indication or an interpretation, to give the gift of the word, no matter what the content, that it be something; but what is even more precious is to obtain from the analyst a lapsus of the analytic act, to obtain from the analyst an error,

a missed act, by which he, in effect, passes to the position of analysand. It is there that what is exquisite in the gift of knowledge is attached. It is that one gives the knowledge that one does not have, and in that way, even, one sees very well what the analysand does continuously: he gives something that he does not have.

Well, then, in the end, he gives his money, that he has, but what counts is the gift, and what counts and what, precisely, the monetary signifier veils is that he gives what he does not have, that is, a knowledge of which he is neither the master, nor the owner, which is situated and hidden in his words. That is the rule of psychoanalysis. It consists of inviting the analysand to give what he does not have and is, thus, an invitation to love. This is already what makes the analysand a lover, an *erastes*.

Thus, the subject-supposed-to-know – let’s go back to that since it is from there that we expect to emerge what I announce as the essential relations of the unconscious and time. “What is the subject-supposed-to-know?” asks the apprentice; is it the analyst or the analysand?

Firstly, it is the analyst, the one who knows and from whom one can expect an interpretative knowledge, no doubt. Secondly, it is the analysand, as a place of unconscious knowledge, but it is essentially a function that comes from an articulation. And this is why we inscribe it as third, beside the analyst and analysand; we inscribe the subject-supposed-to-know as third, as being neither of the other two, but unconscious knowledge itself. That is what led me, at the time of the interruption of the activity in November, to utilize, very simply, this triangle of the transference.



This is a triangle I have used to situate [*pour loger*] a certain number of the phenomena of the experience which, various people [*les uns et les autres*], clinicians, could attest to in clinical conversations.

First, there is the couple analyst-analysand. It is on this axis that we establish the sentimental transference, the relations of love and hate, indeed the counter transference to which Lacan has always given its place when he evokes the dazzling marvel in that which is the place of unconscious knowledge. Of course, we make some distinctions there between narcissistic, imaginary love and what there is in hatred of the more real than love, because hatred aims for the being of the Other.

Hatred is an important post-analytic feeling, that the analyst merits for having destroyed, worked against the homeostasis of the subject. One sees, indeed, that when the subject separates himself from the place of the Other, he can leave this horrible little *a* on the side of the Other; this is the trash-bin function of the analyst, which, it must be noted, can continue to cause hatred after the analysis. Besides, it is there that the pass, when it takes place, constitutes a comforting of the analyst. The pass consists for the analyst in passing the torch [*les relais*] of the transference over to the School, both the torch of the transference and the remainder. If there is success, one can imagine that there is a positive transference and if there is a failure, a negative transference, onto the school! Of course that can be the contrary also, but finally, it is for this [reason] that I believe in the success of the procedure of the pass in the analytic movement in general; it is true, however, that they will need a certain [amount of] time to understand the comfort that the pass will bring them.

The other couple is the relation of the analyst with unconscious knowledge. Basically, the analyst is only there to promote the relation of the analysand with unconscious knowledge, he is there so that the analysand may connect himself with the unconscious. If you wish, the analyst is a *provider*, this is what one calls the organizations to whom one pays a certain fee and that permit you, when you are in front of your computer, to connect with the Internet: *sellers of access*, it is how one says it, more or less, in French. Very well, the analyst

is a salesman of access. Now, obviously the problem, now that there are some free *providers* (*laughter*) – but I do not know if you are like me, but *I* have no confidence (*laughter*) [in them], so I have stayed with a paid *provider*, because the free *provider* weighs you down with advertisements which make that quite troubling. That may change.

Then, one can note, in regard to this, on this axis, the inversion of the position of the subject and of knowledge, when one compares the master discourse with that of the analyst.

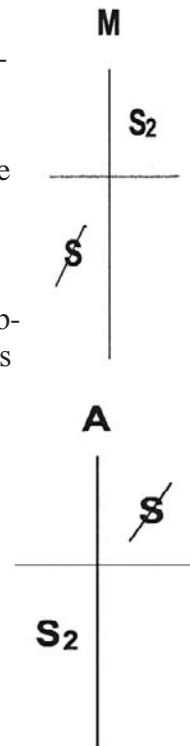
In the discourse of the master, knowledge is at work while the subject is in the supposition and it is this relation that is inverted in the analyst's discourse.

In the master discourse, the identified subject makes knowledge work. The identification is what helps the subject make the knowledge of the Other work for obtaining surplus enjoyment [*le plus-de-jour*] while the analyst makes the subject work to separate himself from his identifications and, through this, obliges the subject to leave the place of the supposed truth and to put himself to work as divided.

That involves something like: there will be no other knowledge in the analysis than the truth effects of your analytic work. There will be no others-who-know [*d'autres savoirs*] than the one you will produce yourself through your work.

In the master discourse, as in others, apart from that of the analyst, knowledge remains separated from truth. What does this mean? This means that the knowledge is a decontextualized truth and it is that which permits knowledge to accumulate and to be revealed, while truth is only a fleeting effect, which Lacan writes by putting "knowledge at the place of truth" in the analytic discourse. There, but curiously, the truth is in essence a fleeting effect would find itself capable of becoming knowledge, of accumulating, but only on account of being supposed.

One sees, indeed, how the analytic discourse, there, is



opposed to this university discourse from the XIIth century. The university discourse is established on the exposition of knowledge; moreover, knowledge is only worth something if one knows how to expose it, in a certain rhetoric which is not the same in the sciences as in literary studies [*lettres*], but it requires that one propose some theses, by way of a rhetoric and even a ritualized one, whose truth is confirmed and that one would be capable of defending against the attacks of others who say “No, I am not convinced. Argue better, etc.”

Well, when one has this relation with knowledge, *one does not love* what the psychoanalyst does with knowledge. Academics do not love what the analyst does with knowledge.

In the university, one is confirmed by way of a position one defends against aggressions, while the analyst maneuvers a hidden knowledge, under a veil, which does not leave the analytic office; truly, there are some maneuvers there which are perhaps dirty, doubtful, and which would let themselves be presented as arising from the behavior of a sect, the sect of those who love the unconscious, those who have a transference onto the unconscious, who have a transference onto knowledge in the form of the unconscious, the sect of lovers of the unconscious.

Obviously, the university is the group of those who love exposed knowledge, those who love footnotes, for example. There is an academic who has devoted a quite remarkable effort to the birth of the footnote, essential [as it is] in the confirmation of the university discourse.

But, obviously, those who practice psychoanalysis as analysands or as analysts can be presented as a kind of sect which seeks to drink from an inexhaustible spring of knowledge, which puts itself in the position of the barred working subject and which, through this, regularly gives out a kind of secretion of knowledge, a doubtful one, which only takes on its value in this context.

Borges, whom I evoked, created a sensational little story where he presents coitus as the practice of an enigmatic sect. One only discovers at the end of the tale that this strange practice is, in fact, coitus.

Well, one could describe the practice of psychoanaly-

sis like that. One must first go into a place, which cannot be done as if this were just any place: one must go to a precise place, where someone expects you, and, then, that is where the access way is, the security door, to what is called the unconscious, and in this place and only in the presence of the one who has expected you, you enter into contact with the unconscious (*laughter*), you copulate with the unconscious and then you pay and you leave, and then you begin again (*laughter*). And what is paid for there, what *jouissance* is paid for there? If one writes things like that, a little from the outside, one can answer Lacan's question of knowing why psychoanalysis has not invented a new perversion. It is because analysis itself is a perversion and it is a new and singular way of enjoying from language and of causing something rare to well up there.

Let us go on to the third relation, that of the analyst with unconscious knowledge, the third side of the triangle. There the thesis is not that the analyst might know the unconscious knowledge, that he might read the patient's unconscious as in a book; the thesis is that the analyst, in his or her presence, incarnates something of *jouissance*, that is to say, incarnates the unsymbolized part of the *jouissance*. Certainly, there is a symbolized part, that which is written with the little S^1 , S^2 , and S^n 's, of this matheme and which are what Freud called the ideas of the drive; there is a symbolized part, but there is also a necessarily unsymbolized part, of which one can say that the evidence is the necessary presence of the analyst, in flesh and bone. Freud could say that one did not have proof of the libidinal character of the symptoms before the marking of the transference. Well, one can say that one has the proof of the little object *a* through the necessity of the presence of the analyst, in flesh and in bone to the extent that there is an unsymbolized part of *jouissance*.

One always asks oneself the question: and why can one not do an analysis through writing, since one can also decipher, interpret the written? Why does one not do an analysis by telephone, since at least one has the voice and, then, tomorrow, you will have the image. Why does one not do analyses in videoconferences, video psychoanalysis? It is because it is necessary that the analyst put his or her body there. He or she must put

his or her body there to represent the unsymbolizable part.

Technology is on the anticipatory side of the millennium; technology permits us, no doubt, to be there without the body, it is true. But to be there without the body is to not be there, that is not the true of the true of the true. No doubt, one is going to say to you: one can give the voice, one can give the image, tomorrow one will give the scent, and perhaps one will give the clone! But it remains that for the next millennium as well, there will be an unsymbolized part of *jouissance* and this is what calls for the presence of the analyst.

The analyst, then, is there on this account, in any case it is based on that, that Lacan has re-tightened the objective; he is there on account of his incarnation and not of the knowledge he would have of the unconscious knowledge of the patient. Rather, indeed, there is the passion of ignorance that connects him to the subject-supposed-to-know and this supposition, the whole question is of knowing if it can be imputed to unconscious knowledge or if the supposition is something intrinsic to the unconscious.

Ah there! And this is one more step, since, in fact, on occasion, Lacan uses the expression the subject-supposed-to-know as a synonym of the unconscious, since the unconscious is essentially linked to something which appears just as doubtful as a supposition. What would Freud have said about all this? Freud was very firm on this: that the unconscious is something real and he says very clearly that if one objects that the unconscious is no more than a manner of speaking [*une façon de parler*] – in French in the text – the manner of speaking, if one says the unconscious, is nothing real in the scientific sense, one must shrug one's shoulders. This is on page 354 of the new edition of the *Introductory Lectures to Psychoanalysis* which came out this year and which is quite excellent.

That is to say that he, Freud, understands very well that the unconscious is something real, in the scientific sense, not a manner of speaking. But at the same time, one must all the same note that Freud presents the existence of the unconscious, *die Existenz*, or more exactly the existence of the unconscious psychic processes, he always presents it, regularly, in his texts, as a hypothesis. The word is *Annahme*, that is the Freudian

status of the unconscious: a hypothesis. And one must indeed say that hypothesis is supposition: supposition is the Latin word which translates what is Greek into the term hypothesis and that is echoed in Lacan's expression the subject-supposed-to-know. When one says *in der Annahme daß*, that means in supposing that – in the language [*la langue*] .

And Freud maintains the two ends, the hypothetical status of the unconscious and at the same time its real status, *real, im Sinne der Wissenschaft*, in the scientific sense because he does not understand the hypothesis in the sense in which Newton says and Lacan comments on, following Koyré, *hypotheses non fingo*, I do not feign these hypotheses. Here it is not a question of an hypothesis that would be feigned, it is a question of what Freud calls a necessary hypothesis, because for him the hypothesis of the unconscious, as he expresses himself, is inferred; it is an hypothesis because it is inferred starting from some data of experience, that is to say, from the data of some absolutely tangible effects, tangible real effects, *Wirkungen real greifbare*.

It is not simply in the *Introductory Lectures* of Freud that one finds this. The text *Introduction to Psychoanalysis* is very precious, though often scorned; it is a text of popular exposition; it is there that one grasps the organization of Freud's thought. There is something there which gives *us* something like the feeling of a more intimate contact with the access he himself had to the unconscious.

This idea of the hypothesis of the unconscious, you find it for example in *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, in the third part and in Chapter VI, which I happened to comment on here, on the relation of the joke to the dream and to the unconscious; and Freud spoke of the unconscious, on page 294 of the French edition, “as something that effectively one does not know, while one finds oneself constrained by irrefutable deductions to complete it.” And, to take another period of Freud's work, one can refer to the chapter “The Unconscious” from the *Metapsychology*, the first part of which is titled “Justification” – *die Rechtfertigung* – of the unconscious.

There Freud speaks of: the *Annahme des Unbewussten*, the hypothesis of the unconscious, is at once necessary and

legitimate and what is its deduction? It is the one that Lacan took up again at the beginning of his teaching in “The Function and Field of the Word and Language” (1953) [“The Rome Discourse”] that comes directly from the first part of “The Unconscious” in Freud’s *Metapsychology*. Freud starts from the idea that the data of consciousness include a very great number of lacunae, that there are some discontinuities, that one does not know why one has done a certain number of things, and for him, the very proof of that is the forgetting of the orders received during hypnotic sleep. For him that remains a touchstone: one puts someone to sleep by hypnosis, one gives him some orders and, then, this someone carries out these orders and does not know why, has a blank patch [*vide*]: regarding knowing why.

For Freud, it is on this that he establishes what he calls the hypothesis of the unconscious, that is to say that there is a hole and that and we must make, at this moment, a hypothesis which permits us to re-establish intelligibility. This is exactly Lacan translated in a sensational way by saying: the unconscious is the censored chapter of my history.

Hence, by interpolating some unconscious acts that we have inferred, Freud says, we re-establish continuity. That’s it, it is here exactly that the hypothesis of the unconscious operates. And it gives us what he calls a gain of sense, *Gewinn an Sinn*, that is to say he uses the same word as *Lustgewinn*, the gain of *jouissance* or the gain of pleasure. Here it is a semantic gain, a gain as to sense and, at the same time, as to continuity, *Zusammenhang*, the continuity of the narrative or the conscious discourse as Freud said. Starting from the moment when the analytic procedure permits one to exercise an effective influence on the course of conscious processes, we have, he says, an irrefutable proof of the exactitude of the hypothesis of the unconscious.

One can say that the hypothesis of the unconscious, that is to say this supposition which is irrefutable for Freud, this supposition which is attached to the very instance of the unconscious translates the fact of the passage of what is deprived of sense, *Sinnlose*, to sense.

You can say that the whole problem is assembled in this

sentence of Freud's: the possibility, he says, of giving a meaning [*sens*] to the neurotic symptom by analytic interpretation is an unshakable proof of the existence, or if you prefer, of the necessity of the hypothesis, of psychic unconscious processes.

I say that it is all there because, as you can feel in this sentence, Freud passes from the possibility of giving a meaning to the necessity of the hypothesis of the unconscious. That is to say, that he passes from *die Möglichkeit*, from possibility, to another modality, *die Notwendigkeit*, necessity. Here, we have, in a reduced form, this changing of the logic of modality, the passage from possibility to necessity, which is at the base of what permits him to attribute a real character to the unconscious.

Then, what is striking, if one follows correctly and if one takes seriously Freud's sequencing of the *Introductory Lectures to Psychoanalysis*, is that the chapter where he exposes this hypothesis of the unconscious is very far from the one where he speaks of the transference. The chapter where he speaks of the unconscious is, in a way, the peak of what he elaborates concerning interpretation as what gives some meaning [*sens*] to the symptom. The chapter on the unconscious is the peak of his semantic elaboration and, then, to introduce the transference, which almost ends the work, there is a whole other series of chapters which, to say it simply, bear on the libido.

It is only starting with its libidinal character that Freud introduces the transference, when it is to reveal that the symptom does not simply have a meaning, but that it also constitutes a means of satisfaction, a mode of *jouissance*, as we say. The whole elaboration of the transference is made on the libidinal side, to the extent that the transference is comparable to the symptom as libidinal satisfaction.

What founds the transference for Freud is that the analyst attracts the libido that is withdrawn from the symptoms. This is what Lacan translated in speaking of the object *petit a* as a condenser of *jouissance*, as close as possible to Freud's text. And it is through this that the transference presents for us even the mode of the symptom's formation.

At the same time as he insists on the artificial character

of the transference, which he qualifies as transference neurosis, Freud does not see an illusion there, but he even sees the evidence of what psychic reality is in play, the proof that the repressed is of a libidinal nature. It is there, moreover, that he exposes what I just evoked: our conviction as to the fact that the symptoms have the signification of libidinal satisfaction, of substitution, has only been definitively established from the day when we took the transference into account.

What comes first for Freud is the libidinal status of the analyst and even, precisely, what he calls the libidinal *Bedeutung* of the analyst, and I have already pointed out that he always used the term *Bedeutung*, as distinct from the word *Sinn*, when it was a question of a libidinal reference. And it is only this *Bedeutung* that gives birth to the new meaning [*sens*] that symptoms take on in the transference.

One can say that, for Lacan, to the contrary, what comes first is the new meaning [*sens*] that symptoms take on; what comes first is the semantic phenomenon, while the emergence of the still latent object of the still latent referent, as he expresses himself in the *Proposition*, comes as a second term. Thus, one witnesses, from Freud to Lacan, an obvious inversion: for Freud, the transference as a libidinal phenomenon conditions the interpretation; for Lacan, it is the interpretation that conditions the transference and it is this that is translated by the primacy of the subject-supposed-to-know for Lacan.

But this primacy of the subject-supposed-to-know has a consequence that I will make you glimpse the next time. It has the consequence that Lacan defines the unconscious starting with the transference and that defining the unconscious starting with the transference is to establish it in an essential relation to time, to the time of its deciphering.

In the perspective of the transference, the unconscious is not a being; it is a supposed knowledge, that is to say, in hope, in waiting. And it is even to this extent that Lacan can say the unconscious is relative, is an affair of ethics. That is not simply to say: it is an affair of our desire. That is to say, the unconscious is not an affair of ontology, it is an affair of ethics. The unconscious is profoundly and always to come, and it is this unconscious to come which constitutes the most striking

and, perhaps, the most hidden [aspect] of what Lacan's practice has brought to psychoanalysis.

I shall develop this next time.

End of Jacques-Alain Miller's
Cours 1, Les us du laps.

November 17, 1999

Translated by Ellie Ragland
with suggestions from Jack W. Stone

Endnotes

¹ A more common translation of this expression would be “*habits and customs*” [tr.]

² *Avant la lettre*, a French idiom that can be translated as “before the fact” [tr.]

