Deciphering Jouissance

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Jouissance is Ciphered

I will deal here with a crucial moment, a turning point, in Lacan’s teaching. This turning point has significant consequences for the practice of analysis, and to understand it we must pay special attention to its antecedents. The turning point I am referring to is embodied in the following statement in “Television”: “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 that is ciphered; it’s something that is deciphered. I say: jouissance itself” (“Television” 23; translation modified).

The statement is clear, sharp, definitive. However, it is so heavy with consequences, in terms of what it mobilizes and displaces, that a commentary on the text forces a rereading of Lacan’s previous teaching and a re-fection of the Freudian text in its entirety. This thesis condenses and concretizes a new theoretical conception of psychoanalysis, congruent with the other modification that appeared at the same time in the Lacanian revision of Freud, a revision which is still troubled and troublesome.

I apologize here for my obsession with literature and for the exegetic quality of my work, which both border on being repetitive: it is jouissance that is ciphered, coded, and that is why it can be deciphered. Who would decipher it? A good decipherer/decoder: the primary process articulated by Freud, i.e., the couple condensation/displacement. This is a translucent expression that does not allow for misunderstanding: the primary process, the unconscious, is not a cipher or a veil; it is the beginning of the unveiling. It is always already a deciphering, a passing from the coded, the letter, the written, the codicil, the partition, to another field, the field of speech, of discourse. It aims at an Other that will give it a signification, that will include it in the networks of meaning, that will make possible its imaginarization in relation with an ego of the statement (énoncé). Thus is indicated a passage from what cannot be said [S(A)] to the signifying articulation [s(A)]. Thus the primary process is a passage from jouissance to discourse. In other words, the Freudian unconscious, which operates through condensation and displacement, is the process through which ciphered jouissance is deciphered and transported to the social bond, to articulated and directed speech (parole), ready to take on meaning for the listener, ready to be misunderstood.
Jouissance is thus transplanted, exiled from the body to language: "moving jouissance to the unconscious, that is to say to the countable, is indeed quite a displacement" ("Radiophonie" 72). I repeat: the unconscious is not the place of origin of jouissance, which is jouissance of the body. It is from this fatherland that jouissance must take the path of exile and go to dwell in discourse and there be recovered. An impossible return and an eternal return. The subject will constitute itself in ostracism by going from the originary One to the Other of speech. For Lacan, there will no longer be any space in which to dream with "full speech and empty speech in the psychoanalytic realization of the subject," as entitled the first section of the discourse of Rome (Écrits: A Selection 40). Words will, from now on, be lacking for all the truth to be told: truth of the One, jouissance, and truth of the Other, absolute knowledge, the two tearing each other apart. Between the two is the subject of psychoanalysis, divided, erased, swept away by its dual allegiance.

The experience of psychoanalysis has as its point of departure speech, the house of the said (here the reference to Heidegger is obvious), a pure signifying di-mension ("Television" 13). This is the phenomenal field recognized from the start as the operator of the first return of Lacan to Freud, to the field of "verbalization." That is where the creator of psychoanalysis stumbles against an invisible motor of articulation and the signifying game, of an unsaid "something" that infuses speech and manifests itself as twittings of the linguistic articulation itself, "a tissue of puns, metaphors, and metonymies" ("Television" 13). Freud gives it the mythical name of libido and Lacan does the same. He calls it lamella. Freud’s term loses some of its evocative power in French: "libido" is a term that must be thought in a language where love is called "Lieber." It is the Freudian myth. Lacan’s term is that of the emanation of a drool that oozes out of the body and covers the vital field of a subject. Words whirl around this inconceivable thing "that Freud posits at the border of the primary processes" (Television" 13; translation modified), and that is nothing other than jouissance itself. The signifying articulation, the work of the unconscious, marks off, delimits, de-limits this jouissance that was deciphered, ignored, buried in a body outside speech (parole)—the underlying, substantial jouissance supposed by the analytic experience already since Freud. To be deciphered.

Jouissance of exile and nostalgia for the (necessary) curse of having to live in language, outside of paradise. This jouissance without which the universe would be meaningless (Écrits: A Selection 317), which is not reached but is evoked, circumscribed, delimited, summoned, kept at a safe distance through metaphors that catch meaning and metonymies that defer it. Indeed, it is the relation of speech (parole) with jouissance that makes psychoanalysis an ethic of the well-saying.

A deciphering and a hell of a displacement from the One to the Other, from jouissance to desire, which is, as always, desire of the Other and which, as always in Lacan, is want of being. Nostalgia for a mythical past that must be recuperated in a future that is no less illusory by means of the fantasy lived in the present. The unconscious is then a saying (dire) that is said on the basis of what has been inscribed of jouissance—the inscription of a writing that supports one and diverse readings. Jouissance slips into this saying that deciphers it. But the subject doesn’t know and doesn’t want to know anything of this passage. In the terms of 1973, "the unconscious is not what the being thinks, ... the unconscious is that the being, in speaking, experiences jouissance, and I add, does not want to know more" (Encore 95). In this saying, jouissance "consists ... in the logical passages through which discourse transits" ("Television" 13; translation modified).

The primary processes do not fulfill desire, but they satisfy a subject that ignores it when he uses the recourses that are those of his own private language (lalangue) where he thinks he is obeying the language of linguists and grammarians. Everyone does so with his particular way of emptying the treasures of originary, linguistic, linguisterile lalangue. It is this singular way of living on the edge of language that we call style. That is why we can risk this other definition—one more—of the unconscious: it is one’s own specific style for deciphering one’s jouissance, for filtering it through the logical passages that measure it out and that one supposedly enlarges through the experience of analysis. For speech (parole) is the diaphragm of jouissance, and neurosis consists of a rigid obduration that prevents jouissance from coming into contact with the saying (dire).

What we say is jouissance, but jouissance disappears in the said and remains forgotten. It is a remnant that is lost because it passes through the signifying battery of language, which leads it to become filled with meaning, the meaning that the other hears in what he understands ("L’Étourditi" 5). It is the unavoidable condemnation that is imposed on the chain of signifiers and that one claims to avoid through the experience of analysis, where the other of the elocution is an other who does not comprehend, and who returns to the one who speaks the jouissance that the speaker is ignorant of in what he says. Functions of silence and scanning in the time and space of the session, presence of the analyst, the one who is such because he has accepted the advice to beware of comprehension.

For speech is awaited and overdetermined by meaning, this imaginary shadow that pursues, tirelessly, the sequence of signifiers in discourse. This is the function of speech in the field of language. In the terms that Lacan uses when he enunciates Radiophonie, the signifier floats above the bar of the sign while the signified slides underneath—to which
we should add that the referent escapes as the product of this operation; it is the remainder that remains forgotten. And this remainder is the object small a, cause of desire, surplus of desire (plus de jouir, minus in that it is lost for the speaking subject) and semblant of the real that, thus, in excluding itself, makes itself present in what we say. The symbolic of the articulation, the imaginary of meaning, and the real of the jouissance evoked constitute the trinity which is omnipresent in all speech. Void of plenitude and full of void. And what if speech is not uttered? It is the blockage of the subject when there is no longer a signer to represent him before another signer. The speaking subject becomes mute, and in its place appears the symptom that is the reversion of discourse to jouissance, a jouissance that is ignored and denied. Freud did not hesitate to define the symptom as a “substitutive sexual satisfaction.” It was his way of saying that the symptom is a jouissance that is not felt, not sensed, disarticulated. The word not said (mot non dit), cursed (maudit), is a symptom and not felt (non sense), jouissance. “Jouis-sens,” wrote Lacan (“Television” 14), term of Lacanian language with its evocations: I hear meaning (sens), I hear without (sans).

In any case, jouissance is not anterior; it is constituted in the aftermath of speech (parole), as a balance that speech never manages to reintegrate, as what speech produces and leaves behind in the course of its progress. Snail drool, never recovered. Not that the snail is anchored or inked in its drool, but that it secretes drool as it is moving. “Not of course that the signer is anchored (or inked) in the tickling, but that it allows it among other traits of which jouissance is signified and by which the problem is to know what is satisfied with it” (“Radiophonie” 70). And thus it is, through the passion of the signer, that the body becomes the place of the Other (“Radiophonie” 70). That is why one can only speak of jouissance by referring to the animal that speaks and why one cannot suppose jouissance outside of the language that constitutes it as lost.

The unconscious, Freud’s as well as Lacan’s, is a deciphering. Truth, which speaks by means of the primary process, is a truth of jouissance, of anti-economic jouissance (Gerber 103), foreign to the principle of pleasure, to the least tension, to homeostasis, to the ethic of the Aristotelian golden mean and moderation. This is the point where Lacan distances himself from Freud. He corrects him. There is no thermodynamics of which the unconscious would find its posthumous explanation (“Television”). In truth, neither meaning nor energetics interested Freud. He rejected these two aspects of the dream, one because it was unessential, the other because it was speculative. There remained, as properly psychoanalytic, only the work of the dream, that which transforms desire into a specific and manifest content by using the raw material of latent thoughts that are revealed in the sessions as “free” associations—this in 1933, in the New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis (SE, 22: 7). With all due respect to Freud himself—“misunderstood, even by himself, for wanting to make himself understood” (“Radiophonie” 59)—what reigns in the unconscious is not pleasure but the jouissance that is deciphered in a discourse. And this discourse, through the shadows of meaning that it trails behind it, is both misrecognition of jouissance and alienation of jouissance in the field of the Other. If this is so, we delimit the possibility and the domain of psychoanalysis as an ethical praxis: in search of lost jouissance. May those for whom these words evoke Proust not be disappointed by what will follow.

To experience jouissance in the moment of wakefulness that crosses the barbed wire of meaning and that poses the question of being for the one who thinks: how can one reach this result when one has at one’s disposal only a practice of babbling? At one end, there is deciphered jouissance, at the other end, recovered jouissance. Thus the psychoanalytic act is determined in function of jouissance, but, at the same time, it is determined by the need to protect oneself from jouissance in various ways (“Comptes rendus” 24). This statement on the nature of the analytic act must be added to and opposed to the already classic statements that appear in “The Function and Field of Speech and Language and Psychoanalysis,” where it is admitted that the analyst has no other means than speech. In the middle of speech, by means of speech, in the half-said of truth—all is determined by something that is not speech but jouissance, jouissance of the body, a tickling allowed by the signer when it shakes down and comes close to, as far as it can, the meaning that only appears inasmuch as the subject alienates his jouissance by offering it to the Other of signification. This “pulling down” (“Television” 26; translation modified) of meaning aims at recuperating the lost jouissance through the only means available to the parâtre, the jouissance of deciphering.

Lacan makes of this jouissance of deciphering the trait defining a new relationship of the subject with knowledge, the gay science considered as a virtue—a virtue indeed, but a sinning virtue. This is the ethical aspect of the theory of jouissance, which our final chapter will deal with.

At the end of this gay science there is nothing but the fall into sin, because of the reconciliation of wisdom and forbidden jouissance, and because of the evocation of jouissance in the intervals of speech when one goes through the specular surface of meaning—a jouissance that goes beyond impotence faced with the real, not to find it, but to denote it as impossible and to allow denouncing the ego as an ally of external reality and of its straight jackets woven by convention and submission to the demands of the Other. It is a jouissance of deciphering that refers to the essential reality of the subject, that of the real beyond the imaginary and the symbolic that is affected and delimited by the primary processes that reign in the unconscious, by the saying of metaphors and metonymies that hook for us the jouissance that is impossible to articulate. To experience jouissance
at the edge of the impossible, to experience jouissance of the deciphering of ciphered, numbered, accounted jouissance, to experience jouissance of a wisdom that does not exist before the saying and which, thus, is not discovered, but invented. To find oneself with this jouissance that underlies the act of speaking, but of which the subject wants to know nothing—to affirm jouissance by the style, or the style of speech which inscribes it in the Other that jouissance aims at. And, finally, no completion, nothing but the fall into sin. "Yes! Intelligence, flamboyant solitude, . . . aridity of mirrors!" exclaims the poet, José Gorostiza. Purgatory.

Letter 52

I think that the moment has come for a re-reading. To do this, I will utilize the simplest of topological representations: the straight line. It has two ends, and at each end we have jouissance. Between the two extremities are found the processes of ciphering and deciphering that allow us to recover at the end what was at the beginning: jouissance. This jouissance, of course, includes marks of the process of passage through the intermediary points of the successive states that at first denaturalize the jouissance and then recover it once it is transformed. It isn't risky to call this metamorphosis sublimation. From lost jouissance to recovered transmuted jouissance. From refused jouissance to one that can be attained.

I am returning here to my starting point in order to show that this essay follows a path that is rigorously consistent with Lacan's statement and—as we will see—with Freud's metapsychology. "What Freud articulates as primary process in the unconscious isn't something that is ciphered but something that is deciphered: jouissance itself." If jouissance figures at the left extremity of the line, one must admit that between jouissance and its deciphering by the unconscious, there must be an intermediary state or moment, which is that of ciphered jouissance, jouissance converted into a set of inscriptions that have no meaning in themselves, but that are ready to be charged with meaning once they are submitted to a process of deciphering. There are thus three successive states: the state of primitive jouissance, the state of its ciphering or writing, and the state of its unconscious deciphering. As one can tell, this linear construction is imposed by reason and experience: it isn't discretionary, it is imperative. The unconscious—in Freud, in Lacan, in psychoanalysis for everyone and for all time—is already a discourse, a passage from jouissance to a speech where a signifier signifies nothing, but rather is articulated with another signifier. And in this case, what is signified, represented by the signifier, is the subject, the subject of the unconscious, the effect of the articulation. Thus shines in all its glory Lacan's statement and saying, "the unconscious is articulated by that which from the being comes to saying" ("Radiophonie" 79). From the being of jouissance to the "I think" of the subject of science, between the two is the articulation of the unconscious.

The unconscious is the manifestation of truth, of "that" (the Id) of being which passes to saying. But the truth, which speaks in this way, does not say the truth. The primary processes produce a displacement, an Enstelling, of that truth that they carry. Jouissance arrives at saying filtered by the sieve of language. As the least recounting of a dream suffices to prove, once this saying is produced, one needs a new process of deciphering in order to incorporate this discourse into the field of meaning. This work receives from Freud the specific name Deutung, interpretation. To avoid confusion, one must preserve the distinction that exists between the operation that is realized on a writing, which is a deciphering (the model of which is hieroglyphics), and the operation that is applied to speech uttered in the analytic situation, which is an interpretation. Thus jouissance is that which is deciphered, while the primary processes are already decipherings that are susceptible to interpretation. The deciphered reveals a writing which in itself is non-sensical and does not interpellate the Other as speech does. Interpretation deals with the reading of this writing and "is made of meaning and goes against signification" ("L'Étourdit" 37). This distinction entails not an opposition where one must choose between deciphering and interpretation but rather a complementarity that clearly shows that each of the two operations deals with a different point of this straight line that goes from ciphered jouissance to the jouissance (joint) of deciphering.

One must insist on this complementarity of writing and reading, of deciphering and interpreting, because it has happened that even the most lucid and loyal commentators of Lacan let themselves be carried away by their enthusiasm over the novelty introduced by Lacan in his teaching, when he stressed "the agency of the letter in the unconscious." These commentators perform an exegesis that opposes a reading of the "modern" Lacan to a reading of the "old" Lacan, a reading centered on the spoken word and the signifier. I have tried, in everything that we have seen so far and in everything that will come, to emphasize and to make evident the continuity and the topological difference on the straight line of the points of insertion proper to each of these two operations.

On this straight line, the unconscious is an intermediary point of connection on the path of deciphering between the system of inscriptions that precede it and the dialogue, with its fullness of meaning, that follows it. It is an intermediary state in the deciphering of jouissance. It is already a discourse, but a discourse that seems to be placed prior to and in the margin of the Other of interlocution and meaning. One must, always, go back to Freud: "If, however, I were to continue the analysis on my own account, without any reference to other people (whom, indeed, an experience so personal as my dream cannot possibly have been intended to
Our journey is now over. The tracing of the line demands that we stop in order to identify the five points of its trajectory: a) jouissance; b) the inscription or ciphering of that jouissance; c) the deciphering of that jouissance in a confused and incoherent discourse that reveals truth at the same time that it conceals it; d) the interpretation of the jouissance, which gives it back its coherence at the risk of increasing misrecognition, and finally, e) the emptying out of this superficial meaning in order to recuperate the truth of the original inscription, which is now transmitted in an invented knowledge consisting in the jouissance of deciphering. Can one say that it is a path that goes from jouissance to sublimation? This is the formula that I am proposing: from one end to the other end of the tether of jouissance.

I realize that I am not announcing something new, nor am I clarifying a misrecognized aspect of Lacan’s thought. I am only returning to the origins of psychoanalysis, armed with an arsenal of references from Lacan’s last teachings. For what I find in recapitulating what is written on a line with two ends and the three intermediary stages of ciphering, deciphering, and the meaning-producing interpretation, is no less than the literal reproduction of the schema that is drawn point by point by Freud in his famous Letter 52 of December 6, 1896, which we now know in a non-mutilated version (Freud, SE, 1:233; Masson 207).

This text is accessible and known by all psychoanalysts, but we must cite it at length in order to show its coherence with the theory of jouissance and, better yet, to show the clear distinction that is already outlined between the id and the unconscious. Thus we have in Letter 52 a stunning point of departure that condenses Freud’s two topographies and does so not by forcing the interpretation of the text but rather by returning with exactitude to the literality of the text.

Freud begins with the idea of the successive stratification of the human psyche that supposes the existence of processes and of memory subjected to a re-ordering that obeys certain new circumstances. Freud develops a clear idea on this new ordering: it is a re-transcription, an Umschrift. He emphasizes these two words; Umschrift implies a writing, concretely an inscription. “The essentially new” in this theory is the thesis of the existence of the memory of experience as a series of no less than three successive and co-existing inscriptions. And this registering of the inscriptions involves “different classes of signs” (Zeichen).

In order to graphically express his thought, Freud immediately designs a well-known schema with five boxes that are linearly ordered. The three middle ones are characterized by their initials and the Roman numerals I, II, and III. The idea that these systems of inscription can have a neuronal support is accepted in the text as a convenient but not indispensable idea, admissible in a provisional way, and thus able to be left aside.
And if one does not fear these analogies, why not talk about “imprinting”—i.e., about the matricial striking of a future speaking-being (parler) by an experience that is anterior and exterior to language—although, as is the case in ethnological investigation, language is not foreign to the very experiment to which geese and monkeys, for example, are submitted by the design of the scientist. Impressions of jouissance, asystematic hieroglyphics, the striking of a coin on the surface the body, all imprint.

From these impressions we move to a first system (I), system of what? Of signs of perception, Wahrnehmungszzeichnen, which is the “first register” or “the first transcription,” (Niederschrift) of these impressions. As we can see, Freud insists on the idea of writing. He now adds the notion, which is capital for Lacan, of signs, Zeichen. The Freudian characterization of these signs is precise and precious: they are not susceptible to consciousness and are arranged according to association by simultaneity—thus, a writing that is pure sign, deprived of meaning and deprived of ordering in time. In this system, as in every writing, there is no diacrony. It is like a book or a phonograph record which has its entire content all at once, in an instant, but where the whole of the printed and recorded inscriptions represent nothing for anybody unless one submits them to a diachronic process that institutes succession, that makes them audible, that transposes them by means of deciphering of writing, by means of a reading. This system of Wahrnehmungszzeichnen is thus a deciphered register of impressions of jouissance that have marked the flesh of the proto-subject. These imprints are not signifying; they are, as Freud himself points out in his Letter 52, signs, marks that precede speech, that seem to prefigure the opposition that Lacan will make famous in “Television” when he opposes the register of the sign to the register of meaning (“Television” 12).

I should not be accused of asserting too quickly that this succinct description that Freud gives of this first register coincides exactly and for the most important part with what, during the years of the “Mystic Writing-Pad,” he was to call the Id. Let it suffice to leave aside the surreptitious hypostasis of a discourse foreign to the analytic experience (the “biological pole”) in order to understand that this reference is as futile and superfluous as the one he himself points out in this Letter 52 about the neuronal relation of its psychical layers. For the biology in question can be reduced—and that’s the bottom line—to the fact that these experiences, which I don’t hesitate to call impressions of jouissance, are marks written in the body, or better yet, in the flesh that will become body thanks to this striking. There is neither order nor agreement; there is no meaning and there is no time. This is how jouissance is deciphered. Lacan (Ecrits 658) offers an illuminating image when he compares this synchronic disorder to the functioning of a lotto game, a big ball full of marbles on which are inscribed numbers that mean nothing in themselves. A disorder of scripturary marks that only acquire their meaning at the time of the
are lacking, which prefigures in all its aspects the Id and which constitutes a sort of raw material where the signifier, the battery of differentiations as well as the values introduced by language, the code of significations, can operate. One can also say that in this chaos where jouissance is ciphered, it is not the language of linguists that is operating but the linguistics of the unconscious, the signification of which is not meaning but jouissance (jouiss-sense).

The problem for psychoanalysis is to recuperate this possibility of jouissance which is entangled in the system of the Id. In order to do so, there is no recourse other than speech. This was the first aspect of the Lacanian discovery in Lacan’s return to Freud: the unconscious is structured like a language—to which one must add that only in analysis are these elements arranged in a discourse, jouissance condescends to audition, to ordering in a temporal diachronic chain, writing becomes reading, the letter lends itself to speech.

One can resort to a technical analogy: our laser disc. A metallic plate where are recorded numbers, ciphers, digits that coexist synchronically on a smooth surface which is completely foreign to the art of music. These inscriptions which are devoid of meaning can nonetheless be decoded, deciphered, by a laser beam that transforms them into electric pulses that, in turn, are sent back to a system of transformation and translation in movements that affect a loud speaker from whence they re-emerge transformed into music. One can complete this analogy by mentioning stages that are anterior to the numerical transcriptions of digital inscriptions: the composer’s score, which is also a synchronic and hieroglyphic writing that will have to be decoded by the interpreter (the one who produces the interpretation) and, from there, passing through the digital deciphering and electronic deciphering to sound and, finally, to the diachronic hearing where the hearer will give meaning to a music that he listens to in relation to his subjectivity, [s(A)].

In Letter 52 the Unbewusstsein, the unconscious, is defined as a second transcription where it is no longer associations by simultaneity that dominate but “another link, perhaps a causal one.” Causality implies temporal succession of cause and effect—diachrony. As discourse, the unconscious is already something that is listened to, a material in which jouissance will remain forgotten—the forgotten remainder of which Lacan will speak in “L’étourdité.” This unconscious is speech ordered in function of links that reject the organized thought of syntax and logic. Interpretation is the activity that, taking as its point of departure the formations of the unconscious, will give meaning to this speech and will expel it from the reign of the “abjuration.”

Letter 52 describes the level of the third transcription: that leading the Ub to the Vb, from the unconscious to the preconscious (Vorbewusst), which is “linked to word-representations, corresponding to our official

drawing, when they are drawn at random and then form a sequence due to chance, or to arbitrariness, which will put them in relation with a preexisting symbolic matrix (assignation of the lots) that will give meaning to the matrices of marbles that are picked at random. The big ball full of inscriptions is the “cauldron filled with boiling stimuli” of the Freudian I. There, jouissance is ciphered. Only the signifier will be able to institute an order by displaying these elements of writing in a diachrony. In short, I maintain that this first system of inscriptions (Wz) of Letter 52 is the Id of the structural theory, and that its characteristics are those that allow a distinction from the second system (II), that of the unconscious, which is already a deciphering and a translation of this primary writing of the imprints of jouissance.

The number is, in the image of the lottery as in everyday language, the cipher, a cipher without meaning. It is language, but on the side of pure writing, a hieroglyph devoid of speech, where elements are foreign to the organization of discourse, where there is no agent who addresses another in order to establish a social bond—outside of meaning but ready to be loaded with meaning. To do so, it is necessary that a “drawing by lots” occur, that a series be set up, that the number, beyond its cardinal function, be ordered either in the series of numbers or in the relation of those drawn at random with those of the other series of numbers, in the case of a lottery game, with the order of the lots (Miller, 19 December 1984). The Id is a set of graphic grammatical elements, submitted to no organizational hierarchy, absolutely comparable and interchangeable with one another, foreign to logical or dialectic contradiction, pure positivities that know no negation. It is the empire of jouissance anterior to subjective organization, which is an effect of the ordering which, in the reign of the signifier, imposes the paternal metaphor by establishing the primacy of the phallic signifier that empties jouissance from the body in order to make jouissance pass through a strictly limited zone of the body (phallic jouissance), submitted to the law.

This notion, which is essentially “Lacanian,” is expressed literally by Freud in Letter 52, which exposes this rectilinear topology of jouissance and speech, of its deciphering and deciphered. “Behind this lies the idea of abandoned erotogenic zones. That is to say, during childhood sexual release would seem to be obtainable from a great many parts of the body, which at a later time are able to release only the 28-day anxiety substance and not the others. In this differentiation and limitation [would thus lie] progress in culture, and moral as well as individual development” (Masson 212).

To summarize, the system of perceptual signs called Wahrnehmungszahlen by Freud in Letter 52 is a system of passages of corporal impressions (W) to a disorganized writing, a deciphering that exists in synchrony and disorder, where the notions of time, contradiction, and order
ego”). We have here all the characteristics of rational thought where the signifying chain entails waves of meaning, a meaning that is "retroactive [nachträglich] in the order of time." Freud adds that these "consciousness-neurons" would also be "perception-neurons (those that I prefer to call "impressions"), and that, consequently, there could not be any memory at the level of consciousness. Thus the apparatus remains something in which the successive ordering implies the annulment of time at each of the two extremities, a-temporal jouissance at each of the two ends of the straight line that traverses 1) the ciphering, 2) the unconscious deciphering, and 3) the interpretation that gives a meaning in the preconscious by linking the lived experience to the order of oralized language, which makes sentences, articulated as propositions linked to the logic of the secondary processes.

Freud completes his description of the apparatus thus constituted by stating that between one system and the other there is an incompatibility of reading or code that requires that the inscriptions characteristic of each of them be translated in order to pass from one inscription to the other. This theory is valid for the normal psyche, for the neuroses—conceived as effects of repression, that is, of the impossibility of "translating psychic material"—and it is valid for treatment, which must be the process that allows the inscriptions previously memorized to be transferred to the new modes of reading specific to the most advanced systems. The progress offered by my Lacanian reading of Letter 52 consists of pointing out that what is ciphered and deciphered is "jouissance itself," and that this elaboration of Freudian concepts allows us to take up Freud’s works and to state unequivocally the continuity that exists between the Id of the second (structured) theory and the unconscious of the first one. The Id and the unconscious are not mutually exchangeable or substitutable; they are two topologically differentiated systems and two different modes, one of writing, the other of speech, treating of originial impressions that are forever irrecoverable.

The sequence is thus from jouissance in its raw state (W) to the Id (Wz), from the Id to the unconscious (Uzh), from the unconscious to the preconscious (Vh), and from the preconscious to consciousness (Ben), which is not a system of inscriptions but a moment of lived experiences that goes back to the point of the initial departure ("So that the neurones of consciousness would once again be perceptual neurones and in themselves without memory” (Masson 208).

_Psychoanalysis_ Proust’s Way: Jouissance and Time

Jouissance, jouissance of the imprinted body, jouissance of the One without the Other, can only be recuperated by having recourse to the Other, the Other of language and meaning, which alienates, disturbs, and prohibits this jouissance. The experience of analysis claims, by virtue of this semblant that the analyst is, to embody and suppress this Other of dialogue and resistance so that the jouissance blocked in the non-deciphered systems of inscription might be subjectified. The Other of language is the wall that one must go through during this search for the imprints left by jouissance. The body is the tablet or the tabula rasa, the scene, the book, the record or compact disc of the ciphered inscriptions or recordings. Analysis will thus be a process of reading with a stylus or a laser beam that makes audible what is inscribed and unknown to the subject: jouissance itself. For this work, there is no hidden code to be discovered; there is, at most, a code or a Rosetta Stone to be produced, that of a primal language (lalangue) where jouissance was at first ciphered, foreign to the battery of signifiers of conventional signification. From the impression, avoiding inhibition and repression, to expression, to the production of this book or this hidden letter, purloined at the same time as it is exposed, like Poe’s letter, in each of those who speak.

I quote again: “The unconscious, structured like a language, I have always said. Because it is in analysis that it is ordered as a discourse” (“L’Etourdit” 9). And by being ordered as a discourse, speech directed at the Other, it takes on an unusual meaning; it reveals itself as a knowledge underlying the subject, shows itself to be the bearer of jouissance that traverses the diaphragm, now permeable, of speech which until then was blocking it. This is to enjoy (jouir) deciphering, _jouir sense, j’ouï  _I hear_ sense (meaning), jouissance—to make jouissance go through the diaphragm of speech, to articulate it, to translate it, to take it to countability. To do so, one must disarm discursive coherence, set grammar out of commission, play with logical and homophonic ambiguities, traverse the barrier of meaning by displacing the Humpty-Dumpty that controls it, what already in 1896 Freud called “our official ego.”

On the way, one must resignify, by moving backwards in time, the traces of memory, and traverse the fantasies that have led at every moment and in every case to the fixation of memories, until reaching the originary and structuring fantasies of personal experience and history as a repetition compulsion, the repetition of modes, specific to each person, of missing the encounter with the object of desire. One can thus aim to recover lost jouissance insofar as desire does not involve the future but is a nostalgia, a memory recorded in the flesh without language and played by the Other, in order that the One be like an object in the desire of the Other and of what was its result, constituting itself as an internal split, a subject barred and divided between the One and the Other, making of the body Other and making of the Other the place and the scene where it claims to recover itself as one, what in psychoanalysis is called the ego ideal. Between One and the Other: between neurosis, alienation in the Other, and psychosis, alienation in the One. Between the Other without the One of neurosis and the One without the Other of psychosis. Between
the letter without the reading of the One, of psychosis, and the discourse submitted to the codes of the Other, which misrecognizes the spiritual essence of jouissance in neurosis. For subjectivity navigates between Charybdis and Scylla. Its wrecks are the substance of psychoanalysis.

The subject (le sujet) as what is under-lying (sous-jil), the substance, the sup-posed of discourse, con-jugated in its sentences, the ciphered that will have to be deciphered, the I that must come to be in place of mis-recognition, where it (pi) was (Es war) like a hieroglyph in the desert, like a book buried with the corpse of its owner. It is behind these objectives that the practice of analysis organizes itself and all its moments are decided: to recapture jouissance as deciphering by means of the playing and firing of associations and signifying substitutions, through word plays and surprise, through the Heideggerian aletheia and the Joycean epiphany, by the unexpected evocation that defies defenses, by the acuteness of the stylus that rubs up against the stupid surface of a discourse that says nothing by virtue of meaning ("vouloir dire") something.

This hypothesis of the recovery of lost jouissance is at the very origin of Freud’s reflection. Isn’t the “identity of perception” the goal that orients the whole activity of the psychic apparatus? And isn’t it the “identity of thought” that interposes—through secondary processes—a barrier of meaning, of meaning regulated for and by the ego, on the way that leads to the recuperation of originary jouissance? Read in this way, armed with the Lacanian distinction between pleasure and jouissance, it becomes difficult not to recognize that already in Freud and from the beginning the conception of the psyche is determined by jouissance, jouissance as lost and recoverable by means of an elaboration that goes through intermediary systems, where neurosis is defined as the impossibility of recovery whereas psychosis is the settling into jouissance or the refusal of the quest to recover it. Here the function of the real is at stake. The identity of perception is reached through the hallucinatory short-circuit that economizes the passage by the stages of deciphering jouissance. The unconscious is not a hallucination but a discourse. Analysis is a staging that allows this discourse to be deployed.

Transference consists of supposing that the Other towards whom the subject moves has at its disposal the code that will decipher its hieroglyphic or, in the other analogy, that music doesn’t exist in the record or compact disc, but in the machine that brings it to transform itself into sounds. The strategy of analysis consists in passing this disc through the in-different, a-pathetic laser in order for the inscriptions that are recorded there to become audible, in order for the synchrony of the Id to be transformed into a diachrony of the unconscious and the unconscious, in turn, into jouis-sense. The Other of the transference is not the master of sense or meaning but the pretext for the text written in a private language (lalangue) to become jouis-sense.

Resignification of the past that makes of any speaking-being (parlêtre) the subject of an “anagorist” that must be produced, of an unveiling of the originary and unknown, of a rebaptism deriving from a new relation of the subject of discourse with the jouissance that he carries and doesn’t know. It is a matter of moving from the speech of linguistics to the vocalized letter of linguistry (linghysteria), where the voice is no longer chain but object of surplus enjoyment (plus-de-jour) and cause of desire. And the chain, the spoken speech, is the indispensable instrument for passing to the voice as object that evokes and acts as a semblance of jouissance—for passing from the discourse to the imprint, from the signer to the letter, from desire to drive, from communication to jouissance.

The book is written. The record or compact disc is recorded. They must be made audible, converted into speech and music. One must recover, find again, the writing that strikes the speaking-being. “The identity of perception” is the encounter with the experience of a satisfaction forbidden to the one who speaks as such. It is on this point that the two extremes of Freud’s apparatus of Letter 52—perception and consciousness, W and Bew—meet. Jouissance, jouissance of the object, substitutes for the subject split by the signer, substitutes for the signer itself and cancels the temporal sequence that the signer constitutes.

This is what Proust discovered and also what he was mistaken about, completely apart from psychoanalytic research, but working on a substance which is that of analysis: jouissance.

A la recherche du temps perdu (Remembrance of Things Past) is the chronicle of an analysis without an analyst, outside of transference. Its 3200 pages are a detailed search (research) for the keys to which a subjectivity responds. The result is that of an experience that is both paradigmatic and non-repeatable. One can wonder who is the Other of Proustian writing, its reader, its posterity, etc. It would be difficult to claim that this Other is the subject supposed to know of the analytic experience. And yet the result of this ricercare, the voluminous work, calls for interpretation, the deciphering of its deciphering, commentary. The result is an object that displaces the author, a work that, as Joyce wanted his own to be, will be the focus and the subject of scholarly and academic elucidations for centuries.

What we are interested in showing here—it suffices to show it; it is not necessary to demonstrate it—is that Remembrance is the model of an analysis and the best illustration that one can find of the Freudian hypotheses of Letter 52 and of the consequences of the Lacanian theory of jouissance as it arises from the analytic experience. With one objection, however: Proust does not recuperate Time at the end of his long voyage, because what he has lost is not Time. Quite to the contrary, it is in Time that he loses himself, in the time of watches and history, in the time of
discourse, in the diarchy and the ordering of its moments in successesions and series. And what he ends up finding is the jouissance that is the cancellation of Time, synchrony, the closing of the progressive movement of the psychic apparatus. Jouissance does not happen in Time but in the instant that is the abolition of the flow of time. The instant, as well as eternity, are outside the order that distinguishes between past, present, and future, and these, in their turn, are determined by discourse, in relation with the enunciation of a speech that establishes a sequence that doesn’t exit in the Real, which is an effect of the Symbolic.

Proustian time, “recovered time” of the last volume of his work, is, in fact, time abolished by the return of first traces. A foreign word of noble philosophical lineage is called: Aufhebung.

In Remembrance, it is a matter, again and again, of the epiphany of jouissance by the meeting with its first edition. The theme, always the same, always varied, comes back unceasingly in the multiple examples that Proust gives: the taste of a madeleine dopped into a cup of tea, the sound of a brief musical phrase, the foot stumbling against an uneven cobblestone, the starched napkin stiff to the touch, the sound of a spoon ringing against a glass, and which reminds him of the train trip when an employee hit with an iron bar the wheel of a wagon that was stopped, the book found again by chance in the library, which is exactly the one that his mother used to read to him when, as a child, he suffered from insomnia, now that he is old. Despite the temporal reference, beginning with the very title of the monumental work, it is unnecessary to add to the text anything in order to replace the idea of “time” with that of “jouissance.” One only needs to read the prose of Proust himself: the eternal return of jouissance is a resurrection of the being that used to be, and this resuscitated being liked “fragments of existence taken away from time” in a contemplation which “although eternal, was fleeting” (III 875). In these moments when time is annulled, the subject also annuls itself, unless it succeeds in recovering time by attaching itself to the sensations of the eternal reality of the present time and of the surrounding space. “And if the actual scene had not very quickly been victorious, I believe that I should have lost consciousness; for so complete are these resurrections of the past during the second that they last, that they not only oblige our eyes to cease to see the room which is near them in order to look instead at the railway bordered with trees or the rising tide, they even force our nostrils to breathe the air of places which are in fact a great distance away, and force our will to choose between the various projects which those distant places suggest to us. They force our whole self to believe that it is surrounded by these places or at least to wave doubly between them and the places where we now are, in a dazed uncertainty such as we feel sometimes when an indescribably beautiful vision presents itself to us at the moment of our falling asleep” (III 877). Ineffable, with speech deactivated in these moments of “extra-temporal joy which I had been made to feel by the sound of the spoon or the taste of the madeleine” (III 877; emphasis added).

A time, thus, that is the cancellation of time after having lived it, having forgotten it, having traversed the forgetting, and having resuscitated in a “direct jouissance,” where “the only way to savour them more was to try to know them more thoroughly, where they were, that is to say, in oneself, to make them clearer even in their depths” (III 877). A time of jouissance at odds with the social framework of time shared with others, with the phenomenological frames of the time of things and with the psychobiological framework of the time of one’s own life. A time made up of instants without dimension (Bachelard). It is in this sense, I want to emphasize, that Proust’s time is the liquidation of time. It is, to use Proust’s expression, extratemporal. Discourse is in time, jouissance is outside time: it implicates it and cancels it. It is time submitted to an Aufhebung that recovers it by dissolving it. This is why the title of the last volume of Remembrance would be time aufgehoben more than time recovered, regained, retrieved (retrieved).

Nor is it about a return to the past. “Was it not perhaps very much more: something that, common both to the past and to the present, is much more essential than either of them?” (III, 872). It is what goes beyond the disappointment that inevitably accompanies the experiences and the loves of reality, the aspiration of the lag between imagination, desire, and memory. “But let a noise or a scent, once heard or once smelled, be heard or smelled again in the present and at the same time in the past, real without being actual, ideal without being abstract, and immediately the permanent and habitually concealed essence of things is liberated and our true self, which—perhaps for a long time—had seemed to be dead but was not altogether dead, is awakened and reanimised as it receives the heavenly nourishment that is brought to it. A minute freed from the order of time has re-created in us, in order to feel it, a man freed from the order of time. And one can understand that this man should have confidence in his joy; even if the simple taste of a madeleine does not seem logically to contain within it the reasons for this joy, one can understand that the word ‘death’ has no meaning for him; situated outside time, what could he fear of the future?” (III 872-3; translation modified).

The two times, past and future, along which existence virtually flows are determined and fixed as such from the present instant, which is the instant of the “I think” of current discourse. Past and future do not exist in reality. Dimensions introduced by the symbolic, they trail their effects in the imaginary in the form of memory “behind” and desire “ahead of,” whence “ego (ergo) sum,” here and now. The Proustian subject produces itself as such from his running away from the “order of time,” that is to say, from the order of a psychological life that is centered
on the fantasmatic construction of the ego. The resurrection, the recuperation of the jouissance of the real ego (moi) that seemed dead because it lay buried, is an epiphanym of the ineffable real; it illustrates the exit from the order of discourse that institutes past time as dead time and future time as the time of death. The present, having escaped from time, is both a fugitive instant and a vision of eternity. Once the symbolic and the imaginary are cancelled and put aside, there is left only this bursting forth of the pure real, dissolving subjectivity, which merits the name of hallucination in Freud's and Lacan's discourse.

One lives, a body sunk in language. An Other which is the body, not me, and another Other which is language, not me either. The ego is the imaginary representative of the subject, claiming to suture this division between those two foreign and strange substances. On the body, the imprint of lived experience, an experience that must be signified on the basis of the Other of language; the flavor of madeleine cakes, Vinteuil's sonatas, the images of the trees. For the subject inhabited by speech, there remains a recourse, evocation, memory, serial ordering, spatio-temporal reference—a recourse that gives faded images, images produced by the secondary processes of thought, disappointing, devoid of vivacity, dead, making one think of what they used to be when they were alive, forever sealed by a difference, struck by the sign of negation. The real is what is lost. When it comes back, it is called hallucination. Can one recuperate originary jouissance in a way other than the vaporous forms of evocation and nostalgia? Proust's answer is affirmative, showing that in Freud is "identity of perception" can take place from a chance meeting that is contingent, unintentional—in his case, stumbling on the uneven cobblestones that makes him relive a delicious experience: "The happiness which I had just experienced was in fact the same as that which I had experienced in eating the madeleine and of which I had at that time put off the task of searching for the deep causes" (III 867; translation modified).

"Where do we meet this real?" wonders Lacan. "For what we have in the discovery of psycho-analysis is always an encounter, an essential encounter—an appointment to which we are always called with a real that eludes us. . . . First, the tuche, which we have borrowed . . . from Aristotle, who uses it in his search for the cause. We have translated it as the encounter with the real. The real is beyond the automaton, the return, the coming back, the insistence of the signs, by which we see ourselves governed by the pleasure principle. The real is that which always lies behind the automaton, and it is quite obvious, throughout Freud's research, that it is this that is the object of his concern" (Four Fundamental Concepts 53-4).

The two searches, Freud's and Proust's, are one—the same as Lacan's, the search for the jouissance that waits behind "fortuitous," "chance" meetings. And it is not a matter of happiness, but of the moment when the subject is overwhelmed by the real, when all the reassuring frames of reality break. "The function of the tuche, of the real as encounter—the encounter in so far as it may be missed, in so far as it is essentially the missed encounter—first presented itself in the history of psychoanalysis in a form that was in itself already enough to arouse our attention, that of the trauma" (55), the trauma as what always comes back to its place, eternal return, it, I'd, that does not cease to be present as a backdrop of all experience. The traumatizing not as pleasant or unpleasant, outside of the register of the sensible for someone, of the "pathological" (in Kant's sense), but as excessive, unassimilable, producer of a fading of the subject. In the reunion of Proust's lost time, in the Freudian "identity of perception," and in Lacanian jouissance, we have this common denominator of the abolition of time as well as space which frame subjectivity.

Thus the existence of a subject is existence in relation to these impressions that found one's experience from the outside.

At this point it is difficult to resist the temptation of quoting and glossing the whole experience that Proust narrates in the Guermantes library, which is the (mythical) point of departure of his book. It concerns the point of the narrative where, after 3200 pages of the novel, the author discovers that everything in himself had been only a preparation of the moment where he would once again run into the refounded sensations that, as marks of origin, oriented his life—in the conception that I have just developed, the moment of the meeting of the two extremes of Freud's straight line.

"Over all these thoughts I skimmed rapidly, for another inquiry demanded my attention more imperiously, the inquiry, which on previous occasions I had postponed, into the cause of this felicity which I had just experienced, into the character of the certitude with which it imposed itself. And this cause I began to divine as I compared these diverse happy impressions, diverse yet with this in common, that I experienced them at the present moment and at the same time in the context of a distant moment, so that the past was made to encroach upon the present, and I was made to doubt whether I was in the one or the other. The truth surely was that the being within me which had enjoyed these impressions had enjoyed them because they had in the them something that was common to a day long past and to now, because in some way they were extra-temporal, and this being made its appearance only when, through one of these identifications of the present with the past, it was likely to find itself in the one and only medium in which it could exist and enjoy the essence of things, that is to say: outside time. This explained why it was that my anxiety on the subject of my death had ceased at the moment when I had unconsciously recognized the taste of the little madeleine, since the being which at that moment I had been was an extra-temporal being and
therefore unalarmed by the vicissitudes of the future. This being had only come to me, only manifested itself outside of activity and immediate enjoyment, on those rare occasions when the miracle of an analogy had made me escape from the present. And only this being had the power to perform that task which had always defeated the efforts of my memory and my intellect, the power to make me rediscover days that were long past, the “Time that was lost” (III 871).

I think that Proust’s idea about time, in his work and in his life, is clear enough, and the addition of quotes could only deprive the reader of the jouissance of reading himself or herself the 50 pages devoted to the scene in the library. But we must go to the next point, which leads the reading of Freud and Lacan, following Proust, to its culmination. I am referring to the identification of jouissance as a form of writing and to the articulation of the various ways of reading the recorded signs that constitute our real ego.

Throughout Lacan’s teaching is the idea that there is no jouissance that is not a jouissance of the body. It is not uncommon that those who study Lacan feel dubious about this statement, which seems to be in opposition to the experience of the jouissance of the mind and of knowledge—what certainly can be called jouissance of the signifier, the phallic jouissance of our previous laborious explanations. It is clear that one formulation does not eliminate the other but that the Lacanian postulate is that if the signifier can be a bearer of jouissance, it is insofar as it evokes and mobilizes the writings recorded as a jouissance that is anterior and exterior to the signifier. For speech is the way open to the speaker to approach lost jouissance, which is jouissance of the body. Thus, apart from psychosis, jouissance of the body is accessible only through the signifying articulation. And there is another jouissance, beyond, the jouissance of the Other (sex).

This implies the succession, already described, of the marks, deciphering of these experiences in an Id of synchrony and of permutation, deciphering of the inscriptions of the Id in an absurd and meaningless speech that looks more like an accident than a revelation, interpretation of the senseless speech of the unconscious in a system of significations regulated according to the battery of language, and finally, movement across the barrier of meaning to recuperate, after the wandering of speech, the truth of a subject exiled from jouissance. “The virtue that I designate as the Gay Science [gay science] ... is 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 [joie] the deciphering, which implies that in the end Gay Science cannot but meet in it the Fall, the return into sin” (“Television” 26).

The Proust of the library scene experiences the recuperation of jouissance that is the annulment of time through the superimposing of the past of memory, the present of fantasy, and the future of desire in a moment of epiphany and of immortality. The objects of his memories take on for him hidden meanings. He writes that they take on the characteristic of hieroglyphs that must be deciphered, and that this deciphering “was difficult, but only by accomplishing it could one arrive at whatever truth there was to read” (III 878). “For the truths which the intellect apprehends directly in the world of full and unimpeded light have something less profound, less necessary than those which life communicates to us against our will in an impression which is material, because it enters us through the senses but yet has an intellectual meaning which it is possible for us to extract” (III 878). These impressions are composed in us like a book, “a complex and flowery book,” which we don’t have the freedom to choose, because they come to us like revelations of our true and hidden being.

And who can read to us this “interior book of unknown signs”? Who can say that we have really read it when reading “is an act of creation,” that is to say that reading constitutes retroactively (nachträglich) what we read, where writing becomes prior on the basis of its reading? What was the order of reality of Remembrance of Things Past before its writing by the subject Proust? One can say of the book what Lacan said about the unconscious: it neither is nor isn’t; it is of the order of the non-realized. Its writing creates it, and in creating it projects it retroactively in time, makes it appear in a past that has never existed, or better yet, creates the past as that which is recuperated by writing.

Thus the synchrony of the object, of the created product, is the consequence of the diachrony of its ordering in reading and of its transformation in a new writing, that of the book that today any reader can read under the signature of Marcel Proust. What happens now, in any reading, no longer has any relation with what Proust lived. He deciphered his interior book and transformed it into an object, an object that is a work of art, and that is offered to the consumption of a reader who may (or may not) use it as an instrument of deciphering of his own personal language (langue), inscriptions which he himself is an effect of. In this sense, we propose the object of sublimation as an ambassador of the real: “Art is what is most real, the most austere of life’s schools, and the true last Judgement. This book, more laborious to decipher than any other, is also the only one which has been dictated to us by reality ... the only one of which the ‘impression’ has been printed in us by reality itself. ... The book with figured types, not traced by us, is the only book that is indeed our own” (III, 880).

One should not overuse paraphrase when ideas are expressed with such soundness and when the superimposition of the signifiers that are used makes transparent the relation between the Proustian position and the enterprise of analysis: “this essential book, the only true book, does
not have to be 'invented' by a great writer—for it exists already in each one of us—but rather has to be translated by him. The duty and the task of a writer are those of a translator” (III 890; translation modified). “This work of the artist, this struggle to discern beneath matter, beneath experience, beneath words, something different, is a process exactly inverse to that which, at each moment, when we live turned away from ourselves, is accomplished by vanity and passion and the intellect, and habit too, when they pile on top of our true impressions, so as entirely to conceal them from us, the nomenclatures, the practical purposes which we falsely call life. In short, this art which is so complicated is in fact the only living art. It alone expresses for others and renders visible to ourselves that life of ours which cannot be observed and of which the appearances that we observe need to be translated and often read backwards and laboriously deciphered. Our vanity, our passions, our spirit of imitation, our abstract intelligence, and our habits have long been at work, and it is the task of art to undo this work of theirs; it is a path in the opposite direction, a return to the depths where what has really existed lies unknown within us, that art makes us follow” (III 896; translation modified).

"This work of the artist" is intimately linked to the practice of psychoanalysis as the taking apart of the tramp of pride, of the superimposed layers of nomenclatures and conventional signification, of dismantling per via di lettura, in order to make permeable the unconscious, this intermediary between the Id and dialogue. To follow Proust and Freud one ends up with a similar result: the recuperation of jouissance by means of a rejoicing (réjouissance) in the act of deciphering. The first premise is the same: the book is already inscribed, the disc already recorded, but these inscriptions are buried like hieroglyphs in the desert. Nothing needs to be invented or added: one must recuperate and translate by following faithfully the original text that requires a discrimination sufficient not to make distinctions in what is identical and not to confound what is different. And to do what? To arrive at a new writing, so that deciphered jouissance is inscribed in an act making the effect of this deciphering pass into the real, where the subject, once and for all, knows who he is on the basis of the certainty that comes from an action that inscribes his or her proper name as consequence of this action, by historicizing itself, “because”—to put it in the best manner—"acts are our symbol." Any destiny, as long and complex as it may be, made of it only one moment: the moment when man knows, forever, who he is “since one destiny is not worth more than another, but every man must accept the one he bears in himself” (Borges).

At the end of our path, there is not, and cannot be, any going beyond of the constitutive split of the subject, this split imposed by the structure of the One of jouissance and the Other of language. There is no resignation either, but a taking on of the secondary position of subjectivity in relation to knowledge, a knowledge without subject, objectified writing of which the speaking being is an effect, of which s/he is an "answer of the real" ("L'étourdit" 15; Miller, "Des responses du reel").

In order to arrive at this result, one must traverse walls of comprehension, meaning, signification, attachment to the consensual frame of reality, to shared certainties, to the ideology of a universalizable knowledge that is the effect of the discourse of academia (by way of "education" [e-ducer] and by way of the uniformization of representations throughout the mass-media industry). One must do this without ever losing sight of the fact that the speaking being enjoys (jouit), but that his/her jouissance horrifies him/her, and that s/he doesn’t want to know anything about it, of the fact that the One slips but that it is generally misconceived in the discourse that is the discourse of the Other and that the constituted structures of the subject tend to obdurately this level of jouissance insofar as it is constitutive.

At the end of our course, we can follow the thread of the story: Freud’s with his inspired apprehension of the whole of the psychic structure in Letter 52 and his patient work of elaboration that brings him to center himself first on the work of interpretation, of Deutung, of the formations of the unconscious. In this way there is established the catalogue of the rhetorical resources that allow a meaning to be given to the apparently absurd manifestations of the primary processes. Then, progressively, with resistance, Freud admits that this unconscious is already a translation and a passage through the mill of speech of a reality more fundamental, synchronic, real, which he calls the Id. And Lacan, more than half a century later, travels the same road: he starts with the analytic experience, which, phenomenologically, is an experience of speech; he becomes confused by merging the Id (Ca) and the unconscious in his famous gnomic formula, “the Id speaks” (ca pari), and then he distinguishes the two planes: whereas the unconscious is speech and language, discourse of the Other, the Id enjoys (jouit) and is made of signs. It may be that in these terms the distinction is schematic and needs to be made more precise. The unconscious is not only the discourse of the Other, but it is also structured like a language. In this sense, it has two faces: on the one hand, it faces the writings of the Id and decipherers them, and on the other hand, it receives signifiers that are those of the Other, and it is with these signifiers that it realizes its work of reading. It is thus found mounted between the “nucleus of our being” and the structures of exchange.

To summarize: the unconscious is a deciphering of jouissance and its products are susceptible to interpretation. The praxis of analysis consists in intervening in discourse by disarming the framework of the significations so that there may emerge this enjoyment (jouir) of the deciphering of a knowledge that belongs to no one but of which someone, the subject, is the effect, the offspring. Réjouissance (Rejoicing).
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*Trans. Note: Di-mension: dit (said)-mension*
*Trans. Note: In French, “sacré,” meaning both “hell of a” and “sacred” (as in holy).*
*Trans. Note: in French, “A la recherche de la jouissance perdue” echoes A la recherche du temps perdu, Proust’s Remembrance of Things Past.*
*Trans. Note: Or more literally, In Search of Lost Time.*

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