

The Written in Speech

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The gap between hearing and saying
The written is not to read
Michel Leiris and his Rules of the Game
An interpretation at the level of language
The apparole, part of the apparatus of structure

We have met already five times this year and, to sum it up, have taken a path going from homophony to the anagram, through multiple examples of a literary nature*.

It seems to me that these examples have taught us something. What have they taught us? First of all, to take things from the base, that there is a gap between what is heard and what is said on condition that we agree upon what *what is said* means.

In the usage that I employ on this occasion, *what is said* means what is understood, what is communicated, what is posed as truth, presents itself as something on the order of a proposition susceptible of being true or false. This is a reminder that there are two dimensions, two places of the said: what comes to the ear and what, of that, is understood. This is all the more two places in that it is in disagreement, staggered.

The dimension of what poses itself as true is what Lacan designated exactly as the *thetic* level of truth. *Thetic* is what poses itself as a thesis, calling for an antithesis, and indeed a synthesis.

* This text is the sixth lesson of Jacques-Alain Miller's course, *L'orientation lacanienne*, given through the Department of Psychoanalysis, University of Paris VIII, 1995 - 96, edited by Catherine Bonningue.

There is another gap between what is written and what is read. We had fun with the observation that there is more than one reading of what is written.

For example, I brought in Saussure when he deciphers, in the Saturnal poetry, his hypogram anagrams. He reads not only the words, but exactly the «words under the words,» to use Starobinski's expression, who was, more properly, the inventor of these texts. He put them at the disposition of the lettered public, and I pointed out the attention they received, in particular from Lacan and from Jakobson.

This anagrammatic reading constitutes the signifier as an enigma, and in Saussure's case, *as if* the signifier at the same time enunciated and dissimulated exactly a proper name, even a famous, illustrious proper name. We pause at the trembling, this shiver that occurs in the *as if*, because Saussure himself was bothered by his certitude, worried by it to the point of leaving the considerable collection of his notes on the subject confined in drawers, from whence they were extracted much later. We are in the *as if*, as if the signifier was, as such, a riddle [*devinette*].

The word *devinette* isn't very serious. It's an effect in French of the suffix *ette*, like *trottinette* [scooter]. It brings with it a diminutive value, and then it promenades like that, fresh and smart, *Marinette* style.

The riddle [*devinette*] doesn't summon the soothsayer [*devin*], who is otherwise weighted down, heavy, compromised. It only requires astuteness. For the good reader, the informed reader, it's a game like those that Jakobson mentions in the Russian riddles, which were spelled out for us the last time with sagacity¹.

The Russian riddle — since we brought it up — presents itself as such, an honest riddle; in other words, it admits to being a definition enveloped in another signifier to be deciphered. But the Saturnal poem, until Saussure's reading — at least since the supposed, mysterious tradition of dissimulating the name anagrammatically had been lost — says to nobody, «I'm a riddle.»

So, the riddle admits to being such.

What it hides nevertheless — when it is a Russian riddle of the folkloric type remarked upon by Jakobson — is that it isn't only the word that solves it. According to Jakobson, it enunciates this word, hidden in its very text, under a veiled form. Scattered throughout the text are fragments, phonemes which, once assembled, give a presentiment of the word solution. The riddle anticipates the word, the signifier of the solution in its very text. According to Saussure, the Saturnal verse is of a higher dimension

since it hides that it is even a riddle, and then it is only solved at the level of the signifier.

I evoke this to bring you gently back to the amusing atmosphere of the inanity of sound. As amusing as it is, it is very serious. The gap between hearing and saying, between writing and reading, is the very gap that arranges the place of analytic interpretation for us.

I

The interpretation concerned in the double gap I indicated, before even calling it analytic, we note that it is obligatory, necessary. In what way? In the sense that what is said in what is heard, what is read in what is written depends on interpretation.

Here it isn't a question of an extra interpretation. In the way I have presented it to you, this is not a supplementary interpretation. On the contrary, it is the obligatory passage from the signifier to the signified, to employ familiar terms.

Between the signifier and the signified, there is interpretation.

We only get to this reduced formula because we have admitted, given the weight of examples including those coming from Saussure, that there is a staggering between the signifier and the signified. We do not take the signifier and the signified as the recto and verso of a sheet of paper.

In his *Course on General Linguistics*, once his reading of Saturnal verses had been forgotten, repressed, to illustrate how the signifier and signified are joined, Saussure took the example of a sheet of paper from which one cuts the top-side and the under-side with the same snip of the scissors. If such is the relation of the signifier and signified, there is no thickness of a sheet of paper between them. In this case, there is no interpretation between the signifier and signified.

The canonic perspective left to us under the name of Saussure is precisely — *between signifier and signified, no interpretation*. On the contrary, our perspective of the first Saussure — the proto-Saussure, the Saussure of the drawers — wholly, obligatorily reestablishes interpretation between signifier and signified.

Saying that — truly at the base of the question, simply from these ultra-reduced terms — doesn't get to a complex interpretation. This doesn't suppose a fully equipped, finalized interpretation. It is an interpretation that has the same degree of elementarity as the signifier and signified.

I might evoke what an equipped interpretation is, so that you see the difference. What is an interpretation that has rules? The rules of interpretation have been specially formulated and refined for writing.

Since I'm covering this quickly, I'll content myself with an allusion, as I have done before, to medieval Christian exegesis of the Bible, since one can make reference, in sum, to Pere de Lubac — four tomes entitled *Exegese medievale*. This work gives us the system of interpretation of the Book with a capital B, consecrated, from the Old and New Testaments, such as it was practiced and such as it continues secretly to determine a great deal of our textual approaches.

If you recall what I have already said before about it; you know that it distinguishes a quadruple meaning of the Book. The terminology might vary, but I will give the following: the literal interpretation which is devoted to what is recounted, what is described, to the history; the allegorical interpretation which puts faith into play; the moral interpretation where *you* are in question for what *you* have to do or to not do; and the anagogic interpretation which determines from the text that to which *you* tend, *you* must tend as end. Here's a system of interpretation that is a little heavy to move. Saint Thomas, moreover, said that it mustn't be used for everything. He specifies that this quadruple focus must remain the privilege of the sacred Book and that profane texts, to wit, the commentaries, did not call for this four footed and handed machine.

Luther tried to throw all that overboard. He contested approaching the text with this quadruple machine. It is sure that this machine was extremely delicate to handle. And the constitution of a caste of those who interpret, who know how to handle the quadruple meaning, followed soon enough. Then Luther's act had been to render the Book accessible to all, and to take the entirely vigorous consequences.

Still, in the twelfth century — a blessed time, the time before Luther — these rules were imposed on all interpretation of the Bible, Pere de Lubac specifies. There, certainly, between the signifier and the signified there is interpretation. There is a machine of interpretations.

I will leave to you those others who found that with four meanings it wasn't enough, and who brought in seven. The text of the Book was then recognized as offering a multiplicity of meanings and a multiple understanding. One said *multiplex intellectus* or *spiritus multiplex*, because, also to simplify it, one can divide the four meanings between the literal on the one hand, and slip the other three over to the order of spiritual or pneumatic.

The basis for all this was the difficulty in making the Old and New Testaments agree. Saint John, in his *Apocalypse*, spoke of a book written in recto and verso to qualify the set of Old and New. The people of the

Book didn't have this difficulty, holding to the so-called Old Testament, which is to say, unique. There is a special difficulty in according, relating the Old and the New which was solved by the interpretation of the Old by the New. The New Testament served as metalanguage for the Old Testament as language-object. At the same time, the New Testament continues the Old, accomplishes it, and transfigures it. The one is to the other like a letter to the spirit, according to the exegetes. The very operation of interpreting the first by the second changes the letter into spirit and thus realizes a mutation of meaning. This poses the difficulty of accounting for what, in variable doses, persists of the continuity between the two sets and what is marked by rupture.

We are back to homophony and anagram.

If there is duplicity, multiplicity, it is internal to the oral and written as such. The *multiplex* is on a par with what is heard and what is written. Without rules, without an interpretation machine, there is always the possibility of passing to what is said and what is read, to interpret.

We speak as if it were justified to draw a parallel between oral and written. Is it justified? I have been speaking about it since the beginning to lead things along gently. It is not unjustified to draw a parallel between the interpretation of what is heard and what is written, if, in the two cases, we think of it in terms of the signifier.

But is it certain that the written, as such, has the status of signifier?

This question is all the more justified since Lacan, without its having been read perhaps exactly in its due place, discovered, invented another status for the written than that of the signified. If one wishes an indication, it is marked in the fact that he ends up, in his elaboration, decoupling what we have, since the beginning, accepted as coupled: writing and reading.

Since the beginning, we have said *what is written, what is read, what is heard, what is said*, as if it were given — will we be reproached for it? — to consider that reading corresponds to writing. Yet, only taking this indication that in the written, in Lacan's sense, there is more or something else than the signifier. He brings us, at the end of the first of his seminars to be published, a little text in which he defines in a marked, forced way the written as *not to be read* — and *not*, without equivocating on the word, is a negation.

The written as such, in Lacan's sense, is not to be read.

What's all this about? What is being twisted here? And what justifies separating writing and reading like that? I take only this as index; the

definition of the written must have taken on a special torsion to succeed in placing it at the same time outside what is said and outside what is read. It concerns a strange status of the written, an extreme, radical status that must be appreciated as such, and lacking which, it seems to me, a doctrine of interpretation which refers to this zone of Lacan's teaching would no longer be able to sustain itself.

We will come to examine this extreme status of the written today, but I must introduce you to it.

II

The Agency of the Letter, Lacan's writing that bears this title, does not give this extreme status to writing². Rather, he discovers the written in the very act of speaking. He discovers the gram in the phone. This text leads to what is heard as being grasped, structured according to the linguistic approach.

The structural linguistic approach, Saussurian from his *Course on General Linguistics*, isn't worried about acoustic identity as such. It isn't worried about frequencies, the variety of modulations; it doesn't bother with acoustic constance as such. In what is heard, the linguistic approach of Saussure, of Jakobson, aims at other things than the properties, the qualities of sound, such as one might examine them with what has been developed today as analyzers, and even machines to produce sounds, so that your computer talks to you in a friendly fashion, and it is more or less able to recognize what you say to it — which we're getting closer and closer to every day. These little machines are put on the market for nearly nothing. You say the name of someone, and it gives you the telephone number right away, if you've been so kind as to enter it beforehand. There is a machine that recognizes sounds. Nothing says that this apparatus won't call you one day with a voice that will seduce you. In any case, this is an approach that is exactly not the one in question here.

The linguistic approach aims at a system, an articulated knowledge present in what is heard when one speaks, an articulated knowledge in which phonemes are opposed to one another, and are discerned in function of the noticeable semantic differences in a given language. They are isolated by multiplying the tests of commutation. The moment a change will make a difference in meaning, one knows that one has isolated a phoneme through opposition to another which, put in its place, changes the meaning. Lewis Carroll gave us many amusing examples of this.

This phonemic system — reduced to a bundle of distinctive traits in the Fifties by Jakobson with the aid of Morris Halle — is the system

presented by Lacan in *The Agency of the Letter* as equivalent to type set. This structured system is like type set when printed characters were materialized in the form of little lead objects. He saw in the phonemic system of *lalangue* what already in speech prefigured the press, anticipated printing. He writes, in his *Ecrits*:

...an essential element of the spoken word itself was predestined to flow into the mobile characters which...render validly present what we call the 'letter', namely, the essentially localized structure of the signifier³.

He treats the system of phonemes like a system of letters. He precisely states: «the phonemic structure is literal.» The word 'literal' is modified for reasons I'll explain later. The letter thus presentifies what detaches the signifier from the signified.

This is indeed what a type character is, such as is found in boxes at the printers. The type character, the literal character is, as such, detached from the value of signification that it only acquires through its combination in monemes. It mustn't be held that this was only Lacan's point of view in approaching the question, because he repeats exactly the same thing at the end of his *Ecrits* in *Science et la verite* [Science and the truth], where he defines the signifier, at first, as acting separately from its signification and sees in this a trait of the literal character⁴.

What he calls *the letter* is the signifier as detached from any value of signification and localized in a materiality that is presented to us in the type character, but that is no less localized when it is a phoneme in a system of opposition. In other words, in speech there is already the equivalent of this writing that we see elsewhere deposited on paper, namely that we ourselves reproduce approximatively. The example that he proposes at the end of the *Ecrits* is the phallus as signifier that is *imprinted*, and always in an ill-timed fashion, in disagreement with development because it is never the exact, biological sign of the partner, nor the sign of copulation as such. Moreover, this implies a subject who would not be the biological individual, nor the subject understanding.

If the letter is the signifier as such, which is to say, in its separation from the signified, writing is at this level. This is hardly an interpretation on my part. The second part of *The Agency of the Letter* is entitled «The letter in the unconscious,» demonstrating the unconscious structured like a language. On what basis? In demonstrating exactly that when it concerns the unconscious, we are dealing with writing.

When, a dozen years later, the philosopher, Derrida, proposed his reflection on what he called *grammatology*, what he named an *archi-writing*, a primordial writing that is not writing debased in relation to speech, and which would be a constant in the history of philosophy, Lacan

would say — «This is about what I called, before any grammatology, *the agency of the letter*.» In a lively, unfriendly enough fashion, Lacan asserted paternity over this idea, for having isolated, in *The Agency of the Letter*, what there is of writing in speech.

Lacan demonstrated that we are dealing with writing by using a dream, in showing that the dream image is retained by Freud for its value as signifier, which has nothing to do with its signification. This is what Lacan distinguished in what Freud offers as example when he says the dream is to be read like a riddle. To say that the dream is read like a riddle is to say that the image doesn't count as a figure, a figured sign, nor as a pantomime either, but as a letter. This is, in an elective manner, for Lacan, an illustration or prefiguration of the symbolic — the letter which is to be deciphered, whose meaning is hidden, and cryptogram up to its inscribing itself from a lost language to be reconstituted.

Whenever the symbolic must be illustrated, Lacan takes special recourse to the letter, not only to mark this presence of writing in the dream, or even the structure of language appearing as equivalent to the status of writing, but it is also the same inspiration that presides at the construction of these α , β , γ by little letters which are not to be deciphered. But in this famous example, the property of overdetermination of the symbolic is illustrated by combinations of letters. One sees the affinities between the symbolic and the letter. The letter appears to be no more than another name for the signifier, the name of the signifier when it is separated from signification, when it is just there, dumb as a box of rocks. This brings Lacan, in his *Encore*⁵, to give as the sole, distinctive trait of the signifier, as predicate for all the signifiers, precisely stupidity. The signifier is dumb because the signified, all the other signifiers are elsewhere, so it remains without having, in and of itself, much to say to us.

What Lacan calls significance holds exactly to that, and he on occasion proposes it as translation for *Traumdeutung*, the *significance of the dream*. There is reading there. At the same time that he advances the status of writing in the dream, he speaks of the analytic operation of reading.

All this *Agency of the letter* joins writing with reading, a reading that is deciphering because the signified is to be rediscovered, to wit, read, and knowing how to interpret supposes a structure of language.

One also sees in this what is the exact relation between significance and semantism. Everything rests on the fact that signifier and signified are not like the right-side and wrong-side. On the contrary, the less semantism there is, the more significance there will be. There is more significance in that the signifier functions more like a letter, separated from its value of signification. This more-signifier is what one might call the poetic effect.

For example, when one follows through the different drafts for Mallarme's poems, it is clear that he proceeds through a progressive occulting of the signified, that he progressively chases out the signification of the first approach, that from which he writes the poem, and that he then crosses out more of the significance in an enigmatic style. He tries to obtain an anagrammatic effect, what he calls «a field under the text,» or, as he said, a «mirroring from beneath.» I'll take up Mallarme again later.

I can bring you a little example with which Michel Leiris begins his *Rule of the Game*. It is three little pages to narrate an experience from childhood. Some of you perhaps remember it.

He plays with his little lead soldiers. One falls. He ought to break hitting the floor. He doesn't break. «Keen was my joy,» he says. «This I expressed in saying,» — he is a little child who doesn't yet know how to read or write — «...Appily!» He is then told, «You mean Happily. Say Happily.»⁶ Little Michel believed that when things turned out for the best, one said: «Appily!»

He then describes himself meticulously, as disconcerted because for him *Appily* is much more expressive than *Happily*. *Appily* is truly a pure ejaculation. One discovers that, in this *Appily*, his joy, his jubilation was truly, entirely expressed, in this case, at having avoided the breaking of the little soldier, his little rifle, his little sword.

This ejaculation is truly a jouissance that finds its adequate signifier.

Here is an illumination, as he says, «a tearing of the veil, a bursting of the truth.»⁷ He discovers that there is a real meaning to the word, as he expresses it, «its meaning in the language,» and that one must say like everyone else — *Happily*.

One has the feeling that it's finished, that it's all over now. He will have to write interminably his *Rule of the Game*.

The rule of the game is that one must say it like everyone else. At that moment, the word finds itself inserted in a whole sequence, he says, «of precise significations,» and «what before was something truly belonging to me found itself socialized.»⁸

He says, «It belonged to me.» It was, all the same, already caught up in what he thought, what for him was said in what he heard. The socialization was in fact, without a doubt, already present in *Appily*.

But that's how he presents this little apologue seized by communication. He concludes this little piece thus: «This is what made me feel how

articulated language, arachnean tissue of my relations with others, escaped me, sprouting everywhere its mysterious antennae.»⁹

This stunning little example — that he develops a little later in the second fragment of *Rule of the Game* — begins with the following words: «When one doesn't yet know how to read...» He tries to capture what *lalangue* is before one has learned to write and read. «What are words when one learns them only by hearing them?» he asks¹⁰. And he reconstitutes it. There are few examples like this of the anamnesis of the very language, of the insertion of the subject into language.

He gives us a descriptive essay on the mode of the speaking being in language before the alphabet, before, as Lacan says in his postface to *Seminar XI*¹¹, the subject is *alphabetised*¹². He shows us a subject who has to deal with a sort of monster, «oral monsters» as he expresses it, where liaisons are made that do not respond to the lexical order, where there are foggy effects, assonances, singular cuts, where the most banal sentence can become, because one hears it a little bit askew, he says, «the sentence the most obscure that has ever escaped the lips of the oracle.»¹³

The oracle is an elective reference of Lacan's on interpretation. The oracle here arrives without soothsayer, simply by misunderstanding, when one doesn't take as criteria the way in which it is written and lexicalized, when one is uniquely hearing it. One has the same experience each time it is a question of a language that one doesn't know how to speak, nor read. But one has no idea, at the moment, of how what is heard is cut into words, while here there are singular cuts which make, precisely, the monsters.

He links these oral monsters to the effect and charm of the songs one learns, where there is a play between music and speech, and where, he says, «are amalgamated in enigmas insoluble rites, sonorous contents, values significant of words and melodies.» I'm going to read you a little passage:

The phrases imbibed of music acquire a very special luster which separates them from common language, giving them the nimbus of a prestigious isolation. More effective treatment than the vulgar typographical artifices...¹⁴

After the songs, he also evokes those fixed syntags that proper names give us. «All that, one way or another, was qualified by a particular appellation in which figured a proper name, which became in effect its *name* and made of it a sort of person, a being gifted with his own life,» — perhaps we don't have the same products anymore — «such as the phosphate *Falieres*, the anise of *Flavigny*, *Bar-le-Duc* jams, the apple sugar of

Rouen and among other medicines, *Manceau* syrup, *Ramy* gum, the ‘tranquil balm’ ...beings who emerged, thanks to the markers that their names constituted, from the quasi-indistinct mist of things...»¹⁵

He holds specially in his memory the jouissance given him by the verse of a duet from *Manon Lescaut* sung by his sister: «Goodbye, our petit table!» What he kept as cut-out of this verse was «tetable.» He evokes this marvelously,

Tee-teh-tah. The ‘eh’ of ‘te’ between the ‘ee’ of ‘ti’ and the ‘ah’ of ‘ta’ far from being skipped is sufficiently accented so that the syllable «teh» takes on a sort of consistence, thickens, tends to metamorphose into an object, and, leaving the adjective ‘petit,’ it glues itself to the substantive ‘table,’ which designates a solid body, a volume made of heavy wood...thus was our table changed into *tetable*, into *totable*, and become masculine noun to baptize I don’t know what sort of bizarre instrument: a stable, a retable, a totem, a sink flowing with potable or nonpotable water, whatever vocables came to my mind in this moment to label an indefinite thing of which I simply knew that it was an object, a thing occupying a bit of space in a room where the Grioux and Manon said goodbye, a thing that was at the same time indeed a table and a little bit more than a table to which was added this particular quality which entirely transformed it...¹⁶

There he evokes a world peopled, through the effect of these names, by fantastic objects which could only be mishearing. I refer each one of you to your memories.

What Lacan called *lalangue* in one word is *tetable*. It is up to us to indicate this Leirissian operation that makes us read in a single word the article and substantive — *lalangue*.

Lalangue is what one makes of language through writing, but that we find, as such, or such as Leiris here gives us a glimpse, integrally subjected to the equivocal, definable through the equivocal meanings it permits. One grasps in this example what Lacan meant when he said that a language, *lalangue*, is none other than the integrality of the equivocal meanings that the subject’s history lets persist there. This shows us the malleability with the pathematique effects which follow for the subject Leiris.

Leiris had always tried to write as closely as possible to *lalangue*. He borrowed the means to do it from limericks, alliterations, phonetic games until the end of his works. I can only recommend to you the astonishing work called *Langage, tangage*¹⁷ where one finds a part of the

Glossary about which I have already spoken. He plays precisely on the phonemic difference. There he shows himself, as he says, «devoured by the desire to declaim,» perfecting in writing a language that sees itself as an initiation of sorts — «shifted language, or even danced.» He doesn't copy Queneau; he doesn't try to introduce spoken language into the written, but he takes care to mark, he says, «to liven up the written by its timber.» Moreover, he makes a precise distinction between the recourse to orality as practiced by Queneau and what he calls his recourse to vocality. I hope to have the occasion to take up again this very fine difference.

III

Returning to interpretation, what is interpretation of the analytic order if its correlate is not language, but *lalangue*?

In Lacan's theory, many doctrines of interpretation have followed one another. We more or less drag them all around with us, we who go through his works. This is why we haven't always dropped what should have been dropped when Lacan constructed us an interpretation at the level of *lalangue*, which restores *lalangue*, and which attacks the very relation between what is heard and what is said.

Doubtless, one might say of this interpretation that its site and means are the equivocal, insofar as it bears on a dimension that is the very same as the integrality of the equivocal.

To grasp what Lacan said in the latter part of his teaching, one must replace oneself in the dimension of *lalangue*, where the word is yet something belonging to me, like *Appily*.

The equivocal, without doubt, gives us a thread running through the whole of Lacan's elaboration. For example, in the third part of *The Function and Field of Speech and Language*, which is especially devoted to the question of interpretation, one finds a reference to animal language — it dates from 1953¹⁸. In 1972, in *L'Etourdit*, being about the same question of interpretation, one also finds reference to the notion of language among animals — more or less in the same terms — which highlights what is lacking when one locates use of symbols among animals — the equivocal¹⁹. The bee always says *Happily*. It never says *Appily*.

In *The Function and Field of Speech and Language*, Lacan denies this animal symbolism the quality of language in saying, *This is not a language. It is only a code, only a system of signals which is dominated by the search and finding of the referent.*²⁰ For example, one transmits

with exactness what one must to direct the swarm. In *L'Etourdit*, on the contrary, he accepts the notion of language among animals, but in remarking that there communication is always univocal, and that one doesn't find among animals equivocal symbols.

Why does he deny this symbolism the quality of language in 1953? And why does he accept it in 1972? It is because in the meantime, the term communication had changed value for him. He no longer defined language essentially by communication. Even if one can follow the thread of the equivocal through Lacan, there is a rupture on the very term of communication, a gap with which one must deal in spite of what one has learned in reading Lacan. In 1972, it doesn't bother him at all to use the word communication concerning animals. He explains it in a chapter of *Encore: Firstly, it is generally enunciated that language serves to communicate, communication implies a reference, lalangue serves everything else but communication*. That is more or less the discovery Michel Leiris translates for us. When it is taken charge of, seized by communication, it is already something else than what it was for him, to wit, the expression, as such, of his jubilation. That is what is lost between *Appily* and *Happily*. That language serves everything else but communication, Lacan assigns to what the experience of the unconscious has shown us, insofar as the unconscious is made of lalangue.

Taking only that, there is, at the so-called level of lalangue, another end than that of communication. Leiris expresses this in saying that, for him, it was a pure ejaculation. The end concerned in that which comes in place of communication and that Lacan privileged; it is the end of jouissance, to the point of qualifying communication as pretend.

What becomes problematic, if one aims at the dimension of lalangue, and if one evacuates it of communication? It must be said; it is the intervention of the analyst.

When one locates oneself on language, and one refers to it essentially as communication, one knows what the analyst has to do, at least he is in a communication situation.

Why does the nature of interpretation become so difficult to specify at the level concerning lalangue? It is because communication as an end disappears. It isn't only the intervention of the analyst that becomes problematic then. Teaching itself must be stitched together in a certain way. This is what we observe after a certain date in Lacan's elaboration.

When Lacan tells us — *The experience of the unconscious shows us that the essential end of what is concerned is something else than communication* — it must be remembered that his first doctrine of interpretation,

on the contrary, related language to communication. Certainly, after the fact, one can already locate a tension in Lacan's inaugural gesture concerning interpretation, a tension between resonance and communication. In effect, in *The Function and Field of Speech and Language*, Lacan highlights what he calls «the resonances of speech.»

He invites us to set in motion the resonances of speech, to restore to speech its full, evocative value, and he specifies that, in resonance, the function of language is not to inform, but to evoke. Here one has the feeling that he is outside communication, that he emphasizes the non-communicative elements, non-communicational to use Habermas's terminology. And in a way, yes. When Lacan evokes, at the start, the resonances of speech, he highlights the poetic function of language, which is to say the effects that overflow communication as information about a reference, communication as univocal information. But at the same time, the poetic effect of resonance is dominated by communication. It is still a mode of communication, not as information, but as evocation, in other words exactly like indirect communication.

Resonance is a property of speech that consists in making heard what is not said. He calls resonance a metonymic property of speech. The poetic is metonymic. Interpretation doesn't speak in this regard, and is thus silent. But at the same time that it doesn't speak, it makes heard, and there it is noisy. It is all the more noisy indirectly for being silent. This is where Lacan announces already the *saying askew* of the half-said [mi-dire] that he will develop afterwards as the mode of saying proper to interpretation.

Obviously, there is a tension between resonance and communication, but what he calls resonance is all the same necessarily a communication. It's just that it is a communication by an indirect route. Finally, there is also a reference, but the reference concerned in resonance is the subject himself.

It isn't a question of this subject informing himself about himself. It concerns evoking himself to transform and even invoking himself to transform himself.

Lacan's starting point is that at the heart of interpretation there is an intimation. All the same, there is an imperative value to interpretation. This is why he takes his bearings in the statements, *You are this, You are my master, You are my wife, etc.* His starting point is interpretation insofar as metaphor for the subject. Even if it is a metaphor sort of said askew, a metaphor that one only makes heard, an indirect metaphor.

We know about interpretation as transformation of the subject. It is what Lacan called recognition. His starting point is the idea that interpretation

is fundamentally recognition, except that to be effective, it is made on the bias, indirectly. This supposes, of course, that the subject is animated by a desire for recognition.

This base of the doctrine of interpretation must be recalled to then recall that Lacan disconnects interpretation and recognition, and that this disjunction remains essential. He disconnects interpretation and recognition, and simultaneously he disconnects desire and recognition.

From thence comes the promotion of the term identification, and the theme *interpretation and identification* is still current. It is this double disjunction — disjunction between interpretation and recognition, and disjunction between desire and recognition — that installs the question of identification at the heart of the question of interpretation.

What is the desire for recognition? — that Lacan went and drew out of Kojève? The desire for recognition, which is supposed as such for the subject, is, in fact, a request for identification.

At first it was placed in the line of request for identification to correct, no doubt, to posit that interpretation, insofar as it aims at desire, plays against identification. And insofar as identification is always identification to signifiers, Lacan ended up generalizing this term in speaking of the master-signifier.

It was much more simple to propose this as the goal of interpretation than to identify the subject. When he said *recognition*, it was a mode of identification. He proposed identification as end of interpretation because identification is always identification to signifiers.

That can be done with speech. The power of speech is essentially the power to identify the other, on condition of enunciating it from the right place. One can identify the other. The doctrine of interpretation that works the best is that which promises identification, the right identification no doubt. Interpretation becomes much more perplexing when it must play against identification, when it must disidentify. This is Lacan's constant line, from shortly after he sets out.

What remains of the process of identification? In any case — and this is good up to the end — what remains is that the being of the subject outside identification cannot be designated by a signifier. Lacan will call that the *being for death*. At this moment, interpretation must aim at the subjectivation of death. What is more, Lacan will define the being of the subject as a lack-of-being²¹. Interpretation must then aim at the subjectification of the lack. In this regard, one can restore indirect resonance, allusion. This is what Lacan does when he evokes Saint John pointing his finger to

the empty sky. In any case, signifying the being of the subject is identification. Thus, one cannot positively designate it by a signifier proposed in the interpretation until Lacan had defined the being of the subject in an object, a desubstantialized object, non-substantial, and until he gets to a subjectification of the object little *a*. But there, one fails to pronounce the terms *subjectification of the object*. Indeed, it is rather the subject who is eclipsed there. Lacan speaks of subjective destitution.

With these beacons you can perhaps see what persists as a thread through Lacan and at the same time what brings us to something new. Interpretation necessitates a new definition of speech if it is to be at the level of *lalangue*.

When Lacan proposed as end of interpretation to realize the identification of recognition, speaking of speech still made sense, had a value. We can't be sure that speech still holds the same value, the same meaning when it concerns speech at the level of *lalangue*.

What was this speech that Lacan had made an essential function of psychoanalysis since 1958? Speech was inscribed in a circuit of question and answer. Speech was waiting for the response of the Other. It was also my question as subject. In this way, Lacan could write, «What I search in speech is the response of the other. What constitutes me as subject is my question.»²³ Here is a definition that is consequent. But, for example, what little Michel Leiris searches in his speech is absolutely not the response of the Other. And when it comes, it cuts his effects; on the contrary, it devitalizes his speech. What constitutes him as subject of *Appily* is not at all a question. As he says so well, it is an ejaculation — *Keen was my joy*. At the level where we grasp *Appily*, it is not at all a question of a speech that would be caught up in the circuit of question and answer.

It is easier to conceptualize analytic interpretation when one continues to adhere to the idea that interpretation is a response. Until he brings up *lalangue*, interpretation is a response for Lacan. But from the moment he isolates the dimension of *lalangue*, interpretation is no longer a response.

This necessitates something other than speech as question and answer. What is marvelous is that there is something else in Lacan. Once again, he furnishes us that also, that by which we might grasp captivated speech, the concept of twisted speech, when it doesn't concern question and answer but essentially the relation to *jouissance*. He says, in *L'envers de la psychanalyse*, «The incidence of the signifier in the destiny of the speaking being, this has little to do with his speech.»²³ This is an enormous change for the one who wrote *The Function and Field of Speech and Language*, where on the contrary the incidence of the signifier is marked above all by the speech of recognition or of non-recognition. «This has little to do with

his speech.» Lacan says, «this has to do with the structure, which is outfitted. The human being [...] has only to *apparole* himself to this apparatus.»²⁴ He proposes us a mixture of speech and apparatus.

Well, I propose that speech is part of this structural apparatus. A few years later, one finds this specification with the same word apparatus. Lacan, in *Encore*, says, «Reality is approached with apparatuses of jouissance. There is no other apparatus than language.»²⁵ He proposes a renovated definition of language: not as means of communication if not as apparatus of jouissance. In a text of the same period, one finds a single, isolated instance of the term *apparole*.

Well, I say that what he is trying to discern by *apparole* and that we can take as a beacon, even if he only said it once — there are little shards that I just indicated — is the new concept of speech that calls for the transformation of the concept of language into a concept of *lalangue*.

Apparole is the proper name of speech as apparatus of jouissance. The interpretation in question, whose contours are difficult to define, is an interpretation that is supported and aims at the *apparole* as apparatus of jouissance.

Certainly, the *apparole* doesn't leave us to think of it in the overhanging terms of a metalanguage, nor to transform it into a language-object, if one intends by language-object what Bertrand Russell, for example, does with it in his investigation of *meaning and truth*, which is a primary language, a language without subject.

I've stopped myself at the edge — this happens often. I have perhaps familiarized you a bit with the concept of *lalangue*. I have been able to pass on to you what modifies the concept of speech into *apparole*. I'm left, for next time, to bring you what renovates the position of *The Agency of the Letter* in a manner coherent with *lalangue* and *apparole*.

What renovates *The Agency of the Letter* is, of course, what Lacan called *Lituraterre*²⁶. In place of the *function of speech*, the *field of language* and the *agency of the letter*, we have *lalangue*, *apparole* and *lituraterre*, which certainly gives us another picture of Lacan.

- 1 cf. Roman Jakobson. *Une Vie dans le langage, Auto portrait d'un savant*. Editions de Minuit, 1984.[trans. note].
- 2 Jacques Lacan. «The agency of the letter in the unconscious or reason since Freud.» *Ecrits: A Selection*. trans. A. Sheridan, Norton, 1977; pp. 146 - 178.
- 3 Jacques Lacan. «The agency of the letter in the unconscious or reason since Freud.» *Ecrits: A Selection*. trans. A. Sheridan, Norton, 1977; p. 153.
- 4 Jacques Lacan. «Science et la verite.» *Ecrits* Seuil: Paris, 1966; p. 875.
- 5 Jacques Lacan. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, book XX: Encore (1972 - 73)*, trans. B. Fink, Norton, 1998.
- 6 Michel Leiris. *Biffures* in the series *Regle du jeu*. Gallimard, 1985; p. 11.
- 7 *Ibid.*; p. 12.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 *Ibid.*; p. 13.
- 11 Jacques Lacan. *Le seminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre XI: Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la Psychanalyse*, Ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, Seuil, 1973. The post-face was not translated in the English edition, unfortunately. [trans. note].
- 12 The word *betisse* means stupidity so that this commentary on the alphabet must be referred to what is said earlier in this article on stupidity, ie. the level of the signifier as such.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 *Ibid.*; p. 18.
- 15 *Ibid.*; p. 18 - 19.
- 16 *Ibid.*; pp. 20 - 21.
- 17 Michel Leiris. *Langage Tangage, ou ce que les mots me disent*. Gallimard, 1985.
- 18 Lacan, Jacques. «The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis.» *Ecrits: A Selection*. trans. A. Sheridan, Norton, 1977; pp. 30 - 114.
- 19 Jacques Lacan. «L'Etourdit.» *Scilicet* #4, Seuil:Paris, 1973; p. 47.
- 20 Jacques Lacan. «Function and field...» *Op. cit.*; p. 84.
- 21 *Manque-a-etre* which Alan Sheridan translated as «want-to-be» and which presents some interesting possibilities in its connotations with the «wanna-be» as semblant, pretender, but which avoids or occults the idea of a lack. [trans. note].
- 22 Jacques Lacan. «The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis.» *Ecrits: A Selection*. trans. A. Sheridan, Norton, 1977; p. 86.
- 23 Jacques Lacan. *Le Seminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre XVII: L'envers de la psychanalyse*. Seuil, 1986; p. 57.
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 Lacan. *Encore. Op. cit.*; p. 55.
- 26 Jacques Lacan. «Lituraterre.» *Ornicar?* #41, Seuil: Paris, 1987; pp. 5 - 13.