

Freud and Love: Treatment and Its Discontents

A rewritten and expanded version of an earlier essay entitled 'L'abjet d'amour' (*Tel Quel*, 91 (Spring 1982), pp. 17-32), 'Freud and Love' was published as the first part of Kristeva's *Histoires d'amour* (Paris: Denoël, 1983, pp. 27-58). This translation is taken from the forthcoming American edition of *Histoires d'amour*, to be published by Columbia University Press. In many ways, the central project of *Histoires d'amour* is to present psychoanalytical discourse as a discourse of *love* (as opposed to *desire*), one that situates itself in the space previously filled by religion. This, I believe, is why Kristeva not only presents this fascinating book as the archaeology of love in the Western world, but pays particular attention to love in its Catholic elaborations (through analysis of the discourse of mystics, saints and theologians). In an accessible and highly readable essay published as a separate pamphlet in 1985 (*Au commencement était l'amour: psychanalyse et foi*, Paris: Hachette), Kristeva returns to the question of the relationship between psychoanalytic theory and practice and Catholic theology and symbolism.

In 'Freud and Love', Kristeva presupposes a certain knowledge of the concept of the *abject* as developed in her *Powers of Horror* (Paris: Seuil, 1980; tr. Léon S. Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). Neither subject nor object, the 'abject' may be defined as a kind of 'pre-object' or, perhaps, as a *fallen* object. Although situated in the Imaginary, it precedes and in no way coincides with the Imaginary Other of the mirror stage. The abject, then, represents the first effort of the future subject to separate itself from the pre-Oedipal mother. Nausea, distaste, horror: these are the signs of a radical revulsion (or *expulsion*) which serves to situate the 'I', or more accurately to *create* a first, fragile sense of 'I' in a space where before there was only emptiness. The abject does not fill the void of the 'pre-subject', it simply throws up a fragile boundary wall around it. In this sense the abject (the 'object' of revulsion) is more a process than a 'thing'. Stressing the fact that the abject is not *per se* linked to dirt or putrefaction, Kristeva insists that

it can be represented by any kind of transgressive, ambiguous or intermediary state.

Abjecting the archaic mother, the child tentatively creates its first separate space. This space, however, remains empty: it is simply a screen hiding nothing, an emptiness always present in patients usually called 'borderline cases', that is to say, patients whose problems are situated on the frontier between neurosis and psychosis, and perhaps more specifically, those whose apparently neurotic symptoms serve to mask a latent form of psychosis. In Kristeva's case histories at the end of this essay, these patients emerge as marked by a peculiarly 'post-modern' relationship to language and the sacred. For these patients nothing is taboo because nothing seems to be meaningful: all their utterances lack depth, and their stream of words, far from repressing anything simply seem to be masking a void. For Kristeva, such patients, like other psychotics, have foreclosed the Name of the Father (see also 'The True-Real'), but in their case, it is not so much a question of foreclosing the paternal signifier in its Oedipal and symbolic guise, as an earlier, paternal, pre-object, which Kristeva, quoting Freud, labels the 'father of individual prehistory'.

According to 'Freud and Love', this 'father of individual prehistory' designates an archaic disposition of the paternal function, which must intervene in the child's original auto-eroticism in order to produce primary narcissism, the stage which in its turn provides the necessary grounding of the mirror stage, and thus for the subsequent development of the Ego. Situating this intervention at about four months, Kristeva argues that it is only the hypothesis of such a triangulating instance (the 'archaic father') which can explain the shift from the *paranoid* to the *depressive position* described by Melanie Klein.

The 'father of individual prehistory' serves as an instance of *identification* for the child. Given that the child at this early stage relates exclusively to the mother, what happens is that he or she in fact identifies with the pre-Oedipal mother's desire for the phallus. The point stressed by Kristeva is that the triangulation necessary for the development of primary narcissism will not take place if the *child* is the mother's sole object of desire: in that case the child risks precisely developing into one of the 'borderline cases' described at the end of this essay.

The child's relationship with this early paternal instance is not one of *desire* (Eros), which, according to Lacan, is *metonymical displacement*, but one of *love* (Agape), which Kristeva here defines as a *metaphorical identification*. For Kristeva, transference and counter-transference in analysis is *love* in this sense, a love that repeats or reinforces the child's relationship with the 'father of personal prehistory'.

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In his journey through the land of love Freud reaches Narcissus only after having travelled over the dissociated space of hysteria. The latter leads him to establish the 'psychic space' that he will explode, first through Narcissus and finally through the death drive, into the impossible spaces of 'lovehate',¹ that is, infinite transference.

Narcissism – a screen for emptiness

The hypothesis of Narcissus is crucial to this Freudian course. Before calling itself 'death', the libido undergoes a first threat to its omnipotence – one that makes the existence of an *other* for the *self* appear problematic. Freud seems to suggest that it is not Eros but narcissistic primacy that sparks and perhaps dominates psychic life; he thus sets up fancy at the basis of one's relationship to reality. Such a perpetuance of illusion, however, finds itself rehabilitated, neutralized, normalized, at the bosom of my loving reality. For Freud, as we know, binds the state of loving to narcissism; the choice of the love object, be it 'narcissistic' or 'anaclitic', proves satisfying in any case if and only if that object relates to the subject's narcissism in one of two ways: either through personal narcissistic reward (where Narcissus is the subject), or there is narcissistic delegation (Narcissus is the other; for Freud, the woman). A narcissistic destiny would in some way underlie all our object choices, but this is a destiny that society on the one hand, and the moral rigour of Freud on the other, tend to thrust aside in favour of a 'true' object choice.² And yet on closer examination even the Ego Ideal, which ensures the transference of our claims and desires toward a true object laden with all the pomp of good and beauty as defined by parental and social codes, is a revival of narcissism, its abeyance, its conciliation, its consolation. Freud's text, one might say, imposes an omnipresence of narcissism, which permeates the other realms, to the point that one finds it again in the *object* (where it is reflected) – if we assume that an object can be designated, in other words symbolized and loved as such, outside of chaos, rejection and destruction.

Moreover, the ubiquity of the notion of 'narcissism' goes hand in

hand with its being far from originary. It is an accrual, and Freud points out that it is the product of a 'new action', which we should understand as that of a third realm supplementing the auto-eroticism of the mother-child dyad: '*Die autoerotischen Triebe sind aber uhrfanglich; es muss also irgend etwas zum Autoerotismus hinzukommen, eine neue psychische Aktion, um den Narzissmus zu gestalten.*' 'The auto-erotic drives, however, are there from the very first; so there must be something added to auto-eroticism – a new physical action – in order to bring about narcissism.'³

That observation endows narcissism with an intra-symbolic status, dependent upon a third party, but within a disposition that chronologically and logically precedes that of the Oedipal Ego. It prompts one to conceive of an archaic disposition of the paternal function, preceding the Name, the symbolic, but also the 'mirror stage' whose logical potentiality it would harbour – a disposition that one might call that of the imaginary father (a point I shall return to). Lacan takes up Freud's observation only briefly to emphasize the need to stipulate the 'mirror stage'. He specifies that 'The human ego establishes itself on the basis of the imaginary relation'.⁴

The question prompted by the Freudian notion of narcissism would then be the following: what is this narcissistic 'identity'? How stable are its borders, its relation to the other? Does the 'mirror stage' emerge out of nowhere? What are the conditions of its emergence? A whole *complex structuration* can seemingly be conceived through what is after all a psychiatric term, 'narcissism'; it is an already ternary structuration with a different articulation than the Ego-object-Other triangle that is put together in the shadow of the Oedipus complex.

Furthermore, the ubiquity of Freudian narcissism has caused some to suggest that narcissism is no more than a Freudian fantasy – and that nothing else exists but originary mimetism. Such a thesis is probably a paranoid version of what would lie at the basis of social and symbolic relations: its finds its mechanism in the 'scapegoat' theory, where Melanie Klein's 'projective relationship' unwittingly serves as cornerstone for society and the sacred. Nevertheless, it is still a fact that narcissism, caught in a play of rebounds within the Freudian text, in a first stage seems to be a mimetic play that would establish psychic identities (Ego/object), until that play finally, and in the dizziness of rebounds, reveals itself as a screen over *emptiness*. That notion has been developed in psychoanalysis by André Green, whose reflections I draw upon for this particular point.⁵

Consequently I shall emphasize this notion of emptiness, which is at the root of the human psyche. It does not reveal itself merely because 'psychotic states' have broken forth on psychoanalytic couches or have shown through the low points of many neuroses. One is compelled to note that the aims of psychoanalysis have changed. After psychiatric *semiology*, Freud had discovered the *symptom* as metaphor, that is, condensation, of fantasy. Now, and thanks to Lacan, one analyses the symptom as a screen through which one detects the workings of *signifiance* (the process of formation and de-formation of meaning and the subject); these coextend with the speaking being as such and, consequently, they cut through not only 'normal' and 'pathological' states but also psychoanalytic symptomatology. In this respect, the arbitrariness of the Saussurian sign has placed us in front of a *bar*, or even an *emptiness*, that constitutes the referent/signified/signifier relationship, of which Lacan has merely taken up the 'visible' aspect in the *gaping hole* of the mirror stage. Saussure's *arbitrariness* of the sign and Lacan's *gaping hole* both readily point to what might be understood from the standpoint of representation – given the uneasy uncertainty, ubiquity and inconsistency of 'narcissism' in Freud...

Thus, against the background of linguistic theory and language learning, the *emptiness* that is intrinsic to the beginnings of the symbolic function appears as the first separation between what is not yet an *Ego* and what is not yet an *object*. Might narcissism be a means for protecting that emptiness? But against what? – A protection of emptiness (of 'arbitrariness', of the 'gaping hole') through the display of a decidedly narcissistic parry, so that emptiness can be maintained, lest chaos prevail and borders dissolve. Narcissism protects emptiness, causes it to exist and thus, as lining of that emptiness, ensures an elementary separation. Without that solidarity between emptiness and narcissism, chaos would sweep away any possibility of distinction, trace and symbolization, which would in turn confuse the limits of the body, words, the real and the symbolic. The child, with all due respect to Lacan, not only *needs* the real and the symbolic – it signifies itself as child, in other words as the subject that it is, and neither as a psychotic nor as an adult, precisely in that zone where *emptiness and narcissism*, the one upholding the other, constitute the zero degree of imagination.

We have, however, reached the threshold of another question: what is it that preserves this emptiness – cause for complaint but also absolute necessity of so-called narcissistic structures, fleeting effect of enigmatic

as well as creative non-sense – at the heart of childhood narcissism? This is where we need to return to the notion of ‘identification’.

Einfühlung – an identification with a metaphorical ‘object’

Amatory identification, *Einfühlung* (the assimilation of other people’s feelings), appears to be madness when seen in the light of Freud’s caustic lucidity: the ferment of collective hysteria in which crowds abdicate their own judgement, a hypnosis that causes us to lose perception of reality since we hand it over to the *Ego Ideal*.⁶ The object in hypnosis devours or absorbs the Ego, the voice of consciousness becomes blurred, ‘in loving blindness one becomes a criminal without remorse’ – *the object has taken the place of what was the Ego Ideal*.⁷

The identification that provides the support for the hypnotic state known as loving madness rests upon a strange object. This archaic identification, which is characteristic of the oral phase of the libido’s organization where what I incorporate is what I become, where *having* amounts to *being*, is not, truly speaking, objectal. I identify, not with an object, but with what offers itself to me as a *model*. That enigmatic apprehending of a *pattern* to be imitated, one that is not yet an object to be libidinally cathected, leads us to wonder whether the loving state is a state without object and reminds us of an archaic *reduplication* (rather than imitation), ‘possible before any choice of object’.⁸ This enigmatic, non-objectal identification might be related to the internal, recursive, redundant logic of discourse, which is accessible within the ‘after-speech’; it is an identification that sets up love, the sign and repetition at the heart of the psyche. For the sake of an object to come, later or never? . . . It does not matter, since I am already in the throes of *Einfühlung* . . . Later I shall examine the conditions that allow the advent of that unification, that identification, on the basis of auto-eroticism and within the pre-Oedipal triad . . .

For the moment let me simply note that becoming *as* the One is imagined by Freud as an oral assimilation; indeed he links the possibility of archaic identification to the ‘oral phase of the libido’s organization’,⁹ and he then cites Robertson Smith who, in his *Kinship and Marriage* (1885), describes the communal bonds set up through participation in a common meal as resting upon ‘the acknowledgement of the possession of a common substance’.¹⁰ Ferenczi and his followers would later develop the notions of *introjection* and *incorporation*.

Nevertheless, one might well wonder about the notional slippage that takes place between the 'incorporation' of an object, or even its 'introjection', and an *Identifizierung* that is not on the level of 'having' but locates itself at once on that of 'being-like'. On what ground, within what material does *having* switch over to *being*? – While seeking an answer to that question it appeared to me that incorporating and introjecting orality's function is the essential substratum of what constitutes man's being, namely *language*. When the object that I incorporate is the speech of the other – precisely a non-object, a pattern, a model – I bind myself to him in a primary fusion, communion, unification. An identification. For me to have been capable of such a process, my libido had to be restrained; my thirst to devour had to be deferred and displaced to a level one may well call 'psychic', provided one adds that if there is repression it is quite primal, and that it lets one hold on to the joys of chewing, swallowing, nourishing oneself. . . with words. In being able to receive the other's words, to assimilate, repeat and reproduce them, I become like him: One. A subject of enunciation. Through psychic osmosis/identification. Through love.

Freud has described the One with whom I fulfil the identification (this 'most primitive aspect of affective binding to an object'¹¹) as a father. Although he did not elaborate what he meant by 'primary identification', he made it clear that this father is a 'father of individual prehistory'.

An 'immediate' and objectless identification

A strange father if there ever was one, since for Freud, because there is no awareness of sexual difference during that period (more accurately: within that disposition), such a 'father' is the same as 'both parents'. Identification with that 'father of prehistory', that imaginary father, is called 'immediate', 'direct', and Freud emphasizes again, 'previous to any concentration on any object whatsoever': *'Diese scheint zunächst nicht Erfolg oder Ausgang einer Objektbesetzung zu sein, sie ist eine direkte und unmittelbare und frühzeitiger als jede Objektbesetzung.'* Only with secondary identification does the 'libidinal covetousness that is part of the first sexual period and is directed towards the father and the mother appear, in normal instances, to be resolved in a secondary, mediate identification that would come and reinforce the primary, direct identification'.¹²

The whole symbolic matrix sheltering emptiness is thus set in place in an elaboration that precedes the Oedipus complex. Indeed, if the primary identification constitutive of the Ego Ideal does not involve libidinal cathexis, drives are dissociated from the psychic realm. Simultaneously, what one can only call the *absolute* existence of *transference* is established, a transference laden with libido. It is a transference rather than an 'identification', a transference in the sense of *Verschiebung*, a displacement, as in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, but also and at the same time in the sense of *Übertragung*, as it will show up during treatment and be directed towards the person of the analyst. Finally, such a transference is called *immediate* (*unmittelbare*) and works in the direction of a complex, composite and, in short, imaginary realm ('the father of individual prehistory').

We know that, *empirically*, the first affections, the first imitations and the first vocalizations as well are directed towards the mother; it is thus hardly necessary to stress that one's pointing to the father as the magnet for primary love, primary identification, is tenable only if one conceives of *identification* as being always already within the symbolic orbit, under the sway of language. Such appears to be, implicitly, the Freudian position, which owes its acuity as much to Freud's sensitivity concerning the dominant place of language in the constitution of *being* as it does to the resurgence of monotheism in his thought. But is there really a difference?

On the contrary, there is Melanie Klein's well-known position, which must be called inexpressible and closer to ordinary common sense. The bold theoretician of the death drive is also a theoretician of gratitude seen as 'an important offshoot of the capacity for love', 'necessary for the acknowledgement of what is "good" in others and in oneself'.¹³ Where does this capacity come from? It is innate and leads to the experience of a 'good breast' that states the child's hunger; it is also apt to convey the feeling of a plenitude that would be the prototype of all subsequent experience of *jouissance* and happiness. Melanie Klein's gratitude is nevertheless and at the same time directed towards the maternal object in its entirety: 'I am not saying that for the child the breast simply represents a physical object.'¹⁴

Yet, along with such innateness, Melanie Klein maintains that the capacity for love is not an activity of the organism (as it would seem to be, according to Klein, for Freud) but rather that it is a 'primordial activity of the ego'. Gratitude would stem from a necessity to confront

the forces of death and consist in a 'progressive integration born out of life drive'.¹⁵ Without being identical with the 'good object', the idealized object reinforces it. 'Idealization stems from persecution anguish and constitutes a defence against it', 'the ideal breast is a complement of the devouring breast'.¹⁶ It is as if those who are unable to set up a 'good breast' for themselves naturally manage it by idealizing; now idealization often collapses and reveals its cause, which is the persecution against which it had established itself. But how does one succeed in idealizing? By what miracle is that possible in a Kleinian life where two live without a third party other than a persecuting or fascinating penis?

The problem is not to find an answer to the enigma: who might be the object of primary identification, daddy or mummy? Such an attempt would only open up the impossible quest for the absolute origin of the capacity for love as a psychic and symbolic capacity. The question is rather: of what value would the question be when it actually bears on states existing on the border between the psychic and the somatic, idealization and eroticism, within analytic treatment itself? To emphasize transference, the love that founds the analytic process, implies that one hears the discourse that is performed there starting with that limit of advent-and-loss of the subject – which is *Einführung*.

Provided one does not forget that in analysis any discourse complies with the dynamics of identification, with and beyond resistances, this entails at least two consequences for interpretation. First, the analyst situates himself on a ridge where, on the one hand, the 'maternal' position – gratifying needs, 'holding' (Winnicott) – and on the other the 'paternal' position – the differentiation, distance and prohibition that produces both meaning and absurdity – are intermingled and severed, infinitely and without end. Analytic tactfulness – ultimate refuge of an interpretation's relevance – is perhaps no more than the capacity to make use of identification and along with it the imaginal resources of the analyst, in order to accompany the patient as far as the limits and accidents of his object relations. This ability is even more important precisely when the patient has difficulty in establishing, or fails to establish, an object relation.

Metonymic object and metaphorical object

Secondly, the *Einführung* gives the language signifier exchanged during treatment a heterogeneous, drive-affected dimension. It loads it with

something pre-verbal, or even non-representable that needs to be deciphered while taking into account the more precise articulations of discourse (style, grammar, phonetics), and at the same time while cutting through language, in the direction of the unspeakable, indicated by fantasies and 'insight' narratives as well as by symptomatic misspeech (slips of the tongue, illogical statements, etc.).

Such analytic attentiveness to *Einfühlung* through transference speech imposes another status of the psychic *object* on the analyst's attention, one that is different from the metonymic object of desire called 'object "a"' by Lacan.¹⁷

We are dealing less with a partial object than with a non-object. As magnet of identification constitutive of identity and condition for that unification, which ensures the advent of a subject for an object, the 'object' of *Einfühlung* is a *metaphorical* object. Carrying auto-erotic motility to the unifying image of One Agency that already sets me up as an opposite One is the zero degree of subjectivity. *Metaphor* should be understood as movement towards the discernible, a journey towards the visible. *Anaphora*, *gesture*, *indication* would probably be more adequate terms for this sundered unity, in the process of being set up, which I am presently conjuring. Aristotle refers to an *epiphora*: a generic term for the metaphorical motility previous to any objectivation of a figurative meaning. . . . The object of love is a metaphor for the subject – its constitutive metaphor, its 'unary feature', which, by having it choose an adored part of the loved one, already locates it within the symbolic code of which this feature is a part.¹⁸ Nevertheless, situating this unifying guideline within an objectality in the process of being established rather than in the absolute of the reference to the phallus as such has several advantages. It makes the transference relation dynamic, involves to the utmost the interpretative intervention of the analyst and calls attention to counter-transference as identification, this time of the analyst with the patient, along with the entire aura of imaginary formations germane to the analyst that all this entails. Without those conditions doesn't analysis run the risk of becoming set within the tyranny of idealization, precisely? Of the phallus or of the Superego? A word to wise Lacanians should be enough!

Metonymic object of desire. Metaphorical object of love. The former controls the phantasmatic *narrative*. The latter outlines the *crystallization* of fantasy and rules the poeticalness of the discourse of love. . . .

During treatment, the analyst interprets his desire and his love, and

that sets him apart from the perverse position of the seducer and from that of a virtuous Werther as well. But he must display himself sometimes as desiring, other times as loving. By ensuring a loving Other to the patient, the analyst (temporarily) allows the Ego in the throes of drive to take shelter in the following fantasy: the analyst is not a dead Father but a living Father; this non-desiring but loving father reconciles the Ideal Ego with the Ego Ideal and elaborates the psychic space where, possibly and subsequently, an analysis can take place.

Henceforth, the analyst must in addition let it be known – since he is an analyst and neither a good shepherd nor a father-confessor – that he is a fleeting, failing or even abject subject of desire. He will then trigger within the psychic space his love has allowed to exist the tragicomedy of life drives and death drives, knowing in his nescience that if Eros opposes Thanatos they are not evenly matched in their struggle. For Thanatos is pure while Eros has, since the beginning, been permeated with Thanatos, the most deep-seated drive being the death drive (Freud).

To say that the analyst handles *love* as a discourse allowing idealizing distance as a condition for the very existence of psychic space is not to assimilate analytic attitude to that of a *primary love* object, the archaic prototype of the *genital* love, as Balint's work suggests with seductive munificence.¹⁹ Concentrating, *for a while*, one's thoughts on love within analysis actually leads one to scrutinize, in the treatment, not a narcissistic merger with the maternal container but the emergence of a *metaphorical object* – in other words, the very splitting that establishes the psyche and, let us call this 'primal repression', bends the drive towards the symbolic of an other. Only the metaphorical dynamics (in the sense of a *heterogeneous* displacement shattering the isotopy of organic needs) justifies that this other be a Great Other. The analyst thus temporarily stands in the place of the Great Other inasmuch as he is a metaphorical object of idealizing identification. It is in knowing this and doing it that he creates the space of transference. If he represses it, on the other hand, the analyst becomes the *Führer* that Freud already loathed in *Group Psychology* – a loathing that showed to what extent analytic practice was not exempt from such hysterical phenomena.

Hate identification, love identification

'It is easy', Freud believed, 'to translate into a phrase the difference between identification with the father and affection for the father as

sexual object (*der Unterschied einer solchen Vateridentifizierung von einer Vaterobjektwahl*): in the first instance the father is what one would want to be (*das, was man sein möchte*), in the second he is what one would want to have (*das, was man haben möchte*). In the first instance, it is the subject of the ego that is concerned, in the second it is its object. That is why identification is possible before any choice of object is made (*Es is also der Unterschied, ob die Bindung am Subjekt oder am Objekt des Ichs angreift. Die erstere ist darum bereits vor jeder sexuellen Objektwahl möglich*).²⁰

It will be noted that the first identification Freud points to in this study is a morbid identification with the mother (for instance, the little girl takes up her mother's cough on account of 'a hostile desire to take the mother's place – *ein feindseliges Ersetzenwollen der Mutter* – in which case the symptom expresses the erotic fondness for the father'). Though conceived within the system of the Oedipus complex (*Entweder ist die Identifizierung dieselbe aus dem Ödipuskomplex*), such an identification nevertheless reminds one of Melanie Klein's projective identification, which is sustained by the 'hostile' as well as guilt-ridden desire to take the place of a persecuting mother out of envy. Object identification because of hatred for one part of the object and fear of persecution. The second type of identification is revealed by a symptom that apes that of the loved one (the daughter, Dora, catches the father's cough). Here, 'identification has taken the place of erotic propensity, and the latter has been changed, through regression, into identification' (*die Identifizierung sei an Stelle der Objektwahl getreten, die Objektwahl sei zur Identifizierung regrediert*). Without hostility in this case, identification coincides with the object of desire through 'a kind of insertion of the object into the ego' (*gleichsam durch Introjektion des Objekts ins Ich*). Love, contrary to the morbid identification mentioned above, would be the merging of the identifying ideal with the object of desire. In the third place, libidinal desires can be completely lacking when identification with another person is made on the basis of some common traits.

One is thus led to conceive of at least two identifications; a primal one, resulting from a sentimental (*Gefühlsbindung an ein Objekt*), archaic and ambivalent affection for the maternal object, more frequently produced by the impetus of guilt-producing hostility; the other, which underlies the introjection into the Ego of an object itself already libidinal (*libidinöse Objektbindung*), providing the dynamics of the pure loving relationship. The former is closer to depersonalization, phobia and

psychosis; the second is closer to hysterical lovehate, taking to itself the phallic ideal that it pursues.

Between hysteria and inability to love

The lover is a narcissist with an *object*. Love involves a sizeable 'Aufhebung' of narcissism; consequently, the relationship established by Freud between love and narcissism must not cause us to forget their essential difference. Is it not true that the narcissist, as such, is precisely someone incapable of love?

The lover, in fact, reconciles narcissism and hysteria. As far as he is concerned, there is an idealizable other who returns his own ideal image (that is the narcissistic moment), but he is nevertheless an other. It is essential for the lover to maintain the existence of that ideal other and to be able to imagine himself similar, merging with him and even indistinguishable from him. In amorous hysteria the ideal other is a reality, not a metaphor. The archaeology of such an identifying possibility with an *other* is provided by the huge place taken up within narcissistic structure by the vortex of *primary identification* with what Freud called a 'father of individual prehistory'. Endowed with the sexual attributes of both parents, and by that very token a totalizing, phallic figure, it provides satisfactions that are already psychic and not simply immediate, existential requests; that archaic vortex of idealization is immediately an *other* who gives rise to a powerful, already psychic transference of the previous semiotic body in the process of becoming a narcissistic Ego. Its very existence and my being able to take myself for it – that is what already moves us away from the primal maternal satisfaction and situates us within the hysterical universe of loving idealization.

It is obvious from the behaviour of young children, that the first love object of boys and girls is the mother. Then where does one fit in this 'father of individual prehistory'? Freud's bent perhaps causes him to speak as a Jew, but he speaks foremost as a psychoanalyst. He in fact dissociates idealization (and with it the amatory relationship) from the bodily exchange between mother and child, and he introduces the Third Party as a condition of psychic life, to the extent that it is a loving life. If love stems from narcissistic idealization, it has nothing to do with the protective wrapping over skin and sphincters that maternal care provides for the baby. Worse yet, if that protection continues, if the

mother 'clings' to her offspring, laying on it the request that originates in her own request as confused neotenic and hysteric in want of love, the chances are that neither love nor psychic life will ever hatch from such an egg. The loving mother, different from the caring and clinging mother, is someone who has an object of desire; beyond that, she has an Other with relation to whom the child will serve as go-between. She will love her child with respect to that Other, and it is through a discourse aimed at that Third Party that the child will be set up as 'loved' for the mother. 'Isn't he beautiful', or 'I am proud of you', and so forth, are statements of maternal love because they involve a Third Party; it is in the eyes of a Third Party that the baby the mother speaks to becomes a *he*, it is with respect to others that 'I am proud of you', and so forth. Against this verbal backdrop or in the silence that presupposes it the bodily exchange of maternal fondness may take on the imaginary burden of representing love in its most characteristic form. Nevertheless, without the maternal 'diversion' towards a Third Party, the bodily exchange is abjection or devouring; the eventual schizophrenic, whether phobic or borderline, will keep its hot-iron brand against which his only recourse will be hatred. Any borderline person ends up finding a mother who is 'loving' for her own sake, but he cannot accept her as loving himself, for she did not love any *other* one. The Oedipal negation of the father is here linked with a complaint against an adhesive maternal wrapping, and it leads the subject towards psychic pain dominated by the inability to love.

If one grants the ternary structure of narcissism and its already harbouring the hysterical beginning of an idealizable object (the object of love germane to primary identification), how can one, to the contrary, understand the inability to love? The cold, set and somewhat false complaint of the borderline person that he is unable to love needs perhaps to be related not to narcissism but to auto-eroticism. Previous to the 'new psychic action' that includes a third party within narcissism, the auto-erotic set-up has neither an other nor an image. All of its figures, all figures disappoint it as much as they fascinate it. The auto-erotic person cannot allow himself to be 'loved' (no more than he can let himself be lovable), except by a maternal substitute who would cling to his body like a poultice – a reassuring balm, asthmogenic perhaps, but nevertheless a permanent wrapping. Such a false mother is the only 'fathering' [*père-manence*] tolerated by one who, henceforth, will indolently be able to enjoy his own organs in polymorphous perversity.

He is undifferentiated, set within the shattered territories of his parcelled body, coiled up about his erogenous zones. He is indifferent to love, withdrawn in the pleasure that a provisionally reassuring diving-suit gives him. The auto-erotic person is not, however, autistic: he discovers objects, but they are objects of hatred. Nevertheless, during those moments that have no saving grace and when the subject is deprived of durability, the hatred that an opposite object projects before him works indeed more strongly upon himself, threatening him with decomposition or petrification. The auto-erotic person who complains or boasts of being unable to love is afraid of going mad – schizophrenia or catatonia. . . .

Dynamics of the ideal

The subject exists only inasmuch as it identifies with an ideal other who is the speaking other, the other in so far as he speaks. A ghost,²¹ a symbolic formation beyond the mirror, this Other, who is indeed the size of a Master, is a magnet for identification because he is neither an object of need nor one of desire. The Ego Ideal includes the Ego on account of the love that this Ego has for it and thus unifies it, restrains its drives, turns it into a *Subject*. An Ego is a body to be put to death, or at least to be deferred, for the love of the Other and so that Myself can be. Love is a death sentence that causes me to be. When death, which is intrinsic to amorous passion, takes place in reality and carries away the body of one of the lovers, it is at its most unbearable; the surviving lover then realizes the abyss that separates the imaginary death that he experienced in his passion from the relentless reality from which love had forever set him apart: saved. . . .

The subject's identification with the symbolic Other, with its Ego Ideal, goes through a narcissistic absorption of the mother as object of need, an absorption that sets up the Ideal Ego. The lover is cognizant of the regression that leads him from adoring an ideal ghost to the ecstatic or painful inflating of his own image, his own body.

Such a logic of idealizing identification leads one to posit, as lining of the visual, specular structure of the fantasy (§ \diamond a) in search of the ever inadequate image of a desired other, the existence of a preliminary condition. If the object of fantasy is receding, metonymical, it is because it does not correspond to the preliminary ideal that the identification process, $\S eA$, has constructed. The subject exists because

it belongs to the Other, and it is in proceeding from that symbolic belonging that causes him to be subject to love and death that he will be able to set up for himself imaginary objects of desire. Transferred to the Other ($\$ \epsilon A$) as to the very place from which he is seen and heard, the loving subject does not have access to that Other as to an object, but as to the very possibility of the perception, distinction and differentiation that allows one to see. That ideal is nevertheless a blinding, non-representable power – sun or ghost. Romeo says, ‘... Juliet is the sun’, and that loving metaphor transfers on to Juliet the glare Romeo experiences in the state of love, dedicating his body to death, in order to become immortal within the symbolic community of others restored by his love precisely.

The ideal identification with the symbolic upheld by the Other thus activates speech more than image. Doesn't the signifying voice, in the final analysis, shape the visible, hence fantasy? Whenever we observe how young children learn forms we are led to understand to what extent ‘sensorimotor spontaneity’ is of little avail without the help of language. Poets have known from time immemorial that music is the language of love, and it has led them to suggest that the yearning captured by the loved beauty is nevertheless transcended – preceded and guided – by the ideal signifier: a sound on the fringe of my being, which transfers me to the place of the Other, astray, beyond meaning, out of sight.²² In short, identification causes the subject to exist within the signifier of the Other. Archaically, primitively, it is not object-oriented but carried out as transference to the place of a captivating and unifying feature, a ‘unary feature’. The analyst is an object (necessarily a partial one) but he also exerts the drawing power of a ‘unary feature’, of a non-object: the actual drifting of a possible metaphoricality.

Here the term metaphor should not bring to mind the classic rhetorical trope (*figurative v. plain*) but instead, on the one hand, the modern theories of metaphor that decipher within it an indefinite jamming of semantic features one in to the other, a meaning being acted out; and, on the other, the drifting of heterogeneity within a heterogeneous psychic apparatus, going from drives and sensations to signifier and conversely.²³

Since it is not object-oriented, identification reveals how the subject that ventures there can finally find himself a hypnotized slave of his master; how he can turn out to be a non-subject, the shadow of a non-object. Nevertheless, it is because identification is not object-oriented,

that the signifier's non-object-oriented underlying layer of drives becomes activated during the treatment that is carried out without the *Einführung* being repressed. In such a case, therefore, it is possible for transference to gain a hold on non-object-oriented psychic states such as 'false selves', borderline cases and even psychosomatic symptoms. It is indeed true that one is ill when not loved; this means that a psychic structure that lacks an identifying metaphor or idealization tends to realize it in that embodied non-object called somatic symptom – illness. Somatic persons are not those who do not verbalize, they are subjects who lack or miscarry the dynamics of metaphoricity, which constitute idealization as a complex process.

Finally, being the magnet for loving identification causes the *Other* to be understood not as a 'pure signifier' but as the very space of metaphorical shifting: a condensation of semantic features as well as non-representable drive heterogeneity that subtends them, goes beyond them and slips away. Actually, by stressing the partiality of the 'unary feature' during idealizing identification, Lacan located idealization solely within the field of the signifier and of desire; he clearly if not drastically separated it from narcissism as well as from drive heterogeneity and its archaic hold on the maternal vessel. To the contrary, by emphasizing the *metaphoricity* of the identifying idealization movement, we can attempt to restore to the analytic bond located there (transference and counter-transference) its complex dynamics, which includes the narcissistic, drive-animated pre-object-orientation and allows it to be tied down to signifying ideals. From this standpoint, there would be no analytical idealization that did not rest upon sublimation. In other words, psychoanalysis skirts religious faith in order to expend it in the form of literary discourse.

Immediate and absolute

Freud's definition of 'primary identification' as 'direct and immediate' (*direkte und unmittelbare*)²⁴ has not, as far as I know, aroused the attention of analysts. In light of that phrase, let us reflect for a moment on the value that speculative philosophy, particularly that of Hegel, assigns to such *immediacy*.

The immanent presence of the Absolute in Knowing is *immediately* revealed to the Subject as the recognition of that which never left him. More specifically, the Hegelian *immediate* (*Unmittelbare*) is the ultimate

disengagement of consistency for the sake of form, the internal overthrow of reflection-in-itself, matter being removed from the self, without yet being for itself and hence for the other. Hegel notes in his *Science of Logic* 'Immediacy, which, as reflection-in-itself, is consistency (*Bestehen*) as well as form, reflection on something else, reflection *doing away with itself*.'²⁵ Heidegger, in his text on Hegel's Introduction to the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* entitled 'Hegel and His Concept of Experience' wished to investigate that immediate presence of the Absolute in order to show the a priori or arbitrariness of the 'immediate' and reveal, on both its far and near sides, the 'blossoming of the Logos', dear to Heideggerian discourse.²⁶ Within the scope of these reflections, one might maintain that the *immediate*, being the auto-severance of certainty in the self, is at the same time that which severs it from object-relation and bestows on it its power of acquittance (*Absolvenz*) without mediation, without object, but keeping and containing both; hence the immediate is the very logic of *parousia*, that is, the presence of the subject for the object. 'It behoves him to keep any relation that merely pertains to the object. . . .' is Heidegger's comment. As the most basic indication of *parousia*, the immediate also presents itself as the logic of *Absolvenz*, as severance outside of relationship, and constitutes the absoluteness of the Absolute. 'It is there, in auto-representation, that the *parousia* of the absolute is displayed' (*ibid.*).

In other words, the presence of the Absolute in Knowing is *immediately* revealed to the subject; consequently, any other 'means' of knowledge is no more than a recognition. 'The absolute is from the outset in and for itself beside us and wants to be beside us', Hegel states in his introduction to the *Phenomenology*. Such a *being-beside-us* would be 'the manner in which the light of the truth of the absolute itself enlightens us', as Heidegger says in his commentary. We are immediately within *parousia*, 'always-already', before producing a 'relationship' to it.

Let us put aside the visual aspect, be it imagined or imaginary, of that immediacy of the Absolute, which Heidegger enabled us to hear when he unfolded the word for knowledge [*Wissenschaft*] in its sonorousness [*novisse*, to have a knowledge of, *viso*, to look at], and which Lacan emphasized when he placed the *mirror* at the core of the Ego's formation. Let me first stress that specular fascination is a belated phenomenon in the genesis of the Ego. And let us try to think through the philosophical investigation against the backdrop of what the analyst might see in the appearance of the term 'immediate' at the heart of primary identification.

With Freud, the arbitrariness of paternal emergence seems undeniable, at any rate absolutely necessary to the interpretative analytic construction. Nevertheless, clinical experience has led us to ascertain that the advent of the *Vater der persönlichen Vorzeit* takes place thanks to the assistance of the so-called pre-Oedipal mother, to the extent that she can indicate to her child that her desire is not limited to responding to her offspring's request (or simply turning it down). This assistance is none other than maternal desire for the father's phallus.

Which father? The child's father or her own? For 'primary identification' the question is not relevant. If there is an *immediacy* of the child's identification with *that desire* (of the father's phallus), it probably comes from the child's not having to elaborate it; rather, he receives it, mimics it or even sustains it through the mother who offers it to him (or refuses it) as a gift. In a way, such an identification with the father-mother conglomerate, as Freud would have it, or with what we just called the maternal desire for the phallus, comes as a godsend. And for a very good reason, since without that disposition of the psyche, the child and the mother do not yet constitute 'two'...

As for the image making up this 'imagination', it should not be conceived as simply visual but as a representation activating various facilitations corresponding to the entire gamut of perceptions, especially the *sonorous* ones; this because of their precocious appearance in the domain of neuro-psychological maturation, but also because of their dominant function in speech.

Nevertheless, let us not be mistaken about the ease of such an *immediacy*. It entails an important consequence: within that logic, the word 'object', just like the word 'identification', becomes *improper*. A not-yet-identity (of the child) is transferred or rather displaced to the site of an Other who is not libidinally cathected as an object but remains an Ego Ideal.

Not I

Let me now point out that the most archaic unity that we thus retrieve – an identity so autonomous that it calls forth displacements – is that of the phallus desired by the mother. It is the unity of the imaginary father, a coagulation of the mother and her desire. The imaginary father would thus be the indication that the mother is not complete but that she wants... Who? What? The question has no answer other than the

one that uncovers narcissistic emptiness; 'At any rate, not I.' Freud's famous 'What does a woman want' is perhaps only the echo of the more fundamental 'What does a mother want?' It runs up against the same impossibility, bordered on one side by the imaginary father, on the other by a 'not I'. And it is out of this 'not I' (see Beckett's play with that title) that an Ego painfully attempts to come into being...

In order to maintain himself in that place, to assume the *leap* that will definitely anchor him in the imaginary father and in language or even in art, the speaking being must engage in a struggle with the imaginary mother, for whom it will eventually constitute an object separated from the Ego. But we are not at that stage yet. The immediate transference towards the imaginary father, who is such a godsend that you have the impression that it is he who is transferred into you, withstands a process of rejection involving what may have been chaos and is about to become an *object*. The maternal space can come into being as such, before becoming an object correlative to the Ego's desire, only as an *object*.

In short, primary identification appears to be a transference to (from) the imaginary father, correlative to the establishment of the mother as 'ab-jected'. Narcissism would be that correlation (with the imaginary father and the 'ab-jected' mother) enacted around the central emptiness of that transference. This emptiness, which is apparently the primer of symbolic function, is precisely encompassed in linguistics by the bar separating signifier from signified and by the 'arbitrariness' of the sign, or in psychoanalysis by the 'gaping' of the mirror.

If narcissism is a defence against the emptiness of separation, then the whole contrivance of imagery, representations, identifications and projections that accompany it on the way towards strengthening the Ego and the Subject is a means of exorcising that emptiness. Separation is our opportunity to become narcissists or narcissistic, at any rate subjects of representation. The emptiness it opens up is nevertheless also the barely covered abyss where our identities, images and words run the risk of being engulfed.

The mythical Narcissus would heroically lean over that emptiness to seek in the maternal watery element the possibility of representing the self or the other – someone to love. Beginning with Plotinus at least,²⁷ theoretical thought has forgotten that it rumbled along over emptiness before lovingly springing towards the solar source of representation, the light that enables us to see and with which we aspire to

become equal, idealization following upon idealization, perfecting upon perfecting: *In lumine tuo videbimus lumen*. Psychotic persons, however, remind us, in case we had forgotten, that the representational contrivances that cause us to speak, elaborate or believe rest upon emptiness. Possibly the most radical atheists are those who, not knowing what the ability to represent owes to a Third Party, remain prisoners of the archaic mother, for whom they mourn in the suffering of emptiness.

Within sight of that Third Party I elaborate the narcissistic parry that allows me to block up that emptiness, to calm it and turn it into a producer of signs, representations and meanings. I elaborate it within sight of the Third Party. I seduce this 'father of individual prehistory' because he has already caught me, for he is simple virtuality, a potential presence, a form to be cathected. Always already there, the forming presence that none the less satisfies none of my auto-erotic needs draws me into the imaginary exchange, the specular seduction. He or I - who is the agent? Or even, is it he or is it she? The immanence of its transcendence, as well as the instability of our borders before the setting of my image as 'my own', turn the murky source (*eine neue psychische Aktion*) from which narcissism will flow into a dynamics of confusion and delight. Secrets of our loves.

The Ideal Ego sated with the Ego Ideal will take over from that alchemy and strengthen the defences of the narcissistic Ego. Consciousness, along with moral conscience (that stern and precious paternal inheritance), will not truly lead us, under the tyrannical protection of the Superego, to forget the narcissistic emptiness and its surface composed of imaginary recognitions and cathexes. At least it will help us block them up; they always remain as more or less painful wounds at the heart of our functions, successes or failures. Beneath homosexual libido, which our social objectives catch and maintain captive, the chasms of narcissistic emptiness spread out; although the latter can be a powerful motive for ideal or superegotic cathexis, it is also the primary source of inhibition.

In being narcissistic one has already throttled the suffering of emptiness. The fragility, however, of the narcissistic elaboration, underpinning the ego image as well as ideal cathexes, is such that it cracks immediately reveal the negative of our image films to those that others consider to be 'narcissistic'. More than insane, empty, that lining of our projection and representation devices is yet another defence of the living being. When he succeeds in eroticizing it, when he allows the

non-object-oriented, pre-narcissistic violence of the drive directed towards an object to run wild, then death triumphs in that strange path. Death drive and its psychological equivalent, hatred, is what Freud discovers after stopping off at Narcissus. Narcissism and its lining, emptiness, are in short our most intimate, brittle and archaic elaborations of death drive. The most advanced, courageous and threatened sentries of primal repression.

In contrast with Melanie Klein's 'projective identification', the proposition I am offering here has the advantage of pointing to, even before the Oedipal triangle and within a specific disposition, the place of the Third Party; without the latter the phase Melanie Klein calls 'schizo-paranoid' could not become a 'depressive' phase and thus could not carry the 'symbolic equivalences' to the level of linguistic 'signs'. The archaic inscription of the father seems to me a way of modifying the fantasy of a phallic mother playing at the phallus game all by herself, alone and complete, in the back room of Kleinism and post-Kleinism.

As for language, the notion outlined here differs, furthermore, from innatist theories concerning linguistic competence (Chomsky) as well as from Lacanian notions of an always-already-there of language that would be revealed as such in the subject of the unconscious. I of course assume, with respect to the *infans*, that the symbolic function pre-exists, but also maintain an evolutionary postulate that leads me to seek to elaborate *various dispositions* giving access to that function, and this corresponds as well to various psychic structures.

In the light of what precedes, what I have called a 'narcissistic structuration' appears to be the earliest juncture (chronologically and logically) whose spoor we might detect in the unconscious. Conversely, understanding narcissism as origin or as undecomposable, unanalysable screen leads the analyst (and no matter what theoretical warnings might be given in other respects) to present his interpretative discourse as a haven, either comforting or confrontingly aggressive, for a narcissism that thus finds itself recognized and renewed. Whether comforting or authenticating (by rational criticism, for instance, in interpretations of the 'mental process' sort), such a welcome falls into the trap of narcissism and seldom succeeds in leading it through the Oedipal procession on to the topology of a complex subject.

In fact, clinical practitioners like Winnicott protected themselves against such a danger, if only by always advocating a mixture of 'narcissistic' and 'Oedipal' interpretations in so-called psychotic states. Nevertheless,

if the dead end that has just been noted can be encountered by others, the reason for it must probably be located in a basic omission – that of the agency of the imaginary father from the start of primary identification, an agency of which ‘projective identification’ is a more belated consequence (logically and chronologically). One may still reach that dead end, by the same token, if one ignores the very concrete and specific structuration required by psychicism within that very elementary disposition, which the term ‘narcissism’ threatens to reduce to a fascination for what is nothing else than the mother’s phallus.

Persian or Christian

The dynamics of primary identification, which structures *emptiness* and *object* as what may have appeared as a ‘narcissistic screen’, will allow us to examine another enigmatic juncture on the Freudian path.

Freud’s uneasiness concerning Christianity is well known, and his rationality would not let him put it into words with respect to revealed religion, but, dazzled and prudent, he did express it when faced with Persian religion. ‘The sun-drenched face of the young Persian god has remained incomprehensible to us.’²⁸ It is indeed possible to interpret that refulgent *jouissance* as ‘direct and immediate’ primary identification with the phallus desired by the mother; this amounts neither to being the mother’s phallus nor entering the Oedipal drama. A certain phantasmatic incestuous potentiality is thus set aside; it works from the place of the imaginary father and constitutes the basis of imagination itself. Moreover, the subsequent naming of that relationship perhaps represents the conditions of sublimation.

In Freud’s text, the ‘refulgent and incomprehensible’ face, lacking an Oedipal feeling of fault or guilt, would be that of the leader of the horde of brothers who kills the father and boasts of his feat (as Ernest Jones suggests).²⁹ One might, on the other hand, consider a pre- or non-Oedipal disposition of that *jouissance*; a position of symbolicity that stems from primary identification, coupled with what the latter infers as to sexual non-differentiation (father-and-mother, man-and-woman) and immediate transference to the site of *maternal desire*. That would constitute a fragile inscription of subjecthood, one which, under the subsequent Oedipal sway, would retain no more than a phantasmatic status. In addition, such a warm but dazzling, domesticated paternity includes imaginary exultation as well as a risk of dissolving identities

that only the Freudian Oedipal process ends up strengthening, in the ideal hypothesis of course.

Maintaining against the winds and high tides of our modern civilization the requirement of a stern father who, through his Name, brings about separation, judgement and identity, constitutes a necessity, a more or less pious wish. But we can only note that if this sternness is shaken, far from leaving us orphaned or inexorably psychotic, such an unsettling action will reveal multiple and varied destinies for paternity – notably of archaic, imaginary paternity. Those destinies could or can be manifested by the clan as a whole, by the priest or by the therapist. In all cases, however, we are dealing with a function that guarantees the subject's entry into a disposition, a fragile one to be sure, of an ulterior, unavoidable Oedipal destiny, but one that can also be playful and sublimational.

Seducer or ideal father

The tragical dynamics of the father's idealization is taken up again in *Moses and Monotheism* through the theme of the election of the Jewish people by its God and through the story of Moses. There is nothing to make one conceive this election as a revival of the old idea, subsequently abandoned by Freud, of the father as the hysterical person's first seducer. The father who brings a people into being through his love is perhaps indeed closer to the 'father of individual prehistory', and, at any rate, to the idealizing agency that drains early identifications, not as object but as 'unary feature'. One might nevertheless interpret Freudian thought with respect to this loving father in the following fashion. The hysterical structure of the horde of brothers construes him as a seducer, an agent of the libido, of Eros, and puts him to death; this is Moses' murdered body. Yet there is also a structural necessity for his unique love as symbolic choice; it appears later on as a pressing need to lay down moral rules or a right to the tribe. The father will then be recognized not as seducer but as Law, as an abstract agency of the One that selects our identifying and idealizing power. The Christian trinity, for its part, reconciles the seducer and the legislator by inventing another form of love – *Agapē*, symbolic (nominal, spiritual) from the very start *and* corporeal, absorbing the acknowledged murder of the erotic body into the universalist profusion of the symbolist distinction for everyone (brother or stranger, faithful or sinner).³⁰

What is opposed to the recognition of the imaginary father? What is it that produces its repression, or even its burial? Freud drops the word 'character', with its well-known anal connotations. 'Whatever resistance character might later be able to bring to bear against the influence of abandoned sexual objects, the effects of earlier identifications, carried out in the most precocious stages of life, will always keep their general, lasting features.'³¹

Character is one of the limits to what is analysable, and that is confirmed by the difficulties encountered in the region we are now investigating. Furthermore, because of the anal character's resistance against primary identification, the advent of the abject during treatment can clearly be seen as the first breach in resistance. . . . Nevertheless and above all it is Oedipal rivalry, which creates mediations, that tragically darkens the dazzlement of primary identification. Within the Oedipus complex, the question is no longer 'Who is it?' but 'Who *has* it?'; the narcissistic question 'Am I?' becomes a possessive or attributive question, 'Have I?' It is none the less true that by starting from Oedipal dramas and their failures – backwards, in other words – one will be able to detect the particulars of primary identification. It is to be noted, however, that 'boundary states' lead us there directly, locating the Oedipal conflict as ulterior or secondary.

A boy will have difficulty tearing himself away from the petrifying situation of being his mother's phallus; or if he succeeds, through the maternal grandfather (among others) who has come in between, he will never cease waging war against his brothers in the shadow of an inaccessible father. Only in poetic enunciation will it be possible for him to be son-and-father within the immediate and direct disposition of primary identification, and bypassing sexual difference – witness the troubadours and Joyce. As for the girl she will retain the traces of that primary transference only if assisted by a father having a maternal character, who nevertheless will not be of much help in her breaking away from the mother and finding a heterosexual object. She will thus tend to bury that primary identification under the disappointed feverishness of the homosexual, or else in abstraction, which, as it flies away from the body, fully constitutes itself as 'soul' or fuses with an Idea, a Love, a Self-sacrifice. . . . If ever a *jouissance* remains, it still seems to partake of that archaic differentiation that Freud so delicately and elliptically touched on under the heading of 'primary identification'.

'Narcissistic structure' thus remains a permanent fixture in the threnodies of love that beckon to us...

John, the ferryman, and emptiness

John comes into analysis with the complaints of borderline cases, which have been fully catalogued by Winnicot, Fairbairn and Rosenfeld – false self, sexual impotence, professional dissatisfaction. His discourse seems to pay tribute to fashion, of which he is yet largely unaware, when he plays with signifiers, deals with words as if they were objects or proceeds by fragmentary, illogical, chaotic sentence concatenations; thus, after having lived and talked so much, he gives the impression of being *empty*. The theme of emptiness, explicit during the treatment of this man, generates multiple metaphors and configurations, all centred in the mother, for which he never uses the possessive adjective. As if repression were problematic, all incestuous as well as murderous contents are present in his discourse. Nevertheless, if they have a *meaning*, they have no *signification* for this patient. Within the empty enclosure of his narcissism, contents (drives and representations) could not find an *other* (an addressee) who, alone, might have given a signification to their weighty meaning that is still felt as empty because it is deprived of love. Transference caused two elements to surface out of the void, and they allowed the long walk around the Oedipal problematics.

First there was the outbreak of abjection.³² Desired or to be killed, the mother was embodied only as abject, repulsive, decked out with all the details of a previously frozen anality. In the same way, and still protected by an explicitly idealizing transference, the patient transforms the uncertain boundaries between what is not yet an Ego and what is not yet an Other by filling this not-yet-an-Ego with 'abjects', thus bringing it out of emptiness, and then giving it only a narcissistic consistency. 'I am repulsive, therefore I can be.' Neither subject nor object, both ab-jects each in his or her turn, mother and son painfully separate all through the initial stage of the treatment, necessarily activating the body's boundaries (skin or sphincters), fluids and ejections, so that passing symptoms might find a place in them. I saw that elementary structuration of narcissism as preceding any possibility of 'projective identification', which, although diffuse during the first phase of the treatment, did not appear essential (it had a *meaning* but no *signification*); only later could it be elaborated and interpreted.

Meanwhile, and this is the second noteworthy element corresponding to the advent of the abject, the patient has a dream. In order to shield himself from his mother's lover who attracts his Oedipal identifications, John races away frantically, but he is losing ground when an old man, who resembles a saint,

miraculously shows up. 'It is Christopher, I think, the one who carries the child Jesus, who lifts me upon his shoulders and takes me across the bridge. He carries me, but my own feet are doing the walking...' The following sessions evoke John's father, who died when he was very young, but also the maternal uncle and grandfather, with whom he had spent his early years. The father, who had been disparaged up to now, averred absent or of no account, is shyly silhouetted in the patient's talk as an 'unassuming intellectual', 'movie buff', 'reader of James' ('strange for an unpretentious clerk, reading works like that'); this to uphold him in his struggle against the abject, thus giving him stabler boundaries, selves that last a little longer before appearing to be false, conflictual landmarks that blaze out the whiteness of a narcissism whose emptiness he initially deplored.

Unlike Freud's patients, the *borderline speaks of Eros but dreams of Agape*. What was interpreted as a 'problematic repression', or even as a 'lack of repression' in such patients appears to be rather *another position* of repression. With the borderline patient, a negation weighs above all and heavily on primary identification. To say that this indicates a 'repudiation of the Name of the Father' is too sweeping and inaccurate, if only because of the existence of transference and, following upon the treatment, the emergence of the Oedipus complex, which can be more or less analysed. But that repression reminds one if anything of a negation of Agape (I shall use this term as synonymous to primary identification), with everything this implies concerning repression of homosexuality when a man is involved; it modifies the status of those representations linked to repressed erotic drives and mainly to erotic relationships within the dual relationship (including 'projective identification'). Consequently, affect representatives pass through the censorship of repression and appear within discourse as empty, without signification. Discourse itself undergoes an analogous process; laden with drives, it is nevertheless experienced as 'castrated', John says, without consistency, empty, too, for want of that elementary, archaic Third Party who could have been its addressee and, by receiving it, could have authenticated it. If all that remains is an Oedipal father, a symbolic father, no struggle against the 'abject', no becoming autonomous with respect to the phallic mother, could be inscribed in the body of language.

The analyst, along this route, is summoned in place of the imaginary father, especially (and this is what the borderline patient dreams of) in order for him or her, apprehensively, to serve as a support for abjection.

Marie and the absence of the mother

Marie exhibits all the delightful throes of hysteria: demand following upon demand, affirmation upon affirmation, until she encounters 'total failure',

which yet leaves her 'cold', although dramatically restless, apprehensive, distressed. . . 'It's amazing, I'm constantly struck by the futility of it all.' This does not, however, spare her the symptom that prompts her to come into analysis – a suffocation that grips her as soon as she sits at the wheel of her car. Marie's story is not an ordinary one. Abandoned by her mother who disappeared during the war, she was first taken care of by her father's family and then put out to nurse. The father remarries and, 'completely terrorized by his wife', Marie says, sees his daughter only rarely; to him she is the burden of a youthful error whom he is ready to support but not to love. The mother's real absence raises to the highest pitch idealization and hatred towards her, with nothing left but the latter when, at age 25, Marie meets with and is disappointed by the family of the one who never ceases not to have room for her. Marie's relationships with women are frequent, conflictive and 'insignificant': 'That doesn't interest me', she says, after having hundreds of times duplicated her 'symptom', as she puts it, when going to visit those women. But she holds back, expresses nothing, raises no objection – 'totally masochistic, you can say that again'. Concern for an essential narcissistic protection makes her 'obliging, friendly, kind', whereas her two ('never fewer than two', Marie specifies) sexual partners with whom she maintains alternating separate and conflictive relationships allow her to lose nothing of either the structure or the bounties of her childhood, and they restore to her a completion that is sometimes 'suffocating' but very satisfying, above all during the quarrels of the threesome.

Out of the central emptiness of narcissism that the story of Marie outlines perhaps too straightforwardly (but how many actual, adored or hated, mothers of hysterical persons undergo the same occultation behind the screen of a winded narcissistic quest in the infinite mirror of hysteria?), measure herself or project herself. What was abjection for John is for Marie pure and simple inanity, restless, feverish and hollow; she is on an impossible search for a 'real job', a 'true love', which would bring an end to 'nobody loves me'. Such a logic dooms her to be a victim, but she realizes it only when a friend tells her, lost as she is within a space without boundaries, punctuated only by her symptoms (the 'suffocations' – a boundary, barrier or buttress?) and the *jouissance* of her fits of anger.

On the occasion of her father's serious illness when she thought she might lose him, Marie had a dream. There is a death notice, a man has died, but the name on the notice is that of a woman. It is soon clear that it is the name of Marie's half-sister, her father's favorite. Marie subsequently discovers that the two men in her life also had other women, hence she is not unique. She becomes jealous, flares up against those women, against the analyst. . .

The hysteric speaks of *Agape* and dreams of *Eros Thanatos*. But whether in this or that disposition of her love, she sustains her narcissistic infinite by

jumbling the boundaries with her mother, and they both founder there in the delights of absence. Absence in relation to what? In relation to the elementary shift effected by primary identification, which allows for the existence of a potentially symbolic Other. For if it is transferred to the place of the imaginary father, inasmuch as he guarantees entrance into language and thwarts the phobic and psychotic potentiality of fusion hysteria, it is transferred along with the kit of representation but without the caboodle of drive.

The caboodle remained in the emptiness of maternal fusion and/or maternal absence. I do mean *and/or*, for at this juncture, provided needs are satisfied (by a wet-nurse, nurse or mother who is only a care-giver without an *other desire*), having a mother or not makes no difference: they are the same, she is the same. The being that satisfies needs (that is, the mother without desire for the Other) can leave no other spoor than that of not being, of non-being. What endows the mother with existence is primary identification, on the basis of which the hysterical person's mother will not assume the outlines of an *abject* but those of a stranger, an absentee, an indifferent one, before becoming, thanks to the incipient Oedipus complex, a conflictive object of projective identification.

Such a hysteria will then experience its Eros with women, while waiting for a symbolic, idealizing Agape on the part of a man who will never, just the same, correspond to its design. That is what mortgages the Oedipus complex of hysteria and explains why it will have the greatest difficulty in choosing a loving object of the paternal kind. For, in that structure, the imaginary father does not exist – he gave out before allowing it to have an object finally capable of love and hate emerge out of maternal emptiness, an erotic object necessarily in the mother's likeness (for the man and for the woman).

Caught between derealization (blurring of boundaries, somatic symptoms), where a narcissism without boundaries unfolds in self-satisfied fashion, and settling scores with women – scores that are necessarily anal but repressed and for that reason not at all abject – hysteria seeks its identity under the stern attention of the symbolic father, a ruthless father. The way towards Oedipal identification with the father is either blocked or impeded by repression of the imaginary father who is fully transferred to the mother's account. The hysterical person, man or woman, is not the mother's phallus but does not want to know this. Negation of primary identification endows him or her with that perverse plasticity, coyness, feigned susceptibility . . . pretending that she does not exist since she is . . . the mother, in other words, nothing . . . or an inaccessible *totality*.

It is possible to discern in the narcissistic hollowing out of the mother and in the anal economizing (in the sense of thrift) of abjection concerning her (the hysterical person spares itself maternal abjection, allowing, with respect

to this proto-object, only emptiness or hatred, a 'lovehatred'), one of the conditions permitting the violence characteristic of projective identifications within this structure. Still more pronounced with women, these features, as I see it, shed light on the feminine paranoia that lies dormant in so many cases of hysteria.

Matthew or the walkman against Saturn

Matthew is one of those youngsters equipped with *walkmen* who have recently invaded the streets of Paris and, I suppose, are rarely seen on couches. He comes in wearing his headphones steeped in music that is 'classical, of course', as he specifies; he removes them only when he sees me, putting them back on upon leaving my office. A university graduate, an 'expert and bored' mathematician, as he puts it, he devotes himself to singing, which, however, he is no longer able to do, hence his entry into analysis. Gifted for computer languages, Matthew was no longer able to speak with his friends, nor could he utter a single word during a previous attempt at analysis that supposedly lasted three months. During several months of face-to-face therapy Matthew did not so much analyse as learn to put together a discourse for an other. Afterwards, reclining, he retraced a family history that was interrupted by brief sequences during which he said he was the victim of aggression – on the street, subway or bus. Music isolates him from such violence, but now he believes that it also brings it about. An elliptic, allusive language, as if fastened to abstraction, serves him more to *delineate* space than to *signify* something for me. For him, speaking is painful and tiring, either too diffusive or too intrusive. Music alone harmonizes that bipolarity (abstraction – intrusion), which, without the headphones, becomes petrified and ties Matthew to his bed, without a phone, cut off from others, as if 'surrounded with a chalk circle, invisible and impassable'.

This phobo-obsessional equipment began to thaw when treatment caused the image of a devouring father to appear – eating, voracious, insatiable. A father-Saturn who took the place of the 'poor guy' and induced a whole series of masculine and feminine figures, educators-persecutors-seducers; starting from there, Matthew began to examine the role of his walkman and his retreat into music.

Basing myself on this stage of his analysis, punctuated for me by Matthew's arrival with the headphones, I still have the feeling that he fears paternal seduction; is this phantasmatic or real? Appended to his mother, described as the key figure in the family, Matthew has not ceased being her phallus. Within their dual economy, which the father did not broach, it seemed apparently inconceivable that she might have a desire other than her child. The voracity of the dual symbiosis, accompanied by denial of the imaginary

father and, consequently, an outpouring of withheld anal sadism, came back to Matthew from outside, projected – and this as soon as an object appeared, as masculine one preferably (for the mother blended with the patient).

Music was the father-again, the landmark, the intermediary between confusion on the one hand and the invisible chalk circle, besieged by onslaughts, on the other. It allowed Matthew to set up a mobile identity for himself and to reject out of it, as abject, whatever did not belong (especially the Oedipal array to which were added the more archaic oral loathing and sadism). Matthew was gleeful, ecstatic and amorous but only as walkman. The headphones were a spot that included all other spots, an organized, differentiated infinity that filled him with consistency and allowed him to face Saturn's devouring but also to have his own destructiveness towards him recognized. Matthew's maternal uncle was a well-known pianist. Analysis made use of the walkman; identifying the shell that the headphones were destined to become, it turned it into a premise of autonomy, of demarcation.

Obsessional neurosis, in the vault of its rituals, shelters a drifting, an instability that reveals the failure or fragility of primary identification, and that is what Matthew's walkman helped me to hear...

'O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams', Hamlet said (II, 2), and Borges quotes those lines at the outset of his *Aleph*. 'The place where all the places of the universe can be located, without intermingling', the Aleph is a 'privilege' granted the child in order that 'the man, some day, might engrave a poem'.

Could what is thus being considered be the condition, and for some the sublimational possibility, for remaking an imaginary father, taking his place, creating his place within language? Such an economy takes nomination closest to that spot without object, both point and infinity, blocked identity and immediate identification. It is the place where narcissism is said to hold sway only in the painful manner of Hamlet, surrounded by abjectness, emptiness, ghostliness and quest for paternal love. For before killing him in Oedipal fashion, the speaking being, in order to speak, loves the 'father of personal prehistory'. Suffering, he beguiles himself with the sound of his cross, an acrobat walking a tightrope: should he let himself be walled in alive or make a poem out of it?

NOTES

- 1 This corresponds to, although it does not fully render, Kristeva's coinage, *hainamoration*. It was suggested by Margaret Waller (who translated *Revolution in Poetic Language*) to replace one of my own less fortunate neologisms – and I am indebted to her for many other suggestions and corrections as well.
- 2 See *On Narcissism: an introduction* (1914) in volume XIV of the *Standard Edition*;

this text is doubtless very bound up with the war, Freud's insecurity and Jung.

Nevertheless, from the time of his earliest works, Freud insisted on a *resistance* that would have been imbedded in the very structure of neurons as well as on *inhibition* as master faculty of the Ego (*Project for a scientific psychology*, 1895, in volume I of the *Standard Edition*). 'We must reckon with the possibility that something in the nature of the sexual drive itself is unfavorable to the realization of complete satisfaction', he notes in 'The tendency to debasement in love', in *The Psychology of Love*, *Standard Edition*, vol. XI, pp. 188-9, before discovering narcissism at the same time as the illusion present at the outset of psychicism, as it is at the heart of amatory experience. Next comes what Freud himself called the 'strange' postulate of death drive, posited towards the end of an exposition on the impossible in love, on loving hatred and primary masochism ('Beyond the pleasure principle', *Standard Edition*, vol. XVIII, pp. 51-61). See also chapter V of *Histoires d'amour* (Paris: Denoël, 1983), the section on Romeo and Juliet.

- 3 *Standard Edition*, vol. XIV, p. 77.
- 4 Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire, Livre I, Les Ecrits techniques de Freud* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), p. 133.
- 5 André Green, *Narcissisme de vie, narcissisme de mort* (Paris: Minuit, 1983).
- 6 See 'Being in love and hypnosis', in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), *Standard Edition*, vol. XVIII, pp. 111ff.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 112.
- 8 'Identification', in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, p. 105.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 105.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 110.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 107.
- 12 *The Ego and the Id* (1923), *Standard Edition*, vol. XIX, p. 31. One of the main ideas of Freud's breviary of love amounts to positing that the Oedipus complex's decline (which he calls 'natural' but is in fact enigmatic) during the latency period favours the inhibition of partial drives and strengthens ideals - thus making the erotico-ideal cathexis of the love object possible during puberty. 'I am in love' is a fact of adolescence when the teenager is capable of partial repression because of difficulties in realizing Oedipal fantasies and can project his idealizing capabilities on to a person towards whom erotic desire can be deferred (see Christian David, *L'Etat amoureux*, Paris: Payot, 1971). Nevertheless, the premises for such a state of love go back to *primary identification* and, before they constitute a lover, they shape psychic space itself.
- 13 Melanie Klein, *Envy and Gratitude* (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), p. 187. See also Melanie Klein and Jean Rivière, *Love, hate, and Reparation* (London: Hogarth Press, 1967). On Melanie Klein see Jean-Michel Petot, *Melanie Klein, le moi et le bon objet (1932-1960)* (Paris: Dunot, 1982).
- 14 Klein, *Envy and Gratitude*, p. 180.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 191.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 193.
- 17 Recalling that in analytical literature the object is in most instances a partial object (mammilla, scybalum, phallus, urine), Lacan specifies: 'This feature, this partial feature, rightly emphasized in objects, is applicable not because these objects are

part of a total object, the body, but because they represent only partially the function that produces them.' Being a function of separation and of want that found the signifying relationship, these objects, designated by a lower case 'a', will be called 'objects of want': 'These objects have one common feature in my elaboration of them – they have no specular image, or, in other words, alterity. It is what enables them to be the 'stuff', or rather the lining, though not in any sense the reverse, of the very subject that one takes to be the subject of consciousness... It is to this object that cannot be grasped in the mirror that the specular image lends its clothes' ('Subversion of the subject and dialectic of desire', in *Ecrits. A selection*, tr. Alan Sheridan [New York: Norton, 1977], pp. 315–16. Lacan discovered in *fantasy* the exemplary efficacy of the object 'a' since in his view the structure of fantasy is linked 'to the condition of an object... the moment of a "fading" or eclipse of the subject that is closely bound up with the *Spaltung* or splitting that it suffers from its subordination to the signifier' (ibid., p. 313). That is what is symbolized by the formula ($\$ \diamond a$) where \diamond indicates desire. Finally, the *metonymical* structure defines the Lacanian object relation to the extent that 'it is the connection between signifier and signifier that permits the elision in which the signifier installs the want-of-being in the object relation, using the value of "reference back" possessed by signification in order to invest it with the desire aimed at the very want it supports' ('The agency of the letter in the unconscious', ibid., p. 164).

- 18 'Take just one signifier as an emblem of this omnipotence [of the other's authority], that is to say of this wholly potential power (*ce pouvoir tout en puissance*), this birth of possibility, and you have the unary feature (*trait unaire*), which, by filling in the invisible mark that that the subject derives from the signifier, alienates this subject in the primary identification that forms the ego ideal' ('Subversion of the subject and dialectic of desire', in *Ecrits*, p. 306). The unary feature of Lacan goes back to the 'unique feature' (*einziger Zug*), to which would be limited the identification that is only partial, according to Freud in *Identification* (*das beide Male die Identifizierung eine partielle, höchst beschränkte ist*) – see the *Seminars on Transference* (1960–61) and on *Identification* (1961–2). Lacan takes advantage of that partial status, on the whole rather imprecise with Freud, in order to insist upon the *unique feature* (*einziger Zug*) that establishes identification as intrinsically symbolic, hence subjected to the distinctiveness of signifying traits, and finally ruled by the benchmark of One feature, of the Unique – foundation of my very own unicity... This unary feature is not 'in the first field of narcissistic identification' where we have witnessed the emergence of the imaginary father; Lacan sees it straight off 'in the field of desire... in the reign of the signifier' (*The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, New York: Norton, 1978, p. 256).
- 19 See Michael Balint, *Amour primaire et technique psychanalytique* (Paris: Payot, 1972).
- 20 See 'Identification', in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, p. 105.
- 21 'Therefore the subject becomes conscious of his desire in the other, by means of the other's image, which presents him with the spectre of his own mastery' (Jacques Lacan, *Séminaire I, Les Ecrits techniques de Freud*, Paris: Seuil, 1975, p. 178).
- 22 '[The imaginary position of desire] is conceivable only to the extent that a guide may be found beyond the imaginary, at the level of the symbolic plane, the legal exchange that can be embodied only on the basis of verbal exchange among human

beings. The guide that rules the subject is the ego ideal' (ibid., p. 162). And this is true even if 'love is a phenomenon taking place on the level of the imaginary and provoking a real subduction of the symbolic, a kind of annulment or perturbation of the ego ideal' (loc. cit.).

- 23 I shall return to the metaphor; see chapter VI of *Histoires d'amour*.
- 24 *The Ego and the Id*, p. 31.
- 25 G. W. F. Hegel, *Science de la logique* (Paris: Vrin, 1970), pp. 385-6.
- 26 See Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege*, Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1950; French translation *Chemins qui ne mènent nulle part*, Paris: Gallimard, 1962. (There is no collected English translation of the essays in this book.)
- 27 See chapter V of *Histoires d'amour*.
- 28 *Totem and Taboo* in *Standard Edition*, vol. XIII, p. 153.
- 29 See *Moses and Monotheism*, in *Standard Edition*, vol. XXIII, p. 110.
- 30 See *Histoires d'amour*, Chapter IV, 1, 'Dieu est Agapé'.
- 31 *The Ego and the Id*, in *Standard Edition*, vol. XIX, p. 31.
- 32 See my *Powers of Horror: an essay on abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

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