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The State Of The Subject Today*

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Fashions come, go, and look alike. The gold embroidery wears off, the hide remains. Not so very long ago, the death of man and the un-being [dés-être] of the subject were widely celebrated. To believe the most recent news items, however, these reports were slightly exaggerated. Like a veritable risen ghost, the subject would seem to be among us once again.

Yet all this talk about “the death of man” and “the end of the subject” has never been anything other than a pseudo-theoretical cover for an evasion of responsibility—on the part of the psychoanalyst, the thinker, the citizen. Similarly, today’s boisterous proclamations about the return of the subject, like the alleged “individualism” that accompanies it, mask the drift of decomposition under another of its forms.

The subject has not just returned, for it never left. It was always there—certainly not as substance, but as question and as project. For psychoanalysis, the question of the subject is the question of the psyche—of the psyche as such and of the socialized psyche, namely, the psyche that has undergone and constantly is undergoing a process of socialization. Understood in this way, the question of the subject is the question of the human being in its innumerable singularities and universalities.

I broach this question here, starting, of course, from the opening offered by Freudian thought and from the aporias


to which it leads. As to the plurality of “psychical persons”—
“instances” grouped in a supersubject that encompasses
them—we may inquire whether, by using the various Freud-
ian topographies and their subsequent elaborations by oth-
ers, one can formulate a notion of the subject that covers
them all and that is not simply formal in character, that is to
say, more or less empty. We shall see that such a notion exists
and that it exists precisely in a prepsychic sense, for it in-
cludes even living beings, whether endowed with a psyche or
not. This first line of inquiry opens the way toward another
interrogation: What, then, is the unity—if that is what it is—
of the human being, beyond its corporeal identity and its
“history” seen simply as its chronological container? This
unity, which is assuredly more than enigmatic, will appear to
us as something that is, properly speaking, beyond the work-
ings of the psychism—beyond what the psychism would ever
produce if “left to itself”; it is to be accomplished [à faire], it
is that which makes itself [se faire] as it has to be, through
analysis. In general, it may be called “project” and, in particu-
lar, it is the project—or, as is said, the end—of the analysis,
provided that we understand clearly what unity, what kind of
unity, is in question here.

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The question of the subject may be formulated as follows: Who comes into analysis? Who recounts a dream? Who makes
a slip, “acts out,” or engages in an episode of delirium? And who
is behind (or in front of) this subject, sitting over there in
the chair? And why does the latter generally think s/he is capa-
ble of responding to the question of who s/he is with the reply:
I am so and so, the psychoanalyst?

Do these questions have any meaning? Thinking s/he could trip us up, a first-year college student might point out
to us that they have none at all; it is not because the gram-
mars of Indo-European languages, s/he would say, just hap-
pen to include a personal pronoun and/or a first-person sin-
gular form of the verb (which is not the case in all languages)
that a reality of one order or another must correspond to this
vocable. (A similar remark can be made, and has been made,

apropos of the verb “to be” and ontology.) With the same argument one could show that the imagination, blood circulation, the Andromeda nebula or Hilbertian spaces do not exist. But there is more: No matter what the grammatical form of the response, there is no conceivable human language [langue] in which it is impossible to pose the following questions: Who did this? Who said that? A human language is always the language of a society; and a society is inconceivable if it does not create the possibility of imputing to someone both word and deeds.

In this form, the question Who? relates to this mode of subjectivity that we call the social individual (see below). For psychoanalysis, however, the question of the subject, the question Who?, is posed immediately; it is raised as soon as the psychoanalyst ceases just sitting back in his chair and instead begins to interpret. (I am not talking about a totally and absolutely silent analyst. Clearly for him/her, this question, like almost all others, is by definition undecidable.) It is impossible, indeed, to formulate an interpretation and to communicate it to the patient without asking the following two questions: Of whom does this interpretation speak? To whom is this interpretation addressed? In both these cases the “who” does not concern the citizen, the social individual lying on the couch, but rather someone invisible. That of which the interpretation attempts to make sense makes sense only as an act (a wish, a thought, an affect) of someone who the visible analysand is not as yet and in whom s/he does not, at the outset, recognize him/herself. (The patient N. N. feels a great aversion to the idea of sucking his mother’s breast—which nevertheless appears to have been the wish expressed in his dream the night before.) Nor is s/he of whom the interpretation attempts to make sense (speaking of someone, of the acts this interpretation makes sense of), to begin with, the visible analysand. In any case, it is not the person “before entering into analysis”; rather, it is someone who is in the process of making him/herself, someone who is aided by the meaning [sens] proposed in the interpretation to make him/herself be and who makes him/herself be only to the extent that s/he can make sense of what the interpretation proposes to him/her. The unavoidable question for the psychoanalyst
is this: **Who** hears the interpretation (and experiences all the modifications in the interpretation and in the style of the interpretation throughout the treatment and throughout the entire dynamic of the treatment)? This unavoidable question has meaning only if one presupposes each time a certain view of the subject and of the state of the subject, not as substrate or immaterial substance but as emergent capacity to gather meaning and to make of it something for him/herself—that is to say, to gather a **reflected** meaning (the interpretation offers no “immediate” meaning) and to make of it something for him/herself by reflecting upon it (were it only because acceptance of an interpretation based entirely upon a transferential “belief” in its meaning would express merely the subject’s continued alienation). It is around these terms—the gathering of a reflected meaning, reflection upon the meaning proposed and presented—that the essential aspect of the problematic of the subject as a psychoanalytic project turns.

Certainly, one could—as one is tempted to do when one reads certain psychoanalytic writings of recent vintage—present psychoanalytical treatment as the looping together of two tape recorders, one of which, being in the place of the analyst, is constantly “mute” (out of order?). But in that case one would have to eliminate all interpretative activity on the part of the analyst, for all our acts of interpretation not only hypothesize effective action upon the “subject” and a reaction on the latter’s part—which is equally true in surgery, for example—but also, and especially, postulate that this sequence of action and reaction occurs by way of **meaning** and that this meaning is not contained in our words like medicine in a tablet. The simplest of interpretations is deciphered by the patient at his/her own risk and peril and the main thing is what **s/he** will make of it: In the **reception** (or the rejection) of the interpretation, the **subject** manifests him/herself as the indeterminable source of meaning, as the (virtual) capacity to reflect and to (re)act. Were one to correct the preceding sentence by saying not “what **s/he** will do,” but “what **Id** will do,” the question would remain in its entirety, for we do not and we cannot always take this **Id** in the same way; this begins already at the level of what the **Id** does in us and what the **Id** makes us do—in analysis I mean, but elsewhere as well. If,
after an interpretation (I am not necessarily saying on account of an interpretation), the patient “acts out” in one way or another, we cannot help but ask ourselves to what extent this interpretation has entered into the efficient conditions of this act, to what extent it might not have been better for us to keep it to ourselves or to think things out a bit further.

We ask ourselves. Here we use the reflexive form of the verb. The term “reflexive” refers us once again to one of the poles of the question of the subject. We ask ourselves, because we could have done it or not have done it: We ourselves undertake the responsibility and we do not rid ourselves of the responsibility for the way the treatment evolves. We therefore grant ourselves, qua analysts, the status of an instance that can reflect and can act, can decide to intervene in this way or another one, to interpret or to abstain from doing so, call attention to a slip or let the associations continue to flow. Now, nothing permits us to refuse this status to others, and in particular to analysands—and it is this status that the term “subject” covers.

“Status” here does not signify “reality” or “substance” but “question” and “project.” I say “question,” for reflection implies that the interrogation is interminable. And I say “project” since what is aimed at through the treatment is the effective transformation of someone. It is neither foreseeable nor definable in advance, and yet it is not just anything at all.¹

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One often encounters in the French psychoanalytic literature of the past few years the expression “the unconscious subject.” Does this expression have any meaning? Everyone knows that the objective of the analysis is the exploration of the unconscious psyche, in the strict sense of the term, that the postulate of psychoanalysis is that this is where things really unfold and that its aim (whatever its explicit form) is in fact to aid the analysand in modifying “his/her” relation to “his/her” Unconscious. But we should also point out that psychoanalysis never encounters this Unconscious, so to speak, “in person”; at most, it fugitively glimpses a few of its effects with the aid of a dream, a slip, an abortive act. Psychoanalysis
always encounters a flesh and blood human being who speaks, not language in general but a quite particular language, who does or does not have a profession, a family situation, ideas, behaviors, orientations and disorientations. In short, we are always faced with a human reality in which social reality (the social dimension of reality) covers almost all of the psychical reality. At the first level the “subject” presents itself as this strange totality that is and is not one at the same time, a paradoxical compound of a biological body, a social being (a socially-defined individual), a more or less conscious “person” and, finally, an unconscious psyche (a psychical reality and a psychical apparatus), the whole being supremely heterogeneous in makeup and yet definitely indissoicable in character. Such is how the human phenomenon presents itself to us, and it is in the face of this cluster [nebuleuse] that we have to think the question of the subject.

The question becomes more complicated at a second level. What is of central importance to us in this chimerical multiplicity is psychical reality. Now, the latter was seen by Freud not as a “subject” but as a plurality of subjects. He spoke about a multiplicity of “psychical persons,” “intrapsychic” conflicts between opposing “instances”: These are metaphorical expressions, to be sure, and those who think themselves clever have taken the opportunity to have a good laugh over them. The juridico-administrative metaphor found in the term “instances” refers both to a hierarchy and to the possibility of jurisdictional conflicts; and the metaphor of different persons relates to the old Platonic image of the chariot with several horses drawing it in several directions at once. Noting that this is a metaphor does not eliminate, however, the characteristics of the object intended by this metaphor.

Indeed, in the work of Freud and of his continuators, the “instances”—or what take their place—each appear as “acting” on their own and pursuing their own ends [finalités]. Among these ends, the first, perhaps, though also the least apparent, is to persevere in its own state of being (which is the ultimate meaning of resistance!); the specificity, the being-apartness, of each of these instances implies the existence, for each one, of a world of its own, of objects, of modes of connection, of valuations that are particular to it.
The Freudian psyche thus presents itself as a conglomerate of psychical subspheres, arranged and held together somehow or other; each of them pursues its own goals and proves capable, in this activity, of performing theoretically and practically “infallible” “calculations” and acts of “reasoning” (let us recall Freudian arithmology: “it is impossible to think of a number which would be selected in a completely arbitrary manner”), and each of them “knows” its “objects” and “works them out” after its own fashion (think, for example, of the Freudian superego, of its “aims,” its “style,” and its “procedural methods”).

I will try to show below that there is nothing truly “metaphorical” about this way of presenting things. The categories of finality, calculation, self-preservation, a world of one’s own are used here in a completely justified fashion. They correspond on a more profound level to the mode of being of the entities in question. The confusion comes from the fact that the categories in question are not specific to the psyche—to the “instances” or to the psychical “persons”—but govern a much vaster region: They are valid everywhere the for-itself exists. At the same time, they are completely insufficient for characterizing what may be called subjectivity, or the subject in the strong sense of the term. The for-itself—or, more simply, the self—exists elsewhere than in the psyche: “this side” as well as “beyond” the psyche. It is not the self or the for-itself as such that characterizes the psyche. Conversely, the psychic as such still does not yield a veritable subjectivity, in the sense I will try to define for it.

We are dealing with a multiplicity of regions, and even levels, of being, all of which come under the title of the for-itself. The lack of sufficient distinctions between these regions and/or levels is the source of confusion. To understand better what follows, let us briefly characterize the for-itself.

1. The for-itself is the living being as such (already, at least, at the cellular level). It is quite understandable that one might be tempted to label “subjective” the active core of the living being, whatever it may be.

2. The for-itself is the psychic, both as such and in its plurality, namely through its various “instances” or “for” each of the “psychical persons.”
3. The for-itself is the **social individual**, in other words, the socially constructed or fabricated individual, or again, the product of society’s transformation of the psychic—language and the family already being two aspects of society. This transformation, which occurs starting from each singular soma-psyche, brings into existence an entity that is socially defined and oriented in its sexual and professional role, in its state [of being] and its appurtenances, in its motivations, its ideas and its values.

4. The for-itself is **society**, as defined in each case and as such. When one says in everyday language, “Rome conquered the Mediterranean basin” or “Germany declared war on France,” these expressions—though certainly abuses of language—are not just metaphorical. I am not referring here to hypersubjects, to a collective consciousness or unconsciousness or to the spirit of a people but rather to the evident fact that each society possesses the essential attributes of the for-itself: the finality of self-preservation, self-centeredness, and the construction of a world of one’s own.

In these four regions we are dealing with the **merely real**. We have not yet encountered what, in psychoanalysis, is of greatest interest to us: the **human subject** properly speaking, the subject that is at once the setting, the means and the goal (the finality) of the treatment. This subject is not merely real, it is not given; rather, it is to be made and it makes itself by means of certain conditions and under certain circumstances. The goal of analysis is to make it come about. It is an (abstract) possibility but not an inevitability for every human being: It is **historical creation** and a creation whose history can be followed. This subject, **human subjectivity**, is characterized by **reflectiveness [réflexivité]** (which ought not to be confused with simple “thought”) and by the **will** or the capacity for deliberate action, in the strong sense of this term.

Similarly, we ought to reserve a place for **a society** that would not simply be a for-itself beyond individuals but would be **capable of reflecting on itself** and of **deciding after deliberation**—a society that can and should be called “autonomous.” We are authorized, and even obliged, to speak of it in this way because certain societies have emerged in history
which are capable of broaching this sort of reflection upon
their own law, placing it in question and—up to a certain
point—deciding to modify it as a consequence of this reflec-
tion. 4

However, there can be no question of broaching here,
even superficially, the set of questions raised by the existence
of these six regions in which the for-itself appears and by the
interrelationships between these regions. I will concentrate
mainly on trying to elucidate two points that seem to me of
particular relevance to psychoanalytic theory and practice.
First of all, I will investigate the astounding similarities and
the abyssal differences that unite and separate the living
being and the psychic. Then, I will examine the question of the
human subject properly speaking, as reflection and as will, as
it is encountered in the problematic of psychoanalysis.

Before doing all that, and since I mentioned at the begin-
ning the fashions of the past quarter century, let us note that
the preceding distinctions allow us to strip naked and expose
to full scrutiny the arguments made by the intellectual heroes
of those years. These people wanted, in effect, to tear the
human subject in two; the two resulting “subjective” modes,
while related to it, do not in any way get to the heart of the
problem. On the one hand, if one considers the for-itself as a
simple self-centered process of self-preservation which is
nevertheless “blind” to everything going beyond the instrumen-
tal activities on which these two finalities [self-centeredness
and self-preservation] depend and which therefore is appar-
ently fully “mechanizable,” the human being would no more
be a “subject” than, for example, the immune system (which,
as is known, exhibits a very strong tendency toward selfhood)
is. One thus arrives at the “subjectless process” (Big discov-
ery! But what, then, is a galaxy but a “subjectless process”?)
and the Lévi-Strauss/Althusser/Foucault line of argumenta-
tion. Or else, one claims that the human subject can be en-
tirely reabsorbed into the dimension of the social individual,
and in particular into language; one will then say that it is
cought, lost, alienated in language (and in the tinsel of soci-
ety), that it does not speak but is spoken (or—why not?—that
it does not write but is written)—only to install “behind” it a
“subject of the Unconscious,” which obviously cancels itself out as soon as a word is uttered. This gives us the Lacan/Barthes/Derrida line of argumentation.

The Living Being

The initial, archetypical for-itself is the living being. Everything that will be said below presupposes the categories of the living being and presupposes that these categories persist through the various levels of the for-itself—not as positive attributes but as framework for relevant questions. “For-itself” signifies being one’s own end. Whether this manifests itself as the for-itself of a particular living specimen, the instinct for self-preservation, or as the for-itself of the species, the instinct for reproduction, matters little: There is self-finality (obviously with the limitations already indicated by the passage from the first case to the second). With self-finality goes a world of one’s own. This world of one’s own is constituted each time in and through a series of encasements and interlacings of various kinds; the world belonging to the dog “participates” in the world belonging to the species dog, the world belonging to some cell of this dog is simply a condition for the world belonging to the dog without explicitly “participating” in it. These encasements cannot detain us now.

What does a world of one’s own signify? There is necessarily each time—at least as soon as one reaches the cellular level—presentation, representation, and putting into relation [mise en relation] that which is represented. Certainly “there is” something “outside,” there is X. But X is not information, as its very designation here indicates. It “informs” one only of the following thing: that “there is.” It is mere shock, Anstoss (we will return to this). As soon as anything more could be said about it, it would have already entered into the play of “subjective” determinations; and ultimately, even this emptied, eviscerated limit case of determination we are calling “there is” is not exempt from the following question: For whom is there something? Nature contains no “information” waiting to be gathered. This X becomes something only by being formed (in-formed) by the for-itself that forms it: the
cell, immune system, dog, human being, etc., in question. Information is created by a “subject”—obviously in its own manner of doing so.

The information thus created is not and can never be “point-like”: Elements (or “bits”) of information are abstractions made by the theoretician. Actual information is always a presentation—therefore always a setting into images [mise en image], and an image can never be an atom but always already is also a putting into relation: It includes, indissociably, “elements” (of an indeterminate number, moreover) and their own mode of cobelonging. This putting into relation can be built up in an indeterminate number of stages up above or down below, but we do not need to go into that here. We may call this function of the living being its “cognitive function.” We shall do so, however, on the condition that we understand how it unites, indissociably, two different dimensions: that of imaging [l’imager] and that of relating [le relier]. By an abuse of language these two dimensions may be called the “aesthetic” and the “noetic,” or the “sensorial” and the “logical.” The abuse of language consists in this: that, as we just said, imaging is intricately involved in relating and vice versa. There is always a “logical” organization of the image just as there is always an “imaged” support for every logical function. Staging [mise en scène]—to use the terminology of Piera Aulagnier—already contains meaning, and putting into meaning [mise en sens] cannot happen without a “presentification” of this sense—which requires a “scene.”

Each time and up to a certain point, setting into images as well as putting into relation obey certain “rules” [règles]. Indeed, they must exhibit a certain regularity, for without such regularity the living being would simply be unable to survive. We do not have to consider here the terms of these rules except to recall that they must be submitted [assertives] (at least partially) to the self-finality of the living being—and already, for example, to the necessities of its self-preservation. Whence derive two other essential determinations of the for-itself of the living being. What is presented must be valued in one manner or another, positively or negatively; it is “affected” by a value (good or bad, food or poison, etc.), and therefore it becomes a support for (or correlate of) an
affect, positive, negative or, at the limit, neutral. And this evaluation—or this affect—henceforth guides the intention (the “desire”), leading eventually to a corresponding act (of advancement toward or avoidance). We have here the three characteristics of the for-itself, which were first sifted out as distinct elements during the fifth century B.C. in Greece. Everywhere the for-itself exists there will be the representation and the image, there will be the affect, there will be the intention; in ancient terminology: the logico-noetic, the thymic and the orectic. This goes for bacteria as well as for an individual or for a society.

It is not difficult to comprehend that these two determinations—i.e., self-finality on the one hand, the construction of a world of one’s own on the other—require each other in a reciprocal manner. If any entity whatsoever is to preserve itself as it is—to preserve itself numerically (this dog) or generically (dogs)—it must act and react in an environment, it must give a positive value to what favors its preservation and a negative value to what disfavors it; and for all this, it must be aware of this environment, be it only in the vaguest of senses. For the parts, the elements, of this environment to exist for it, they must be present for this entity and therefore represented by it. Now, such representation can be neither “objective” nor “transparent”—each of these eventualities would be a contradiction in terms. Representation cannot be “objective” since representation is representation through and for “someone,” and therefore necessarily “adjusted,” to say the least, to the finalities of that someone; neither can it be “transparent” since the manner of being of this someone participates as an involved party in the act of constituting this representation. Thus, to mention only its most brutally obvious feature, this representation—representation can only be immensely selective in character. What is each time “perceived” or “taken in” leaves out an infinitely larger mass of the “nonperceived” on all levels; selection is not only quantitative, it is necessarily also qualitative. Some strata of that which is will be able to be “acquired/constructed,” others will not, due to the nature of that which is as well as to the nature of the presentational/representational predispositions of the living being, which can only be determined. “Determined” means, in identical terms,
“limited” or, if one prefers, “specific.” (This is why the omniscient God of rational theologians is itself an irrational idea: It would have to “perceive” at all possible phenomenal levels everything that might possibly ever be given to all internal and external sensoria; “thinking” would obviously not suffice here, for one cannot, through “thought,” reconstitute the specific pain of someone who has just undergone an operation or just lost a loved one.) This specific selectivity is obviously also correlative with the aims of the for-itself which is each time this specific living being and which depends on what it already is. A tree’s goal of preserving itself does not lead to the same sort of selections within the environment that a mammal’s goal of sexually reproducing itself does. Something else is selected each time, and it is transformed each time in another fashion when it is presented/represented. This leads to different predispositions in “perception/elaboration”—and the particular character of these predispositions is also codetermined by that which “comes to hand” (François Jacob’s “bricolage”): The living being does not create its system of acquisition, elaboration and “interpretation” of the elements of the environment in absolute liberty. For the most part, however, each living for-itself constructs, or better creates, its own world (I call world, in opposition to environment, that which emerges through and with this creation). Quite obviously, the construction/creation of this world supports itself each time—it leans, to take up Freud’s term (lehnt sich an . . .) on a certain being-thus of that which is. Of this being-thus, we can say strictly nothing—except that it must be such that it allows precisely for the ongoing existence of living beings in their unending variety.

Nevertheless, we are talking about it. How are we talking about it? In this specific case, we are talking about it qua metaobservers who are capable of observing at one and the same time the living being and that which happens outside the living being and of noting that an element X of our world triggers, in some living being, an element X of our world which we call “reaction Y” of the living being. We are saying then, if we are not careful, that for the living being in question, the element X furnishes information Y. This is a dreadful abuse of language. That which, “in itself,” corresponds to
X is not information, nor does it furnish information: All that we can say about it is that it creates a shock (Anstoss, to take up Fichte's term) which sets in motion the formative (imaging/imagining, presenting and relating) capacities of the living being. It is only after this enormous process of elaboration takes place that the undescrivable correlate of X becomes "information." But, at the same time, this "beyond X" to which we can attribute no form (every form being "subjective") cannot be absolutely formless: The shock cannot be, in itself, absolutely undetermined and totally undifferentiated, for if that were the case we would be able to hear paintings and see perfumes.  

Here then we have the points of departure for a consideration of the living being as for-itself. Let us summarize once again the three principal ideas: The living being is for-itself insofar as it is self-finality, insofar as it creates its own world, and insofar as this world is a world of representations, affects, and intentions. And, without being able to extend the following remark, we must mention certain questions to which the living being and its mode of being give rise. These questions straddle the "scientific" investigation of the living being and philosophy and they will show, I hope, the relevance of what has just been said to psychoanalysis.

First of all, the living being exists in and through closure. In a sense, the living being is a closed ball. We do not enter into the living being. We can bang on it, shock it in some way, but in any event we do not enter into it: Whatever we might do, it will react after its own fashion. The analogy with the psychoanalytic situation—and with every human relationship in general—is direct. One does not enter into someone as one pleases; one does not even enter in at all. An interpretation—or a period of silence—is heard by someone. That someone hears it: S/he has his/her own predisposed listening apparatus, just as the cell has its own predisposed perceptual/metabolic apparatuses.

In the second place—this may seem paradoxical and indeed it is, but it is also a consequence of the first point and a response to it—when we get to the heart of the matter, we cannot think of the living being except from within. Of course, to an enormous extent we cannot do without causal,
“scientific” explanations and they are important, but ultimately something is still lacking: All the casual sequences we describe in scientific and purely outward terms, along with the coexistence and overlapping of these sequences, become intelligible to us only because they are subject [asservies] to this finality that leads nowhere, to this being without a raison d’être, this particular living being. This is true of any single living specimen we might consider and it is true of the species as well. And this is apparent in an almost comic fashion in the writings of Neo-Darwinians: After the hypothesis that everything is mechanistic/random is posited, all descriptions are given in teleological or finalistic terms. Species have evolved (as it were) in order to adapt to the environment; one adaptive strategy has succeeded whereas some other one has failed, etc. (One never hears it said that a galaxy has failed in some activity or other.) But to say “some strategy of adaptation has failed” shows that one cannot think the set of processes of mutation-selection, and so on, without espousing the “point of view” of a species that “aims at surviving.” (What matters here is not the linguistic metaphor but the category that permits intellectual comprehension.) Analogously, and leaving aside the literature relating to empathy and the critique thereof, there is no psychoanalysis unless it takes into consideration the “point of view” of the patient; no interpretation is possible if it fails to “see things from the inside.”

Finally, we encounter the supreme paradox: Closure and interiority go hand in hand with a universality and a sort of participation. There is not only a cell, there are an incalculable number of them. There is not an oak tree, there are oak trees—and the oak tree would not be able to exist without there being oak trees. Moreover, closure and interiority are opposed not only to a generic universality. Each singular entity participates in entities at other levels, it is integrated within them—or it is itself formed by the integration of such entities. An oak tree cannot exist without a forest, a forest cannot exist without birds nor can they without worms, etc. Likewise, there is not a single obsessional neurosis, but also the totality of obsessional neuroses are not mere examples of the entity “obsessional neurosis.”
The Psychic

What are the specific characteristics of the psychical sphere relative to the living being? Before answering that question, however, let us ask another one: What does one intend by “the psychic”? As is known, Aristotle attributed a soul—psyche—to animals and plants, on the one hand, and to the gods, on the other. This is what we have called the for-itself. What particularly concerns me here is the human psyche and its specific characteristics. But specific characteristics in relation to what? We will keep in mind during this discussion what we know—or think we know—of the “higher” animal life forms, e.g., since monotremes appeared some one hundred and fifty million years ago. What can we say, what can we suppose, about the differences between the “psychism” of echidnas and the human psychism? The difference is obviously not sexuality as such. What is specific to humans is not sexuality but the distortion of sexuality, which is something else entirely.

This specific character is first of all transversal or horizontal. I mean by that its traits hold for all psychical “instances.”

The first of these traits is the defunctionalization of physical processes relating to the biological substratum (component) of the human being. We need only reflect a little to see that this defunctionalization holds even for the Freudian Ego, which is supposed to ensure the human being’s connection with reality: In most cases in which someone commits suicide, the Ego must actively cooperate in the effort. Certainly, in this defunctionalization can be seen the condition for a functionalism of a different order: The psychical “instances,” each taken in itself, and the psyche as a whole are biologically nonfunctional in order to be “functional” from another point of view, their own. It is, for example, in the “functionality” of preserving one’s own “self-image” that one can, at the limit, kill oneself. But, as this example indicates, that would be an abusive use of the term “functionality.” Each instance works at preserving its world, of which its image of the being in question is a central part.
That the preservation of this image may be valued, in general, much more than the preservation of the “real being” is a consequence, among other things, of this second transversal trait of what is humanly psychical: the domination of representational pleasure over organ pleasure. And from this derives what Freud had called the magical omnipotence of thought and which ought to be called, more correctly, the real omnipotence of unconscious thought. We say “real” here because for the Unconscious the question is not that of transforming “external reality” (about which it knows nothing) but that of transforming the representation thereof so as to render it “pleasing.” Now, such a pleasurable representation can, in principle, always be formed; if and when it is not, another psychical instance is opposing it in this endeavor.

Presupposed by these two traits, but not identical to them, is a third which is undoubtedly the one that characterizes the human psyche par excellence: the autonomization of the imagination. We are speaking here, of course, of the radical imagination, which is not the capacity to have “images” (or to be seen) in a “mirror” but the capacity to posit that which is not, to see in something that which is not there. Strictly speaking, and as has already been said, this imaging must be presupposed everywhere the for-itself exists, therefore beginning with the living being in general. The living being makes an image (a “perception”) be where X is (and even where there is nothing at all, as in the case of shadows). But it makes the image once and for all, always, “in the same fashion,” and it makes this image by subjecting it to the requirements of functionality. For the human psychism, there is unlimited and uncontrollable [immaitrisable] representational flux, a representational spontaneity that is not subjected to an ascribable end, a rupture of the rigid correspondence between image and X or a break in the fixed succession of images. It is obviously upon these properties of the radical imagination that the human being’s capacities for language lean: These capacities presuppose the faculty of quid pro quo, of seeing something where there is something else, for example in the ability to “see” a monkey in the five phonemes and six letters of this word, but also not always to see the same thing, therefore in
the ability to understand the expression “I’ve got a monkey on my back,” and once again in the ability to see a monkey in singe if one knows French.

I will merely add a few words on a fourth trait, one which seems to me of capital importance and which, to my knowledge, has been neglected by other writers: the autonomization of the affect in the human psychism. I think that it is of capital importance from a psychoanalytic point of view to note the existence of this trait. We are in the habit of thinking that the affect happens to be dependent on the representation or on a certain connection between desire and representation. If we were to listen more simply, I would dare say more naively, both to clinical data and to ourselves by means of self-observation, we will easily be able to convince ourselves that the affect and the representation are interrelated as well as independent. This is of great importance both with respect to the limitations on interpretation (on the power of interpretation) as well as with respect to the role of the analyst. States of depression provide the clearest example. Quite often when dealing with someone in a state of depression the question inevitably arises: Is the patient in a depressed mood because s/he sees everything in a dark light, or does s/he see everything in a dark light because s/he is in a depressed mood? We see in these states that, to the extent that the representation determines the affect, the interpretation can work. But to the extent that the representation depends on the affect, the interpretation does not work and the analyst cannot fulfill his/her role as interpreter; here s/he can only play the role of providing an affective support or reinforcement—within the limits dictated to him/her by his/her profession. I think that this duality exists, that neither of these two roots of depressed moods is reducible to the other, and that this is the reason why these states so often prove resistant to treatment.

That there is also both a defunctionalization and an autonomization of desire is obvious and clearly recognized (although under other terms). We must simply note that they are indissociable from the autonomization of the representation (imagination) and of the affect.

In this human psychical world—characterized by de-
functionalization, the domination of representational pleasure over organ pleasure, and the relative autonomization of the imagination, the affect, and desire—remain floating debris of the animal’s functional “psychical” apparatus—namely, mechanisms depending on ensidic logic—and these are, moreover, constantly being utilized by the various instances of the “psychical apparatus.” It is obviously not the existence of such mechanisms that can be said to characterize the psyche but rather their “disintegration,” their being put into operation for goals [finalités] that are contradictory or incoherent. Man is not, first of all and to begin with, a zoon logon echon, a living being possessing logos, but a living being whose logos has been fragmented, the fragments being put in the service of opposing masters.

The specific characteristic of the human psychism, on the other hand, lies in its vertical dimension, i.e., in its stratification. We do not have to enter here into particular conceptions of this stratification; whether it is a question of the first or second Freudian topography, Kleinian “positions” or something else—that of Piera Aulagnier, for example, which is articulated through originary, primary and secondary strata; or again, the one I have formulated on my own, which posits at the outset a psychical monad closed upon itself that bursts apart during a triadic phase and then goes through an Oedipal stage to culminate, finally, via various processes of sublimation, in the social individual—we are still dealing with a psyche characterized by a multiplicity of “instances” that are something completely other than a functional deployment [of parts] aimed at achieving a better division of labor. We are justified in speaking about stratification here since some of these instances—or of these processes (I am not presupposing, in all that is said here, any sort of “substance”)—are much closer to the “surface” than others and since this division between “surface” and “depth” is inscribed in the very thing itself (it is not an “optical illusion,” etc.: In short, there is a dynamic Unconscious).

Now, this stratification, as well as defunctionalization, furnishes us with a decisive way of discriminating between the human and the animal “psychism.” An animal is not “stratified” in the strong sense of the term: It has no psychi-
cal history; it has no intrapsychic conflicts. (That one might happen to make them appear by experimentation just confirms what I am saying.) But in the human being, intrapsychic conflicts are conflicts of "instances"; and the very existence, as well as each particular concretion, of these instances are the result of a history. In and through this history instances (or types of processes) are constituted; they are not later "transcended" or "harmoniously integrated" but rather persist in a contradictory and even incoherent totality. Here we have what radically distinguishes the human psychism’s temporal development from all “learning processes.”

Certainly there is human learning, just as there is human logic: Both are part of the human being’s animal inheritance. (The astonishing thing in the human being is not that s/he learns but that s/he does not.)

In this history the subsequent stages do not nullify the preceding ones, they coexist with them in all conceivable modes of coexistence. Thus is created the whole range of human psychical “types” that we have become familiar with through nosology and psychoanalytic characterology. But what we should emphasize here is what confers upon each “instance”—or upon each type of process—its essence of for-itself. This is what we observe each time concerning processes that are related to themselves and which are creations of a world. There are, for each “instance” or for each process, new and specific objects, specific valuations and affects, specific appetitions. We equally have, each time, a new and specific type of meaning—namely, the insertion of “representations” into new types of relationships, into other matrices of equivalence and belonging. (The forest for the Conscious and the forest for the Unconscious.) Each time, a mode of representing, a mode of desiring, a mode of being affected is deployed. For example, there is an affective coloration that is anal and nothing but anal. There is, therefore, also a preservation of closure for each of its instances, as is the case for the living being: Each knows its world and does not want to know anything but it, each pursues its ends and is opposed to all the other ends. But at the same time there is in the psychical apparatus a relative rupture of this closure: These different instances do not exist in a relation of mutual exteriority, and
this is what furnishes, among other things, the condition for the possibility of psychoanalytic treatment. I will return to this point.

We know that this psychical plurality leans heavily on the stages of neurophysiological maturation (and animal learning), which are not of concern to us here. But it is also codetermined to a decisive degree by the process of socialization, both in its consistency (each time of a specific character) and in the simple fact of its unfolding. And this strange plurality is not a system; it is what I call a magma, a sui generis mode of coexistence with an “organization” that contains fragments of multiple logical organizations but which is not itself reducible to a logical organization.14

The Social Individual

The process of socialization leads us to the third region of the for-itself, which is that of the social individual. In psychoanalysis, no one likes to use either this term or that of socialization, and I truly do not know why. Everyone is always talking about the mother. But what is the mother? The mother is someone who speaks; even if she is a deaf-mute, she speaks. If she speaks, she is a social individual, and she speaks the language of such and such a particular society, she is the bearer of social imaginary significations specific to that society. The mother is the first, and massive, representative of society for the newborn; and as society, whichever one it is, participates in an indefinite number of ways in human history, the mother is to the newborn the acting spokesperson for thousands of past generations. This process of socialization begins on the first day of life—if not beforehand—and ends only with death, even if we think that the decisive stages are the very first ones. It culminates in the social individual, a speaking entity that has an identity and a social state, conforms more or less to certain rules, pursues certain ends, accepts certain values, and acts according to motivations and ways of doing things which are sufficiently stable for its behavior to be, most of the time, foreseeable (sufficiently as to need [as Aristotle would say]) for other individuals. The con-
dition for the whole process is the psyche’s capacity for sublimation, which I have spoken about elsewhere.\textsuperscript{15}

The process results in an individual that functions adequately: that is to say, functions adequately for itself most of the time (we must consider the history of humanity and not just our patients) and, above all, functions adequately from the point of view of society. This last aspect was admirably recognized by Balzac when he described, at the beginning of one of his novels,\textsuperscript{16} the arrival of his hero into Paris. This description serves as the pretext for a brief but wonderful characterization of the essence of the big city—in this case, Paris—and culminates in one of the most discerning definitions of the relationship between the individual and society: “You are always acceptable to this world, you will never be missed by it.” This is society. Whether you are Alexander the Great, Landru,\textsuperscript{17} de Gaulle, Jack the Ripper, Marilyn Monroe, a girl from the red-light district, autistic, an idiot, an incomparable genius, a saint, a criminal, there is always a place for you in society, you are suited for it. And three minutes (three milliseconds, rather) after your disappearance, the surface of the waters closes upon itself again, the hole disappears, society continues, and you are not missed. From this point of view—from the point of view of society—the process of socialization is always in operation. The failures that occur are on the side of the “person”—but that is another story.

This allusion, via Balzac, to the self-finality of society is all that I will be able to say about this fourth level of the for-itself.

With the advent of the social individual the question I posed in my introduction arises once again: What is the unity of the singular human being? But an answer to this question now also emerges. This unity/identity of the individual is the unity/identity of its singular social definition—including here, of course, its name (X, son of Y and Z, inhabitant of C, with profession P, age t, married to . . .). Certainly this unity/identity is, first of all, a unity/identity of markings; but it is above all a unity of attribution/imputation without which society cannot function (Who did or said that? To whom should this be given?). As such, it seems to be—and, indeed,
it is in large part—a social artifact, a unity that covers plurality, an identity that conceals the contradictions of the psyche. An enormous part of the rhetoric of the Sixties and Seventies concerning the subject as a simple effect of language and its un-being was in fact questioning only this social individual, more exactly the (fairly naive) idea that this individual represents a “substantial reality” or possesses an “authenticity,” whatever the meaning of these terms may be.

The Human Subject

I now come to the center of my concerns, the human subject. There is obviously no question of “deducing” it or of “constructing” it. We shall start with the vague “common-sense idea,” in our culture, of what a “subject” is and we shall keep in view, too, the terms I indicated at the outset, namely, reflectiveness and will (or capacity for deliberate activity).

In the psychoanalytic field, we encounter “instances” which can claim, as a first approximation, the title of “subject” in the sense intended above. This would be the Conscious of Freud’s first topography (which includes, obviously, the Preconscious) or the conscious Ego (Ich) of the second topography. Let us note in passing that in any case this Conscious or conscious Ego is, to a decisive degree, the coproduct of two factors, each irreducible to the other and at the same time mutually indissociable: on the one hand, the psyche and, more particularly, the emergence of various psychical instances (in whose “series” the Conscious is found); on the other hand, the social, which constantly acts in the formation of the Conscious as mother, family, language, objects, etc.

I say that the Freudian Conscious can claim the title of “subject,” but as a first approximation only. The positive part of this statement probably goes without saying; the negative or limiting part requires elucidation.

The “Conscious” as such can quite easily be confused with mere “logical reasoning” or even with “calculating,” which in no way includes the moment of reflectiveness. Hobbes already defined human “reason” by the word “reckoning,” that is to say, calculating (computing, Edgar Morin
would have said), and Leibniz, in his *Ars Combinatoria*, expressed his approval of this definition. For reasons that are quickly going to become clear, we should today, more than ever, avoid this confusion. Freud was, inevitably, rather ambiguous on this issue. As is well known, he used the term "thought" when speaking of the Unconscious: He spoke of unconscious thoughts, unconscious thoughts (or representations) oriented toward a goal, etc. But the "Conscious" itself, in Freud, appears essentially as a calculator, trying to work out compromises between the unconscious instances and to get along with a minimum of inconveniences. We may observe here Freud's reluctance to examine, as such, the domains of the "higher activities of the mind," as philosophy and traditional psychology would call them; this reluctance being responsible, perhaps, for the immense gap he left in the place of sublimation. But let us also take note of the profundity of his view: The activities of calculation and reasoning do not belong to waking consciousness, they exist everywhere in the psychical sphere and, we may add today, everywhere the for-itself is, certainly everywhere the living being is.18

But if this calculating and reasoning activity does not belong to waking subjectivity, can one find an *intrinsic* characteristic (other than the trivial one: "that which has been repressed")?

We cannot help but impute a calculating and reasoning sort of activity to all living entities, whatever their order of complexity. And neither can we avoid imputing to them another decisive trait, one implied by self-finality: that is, *self-reference*. To this extent, "knowing that one knows" does not yet characterize the human subject, more precisely the human subject's capacity for *reflectiveness*. If one considers the immune system, one sees that reckoning, calculation, computation are clearly present there; but self-reference is also present there to the same extent. The immune system is nothing if not the ongoing (and certainly, as one knows, fallible) capacity to distinguish the *self* and the nonself (and to act accordingly). In more general terms, if any system is endowed with the property of self-finality, self-reference is necessarily implied thereby: The system must preserve (or attain) the desired
state, and to accomplish that, it must “actively” refer to itself. It follows that, in one fashion or another, the system must include a certain “knowledge of its own state”; such knowledge, however, can be provided simply by a set of “state indicators” (including “deviation detectors” [indicateurs de déviation] and “reaction/correction indicators”), without at any time there being in the system a representation of the system as such or any “instance” or “process” having or incarnating this representation. (It is in an analogous fashion that Hofstadter believes, in Gödel, Escher, Bach as well as in The Mind’s I, that he can eliminate the question of “consciousness” or the “Ego.”)

The human Conscious is obviously endowed with self-referentiality, and this weakly implies knowing that one knows. But this can be—and most of the time it is—a simple “accompaniment,” a green light indicating that the circuit of “state indicators” is functioning well. In reflectiveness we have something different: the possibility that the activity proper to the “subject” becomes an “object,” the self being explicitly posited as a nonobjective object or as an object that is an object simply by its being posited as such and not by nature. And it is to the extent that one can be for oneself an object by being posited as an object and not by its nature that the other, in the true sense of the term, becomes possible.

I have spoken of “accompaniment” being a matter of mere consciousness; but reflection implies the possibility of scission and of internal opposition—Plato already spoke of “the soul’s dialogue with itself”; and a dialogue presupposes two possible points of view—therefore also the possibility of putting oneself into question.

Freud’s mere unconscious thought knows neither of objection nor of interrogations but, at the most, of obstacles. It functions according to given rules; if it encounters something that is impossible, it is put off track or it stops in its tracks. (These types of incidents cover what Bateson called “double binds”; there is no reason why they should be excluded from the pathogenic factors of psychical development. But let us recall their evident kinship with the procedures used for producing experimental neuroses in animals.) As ensemblist-identitarian, this type of thought (“reckoning,” and so on)
has to be blind to its own axioms, its rules of inference, etc. Mere consciousness is not blind about what it does, but it is generally more than blind about why it does it; likewise, it thinks something but does not ask itself why it thinks this rather than the contrary or something else. Now, history as well as psychoanalysis shows us that the possibility of such an interrogation, beyond what is authorized each time by the instituted system already put in place, while being a possibility that we have to postulate as present everywhere among human beings, is only very rarely realized throughout the variety of historical societies and even throughout our own society. It is through a historic creation that this possibility is transformed into an actual reality: In this sense, there is indeed self-creation of human subjectivity as reflectiveness. I cannot extend my remarks here on the conditions for and circumstances surrounding this historical creation. In order to recall the pertinence for psychoanalysis of the preceding considerations, let me simply note that the question of the possibility of representing oneself as representational activity and of putting oneself in question as such is not a philosophical subtlety; it corresponds to the minimum we require of every patient when we try to lead him/her to discover that X is not Y but that it is very much so for his/her own representational activity and that there may be reasons for this.

The absolute condition for the possibility of reflectiveness is the imagination (or phantasmatization). It is because the human being is (nonfunctional) imagination that it can posit as an “entity” something that is not so: its own process of thought. It is because its imagination is unbridled that it can reflect; otherwise, it would be limited to calculating, to “reasoning.” Reflectiveness presupposes that it is possible for the imagination to posit as existing that which is not, to see Y in X and, specifically, to see double, to see oneself double, to see oneself while seeing oneself as other. I represent myself, and I represent myself as representational activity, or I act upon myself as active activity. Of course, here too there is the possibility of having “illusions” or of being “taken in”: Among other things, I can, in this way, posit myself as a (“material” or “immaterial”) “thing” or “substance,” I can “re-
alize" (reify, objectify) my thinking activity and its results (and, consequently, also hear voices).

Clearly, psychoanalysis presupposes this reflectiveness as actual in the analysand and as virtual in the patient. Psychoanalysis thus presupposes that reflectiveness may be used as a virtuality in the process of actualization in the patient and that its goal is to instaurate the patient’s capacities for reflection as definitively as possible (which does not mean at all that the goal of the analysis is for the Conscious to dominate the Unconscious, that to understand is to heal, etc.). But psychoanalysis also presupposes the capacity for deliberate activity, first of all in the psychoanalyst (s/he decides whether to accept a patient or not, to talk or to remain silent, etc.), then in the patient (who must at least be able to come to sessions regularly)—a capacity that it aims at instaurating in the patient in as definitive a manner as possible.

I have spoken of a capacity for deliberate activity. If I wished to ignore the risk of being misunderstood and the risk of an allergic reaction among many psychoanalysts, I could just as well have spoken of “will,” too. By this term I do not even necessarily mean what presides over or triggers a motor gesture—or the inhibition of such a gesture. There already is deliberate activity, and an act of will, when my attention becomes focused in a systematic and sustained manner on an object of thought: The object of the capacity for deliberate action, or of the will, can simply be a state of representation, a way of orienting the representational flux. What is generally called thought (in the sense of “theoretical” thought, for example) is a mixture in which the parts played by conscious activity and nonconscious activity are indissociable; so too are the parts played by spontaneous activity and deliberate activity.

The capacity for deliberate activity is something other than the possibility of performing an act dictated by mere logical calculation or “reckoning” (an animal, even a bacterium, is capable of that). I call capacity for deliberate activity or will the possibility for a human being to make the results of his/her reflective processes (beyond what results from mere animal logic) enter into the relays that condition his/her acts. In other words, will or deliberate activity is the reflective
dimension of what we are as imagining (that is, creative) beings, or again: the reflective and practical dimension of our imagination as source of creation.

I have already spoken of the relationship between the imagination and reflectiveness. There is just as profound a relationship between imagination and will. One must be able to imagine something other than that which is to be able to will; and one must will something other than that which is to liberate the imagination. Analytical practice, as well as everyday experience, constantly shows this: When one does not will anything other than that which is, the imagination is inhibited and repressed; in this case, it represents only the eternal perpetuation of that which is. And, if one cannot imagine something other than that which is, every “decision” is only a choice between possible givens—given by life as it existed beforehand and by the instituted system—which can always be reduced to the results of a calculation or of some form of reasoning.

* * *

What is the relationship between what has just been said and the Freudian outlook on these issues? And what are the metapsychological presuppositions of reflectiveness and of the capacity for deliberate action?

I see four such presuppositions, two of which belong to the investigation of the metapsychological and two of which go beyond the psychoanalytic field proper. These presuppositions are: (1) sublimation; (2) the existence of a quantum of free energy, or significant capacities for energy alterations within the conscious instance; (3) the lability (liableness to change) of catexes in this field; and (4) the capacity to put in question objects that have already been cathected as a function of reflection. I will briefly comment, as needs be, on these four presuppositions.

The first metapsychological presupposition of these two possibilities, the actualization of which defines human subjectivity properly speaking, is the psyche’s capacity for sublimation. I can only mention here in passing my enormous astonishment at certain recent insinuations that the notion of
sublimation is hardly compatible with the Freudian outlook—and, more generally, at the hesitations, confusion, and vagueness concerning what is generally said about it.

Undoubtedly, the question was left in a chaotic state by Freud, but this is neither an explanation nor a justification. To put it in its proper place, we must recall this banal but evident fact that no one seems to take into account: To speak is already to sublimate. The “subject” of language is not a “subject” of drives [sujet pulsionnel]. As soon as the oral apparatus cathects an activity that does not procure any organ pleasure (at least not in general), there is sublimated activity. To speak is a subminated activity, first of all because this activity procures no organ pleasure; second and above all, because it is instrumented in and through an extrapsychic creation that goes beyond what the singular psyche is capable of doing by itself: i.e., the institution of language; finally, because speaking always potentially implies that one is addressing other participants, real ones, situated in society (I am disregarding psychotic delirium here, though . . .).

We can understand nothing about the human psyche (no more than anything about society) if we refuse to acknowledge that at the basis of all its specific characteristics are found the substitution of representational pleasure for organ pleasure. This is a massive conversion, co-originary with humanity; its depths we cannot sound further and yet this is what renders sublimation possible. Certainly, the substitution of representational pleasure for organ pleasure first takes the form of phantasmatization or, as Freud said, hallucinated pleasure. But already in this case of hallucinated pleasure one sees the psyche realize the possibility of satisfying itself with something that no longer concerns the state of an organ. In phantasmatization properly speaking, the scene no longer depends on anything but the avatars of the representational flux; these are indeterminate and indeterminable avatars, and, in any case, they are unrelated, as far as their “content” goes, to the sexual (or instinctual [pulsionelle]) naturalness of any supposed initial object. The boat as fetish object is a challenge to every naive theory of sexuality, and it shows the omnipotence of phantasmatization (were it only because for most of their history, humans have walked on bare feet). In
Freudian terms, one would say that this substitution of representational pleasure for organ pleasure is equivalent to a change in the “goal” of the drive. But the characterization provided here, which is more general and inclusive, concerns phantasmatization as well. The distinction between the two will be made below.

Correspondingly, one could say in an almost identical and in any case indissociable fashion, that sublimation requires a change in the quantity of psychical energy, from energy directed toward “motor discharges” into energy concentrated on the representation or the representational flux itself. This too is an essential trait of phantasmatization (of the radical imagination) that sublimation also shares—which is understandable since it is, in a sense, an offspring thereof.

But, in the third place—and here is the difference between sublimation and phantasmatization—the “object” of sublimation (that on which the energy in question is cathected) exists and has value only in and through its almost always actual and sometimes also virtual social institution. This boils down to saying that sublimation is the cathecting of representations (or states of representation) whose referent is no longer a “private object” but rather a nonprivate, public, that is to say, social object. And these social objects are invisible—or have real value by means of their invisible attributes: In other words, they are valuable by virtue of their constitution or by virtue of their being permeated with social imaginary significations. Whereas in the animal, the concatenation of representation and motility is: (a) in principle constant (to change it, a “learning process” is required: The imagination here is repetitive); (b) functional; (c) always related to a “real” referent.

Here a digression is necessary. In everything that has been said here—and as is the case in the entirety of Freud's psychoanalytic work22—“causation” by representation has been fully assumed. In other words, we are taking for granted that modifications in representation or in the state of representation in general can bring about motor discharges, lasting modifications in one's cathexes, and therefore in the distribution of psychical energy, etc. The idea is not only supported by the most massive and elementary common-
place pieces of evidence; without it, psychoanalytic activity becomes incomprehensible and impossible. This statement, however, in no way furnishes us with an argument in favor of the existence of a “free will” in the traditional sense since one’s representations are in this case only links or relays within “casual” processes which themselves can be rigorously determined. In fact, they are not: Such is the nature of the representational flux, about which I explained my views earlier.25 Should one want to pursue the determinist argument, however, let us point out that these determinations need not be considered point-like in character either: They can relate instead to the overall state—and as such they could not be localized in any sense of the term—of representation which each time conditions (and is conditioned by) “exchanges with the outside world.” Of course, the strict epiphenomenalist will maintain that these links or relays either are superfluous or are “subjective illusions” (?) and that one passes each time from one precisely defined overall “material” (neurophysiological) configuration (or “cause”) to another such configuration (or “effect”). We discover, then, that (1) this view can itself be characterized as a subjective illusion; (2) it provides the blueprint for a research program that is unrealizable or, in the best of cases, would require the erection of a fantastically encumbering set of scaffolding for the purpose of understanding some of the simplest facts; and finally, (3) this view is incapable of grasping even these “facts.” A word in a telegram provokes a world war. If representations are relays, the links in the chain of causal determinations are not formally broken. (It is something else again that we may encounter here an extreme disproportion between “causes” and “effects.”) But at the same time it is clear that a description of the outbreak of World War I in terms of electric currents moving along telegraphic wires and the nervous systems of Kaiser Wilhelm, the Czar, Sir Edward Grey, Poincaré and Viviani is absurd; it is already absurd because it cannot provide itself with its own object on its own terms.

The second presupposition is that there exists a quantity of free energy or significant capacities for energy alterations in the conscious instance. One would be tempted to postulate that the attainment of reflectiveness, like the attainment of the
capacity for deliberate activity, requires the existence of a (non-specific and unconnected, freely floating) quantum of free energy. And one would be tempted to insist upon the same prerequisite for the whole of (human, and even animal) psychical life in light of facts as fundamental as the development of the psychism, its capacities for adaptation and learning, etc. Nevertheless, all that can just as easily be placed under the title of a “capacity for disqualification-requalification” (or, more briefly, modification) of psychical energy. Though it is certainly something other than a mere metaphor, the expression “psychical energy” does not as yet cover anything that is truly discernable and assignable, and therefore the terminologies appear to be equivalent. We know that there are cathexes of different intensities—and that these intensities can change. We have no idea about how and whether these intensities allow for mutual “comparison”—except in the roughest of qualitative manners and only when it is a matter of the same individual—and still less for “addition.” We cannot even broach such questions as: “Are the evident ‘energy’ differences between individuals congenital or do they result from blockages caused by the unique history of one or the other individual?”

Whether one postulates the existence of a quantity of “free energy” or the capacity for energy alterations, it is clear that each time the psychical apparatus does something other than look after its homeostasis, there is a disqualification/requalification of energy and that this process plays a fundamental role in the history and constitution of the human being. And it goes hand in hand with the emergence of new objects. This does not surprise us, for the wrong reasons and as a function of habit, when these new objects and the corresponding energy alterations follow the usual psychical developments—for example, when the child cathects its genital apparatus “in place of” the anus/feces. Nonetheless, it should surprise us and make us reflect when the psyche cathects new objects that are “invisible”: for example, during passages in history like that from paganism to Christianity or from Catholicism to the Reformation. Neither do I see how it could be denied—especially when one is a psychoanalyst—that the emergence of a new representation (and a grouping
or arrangement of representations is to be put under the same heading) can, in the case of opposing catheges, tip the balance toward one side rather than the other.

With the last two presuppositions we leave the properly metapsychological terrain and enter into a domain where the synergetics of the social institution is decisive. For this reason, and for reasons of space, I will have to be very brief here. The establishment of a form of reflectiveness and of a capacity for deliberate activity requires in the third place a large (and relative) lability of catheges. This lability is not to be confused either with some sort of fluidity or with what Freud called the “vicariousness” of the object of the drive. It is simply the contrary of rigidity. Now, this rigidity of sublimated catheges is characteristic of almost the entirety of human societies—and it can be said that it is the best characterization, from the psychoanalytic point of view, of their heteronomy. A believer’s cathegism in his/her Jehovah, his/her Christ, his/her Allah, a N.S.D.A.P. member’s cathegism in the Führer, a C.P.S.U. member’s cathegism in the General Secretary, or a scientist’s cathegism in the hereditary character of intelligence (leading him to doctor observational data) is not labile. The cathegism of a citizen who is willing and able to discuss the cogency of a law which s/he in the meantime obeys, or that of the critical scientist, is labile. Now, this does not depend on the singular human being, and that is so in at least two ways. First of all, it is never the singular human being that has inscribed over the door to society, The law is made by us instead of God has given us the law. Second, it is not the singular human being that has educated him/herself in such a way as to refuse obedience to any supreme authority which would fail to account for and provide a reason for its acts and its existence; others who have already been raised in this way have educated him/her to adopt this attitude.

Finally, as the fourth presupposition (the distinction between this and the preceding one is extremely tenuous, and one can call the former the “objective” side and the latter the “subjective” side) one must have the actual capacity to put in question by means of reflection the objects (even if they are, at the limit, simply rules for thought) that have hitherto been cathedicated and to come to conclusions based on the results of
this reflection. This boils down to saying that one must have the capacity to put instituted objects into question. This too, as “subjective” as it is, is related to the mode and the content of the social institution of these objects. It is psychically inconceivable for one to say The law is unjust when the law has been given by God and justice is merely one of God’s name-attributes. (The same goes for the Czar.)

* * *

What I have just done is to give a more precise content to what I have defined since 1965 as the autonomy of the human “subject.”27 The establishment of another relation between the Conscious and the Unconscious can be specified further: It must contain, on the part of the conscious instance, reflectiveness and the capacity for deliberate action. There is no point in adding that this in no way implies that the Conscious should “take power,” thus absorbing or drying up the Unconscious: Rather, the contrary is true, and this is so for obvious reasons. (Who is most afraid of viewing his/her most monstrous desires? A heteronomous being.) Nor is there any point in adding, in response to a rhetoric that has been in vogue in France for thirty years, that autonomy not only has nothing to do with some kind of “adaptation” to the existing state of things but is instead the contrary thereof, since it signifies precisely the capacity to put this order into question. And this existing order is just as much founded on an act of sublimation that respects instituted significations as it would be little threatened by an explosion of “desires” (which are, by definition, inarticulate and incapable of being articulated) or by the ghostly apparition on the social scene of the “subject of the Unconscious.”

Of course, we are talking about the human being’s possibilities. We are not saying that they are realized always, most of the time, automatically, etc. We know positively that the contrary is true; but we know too that these possibilities are actualizable, that they have been actualized by certain societies and by certain human beings, that thinking, psychoanalyzing, saying what we are saying presupposes this actualization of the possible.
In speaking of the capacity for deliberate activity, I have equally used the term “will”—but with precautions. These precautions are motivated only by the selective and biased reading (on both sides) that has, almost always, been made of what Freud wrote in this regard. The will, such as I intend it from the metapsychological point of view, refers to the existence of a quantity of free energy or to the capacity for significant alterations in energy coordinated with reflectiveness. Now, from the beginning to the end of Freud’s work, we see a host of formulations abound, all of them insisting that the processes through which energy is “concentrated” in the Ego develop along with the individual. Freud lines up against the absurd idea of a “free will” in the sense of a motiveless flash [of energy] capable of making a tabula rasa of the entire previous history of the individual. Yet, neither can causation via representation be eliminated without reducing his entire life’s work to nothing. If one attentively rereads the third point of “A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis,” one will see that Freud is in no way saying that the Ego can do nothing. He says instead that the Ego (in this case, the mentally ill or neurotic Ego) has, in light of the conditions or circumstances in which it is placed, willed to do too much; and yet one can still help it to adjust its goals and broaden the means at its disposal. Now, to broaden the means at the Ego’s disposal consists in remobilizing its energies, directing them toward the process of reflection, and facilitating “reflected” representations to act on psychical energy; indeed, it consists in doing all of these at once. All these points boil down to saying that what is at issue here is the reestablishment of pathways [frayages] (Bahnungen, “routes,” passages, trajectories, “facilitations” as some English translators believed they could say), a term that contemporary neurophysiology would certainly be far from disavowing. It is by means of the establishment of such pathways, as we know, that the human being becomes what it is: The entire process of maturation, every stage of development, and all of education is the establishment of such pathways, whether one takes the term in a “material,” neurophysiological sense or in a psychological one. These pathways are historical in both accepted senses of the term: They constitute, first of all, the history of the being
in question, but they also depend (via education in the broad-
est sense) on the collective history to which this being be-
ongs. And what is analysis itself but the effort to create new
pathways in the analysand, and, in particular, a cathesis of
his/her capacity for reflection, a remobilization of his/her en-
ergy and, finally, a capacity for coordinating his/her “energy
utilization” with his/her processes of reflection.

These considerations will not satisfy the defenders of
“pure freedom” among the philosophers any more than they
will satisfy certain psychoanalysts. For the former, let us re-
call simply that Aristotle defined virtue as hexis proairetikê,
namely, the habitus that is dependent upon choice and that is
the creator of choice. He knew very well what he was talking
about. All the antinomies, the real ones as well as the appar-
et ones, of the matter at hand are already to be found in this
phrase. Autonomy is not a habit—that would be a contradic-
tion in terms—but autonomy is created by the self-exertion
of autonomy, which presupposes, in a certain manner, that it
preexists itself. Perhaps the image Plato employed apropos
of true knowledge is, in this case too, the least ill-suited: The
flame that grows by feeding upon itself.29

* * *

I will conclude my remarks by attempting to respond, in
summary fashion, to the two questions I raised at the outset.

In the first place, it is impossible to formulate an all-
inclusive concept of the subject. We are obliged to differenti-
ate. We must acknowledge, at the outset and on a first level, a
for-itself—a soi, a self—of the living being as such, itself
capable of realizing the decisive traits that will characterize all
“subjective” entities at all levels. These entities, which exist
each time at different levels, are the psyche and the psychical
“instances,” the social individual, society. Each of them exhib-
ts decisive, specific characteristics. In particular, Freud’s psy-
chical “instances”—or the corresponding entities found in
other descriptions of the “topography” of the psyche—are
each a for-itself, certainly, but the other characteristics they
create by their very being open up an abyss between them
and the mere living being. The same goes for the social individual or the entity we call “society.”

More specifically as regards the social individual, great confusion remains between it, the psychical being, and the subject or human subjectivity properly speaking. The social individual, the “socially functional” level of the human being, certainly exhibits the characteristics of a for-itself; via the family, language, education, etc., society fabricates this social individual out of the latter’s psychical material but this social individual is “separated” from other psychical instances by the barrier of repression. Nearly coextensive with “the Conscious” of Freud’s first topography, it is capable of “thinking” within instituted boundaries and of willing—in the sense of activating motor mechanisms by conscious means—within these same boundaries. But as a general rule (if the entirety of human history and society is considered), it is not up to the task of putting these boundaries themselves into question or of putting itself into question. There is therefore no reflectiveness in the strict and strong sense of the term—and, consequently, no capacity for deliberate activity as it has been defined here—these being characteristic of what should be called human subjectivity. Of the latter one ought to say that, as a relatively recent historical creation (the historic break that created it occurred in ancient Greece), it is virtual in every human being, but it certainly is not a fated process. Recent and present history offers massive and horrifying examples in which the last traces of reflectiveness and of a will of one’s own, which human beings can possess, are reduced to nothing by the social (political) institution. It is inasmuch as it makes itself as subjectivity that the human being is able to challenge itself and to consider itself as the origin (though only partial) of its past history as well as to will a history to come and to will to be its coauthor. This, I emphasize again, mere “consciousness” is far from being able to do on its own: One can perfectly well conceive of a consciousness that remains a simple spectator, recording the processes that unfold in its individual life. Examples, both clinical and nonclinical, abound. Without such a subjectivity—without the project of such a subjectivity, but in the process of being realized—not only does every attempt at
truth and knowledge collapse but every ethical effort disappears, since all responsibility vanishes. Psychoanalysis would then become, as a theory, a variant of sophistry and as a practice, a cynical venture in exploitation.

To my second question, “Is there a unity to the singular human being beyond its corporeal identity and the chronological container of its ‘history,’ “ my brief and provisional response will again be many-sided. There certainly is a certain unity to each singular psyche, at least as the common origin and obligatory coblinongness of forces that are plunged into an extended war taking place on the same theater of operations. There is, in its way, the more or less solid unity of the individual fabricated by society. Beyond this, there is a unity that is aimed at or that we ought to aim at: the unity of reflective self-representation and of the deliberate activities one undertakes. “Unity” here does not mean, of course, invariability through time.

* * *

I will end by providing two images for the reader’s consideration. The for-itself may be thought of as an enclosed sphere—that is what closure means—whose diameter is approximately constant. And it happens that this sphere is each time “adjusted,” somehow or other, through an indefinite number of dimensions, to an indefinite number of other spheres. Human subjectivity is a pseudo-closed sphere that can dilate on its own, that can interact with other pseudo-spheres of the same type, and that can put back into question the conditions, or the laws, of its closure.

Self-dilation signifies that the human world, the world accessible to human subjectivity, is not given once and for all; it is both extendable and modifiable (toward the “outside” and toward the “inside”). We have already spoken of this possibility, of its rootedness in the radical imagination of the psyche, of its interdependent relationship with the institution of society.

Genuine interaction with other subjectivities signifies something unprecedented in the world: The transcendence [dépassement] of mutual exteriority. (We have been trying, at
least, to think the simple living being as the incredibly fine-tuned and complex adjustment to mutually external things.) It is this effort to go beyond [dépassement] mutual exteriority that is at stake when we try to comprehend as well as to accede to the dimension of meaning as invisible. Should someone tell us: Human beings are always mutually external to one another, we adjust to each other like tape recorders built for that purpose; I act as if I am talking to you and you act as if you are hearing me, making faces as if what I say makes sense; to love is to want to give something one does not have to someone who does not want it, and so on and so forth, we would certainly respond, first of all and above all, that our idea of what makes sense prevents us from acting as if we are having a dialogue with a tape recorder and that therefore we will just let it make noise over in its corner. But between us, we would also say that this someone not only is repeating philosophical trivialities which one could rightfully have hoped had been shelved for twenty-five centuries but also that this someone does not know the essential prerequisites of psychoanalytic theory, for in this domain the implication we could draw from the idea that one can never go beyond a situation of mutual exteriority among human beings is that, in the development of the psychism, genuine introjection would never occur: All introjection would be a completely “introprojective” construction, everything that the child would introject from its mother would be due exclusively to the child and the mother would be there for nothing, she would be a pure projection that the child would illusorily reincorporate into itself. Now, we know that this isn’t even half the story: The child transforms what is given to it or what it finds by giving to it a meaning—but this is not unrelated to the meaning of what has been given to the child. Babies that fail to distinguish between a look of love and one of hate do not exist. And it is also upon this condition that one learns to talk, that is, to accept that the signification of a word is the one that others attach to it.

Finally, and this is the most difficult point, every questioning of the laws and of the conditions of closure for subjectivity still occurs in [a state of] closure, in the closed sphere of other laws and conditions—as immensely enlarged as this sphere might be. To be a subject, to be an autonomous sub-
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ject is still to be someone and not everyone, not just anyone or anything. It is still, and above all, to cathect determinate objects and to cathect one’s own identity—the representation of oneself as autonomous subject. It is for this reason that Socrates accepts to die—and it is for this reason that, in dying, he saves himself too. He saves himself for himself; he saves his image, this being the triumphant return of self-finality in the disappearance of its “subject.” But he also saves something for us; an equally triumphant affirmation of sublimation, the root and continuing condition for historical life nourished by so many voluntary deaths.

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Notes

1. This is why psychoanalytic treatment can be defined as a practico-poetic activity. See “Epilegomena to A Theory of the Soul Which Has Been Presented As A Science” (1968), in Crossroads in the Labyrinth (Brighton: Harvester and Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT, 1984), pp. 3–45.

2. There is no need to document this point with quotations. But the following note, written by Freud in 1897, is worth being cited: “MULTIPlicity OF PSYCHIC PERSONALITIES. The fact of identification perhaps allows us to take the phrase literally.” (Capitals and italics in the original, S.E., 1.)

3. Translator’s Note: “Instance” is used in both English and French as the translation for the Freudian term Instanz. Another translation of the French word “instance” would be “authority,” which has the “juridico-administrative” connotations Castoriadis mentions and Freud intended. (In English legal terminology, the word “instance” can also refer to a suit, and “court of the first instance” is a phrase often employed.)


5. Thucydides, II, 43, 1 (the Funeral Oration). Apropos of the dead honored in this speech, Thucydides cites the positive qualities of the affect, thought, and desire. His primary “source” is obviously the Greek language; these three qualities must have already been sorted out by those in “Hippocratic” and/or “Sophist” circles.


10. Ensemblist-identitarian logic. [Translator: This is a term Castoriadis has developed in his writings in The Imaginary Institution of Society and in Crossroads in the Labyrinth. Another translation of “enssembiste” (from “ensemble”) would be “set-theoretical,” i.e., relating to set-theory (la théorie des ensembles). In introduc-
ing this term to an English-speaking audience, I have decided to retain "ensidist" and "identitarian" so that Castoriadis's neologism abbreviated form, "ensidic," can be used and gain currency. (By itself, "ensidique" makes no more sense in French than "ensidic" does in English.) See "La Logique des magmas et la question de l'autonomie," in Domaines de l'homme, pp. 386–418.


12. The term stratification obviously ought not to be taken as signifying a sedimentation of deposits that are ordered and regular. It is in thinking about this indescribable mode of coexistence among various psychical processes that I have been led to reflect on a logic of a different type, the logic of magmas. See the citation at the end of note 10. Freud speaks of Brecciagestein (Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged) defines "breccia" as "a rock consisting of sharp fragments embedded in a fine grained matter"): see Gesammelte Werke, vols. 2/3, p. 422 = Standard Edition, vol. 5, p. 419 (The Interpretation of Dreams, Chapter 6, section F: "Speeches in Dreams"); also, Gesammelte Werke, vol. 11, p. 184 = Standard Edition, vol. 15, pp. 181–82 (Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, "XI. The Dream-Work"). Again in Chapter 6 of The Interpretation of Dreams (Section G: "Intellectual Activities in Dreams"). Freud speaks of dreams as a Konglomerat (Gesammelte Werke, vols. 2/3, p. 451 = Standard Edition, vol. 5, p. 449). By the way, the page references from the Register der Gleichnisse in the Gesamtregister (Gesammelte Werke, vol. 18, p. 911) are erroneous; they should be corrected and supplemented based on the preceding citations.

13. It would change nothing in what we are saying here if, in order to satisfy those who believe in innate instances or innate embryos of instances (the first Freud sometimes did), we replaced this phrase, "are constituted," with "are deployed" or "are developed."

14. See the article on magmas cited in note 10 above.

15. On sublimation as such, see The Imaginary Institution of Society, Ch. 6, pp. 311–20.

16. Balzac, The Girl with the Golden Ears, trans. Ernest Dowson (Chicago: Peacock, 1928), p. 6 (translation slightly altered). In the next sentence I will say "pretexit, but in fact one can just as well think that, for Balzac, individuals become pretexis for a description and analysis of these galaxies of times, places, states, passions, endeavors, and "careers" that are the living flesh of society. Ultimately, it is not a question of pretexis one way or the other. The miracle of Balzac is the balance he establishes between the phenomenologicalization of society through individuals and the realization of individuals via society.

17. Translator's note: Henri Désiré Landru was a famous convicted mass murderer in France whose life story was made into a film written and directed by Charlie Chaplin, entitled Monsieur Verdoux.

18. One confusion is to be avoided here. Freud talks all the time about unconscious thought processes: unbewusster Denkvorgang, ubw. Denkprozess, ubw. Denkaft. At the same time, he writes, as we know, apropos of dream-work—which transforms "dream thoughts" into "dream contents"—that "it does not think, does not calculate or judge in any way at all; it restricts itself to giving things a new form" (Die Traumdeutung, in Gesammelte Werke, vols. 2/3, p. 511 = On the Interpretation of Dreams, in Standard Edition, vol. 5, p. 507). This dream-work consists of (and culminates in) displacements and condensations (psychical intensities and parts of dream thoughts) which are subject to the need to take the conditions for figuration into consideration and culminate in such figurations. Elsewhere, and much later (Das Unbewusste [1915], in Gesammelte Werke, vol. 10, pp. 285–86 = The Unconscious, in Standard Edition, vol. 14, p. 186), he returns to displacement and condensation in order to insist on the point that these are the essential characteristics of the primary psychical processes. Now, in actual fact, dream-work does not "think"—if "thinking" is exclusively ensidist-identitarian; dream-work, in the main, images, it sets into images, it presentifies (under known constraints and with the means at its disposal). Can we go along with Freud and say that it "does not think, does not calculate or judge in any way at all"? Does it transform just
anything into just anything else? Does not the “inversion of psychical intensities,”
which is for Freud the essential aspect of displacement, evident in this very
characterization, bear the mark [trace] of calculation and convey its results? In
dream-work there is a setting into images that is certainly the “the essence of
dreaming [das Wesentliche am Traum]” [Der Traumdeutung, in Gesammelte Werke,
vol. 5, pp. 506–07, no. 2]; in other words, it is the creative work of the imagina-
tion, the presentation (as visible and audible) of that which in itself is neither
visible nor audible. But in this dream-work, as in all work of the imagination, the
ensemble-st-identitarian dimension is also always present, it is everywhere dense.
No more than one could write a fugue without making calculations could one
condense and displace without elementary logical operations, without a certain
“reckoning.” The confusion, or the deficiency, comes from an imprecise notion
of “thought.” The topic under discussion would certainly require a much
broader treatment, but we have no room to do so here. See, nonetheless, my

20. On psychoanalysis itself as a sublimated activity, see “Epigomema . . . ,” loc.
cit., pp. 33–40 and, especially, “Psychoanalysis: Project and Elucidation,” ibid.,
pp. 85–103.
21. “Sublimation is the process by means of which the psyche is forced to replace its
‘own’ or ‘private objects’ of cathectic (including its own ‘image’ for itself) with
objects that exist and have value in and through their social institution and, out
of these, to create for itself ‘causes,’ ‘means’ or ‘supports’ of pleasure.” (The
Imaginary Institution of Society, p. 312 [translation slightly altered])
22. And contrary to Freud’s prepsychoanalytic convictions, when he adhered to the
views of Hughlings-Jackson. See the Editor’s Note to the translation of Das
Unbewusste (Standard Edition, vol. 14, p. 163) and especially the excerpt from his
monograph on aphasia, ibid., pp. 206–8.
23. The term “causation” is here a very clear abuse of language. In any case, there is
no such thing as a strictly causal series of representations, and there cannot be.
See my “Epigomema to A Theory of the Soul Which Has Been Presented As A
Science,” op. cit., and The Imaginary Institution of Society, Ch. 6, pp. 274–78, 279–
24. On the critique of criticisms of “mere metaphors,” see “Epigomema to A Theory
of the Soul Which Has Been Presented As A Science,” op. cit., pp. 30–33.
25. In any case, direct action by representation on psychical energy cannot be
eliminated as a possibility without ultimately falling into an infinite regress.
26. On the points briefly discussed here, see especially my “Institution de la société
et religion” in Domaines de l’homme, pp. 364–84.
27. See The Imaginary Institution of Society, Ch. 2, pp. 101–10 and most recently, “La
28. It does not matter that this energy is cathexed in large part on the Ego’s self-
images, on the “ideal Ego,” or on other objects of sublimation, or that it there-
fore has, in addition, a “narcissistic” or pseudo-“objective” character; all these
cases are perfectly consonant with what has been said above in the text.
29. Seventh Letter, 341, c-d. Relative to “pure Kantianism,” see “Epigomema to A
30. Certainly, it can also transgress one boundary or the other. But the act of
transgression here goes unquestioned; indeed, this act rather confirms existing
laws. As for the rest, I cannot enter here into the undoubtedly profound and
significant relationships that exist between individual transgression and political
contestation. “Relationships” here obviously does not signify the same thing as
“identity.” Those who sang the praises of transgression (as well as of political
“subversion”) are no better than the psychoanalysts (alas, there have been some)
who wanted to reduce political contestation to transgression; their stance was
not so different from the effort to criminalize revolt which every self-respecting
penal code incorporates.