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# PSYCHOGRAPHIES - SPECULARITY AND DEATH IN PSYCHOANALYSIS

**Bogdan Wolf, MA**

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**University of Warwick**

**Department of Philosophy**

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## SUMMARY

This thesis discusses the relationship between philosophy and psychoanalysis. It takes the work of Freud and Lacan as a primary reference, and implements it in the reading of the texts of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Blanchot among others. The relationship is pursued along the lines of the problems originally posed by the philosophical writers and concerning the theme of subjectivity, identification, image formation and loss in order to punctuate the difficulties and aporias as articulated in and by the psychoanalytical questioning. The discussion aims therefore to demonstrate how the problems raised by philosophy can, but also should, be addressed by the psychoanalytical theory, and to what extent the former mishit, in the very way in which they are raised, by virtue of ignoring the discussion of the “fundamentals” of psychoanalysis, namely the status of the unconscious, the subject and the object in the human discourse. My strategy to address the philosophical readings begins in each part of this work with an analysis of the psychoanalytical text followed by the effects and implications, as they are imposed on the reading of philosophy/literature. This lack or insufficiency, as emerging in such an encounter, and operative in such a problematization, is thus given a certain psychographic attention which does not merely represent a psychoanalytical “viewpoint” but rather involves a shift in the strategy itself. This shift questions the status of the subject in the production of discourse, while deploying the subject as a lack in such a questioning, and its relation to the real (object). It is in accordance with such an approach that I have divided this work into two parts, each attempting to address in the way described above the following issues. On the one hand, the analysis revolves around the problems of narcissism, specularity, image, ego and ‘I’ formation, and the symptom, and in this respect discusses the texts of Freud, Lacan, Rank and Nietzsche. On the other hand, it touches upon the work of “sad passions” or *passions of death* as operative in the production of the letter, and apparent in what could be called fictional theorisations in the texts of N. Abraham, Torok, Blanchot and Heidegger. Such tactics, again, take us beyond the meaning caught in the real, towards the way in which the problems of philosophy can be, again, taken up by psychoanalysis. To this extent, the second part has been devoted to the discussion and analysis of melancholia, mourning, loss, voice and guilt.

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## INTRODUCTION - FREUD, LACAN AND PHILOSOPHY

In this thesis I will attempt to fathom the anxious relationship between psychoanalysis and philosophy. I will take the Freudian and Lacanian perspectives as a guide to lead us towards the themes which constitute the borderline between psychoanalytical theory and philosophical writing, especially that of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Blanchot. On the one hand, our investigation will point to the problematic which has always unfolded under the name of philosophy - subjectivity, identity, specularity, death - to open a psychoanalytical perspective from which these questions can be approached. Such a strategy would already lead us to raise some preliminary questions. To what extent have the problems of metaphysics posed by such writers as Nietzsche or Heidegger been in fact the problems of and for psychoanalysis? How and in what way do the fundamental problems of metaphysics reflect the key points which the analytical theory marks as signposts in the dynamic of the unconscious, namely transference, identification, subjectivity, death drive, knowledge, symptom? If the reading of the texts we still insist on calling philosophical can punctuate the foundations of psychoanalysis, is not their metaphysical "status" or "origin" brought into question? And if so, would this tend to reveal an incompatibility between metaphysics and psychoanalytical theory as two separate and autonomous guidelines for theorising both rooted in what? In the case of psychoanalysis the theoretical is always tethered to an empirical discovery, a shift in perception effected in time and by way of repetition returning *as* theoretical reflection to the future. Such a procedure is characterised by a heterogeneous relation, difference and insatiable mobility. Metaphysics, and its sister ontology, are by contrast bound to the debts of origin and priorism. But this debt which always already sends them back to seek more and more originary premises, more and more fundamental presuppositions - where the question of the father and the phallus already begins to transpire - must sooner or later come to reflect upon its movement as generated by the guilt and desire to return its irreducible surplus. To whom? This is no longer a question for theory *via* theory but a call

of analytical experience that resonates in the subject as the call of the Other.

On the other hand, what needs to be examined is some of the strongholds of Lacanian theory, their limits and implications, the genesis and power of attraction which they exert on, echoing at the same time, philosophical tradition as writing. The revolutionary turns in Lacanian theory that draw our interest in this respect concern the imaginary character of the ego and the linguistic structure of the unconscious, the problem of the subject and the signifier, the death drive, the status of the object, the problematic of loss and guilt. This is how Lacan laid them out *after* Freud bringing to the fore the host of problems that could not have been posed *without* Freud. For Lacan this meant that the structuralist psychoanalysis brings out with it a hiatus in favouring certain concepts. These include the Oedipal structure, the phallus as the “transcendental” signifier, the imaginary character of the relation to the other, the place of truth as presence, full speech, etc. To this extent a storm of criticism has been blown against the Lacanian perspective and we must allow here for at least some of the winds to move the sails of criticism against the currents of Lacan’s doctrine.

Let's now take an overview of what is called Lacanian doctrine, although teaching would be a more appropriate description, and introduce some of its keypoints. Lacan is a reader of Freud. His both formal and strategic commitment to read through the Freudian text makes him an adamant interpreter and translator, an operation that at every turn returns to the analytical experience, articulates the experience of the subject, plumbs the structure of subjectivity. The effect of such writing has produced in the case of Lacan an utterly original texture of insights and formulations which can no longer be placed in Freud's mouth. Although Lacan constantly emphasises the place of experience in analysis, i.e. experience of the subject, thus allowing for it to run full force into and permeate the theory, he, and to some extent Freud, nevertheless remains in some vicinity to philosophical tradition. This tradition has been called “metaphysics of presence” and at its heart can be found a mutually unsatisfactory relation between the empirical and the rational, between the return of and to experience and the significance of metapsychological theory. In short, the subject is always caught in the relation to the Other that preexists the subject. It is towards these two terms that psychoanalysis as both clinical practice and practice of theory is oriented. It is also within this field, the relation between the subject and the Other, that one could situate philosophical texts, notably those of Nietzsche and

Heidegger, although for different reasons, as giving a thought-provoking impetus to the itineraries taken up by psychoanalysis. I will come back to this.

Lacan's contributions to psychoanalysis have taken on the form of a gauntlet thrown in the face of the fundamental questions of philosophy. These, as I have said above, include the problematic of identity or identification with the specular image and its narcissistic charge as underlining the orientation of intuitive and speculative philosophy, the place of the phallic function in distinction to the mOther's *jouissance*, the epistemological problem of "the subject supposed to know" (*sujet supposé savoir*), and a renunciation of the imaginary ego in favour of the symbolic order (drive, desire). The imaginary (specular) character of the ego is perhaps best illustrated by Lacan in his famous *mirror phase*.<sup>1</sup> Briefly then. Situating the child before the specular image, the mirror which is discovered before it is invented, Lacan speaks of the egotistical tendency to seek unity with the body-image that is split off, separated from the subject. The ego attempts to incorporate the specular other into a wholeness which would stabilise its position in relation to the Other, the Name of the Father, the texture of language, the desire which only as a lack can emerge in the subject's I. Thus the ego being a product of a succession of identifications with what it takes for its integral part becomes subject to separation anxiety, or anxiety in a more "general", Heideggerian sense, of slipping from Being into nothing.

The loss of wholeness and unity, on the imaginary plane, can only, however, be marked by the entrance of the desire of the Other, the subject's birth into language, as naming what this desire of the Other is lacking, which in turn finds support in the signifier as constitutive of structure. In M. Bowie's words: "a theory of language and a theory of interpersonal perception are taking shape; another order of experience is emerging over and against the order of imaginary identifications which the 'specular' moment inaugurates".<sup>2</sup> The ego, without delving too deeply into the problem to be discussed in chapter 3, appears as an imaginary presupposition, the centre soon to be decentred in "another order of experience". But although the ego is divested of its imaginary claims for wholeness and self-identity, the I, standing for the subject's place in the symbolic order, will nevertheless stamp its presence in the textual narrative that is so characteristic of Nietzsche, and of Lacan for that matter. It remains to be examined how, and by what criteria, the imaginary ego becomes, indeed, is succeeded by, the I of the symbolic order.

This brings us to the next problem, that of the unconscious. But before we look at

what Lacan has up his sleeve let's return to the relation between the subject and the Other which will serve as a preamble to the question of the unconscious. Between the subject, understood as a divided subject, divided in the transferential relation to the Other, there is a specular other, the image, which tends to seduce every symbolical relation to a specular identification. It is as if the Lacanian mirror stage has always been on the track of a recourse to support the fundamental inadequacy of the subject's relation to language, be it speech or writing, installing an *image* in the narrative, an image to which he assumes to have a free access. This image, by and large the imaginary phallus, can take on a particular form of, for example, the vocal image of hearing-oneself-speak, and would have as its purpose to fill in the temporal gap that separates the I from the alterity of signification, and bring the effects of subject's speech, or writing, into a closing whole of the specular relation that the mirror stage exemplifies.

What disrupts the continuity of such narcissistic functioning is what might be called the economy of time, the emptiness of a subject's speech which falls on its imaginary constructs thus opening the yawning abyss of his being that is lost or deadened in this imaginary identification:

Does the subject not become engaged in an ever growing dispossession of that being of his, concerning which - (...) - he ends up by recognising that this being has never been anything more than his construct [*œuvre*] in the imaginary and that this construct disappoints all his certainties? For in this labour [*travail*] which he undertakes to reconstruct *for another*, he rediscovers the fundamental alienation that made him construct it *like another*, and which has always destined it to be taken from him *by another*.<sup>3</sup>

The image which in Lacan's vocabulary stands, in the visual field, for the lack of an object, a little object a, appears as a loss, a dead image detached from the subject yet in some sense still orienting the ego's identifications. Not only is the image a construct of the speaker or looker but it also fails to render the subject a consistent whole. The image is dead as a deadened fragment of the subject because the speaking subject is always ahead of time. If the lost object were to return to that of which it is an effect, *jouissance*, it would find nothing there, no subject which would receive it in the temporal repetition that makes him absent in the time of his desire. There is no reciprocity between the subject and the image even if the image as an object is always of the subject, of his imaginary construction that is left behind in the course, or rather dis-course, of time.

The specular relation made Lacan introduce the notion of *labour* into the subject's precarious position in the world of others. The lost object which has been left behind neither speaks back nor looks back at what caused it for it has no life with which to dispatch itself back to its father. Lacan reserves a central place in his discourse for the symbolic father, or the punitive father, thus echoing Freud's primordial *Pater* who has been silenced for millennia but who none the less returns as a myth of patricide and, most importantly, the symbolic function. In so far as the subject recognises in his own image the shadowy presence of the threat of castration and the residues of the *γber-Ich* (ideal I), his relation to the image falls within the master/slave dialectic, the debt to Hegel no doubt, restored by Lacan to its morbid function in the analysis of obsessional neurosis.

It is in the narcissistic relation to the imaginary other where Lacan finds the source of aggressivity, not “the animal aggressivity of the frustrated desire”, but “the aggressivity of the slave whose response to the frustration of his labour [*travail*] is a desire for death”.<sup>4</sup> Somewhere between *œuvre* and *travail*, between the effect of his work as the empty and unreciprocated gift for the master, and his incessant toil for the *jouissance* of the master, the desire for death marks its origin. The slave, or the obsessional neurotic, defies time, that temporal movement which always shifts his desire ahead of its reflection tailing him as his double, the spectre of the master he is unable to destroy in the empty repetition of his action, empty in so far as it is devoid of that difference that originally placed him there. The existence of the obsessional revolves around waiting and waiting for a moment of emergence that would liberate him from the revolutionary struggle against the Other to whom he is destined in his work and who, as a dead Other, holds him hostage of his identification. The slave's time is nontemporal, his existence nonecstatic:

The obsessional thus waits because he has entered time that is non-existent, predicated on the non-happening of an event that did happen: he has entered an impossible world, and, just as any number becomes infinite when divided by zero, any time becomes empty, becomes pure duration, when it is deprived of anything that has actually happened. This time of pure duration is the time of the pure object: the object defined by nothing more than its duration.<sup>5</sup>

In analysis, time is inaugurated, if I can put it this way, in the relation to the Other as it cuts in the narcissistic dialectic of waiting and postponement at the moment of death. Cuts in, that is to say, is raised, in the time of reflection, as an excess of desire-to-signify which separates the subject from its object.



In analysis time has a beginning as a nontemporal time. To the extent that in the analytic discourse time is energised in the operation of punctuation, “calculated delay” and syncopation which interferes in the rhythm of *jouissance*, repetition reveals the “other” side of the death drive, the lack and desire. In chapter 8, I will consider the death drive as a kind of passion that is at work in the writing of mourning and melancholia, and its relation to loss.

*Theoria* appears as a variation of the celebrated passion in a relation to the spectral object that as a lack provokes the desire of the Other. This will take us to a reflection on death as an existential phenomenon as described by Heidegger. On this occasion it will be worthwhile to look at Heidegger's strategy regarding his existential analysis of death and his insistence on interpreting the encounter between Dasein and Thanatos as preceding any other, be it biological, psychological, or scientific in general, type of analysis.

In the first chapter I will look at the death drive as that work of excess that cannot be reduced to the primary state of inorganic matter - the concept Freud wrestled with - for it is already included in the circulation of signifiers. Any attempt at an effacement of the signifier, whether in repression or foreclosure, inevitably amounts to nothing else than executing of the power of the drive. To have a fuller grasp of the function of the death drive one must therefore trace its work elsewhere, namely in relation to the imaginary, which is where Lacan located it.

Lacan's general claim that “the unconscious is structured like a language” appears as a particular elaboration of Freud's theory and rests on the latter's topographies. Lacan's debt to linguistics (Saussure, Jakobson) is matched by his debt to Lèvi-Strauss for whom language, in the first instance that of myth and music, unfolds in time only in order to replace time with space.<sup>6</sup>

From the start, Lacan, following Lèvi-Strauss's topological arrangements of the mind, adopts constructs and formulations to provide the necessary criteria for explaining the unconscious structure. On this occasion Lacan takes a decisive step towards “modern science not to trust the phenomena and to look for something more subsistent behind them that explains them”.<sup>7</sup> The fervent pursuit for essence behind appearance, being behind existence, that characterises Lacan's discourse places him in relation to the history of Western thinking which according to such critics as Derrida always favoured one term over its double, spatial organisation over economy of time, cause over effect, placing

desire for presence at the fore of this orientation. The concept of structure *seems* to fit the bill of the orthodox strategy and means used for appraisal of the nature of the unconscious. Does the structuralist approach then do justice to history and time? Does psychoanalytic debate as taken up by Lacan reopen what could be called the closure of time? Or does his emphasis on the relation to science whose foremost duty is to explain or reveal essence under the veneer of appearance, and save the object at the price of the unquestioned subject, sail towards the rocks of metaphysics where it is likely to be crushed into pieces of drifting debris which it had already gathered for making this ship? What Heidegger found discrediting in science and as science,<sup>8</sup> Lacan *seems* to attempt to rehabilitate into a new structuralist creation with the old name. How does this work?

Lacan's pronouncement implies that there is room for two structures here, one of the unconscious and the other of language, both being linked up with each other by way of a certain resemblance. Why structure then? What does Lacan do when he appeals to a spatial organisation that underlies the temporal historization of the subject or the performative dimension that makes language exist in the signifying relation to the Other?

For Lacan the structure of a language refers to a set of signifiers that predetermine human relations moulding and forming them according to these structures. In short, I am counted, included in the operation of counting others, before I recognise myself as the one who counts.<sup>9</sup> This is what I mean when I say that the Other as symbolic order preexists the subject. Secondly, armed with an arsenal of contemporary linguistics, Lacan directs his interpretation of the unconscious beyond the notions with which the traditional interpretations of the analytic theory try to describe Freudian unconscious, namely as the dynamic seat of mnemonic traces to be unfolded, or a reservoir or receptacle of affects, the forgotten desire censored and repressed under the repetitively neurotic vigil of consciousness. Lacan veers away from such symmetrical arrangements, already a construct of speculative thought, urging us to rethink the unconscious. He thus proposes that “the unconscious is the whole structure of language”.<sup>10</sup> Since the unconscious exists as an effect of the subject's division Lacan introduces “the law of the signifier” into the gap which emerges as another speaking. The subject is divided in the sense of a persistent duality whose fundamental dissymmetry is the immediate effect of a transferential relation to the Other. And in so far as the subject is represented by a signifying chain his speech is constituted by a gap between the signifier and the signified.<sup>11</sup> The gap which is on the one

hand the bar separating the former from the latter, represents for Lacan the locus of the discovery of the unconscious, and, on the other hand, the site of an error produced, the other speaking in the gap:

There, something other demands to be realised - which appears as intentional, of course, but of a strange temporality [*étrange temporalité*]. What occurs, what is *produced*, in this gap [*béance*], presents itself [my modif.] as *adiscovery* [*la trouvaille*].<sup>12</sup>

Since the signifying slip or lapse appears as a surprise “this discovery is at the same time a solution - not necessary a complete one”. In dreams and parapraxes we are constantly surprised by something *other* emerging in the locus of the gap which is not to say that suturing it can lead to the cure of neurosis. The gap could be located somewhere between cause and effect; it “reproduces” the cause on the level of the truth of the signifier, that is to say it names the lack at the time of a fall or fracture, given that the cause is what Lacan calls the real, a notion to which I will return shortly.

All this can only make us think that the crack in the unconscious, the crack *as* the unconscious, which allowed us to introduce “the order of the *non-realised*”, produces an effect of the discontinuous character that cannot be measured against some consistent and total Other, because the Other as a desire is always, although not in psychosis, characterised by the lack. It is this lack in the Other that is the condition of Lacan’s notion of structure pointing to an always already silent moment in the signifying chain. But that which does not emerge in the structure, again with the exception of psychosis, what remains unsymbolised, is the master signifier, the signifier of the desire of the Other. Its condition is what Lacan calls “the letter in the unconscious”. What is the letter, then, and how does Lacan account for its existence?

The *lettre* is not to be taken metaphorically, at least not as a metaphor that is aware of itself as a metaphor. It is not some essence or nature of things, as one used to say in the traditional language of philosophy, displaced by a symbol, nor indeed a letter of law or the letter of the text. The letter is to be taken “quite simply, literally” (*Tout uniment, B la lettre*).<sup>13</sup> The *lettre* is a literal, self-identical and self-referential, medium or agency (*instance*) of an alphabetical letter which, following Lacan's interpretation of Freud, gives an image a value of a signifier. The letter then is one, and designates the mark as a condition of structure in which it alone will not be spoken. The letter, say *aleph*, has

nothing to do with the signification of the animal species, as they appear in the Egyptian hieroglyphics, but already designates a “form of the verb ‘to be’”, or a form of being that functions in language as a signifier.<sup>14</sup> Thus the signifier appears as an indivisible linguistic monad indicating an absence of what it names (the animal) and a presence of the acoustic image. It has no quality except for the relation of difference to another signifier. For Lacan this difference has a structural value; the signifier differs from another signifier not by the meaning but by the way it is uttered. There are therefore no two identical signifiers. It is in the linguistic functioning, or malfunctioning which is more obviously the case, of signifying chain founded in the instance of the letter that Lacan sees the structure of the unconscious.

But is it really possible to even approach the question of the structure of *a language*, any language, language as such? Would not such a pursuit prompt us to seek the essence of an interlinguistic difference, that *jouissance* which remains *sensu stricto* unsignifiable save for the phallus which is the Outside of the signifying chain? Thus the letter is not a “universal” letter of a language, but already an operator in a particular phonemic system that falls short of freedom to be transported into another system without translation, as such operation would bridge the interlinguistic gap that makes translation possible. In which case should we not leave it untranslated? Lacanian *lettre* is always written as a fundamental irreducibility of that which metaphorically resonates as *l'être and* as a letter that is sent to whoever finds it readable, that is to say decipherable. Is it not the case that, given Lacan's insistence on the predominance of speech in human discourse, the letter is what cannot be spoken precisely due to this ambiguity but only written, which makes it subject to and the condition for dispatching a signifier that does not come back other than to another signifier.<sup>15</sup>

I will not pursue these remarks any further as their sole purpose was to introduce us to Lacanian thought. It is now time to return to the thematic of my thesis, sketch out its general strategy and give a brief outline of each chapter. Let me say from the start that nothing is further from my mind than to contribute to a prejudice that the notions we will encounter in this study reserve the right to be used solely in the analytical practice, or, in more general sense, which I have already signalled, that this practice at any point abstains from the “metapsychological” considerations and theoretical commitments to which this work will hopefully testify. In fact, the Lacanian clinic is theoretical, and in its elaborations can be heard as an echo of metapsychology. There is no room in psychoanalysis, I believe,

for such a dogmatic monopoly which, it seems at times, bears some favours in the Lacanian circles.

This distinction, which is always arbitrary, is not without significance for the present study as it aims to put into question the view that Lacan, in contrast to Freud, was not a writer but a speaker. Just as the relation between Plato and Socrates demonstrates the importance of writing as veiling/unveiling of the Socratic truth, so the Lacanian theory which has been bequeathed to us chiefly as a transcription, and therefore written text, should influence us in our reading and rereading of his text irrespective of whether we are in the clinic or at the university. But does it? If it can be said that Socrates was a *jouissance* of Plato who devoted himself to the practice of the letter inscribing the voice which knows nothing, it is not entirely beside the point to pry into a debate about *jouissance* that accompanied the transcription of Lacan's Seminars. This, of course, is not to say that there is no difference between the *Ecrits* and the Seminars. It is simply that the difference of this kind will always be left out slipping away from the presentation that spaces the signifiers in time, thus giving this space not only a structural but also a historical dimension, unlike speech which intimates them in the nontemporal intimacy of the voice.

In the view of the above the title of the present study - *psychographies* - is no longer accidental. The term was introduced by Freud<sup>16</sup> who referred to it as a form of psychological biography<sup>17</sup> What interests me here, however, is not so much an analysis of a sequence of events in the psychical life of a person, as a particular attention we should pay to the signifying events that testify to an interest or *concern*, whose conceptual status, at the same time, testifies to the subject's singularity that these signifiers represent. And this means that a pursuit of a problem or question is always reflected in the specificity of style and presentation. To reformulate, then, what the psychographic practice involves - what it does not involve - would be first of all to say that it recognises the concerns (not in the Heideggerian sense of *Besorge*) as satisfactory/unsatisfactory and symptomatic attachments to objects, attachments that are already constituted in transference and identification. With respect to writing, and in particular to Nietzsche, Heidegger and Blanchot, this will amount to a rereading of a *patheme* or a host of pathemes that recurrently cement the corpus of their work. To this extent representational projections, mimetic identifications and imaginary speculations are constitutive of the discourse and serve as an example of psychographic strategies of avoidance, resistance, insistence.

concealment, generated by a libidinal economy whose work, as it gives rise to anguish and “sad passions”, as Spinoza called them, to melancholic passions over the loss evoked in writing, is tied to the “law of the signifier”. These metonymic displacements of desire and metaphorical combinations of the drive, as Lacan following Freud and Jacobsen formulated them, can only be guided, or misguided, by transference that is a condition of reading as such.<sup>18</sup>

Needless to say, if analysis of a text produces another text, its structural vacillations cannot be determined in advance or captured with some supreme vision or knowledge. Such structuring always involves, and the shifts and changes it propels, a subjectal position, that is to say an elusive presence of the Real.

The unmasking of concepts, or reading of them as signifiers, “translates” them into symptoms, which in turn reveals another stratum of the text, of the unconscious whose linguistic operations such as desire, death drive, loss, pivot around the symbolic term returning to the impossible, the trauma as real. Subjecting a particular patheme (identity, temporality, myth, death, repetition, anguish, conscience, guilt) to a psychoanalytic scrutiny reveals an epistemological gap, a lack of knowledge which a writing subject nevertheless supposes. If, on the other hand, a particular term can be analytically examined as to what it, in the face of its history and originary alterity, attempts to conceal as its symptomatic double, then, the effect would be what this work aims to produce. In short, my strategy is concerned with the impossibility of the real as undercutting the project of reciprocity and resemblance whether in terms of the imaginary (mimesis, specularity, identification) or the symbolic as naming. The patheme then relates to both the subject and the object, for it is the real of the object that the subject, barred in this very operation, attempts to excavate.

Such mirroring would doubtless show to what extent this strategy is itself a hollow - a hole-owed to the originary traumatic event - were it to attempt to introduce and smuggle into the discourse a third and neutral term. In its absence the psychographic task will from beginning to end be nothing but an operation stemming from the lack, that is endowed with the meditative force capable of showing the operations involved in the creative discourse, whether it unfolds under the name of philosophy or psychoanalysis. I will now outline briefly the chapters in this work.

In chapter 1 *Freud's Narcissus* I will discuss Freud's paper on Narcissism (1914).

It provided Freud with a platform to declare his libidinal credo and divorce himself from his opponents, notably Jung and Adler. In doing so he presented and analysed his libido theory, and situated it as a foundation of psychoanalysis, from which the above fled and others began to borrow. In this chapter I will examine the status of libido, love, object, self and ego-ideal in their relations in Freud's topography. This will provide me with the starting point to stress the importance of the imaginary relation that founds Freud's critique of philosophical speculation, in which the superego agency of self-observation plays a crucial role thus bringing to light the notion of imaginary identification. It seems to me that Freud's examination of narcissism, its validity and its honesty, should be taken as representing a position of the subject, which in this case is highlighted by both semibiographical motifs and the fact that its main object remains concealed and unthematized .

In chapter 2 *Death in the Mirror* I will focus on what remained occluded in Freud's study, and what is nevertheless its principal theme, namely the place of the death drive in narcissistic - used here as an analytical concept - formations. In Lacanian terms, the narcissistic relation can only be approached in imaginary terms, for it concerns those libidinal attachments to an object, which aim at totalization of the image of the body. Thus narcissism as a particular form of attachment to the body becomes a playground for the death drive to cement, in a growing regression and fixation to the body, what is never whole. This brings into an analysis of Freud the study carried out by Otto Rank, Freud's contemporary, whose discussion of narcissism is solely devoted to *thanatophobia*. If the self is divided due to the loss of the maternal imago, in narcissism this crack is glued in a particular attachment to death as a phantom partner, a double. This ambivalent relation to death, which is an effect of an ambivalent status of the object both lost and clung to, will take me at the end to an overview of Heidegger's analysis of the "ontological meaning" of death, e.g. an impossibility of dying with the Other which for Heidegger will be associated with the masculine pronoun, the death of the father.

In chapter 3 *The Body Image and the Origin of Specularity* I will present a detailed reading of Lacan's *mirror stage*. Lacan showed that the ego has an imaginary, or a specular to be more specific, function whose sole aim is to give a child, in his relation to mirror image, a sense of wholeness and completeness. Thus what is unrepresented, i.e. libidinally not invested, in the body, is patched up by an imaginary-specular form only to

close the picture of the self. I have followed Lacan's analysis of what is called imaginary identification in examining the role played by the gaze that aids identificatory constructions. This will take me to the point at which we could see that the totalizing *Gestalt* of imaginary identification, or the imaginary phallus, is responsible for the philosopher's attempt to find the meaning of Being. Such a search for the "meaning of Being" has an upper hand in deciding the status of "being-me", which is an effect of being-seen or caught in the gaze of the Other. This contrasts with Lacan's notion of "a lack of being" that generates desire which orients the subject's relation to the desire of the Other. It would therefore appear that the intuition of an ontological analysis of Being borrows from what Lacan saw as a child's relation to the mirror, a relation that tries to negotiate the fact of being an object of the Other's gaze into an imaginary "potentiality-for-Being-whole". In conclusion my discussion of Lacan's specular identification shifts to the question of how the child's entry into language produces a specifically human aggressivity in defense of the phallic image that the symbolical term does not leave intact. Hence Lacan's vitriolic criticism of Hegel and Sartre whose concepts of freedom draw from the alienation of the ego glued to the image that does not lack. This chapter concludes with some questions about the status of the unconscious as a linguistic structure in opposition to mimesis, mediatization and philosophical speculation.

Given the discussion of narcissism above, the place of the image and imaginary identification, what interests me in chapter 4 *Nietzsche in the Mirror of Narcissus* is to bring out symbolical relations in opposition to imaginary constructions. I will take up the reading of Nietzsche's fragments in order to show the ambivalent status of the self and the ideal in his writing. On the one hand, Nietzsche's critique of philosophy could be read as an attempt to demonstrate how these imaginary and specular constructions constituted the subject's confessions under the veneer of philosophical truth. On the other hand, it is always striking to notice how Nietzsche's language itself is immersed in his experiences as subject, how they stir his passions in the direction that is not far from a certain ideal. If this ideal is a derivative of Freud's conception of ego-ideal, how are we to interpret Nietzsche's writing, style and discoveries that, as I have shown, on one side paved the way for those of Freud, and on the other, retained the terrain of imaginary identification that Lacan understood as a false claim to knowledge. What is at stake here is the difference between the imaginary ego and the symbolic I, and the function of the sexual drive,



indifferent to the object to the extent that it is solely concerned with satisfaction. And finally, what interests me here, is the place of the voice in what Nietzsche called “the art of hearing”. The question of the voice will also be taken up in the concluding chapter in this work.

Chapter 5 *What are Philosophers For?* further develops the discussion of Freud and Lacan above, and examines what it is to philosophise as Nietzsche practised it. I will discuss here those elements of psychoanalytical theory that came to play a driving role in how philosophy always tackled perception, understanding, cognition, knowledge, subjectivity. Nietzsche could be safely credited with bringing to our view the activity of sexual drive in philosophy, and with showing how a long-lasting ignorance of the unconscious, although not yet in Lacanian terms, led to numerous misunderstandings. Thus it is Nietzsche who opened the discourse of fiction in philosophy but had to pay the price of his own declarations becoming subject to analytical interpretation. To this extent, as I have developed this theme also in other chapters, psychoanalysis is no longer in the position of the master-builder, for it deals with the lack. If Nietzsche aspired to be the one to have a final say without saying so, subjecting the “personal”, “imaginary”, “objective” to scrutiny, he also showed what philosophers lack, or, in more general terms, how their symptom lies at the very heart of philosophical claims, how to philosophise with the lack.

Chapter 6 *Introduction to the reading of Mourning and Melancholia - Identification, Incorporation* invites us to read Freud’s paper on *Mourning and Melancholia* written couple of years after the article on Narcissism. It deals as directly as possible with Freud’s account of the unconscious structure of language taking as a central point the status of the lost object of love. I will take as a point of departure Freud’s analysis of truth in melancholia and the symbolical status he gives to it. The reading of Freud’s paper on melancholia urges us to pay some attention to the discussion of the difference between neurotic and psychotic structures, a significant distinction in so far as the philosophical treatment of psychoanalytical theory has always confined itself to the notion of repression (neurosis). Lacan’s analysis of psychosis, and his reading of Schreber’s paranoia, is paramount to understanding his theory of language, especially the notion of paternal metaphor and its foreclosure in the discourse of the psychotic. As far as paranoia is concerned, such a foreclosure would show a lapse of the imaginary function into delusion and hallucination, in which the lack of the mOther as desiring is excluded due

to absence of the paternal phallus in favour of the total union of language and body, the symbolic and the real. Melancholia, to the extent that it relies on the identification with the lost object of love, is more difficult to define in these terms. Hence the discussion of the notion of the crypt pursued across to the following chapter. I will also stress here the difference between identification and incorporation to return to Freud's relations with his contemporary Karl Abraham in whose work on melancholia this distinction is of crucial importance. We will likewise examine here Lacan's notion of *jouissance*, one of his crucial terms that put him at odds with philosophy, and so vital in understanding the shift from melancholic identification with the void to the delusional bond with the *jouissance* of the mOther as lost, as well as introductory remarks on both the stabilising and prohibitive functions of the Name of the Father.

As a follow-up to the previous chapter, chapter 7 *What is a Crypt?* deals in more detail with the ambivalence involved in melancholia, and the difficulties in analysing its structure in terms of the difference between writing and speech. Hence my attempt to introduce the notion of the crypt in contrast and opposition to the fantasmic discussion of it by Maria Torok, Nicolas Abraham and Derrida's commentary. If the metaphor of the crypt can symbolise the lack of the object thus naming that - the crypt - which remains empty, the place of the phallus as removed from the field of perception and a possibility of being spoken or written, such a metaphoricity is refused by Torok & Abraham attributing to the crypt that which it conceals. What? The "word-thing" or the unity of *das Ding* and the signifier, which, in my view, the crypt precisely disallows. The lack of distinction between what Lacan was at pains to delineate, namely *das Ding* and the signifier, would lead us to understand the crypt as a place of double concealment - it conceals, as Derrida confirms the steps of Torok-Abraham, the very concealment, the lack. It therefore does not allow for the lack (of the object) to function as a lack of the mOther's desire to be named. This then will allow me to approach the structure of melancholia once again, and also to think the crypt as a place of the letter in the writing, the place, as Lacan said in his later work, of the one.

Consideration of the crypt as a metaphor and mechanism which sustains the relation between the voice and the letter, can thus be pursued in terms of encrypture that presents in writing what is absent, the object. And it is this that we will approach in Chapter 8 *Autopsies: Blanchot's Imaginary Versions*. It is the object - present as a

“shadow” that can nevertheless be only introduced by means of a symbolical term that names what is absent - that remains encrypted in writing to the extent that it conceals what allows for the signifying play in writing. In this chapter I follow my study of melancholia by taking up the writing of Blanchot, where it remains undetermined to what extent identification with the lost object, and the self-accusatory and self-reproachful characteristic of melancholia that Freud accorded to it, is constitutive of the melancholic discourse in the sense that the phallic signification is operative, but does not allow us to subsume it under psychotic structure. In the texts of Blanchot this phallic signification remains evident in the form of the prohibition of cohabitation with the dead, which is where Blanchot takes his meditation. In it, Blanchot speaks about the registers of the symbolic, real and imaginary, which constitute the core of Lacan’s doctrine. He advances his meditation on the cadaver - testifying to the impossible real in the confrontation with the image - to the point where the desire of the subject gives rise to a fantasy, in this case of necrophilia, opening the symbolical dimension of the signifier. Blanchot’s signifier names the horror of loss in the proximity to the lack of the object. On the other hand it reveals that dimension of human desire whose realization remains prohibited “under the punishment of death”. In my reading of Blanchot’s texts, I will try to show how close his writing takes him to the field of the unconscious, and how his meditation on death runs into Lacan’s categories.

The final chapter 9 *To Conclude: on the Voice, Conscience, Being-guilty and Love* will be devoted to the discussion of the status of the voice. This will specifically bear on Heidegger’s analysis of the voice of conscience to show how Heidegger’s critique of the moral theories aims to give the voice a salvational character. This no doubt would take us back to Freud’s analysis of the superego of which the voice is an heir and the source of hallucinatory self-accusations. This is where Freud placed the discontents of civilisation in relation to the superego; it is the source of neurosis not a cure. This will lead me to an analysis of Heidegger’s notion of Being-guilty against, on the one hand, Freud’s elaborations on the agency of conscience, the need for punishment and anxiety in the face of loss of love, and, on the other, Miller’s formulations about *jouissance* and the barred subject. The power of the voice (one can for example think of Blanchot’s Sirens) is not without relation to the death drive in which the superego finds its most extreme fulfilment.

Let’s recapture and further our task here. If the problems as posed by Lacan

constitute for a critic, and not necessarily for an analyst, an interface between philosophy and psychoanalytical theory, thus challenging the traditional way of theorising (concepts as symptoms, theory as metaphor) how does the reading of the pathemes affect our relation to knowledge? The questions raised by Nietzsche, primarily epistemological, for they touch on the possibility of the translation of the language of morality and Aristotelean master ethics into the language of psychology that opened the floodgates of psychoanalytic theory, can only serve as a preamble.<sup>19</sup>

If the discourse of philosophy were to do justice to the unconscious it would have to allow for a surprising gap to lapse into the open to emerge as a lack, a missing reference, instead of endeavouring a closure or filling in which is doubtless all too meaningful to remain, for some at least, an abyss that lacks rather than a lack of abyss. It is precisely at this juncture that Lacan, following Freud, continued to challenge the traditional formulations practised by way of phenomenological forays into the “contents of consciousness”, and where the problems raised by him could find their legitimate place. They are concerned with the status of truth in psychoanalysis and the position of knowledge as assumed by the subject. In this we must once again articulate that what, according to Lacan, gives these problems as they appear in the light of psychoanalytic theory a radically different face is what distinguishes philosophers from the analysts, namely the *real*.

If the writing of this thesis is in anyway to tell us anything about the “what” and “how” of the restless relation between philosophy and psychoanalysis, indeed enlighten us to the problematic involved it must, in my view, whether this be arbitrary or not, take into account the fact that it is bound to the place to which, formally at least, it is addressed. This place is called the university and the purpose of addressing it, which will no doubt show itself as a place or point of contention, is for the sake of knowledge. I say “point of contention”, because these are the stakes of the task undertaken here. Where the discourse is practised in the light of the *effect* it produces the question concerns not so much knowledge as such but a particular *kind* of knowledge.

On the one hand, what is involved here has its root in what I will call the *demand for knowledge*, and, on the other, which is partly a formalization of this demand, the strategies of the discourse are in their very premises concerned with satisfying or not satisfying the demand. In short, the question is *how* one arrives at what is called

knowledge, theoretical knowledge, psychoanalytical knowledge. I am touching on this for at least one important reason which must be emphasised to all those who are engaged in the reading of Lacanian text. Reading Lacan sets in motion almost insurmountable difficulties regarding his style, his use of language, endless ellipses and puns that slip through the pen in the way which is as poetical as it is untranslatable.<sup>20</sup> To follow through his text, to endeavour its critique and to argue for or against its validity whilst, at the same time, refraining from random reductions or magnifying universalizations, conceals a danger of jumping into epistemological conclusions which the critics are not always in the need of avoiding. Hence the problem of the *kind* of knowledge that is at stake and in question; we are, after all, confronted with the analytic discourse.

If what separates the discourse of the university from the analytic discourse is, in Lacan's formula, an associative chain that surrounds what is at stake in producing it, namely the real, the primal wound by which the subject comes to ex-ist as divided and supported only by the signifier that is always already severed from that which pro-voked it, then, this impossibility as the real occupies the *same place* in its encounter with discourse // the university. Having invented the term Lacan needs no longer to concern himself with the concept which is equally pervasive in Freud's text (trauma) and in philosophy as that which the philosopher does not write about:

it is not a question of reality, but of truth, because the effect of full speech is to reorder past contingencies by conferring on them the sense of necessities to come, such as they are constituted by the little freedom through which the subject makes them present.<sup>21</sup>

*Reality* has always been conceived of as an *ideal presence*, on the one hand that which is extraneous to and removed from the subject (imagination, symbolisation), and, on the other hand, that which is none the less an *object* of inquiry, a *telos* to be attained. If that is so, then, Lacan seems to be saying, this inquiry, which is discourse, involves the real, that is to say, the real is at work where and when the object of analysis, "reality", is in question. But although reality is in question the truth of the subject is at stake. For Lacan, as far as the discourse is concerned, and in so far as the discourse in being addressed by the Other addresses the other, it is the truth that does not know.

The concern with the object has, in psychoanalytic terms, an imaginary effect, and, it is this imaginary conception that determines the true dimension of *analysis*. Hence in

Lacanian teaching the object is no longer the mental object of psychology or the philosophical object of perception, but what he calls *objet a*, that absence present as a lack which orients the subject's fantasmatic itinerary in his experience of the signifier. The subject, the divided subject supported by the signifier, to the extent that his desire attempts to name the desire of the Other, ex-ists in relation to "his" real object. In other words, not only has the subject been at some stage supposed as an object by the Other, but also in every object there is *something* of the subject, the object *a*.<sup>22</sup>

It is this object *a* that is dominant in the analytic discourse drawing the divided subject to the site of the real as Cause. What interests me is to show how the lack, which can only be conceived in symbolical terms, wrongfoots and unsettles the "given" significations, how they are shaken by the intervention of the Other. Thus we can position psychoanalysis as the Other of philosophy or as the libidinal underside of enunciation of philosophical statements.<sup>23</sup> Analytical questioning will therefore derive its force from the dynamics of transference and drive. Structurally speaking, to give the naming Other, the Name of the Father, time in this respect would be not only to introduce, and for this matter inaugurate, time, but also to give it a place in which time could return as a particular reversal of its history. To be sure, this reversal concerns the history of a subject, its symptom and fantasy, and in terms of Lacanian topology such effect can be achieved on the Moebius strip. What then constitutes the analytical experience that is in question here, and how does it stand at the university which is where we are?

This question concerns our arrival at the place where a certain status is given to knowledge, to the *contribution* to "general" knowledge (and further, to transmission, teaching, dissemination, etc). For example, how do we situate the unconscious and *jouissance* that produces subject's division but fails to incorporate the *lack* into the discourse? Is it possible at this curve to drive the analytical and philosophical discourses into the open, or is it that, as Phillippe Sollers amusingly said, the philosopher always finds the stone of the unconscious too difficult to swallow. But then does he not in any case end up with stones in his stomach, which, like in the old fairy-tale, have replaced the little red riding hood? As for our discourse grinding and chewing are certainly more appropriate for the task.

The analyst comes to know about his desire by way of the loss of narcissism. His position, for example Lacan's, as he responds to the demand of the Other, is that of

unknowledge. The passage - does Nietzsche exemplify such crossing? - at which he finds himself confronting a loss of Heideggerian unity of “being-me”, the inadequacy of “unified”, that is to say supposed subject, would suggest that Nietzsche has given us the key to psychoanalysis, namely the split subject, divided by a fundamental incompatibility between the body and consciousness. Was not Nietzsche’s fondness of Spinoza an effect of the latter’s pointing to what the body is capable of? However, Lacan, despite being influenced by philosophy, not less than Freud, remained intransigent in his rejection of what he described, as I have said earlier, as philosophers’ ignorance of the real. As we shall see, contrary to such generalisation, both Nietzsche and Heidegger preclude a possibility of inquiry under the name of philosophy without allowing an affect, an anguish of existence already marked by falls, limits, finitude and death to make itself present in the text. Although for Nietzsche the therapeutic effect of reading philosophy without philosophy remains unquestionable, for Lacan the chief emphasis remains on the real and “the subject’s solitary relation to the Cause”. It is here that we find the basis to speak about analytical experience. In this sense the real, conceptually elusive and “philosophically” unswallowable, should not, in a more or less awkward way of defining it, be reduced to a personal event, say the death of Heidegger's father, or Nietzsche's relationship with his sister. We could rather approach it as an emergence of a signifier that stamps a name on a certain loss, and, by this virtue, on the inseparability of theory and fiction, as they both fumble through repeated attempts to bypass the *jouissance* of making sense, the work of the death drive or echoes of an imaginary identification that alienates the subject in his discourse.

There is therefore no reason why the real of *jouissance* as manifest as discerned in the psychoanalytic clinic should remain confined to it and not help us unravel the confines of writing in a philosophical text, which is what I intend to do when inviting Lacanian “concept” of it. The real designates a wound or trauma, not the trauma of birth in the biological sense, but a signifying event whose primacy can only be defined as an entrance or intrusion of the symbolical Other - the body caught in language - that leaves me anxiously trembling in my divided subjectivity. It is the entering of language’s alterity as a crossing of the path of the so called intention, that leaves an indelible mark of the subject's silence of being, the scar, that Lacan called the real. Given its ambiguous relation to the symbolic order, the real as Cause in Lacanian sense has to be understood in terms of a

trauma's vicious circle: the trauma is the Cause which perturbs the smooth engine of symbolisation and throws it off balance; it gives rise to an indelible inconsistency in the symbolic; but for all that the trauma has no existence of its own prior to symbolisation; it remains an anamorphic entity that gains consistency only in retrospect, viewed from within the symbolic horizon - it acquires its consistency from the structural necessity of the inconsistency of the symbolic field.<sup>24</sup>

That is why to emphasise its structural importance Lacan said of the real that it "is that which is always in the same place".<sup>25</sup> If the real is, as Lacan claimed, what the philosophers have always tried to bypass, it nevertheless speaks in their writing whether they associatively poetise through it or proceed with a methodological aplomb. This could be read that, as Fink put it

it is impossible - except in philosophical treatises - to divorce the statement of a moral principle from the libido or jouissance attached to its enunciation; it is impossible to divorce a precept taught us by our parents (for example, 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you') from the tone of voice in which it was pronounced.<sup>26</sup>

That is what I meant by saying that if the real is always in the *same place* it can also be found at the university. Hence my question about the real in the subject's relation to knowledge, or, in relation to the demand for knowledge.

But in saying that such a relation exists do I not already (pre)suppose knowledge? Do I not, in bringing the problem of the subject, identity, origin, death into question assume even the vaguest familiarity with how these problems make themselves evident in the subject's relation with the inconsistent Other? By what criteria and means does a writer, an inquirer gauge these relations and assume that reading of text renders them known, let alone knowable, in short, that I know?<sup>27</sup> To address these questions in relation to writing (philosophy, literature) is, we may suppose, to want to reply to the letter already received. To know, in saying that which is being said, is to reply to the letter. But to reply to a letter is bound to involve the imaginary elements, fantasy, supposed knowledge, or fiction in a more general sense, which is an integral part of the formation of the subject's discourse. As Lacan formulated it in his early teaching:

It is in the relation between the subject's me [*moi*] and the I [*je*] of his discourse that you must understand the meaning of the discourse if you are to achieve the dealianation of the subject. But you cannot possibly achieve this if you cling to the idea that the me [*moi*] of the subject is identical with the presence that is speaking to you.<sup>28</sup>



Who, then, or what, is speaking, and to whom? If it comes from the letter, as Lacan shows, where does it go? For one thing it indicates that the epistemological discourse can no longer be conceived of as coming from the masterly *moi* of Descartes. Lacan will push the analysis of the ego to the extreme calling it “frustration in its essence”. Not so with the I of the symbolic order which, as we recall, emerges when the me of imaginary identification is dissolved or surpassed. In a more general sense, for philosophy to reply to a question is to respond to the demand for knowledge,<sup>29</sup> the demand which comes from the Other in so far as the Other has always already left mnemonic traces impressed, as Freud in his paper on the Ego and the Id showed, on the *moi*.

Lacan will confirm this by exerting a further split between being and thought, knowledge and object, in a reformulation of the Cartesian formula. I am merely an object of my thought, or, I am not where I am thought. Being an object of thought, which thinks me, I cease to be a subject. *I think* speaks in the place of the subject with the proviso that the place of *I think* has no room for being. And contrariwise “I am where I do not think”.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, *I know* appears to be an object of thought. It remains to be asked whose thought and whose knowledge are at work in this schema? It can also be asked why *I am* is taken to be an incarnation of Being, as Heidegger initially approached it, and not as a temporalization that is gradually stripped of its privileges by *I was*, *I have been* and *I will have been*?

We can say in view of the above that the demand for knowledge as posed by the Other, is posed by an Other that is incomplete and inconsistent. In other words, the epistemological demand comes from what Lacan called the barred Other. The subject’s reply, too, in responding to the “inconsistency of the symbolic field” of the Other, has a lack inscribed in it, a real loss that can only be accounted for in the inconsistency of an answer.

I will try to show how this lack, and this “symbolical inconsistency” operates in the philosophical text and how it produces a double effect, that of a recourse to narcissism of self-reflection, to which a signifier bears witness, and, that of a reply to the Other to whose demand I am always bound in my fundamental guilt, or debt of *jouissance*. I will try to show how writing (Nietzsche, Heidegger, Blanchot) runs into the field where it undermines not only what philosophers nostalgically cling to, the master signifier that

speaks in the empty place of the subject, the symptom,<sup>31</sup> but also how the “symbolical inconsistency” of the Other permeates the discourse of metaphysics, and, with it, as Heidegger pointed out, the discourse of science. It will be through Freud, “a symptom of Heidegger”,<sup>32</sup> and Lacan, that we must see how philosophy, due to the intervention of the unconscious, turns into the discourse of *non-mastery*, the sexed and divided subject that supposes knowledge but, in fact, is only supposed in the act of signification, supposed to know nothing.<sup>33</sup>

The epistemological problem which again and again brings philosophical and analytical theorising into proximity (only the unconscious separates them), confirms in our problematization the highly questionable link which seems to pervade the discourse of the subject, namely the link between *I speak* and *I know*. Lacan's answer to the problem is that whenever the subject assumes knowledge, what Lacan calls *sujet supposé savoir*, he is, or indeed says, nothing more and nothing less than that he is the subject of knowledge in the sense of being an effect by which he is both constituted and divided. Lacan bases his formulation on analytical evidence saying that in the subject's supposition of knowledge the conditions are given for a premise - in a relation which is both most distant and nearest - of the Other in response to which the subject has been brought to existence, or made to exist sexually, symbolically as the not-one, the one who, if we recall Aristotle's *hupokeimenon*, lies under or stands-under, in short that he knows knowing nothing.

Let me therefore conclude these preliminary considerations, and the overview of my preoccupations here, with a question that, as far as the epistemological problem is concerned, opens a moment of beginning. How does the subject respond to the “fundamental” guilt perpetually revived in its claims for “potentiality-for-Being-whole”? How does the subject refuse castration admitting its debts to the Other? How does the subject's desire come to face the “lack-of-being” as marked by the loss of *jouissance* that renders the subject divided or decentered? And finally, is psychoanalysis a lesson in the forgetfulness of guilt by giving oneself a desire of the Other that does not exist?

# **PART I**

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## **TOWARDS METASPECULARITY: FROM NARCISSUS TO NIETZSCHE**

How to write Narcissus? How to name narcissus *en route* of gaze and death? But above all, in whose name to write him, and in what person, first, second, third? Is it him, or is it me?

He approaches the pond and leans over the silver mirror. Having been captured in his own image he falls in love with *himself*. Economically speaking, this is the story of Narcissus and of all stories that speak of the image, the eye, identity, reflection and the self. The mythographers such as Ovid, Freud, Rank, Lacan, Girard, Blanchot, to mention a few, come within the threshold of narcissistic seduction when they construct a critique of what is called the myth of Narcissus. Their reading, whether conducted under the name of psychoanalysis or philosophical inquiry or poetic meditation, has as an aim to elucidate the intricacies of the relation with the self. Thus the narcissistic tradition is maintained within a certain economy of the subject, *an ideal economy*, in so far as it is concerned with the self-relation of the subject. In a certain sense, this economy, as Freud showed, could also be called the economy of the same; considerations given to analysis of the relation with the self capture the reader, and therefore the writer, in their attempt to demonstrate the aesthetics of futility of such a relation and such an economy.

One of the questions that occupies the critic committed to understanding the work of the narcissistic relation is this: how to depart from the illusory realm, where every relation is both a relation with the self and a preservation of a certain tradition, strategy, economy and temporality that is challenged and put into a test in the first place? How to invent a difference, or a *di-gression*, that would point to and perform a transcending passage beyond the homogeneous reservoir of narcissistic relations? Having raised the question of the possible limit and border another question poses itself: will this awareness of transcending, crossing, passing through, or simply, the proposed knowledge of the rites of passage, be amenable to our task of reading narcissism if from the start, that is on the basis of the premise above, it is destined to failure? Must there not be a grand scheme operating for the narcissistic dialectic to be able to maintain itself within itself and to come back to itself following the guidance of self-reflection and self-love? How to transcend the homosexual boundaries within which the critic of narcissism is bound to return to the same dialectic, or the dialectic of the same, namely, to the imaginary construction as generated by the reversal of the relation between the subject and the Other into the relation between

the ego and the specular other? If the image of my body is necessary for concocting an identity of my self, as Freud seems to suggest, if I see the specular image as the other of me, the other with which I wish to be one, as Lacan will add, what is this relation between me and the image of me, or, better still, the assumed relation between the eye and its luminous reflection, if not a particular kind of reversal of time, history, libidinal heritage, in short, a relation in which the ego has always been an object for the Other, perceived and therefore assumed in my existence by the Other?

But to look closely at this reversal, and examine it under the terms which are here in question, is already insufficient to effect a breach in the structure within which it operates. Something else is needed, that is to say another kind of *insufficiency* is in operation here. Freud called it the unconscious, the temporal difference that radically separates the signifying subject from the Other. Before we get there to put into question the temporal simultaneity as an underlying condition on which both relations rest, let's turn our attention to the psychoanalytic tradition where narcissism holds a particularly pronounced place and where it has even become, at least in the Freudian theory, a philogenetic paradigm in the development of the psyche.

The history of narcissism is a history of repeated attempts to appropriate an alterity, that has always come back, or re-turned, to the same.<sup>1</sup> But just as the legend of Narcissus has a moment of death inscribed within its itinerary, so narcissism, considered as a *stasis* in the dynamic of the psyche, appears, given Ovid's account,<sup>2</sup> as a passing moment of identification-formation. Conceived in this way, narcissism serves as a strategy, and an ontology, which opens and closes, the pathemes of identity, mimesis, temporality. In each case we are dealing with the double, or doubling, of the theme, that has its alleged origin in the perspective of the self. Thus, the writing of narcissism repeats a series of gestures that are said to underlie the structure of the myth of Narcissus as such. What are these gestures?

The term *double* immediately assumes here a particular importance, as it highlights both the imaginary-projectional relation of the self and the representational framework of critical currents in which the former surfaces. In his understanding of narcissism, Rank adopts the term *double* to characterise the root of narcissism as a form of "ambivalence" in the relation to the self.<sup>3</sup> Rank gives examples of the double in literature and anthropology to lay the main focus on the psychoanalytic theory. On the one hand, the ambivalence includes resistance to "exclusive self-love", "the fear and revulsion before one's own

image" and the fear of "the loss of the shadow-image or mirror-image".<sup>4</sup> Both love and hatred for the self have a share in the anguish that grips Narcissus in anticipation of the lack of a fixed and consistent subject.

On the other hand, there is another aspect of ambivalence which permeates the narcissistic discourse of the self. It concerns the function and meaning of the *self* in an infinite series of relations starting with self-love, self-destruction, self-affirmation, self-esteem, self-consciousness, to give a few examples that belong, even found, the corpus of narcissistic being. Is the self an object of these relations or is it that these relations happen *by themselves*, the Hegelian way, as if coming from themselves and turning round upon themselves?

The narcissistic subject stays afloat due to, as Freud put it, "the sexual overrating" of himself, whilst the self-love is constantly interfered with by the fear of loss of the loved image and by the anguish of death, which Rank calls *thanatophobia*. The self as double is an ambivalent object, on the one hand of love, esteem, care and preservation, and, on the other, of hatred, fear, contempt and disdain. The narcissistic double is caught up in adoring what he at the same time despises, and Rank cites ample passages from Wilde's *Dorian Grey* to demonstrate the character's ambiguous attitude towards his self. Here, as in the case of classical mythography according to which Narcissus would rather welcome death than live in the face of the image's ephemerality, the fear of death has to do with growing old, with the *coming* of death, or dying. The narcissistic *persona* suffers from the persecutory rage against the coming of the future which he identifies with the end and termination, his double, thus inflicting upon himself, as Dorian does, the obsessional terror of the present: will I live or die?

The vacillation of polarities at work, however, the love of the beautiful image and the anguish in the face of finitude, does not lead to some form of neutralisation of the opposing attitudes, on the contrary, the persecutory ambivalence strengthens the position of the centre on which they focus and "shows exceedingly strong interest in one's own self".<sup>5</sup> Likewise, thanatophobia is paralleled by the strong drive of self-preservation. Rank even goes on to say that the anguish of death "has its main root in the self-preservation drive, the greatest threat to which is death".<sup>6</sup> Even if this, as Rank admits, does not suffice in accounting for the "pathological thanatophobia" caused by that portion of the repressed libido which gives rise to *Ichtribe*, there is nevertheless nothing else within the narcissistic passivity that could provide us with the means of crossing its position. The rationality of

the narcissistic dialectic of love and hate, self-attachment and the dread over the loss of the beloved form, is too remote from the desired transcending moment that can only be found in the encounter with the real, the point of departure from the traumatic turn that left narcissistic moment revolving around itself in the same time, the present that is silent.

Rank, whose work on the double and narcissism spans over eleven years from 1914, the time when Freud published his paper on narcissism, to 1925, the time of publication of *The Double*, seems to borrow a number of terms from Freud not only in order to confirm the inherent tendencies of the narcissistic self, notably "the narcissistic disposition towards paranoia", "the homosexual aetiology of paranoia", "the persecution complex", megalomaniac and projectional tendencies, and "the recurrence of what is repressed in that which represses".<sup>7</sup> But, as we will soon see, Rank also discloses those workings of the narcissistic position over which Freud remains silent. What are they?

## CHAPTER 1

### FREUD'S NARCISSUS

Freud opens his paper<sup>8</sup> with the definition of narcissism as a sexual perversion.<sup>9</sup> In making this description Freud uses the term already current in the psychological circles of his time.<sup>10</sup> But he also refers to the mythical story of a beautiful youth who, having failed to speak the difference to another, remains in the custody of an untransformed innocence - untransformed, that is to say, unreflected, but in a different sense than in the case of self-reflection which, whether speaking or hearing, he is.<sup>11</sup> Perversion being on the one side, on the other, as Freud seems to agree with Rank, narcissism occupies a legitimate "place in the regular course of human sexual development".<sup>12</sup> Everything that concerns this "regular course" with regard to narcissism will revolve around the investment, or misinvestment, of the libido.

It is interesting that in the opening pages of his study Freud unfolds, alongside the preliminary remarks about the *economy* of narcissism, the scene of contention, where he plays his views against those of Jung.<sup>13</sup> The kernel of the conflict, which eventually led Freud to relinquish his hope for Jung to become his spiritual successor, and to the break between two men, rests with the understanding of the libido theory. I will outline it briefly. Jung's main objection concerns the "withdrawal of libido", which he calls "introversion", from the external world and replacing real objects with imaginary ones. This for Freud is a condition for the constrained relation with the world, subsequently leading to narcissistic disorders. It also makes impossible for distinguishing psychosis and neurosis in which one is only partly withdrawn from reality. Jung identifies libido as a force in itself, or a "psychical interest in general", not only defending but also affirming his libidinal *elan vital* as that which for Freud constitutes a narcissistic illusion. Without any doubt, and this is also one of the cornerstones of psychoanalysis, libido's birth is already its cathexis, which summons the Other as a mark of sexuality. There are two kinds of libidinal investment for a child "himself and the woman who nurses him".<sup>14</sup> Whether the libidinal attitude is narcissistic or follows the object choice, human sexuality is from birth, if not earlier, formed



in the relation to the Other, the mother being the primal Other, or, what defines the narcissistic bond, to the imaginary other, namely the self. It is only on the basis of exclusion of heterogeneity that Jung can by contrast afford to speak of the non-sexual libido. And since his theory does not incorporate the object-libido which for Freud constitutes the actual dimension of the subject's formation, one could easily say that for Jung there is no concept of the Other.

Having broken off the relations with Jung in 1913, and having been attacked the same year by him in his paper *Theory of Psychoanalysis*, in which the object-libido has no legitimate place,<sup>15</sup> Freud gathers his theoretical assets to formulate in 1914 his libidinal credo. In doing so he distances himself from the notion of the psychical force as such and from its espouser who will no doubt come to incarnate the narcissistic spirit of self-generated and self-sufficient libido whose only "object" can be that of the self. This mirage, or as Lacan will call it in *Ethics of Psychoanalysis* "the ideal of independence", sustains the homosexual illusion of a masturbatory generation of the same, throwing Freud in the other direction, or in the direction of the Other, which for him is marked as the question of transcendence. To accomplish that, or at least to have such accomplishment as a goal, is for Freud to move into the inquiry proper of that libidinal territory where the subjects, "perverts and homosexuals" enter on the path of "seeking *themselves* [*sich selbst*] as a love-object exhibiting a type of object-choice [*Objectwahl*] which must be termed narcissistic".<sup>16</sup>

Although Freud's clear objective is to move from the I-libido to the object-libido, he is far from labelling the former pathological. It is rather that I-libido arises as a secondary investment, a displacement (Freud does not use the term) effected by the "'damming up' of the libido [*libidostauung*]"<sup>17</sup> Such libidinal withdrawal to the "subject's own self", narcissistic by definition and nature, is also a condition favourable to the development of hypochondria, anxiety neurosis, indulgence in sleep and "egoism of dreams". Freud bases its appearance on a commonly recognised fact:

It is universally known, and we take it as a matter of course [*selbstverständlich*], that a person who is tormented by organic pain and discomfort gives up his interest in the things of the external world, in so far as they do not concern his suffering. Closer observation teaches us that he also withdraws *libidinal* interest from his love-objects: so long as he suffers, he ceases to love. The commonplace nature of this fact is no reason why we should be deterred from translating it into terms of the libido theory. We should then say: the sick man withdraws his libidinal cathexes back upon his own I, and sends them out again when he recovers<sup>18</sup>

The hypochondriac is not the only one who after experiencing displeasure in the face of an object, or anguish in the face of its lack, directs his libidinal resources inwards, a process similar, but not identical, to what Nietzsche already called *inpsychation*. The hypochondriac has a particular kind of attachment to his body that is left to him as a shelter from the outside perils. In particular, in his care of the self there is an *organ* whose erotic significance replaces the real object. This organ is an ambivalent source of suffering as it seems to be blocking the outward way of the libido and, on the other hand, accumulates a high amount of excitations rendering them pleasurable. The organ in question is what Freud calls "the genital organ in its states of excitation",<sup>19</sup> and it is susceptible to a whole range of sensations. The genital organ is in fact *any* organ in so far as it constitutes the locus of the stimuli and represents the erotogenic place, heavily charged with the libido, which the hypochondriac makes into his narcissistic sanctuary.

It is the basis of erotogenicity of a bodily part as invested with and objectified by the libidinal force, given that these parts are displacements of *the* genital organ, the primary source of pleasurable sensations, that allows Freud to make an inference with regard to the I. Just as it is an erotogenic organ belonging to *my* body that, due to the ambivalent *jouissance* of which it never wearies, attracts me whilst distracting me from other bodies, so it is also, as Freud seems to be suggesting, the ego that offers an abode on the exiled existence from others. In this respect, hypochondria appears as a relative of anxiety neurosis, the distinction being the lack of the object in the case of the latter. In so far as the genital organ of the hypochondriac only becomes an object through the withdrawal of the libido from the external world, it never remains one in the sense of an outer object, that which would undermine the narcissistic bond between the libido as force and the place of its investment which becomes a seat of excitations.

This brings us back to the question of the origin of *libidostauung*. How and why does the libido become deflected to stalk the object-libido? The question concerns the origin of libidinal attachment which Freud already located in the I. For the libidinal energy to be released towards an object, it must in the first place be accumulated in the I. Thus Freud seems to have an answer ready at hand. Firstly, the I-libido is a necessary condition for further libidinal development. Secondly, the object investment will facilitate renunciation of primary narcissism if there is an I effected by it. As yet another circle. Now, the "necessity for transcending narcissism" comes from the overflowing of libido in

the domain of the I which is structurally limited. At the moment when the I becomes brimful of libido, its surplus leads on to the development of a certain egoism that serves, in particular in the case of the hypochondriac, as "a protection against falling ill". Such an erotic shield assumes a narcissistic power to "protect" us from both desiring and loving the Other, falling in love and falling ill being uttered here in one breath: "in the last resort we must begin to love in order not to fall ill, and we are bound to fall ill if, in consequence of frustration, we are unable to love".<sup>20</sup> But is love understood here as love of the Other, or does Freud speak about love of the self thus equating it with illness? Or is every kind of love a form of hypnotic malady, as Freud will comment elsewhere?

Love, called transference in psychoanalysis, carries me over to not myself but to another, an object outside myself. And yet without the I-libido such an investment is destined to failure from the start; that which loves is also loved (like in the Hegelian example above), closing the circle of narcissism and bringing out the illness as a result of my inability not to love but to assimilate or appropriate the object within the subject. It is only this strange surplus of the I-libido that, while facilitating an object-libido, prevents me from giving the whole of the sexual reserve out towards the Other. "I can only love the Other if I can no longer love myself", seems to be the only way in which the desirous excess can wedge a split between the I as a privileged object of narcissism, that which loves itself, and the Other whose love will emerge outside the egotic economy of narcissism.

The patheme of love makes Freud break his investigation. Where does it go this surplus which prevents us, indeed saves us, from the extremities of *homeostasis*, self-absorption and disappearance? Love, like the drive, is always a partial and fragmentary love for there are at play both real and imaginary objects. The object-libido paves the way for overcoming narcissism but the fantasmatic object is still there in the background to strengthen *libidostauung*.

The difference between objects is crucial for understanding the damming-up of the libido, but it does not determine the status of the I. The blocking of the desire of the object, or an attachment of the libido to the imaginary object, leads to *introversion*, a term already introduced by Jung, but very useful in Freud's narcissistic project nevertheless. However, the introversion-based withdrawal of the libido into an imaginary object is not a synchronic concurrence to the libido's attachment [*Anlehnung*] to the I. Introversion does not involve the I. Freud presents these two kinds of investment as alternatives,

distinguishing at the same time his views from Jung's in that the latter does not acknowledge the second kind of investment. It seems that Freud is extremely careful in separating out what he will later call "the narcissistic type" [*narziſtischen Typus*]. To the extent that it is detectable in hypochondria, which has an erotogenic organ as its object, the second variation of the narcissistic attitude falls under the name of megalomania. The term designates temporary mastery of the I-libido serving as the "counterpart of the introversion on to fantasies that is found in transference neuroses".<sup>21</sup> Thus the libido becomes unblocked as soon as the passage has been secured from the imaginary object to the real object, e.g. a body of the Other. It will be up to Lacan to demonstrate that Freud's epistemological conclusion drawn "from our observations and views on the mental life of children and primitive people" offers a slim choice, as the I becomes included into the category of the imaginary constructs, whereas the so called real object appears in Lacan's theory as a part of the body fallen from it. I will come back to it later in this chapter.

Megalomania is for Freud a turning point in breaking away from introversion, and from Jung, and leads on to the formulation of the I-drive [*Ichtrieb*]. The distinction between imaginary and real objects is dropped, whereas the difference between the object-libido and I-libido no longer holds, as Freud goes on to say that the former is a form of concealment of the latter. The problem of narcissism now receives another dimension, that of the subject's "experiences of satisfaction". It is also at this juncture where the self-preservational drives are brought into the scene and, with them, the I-drives, the early incarnation of the sexual drives. An encounter with an object, its availability/nonavailability is, after all, measurable in degrees of satisfaction which, in the first place, have the I-drives as a subject of satisfaction. It has now become clear that the "necessity to transcend" narcissism is not so much dependent on the separation of the I-drives from sexual drives, which is never achieved completely, but on that on which the drives lean. Now, since Freud distinguishes two types of attachment [*Anlehnung*] of the drives, there must be, accordingly, two types of objects for the drives. What are they? In the first *Anlehnungstypus*, the drive props itself up on the mother and her substitutes, thus appropriating "the persons who are concerned with child's feeding, care, and protection"<sup>22</sup> into a love object. Thus the I-drive, following Strachey's rendering of the Freudian term, leans on, is appended, or even supplemented, to the object *anaclitically*.<sup>23</sup> The supplementarity of the drive is a further confirmation of the inseparability of the I and sexual drives in so far as one is propped on the other, namely the I-drive on the sexual

drive. Likewise, the love object is in a supplementary relation to the varying degrees of satisfaction of the drive.<sup>24</sup>

The second type of love bond is designated by Freud as *narcissitic*. In this model, the I-drive seeks both attachment and satisfaction in the relation to what is not the mother but his own self [*selbst*]. What is this self, given that it is from the start distinct from the *Ichtrieb*, the I-libido being directed outward and falling, or attaching itself, just as the sexual drive does, onto an object which is obviously not identical with the source of the libido? It is not the first time that Freud's structuring of narcissism touches upon the structure of the drive in which four components are singled out, two of which are the source and the object. Without going into the details of this model, it suffices to say that the drive's structure is an accurate representation of what Freud aims to transcend, namely, the narcissistic circularity of the libido from its source to the object which in the case of the I-drive can only be one, the ego itself. If for the narcissitic *Ichtrieb* the I is the only object on the dynamic horizon, what is the object of the sexual drive that could be distinguished from the I-drive and its sources? Let's reverse the question before looking into how Lacan will attempt to maintain the Freudian structure of the drive whilst situating its object, in this instance the I, in the register of the imaginary.

In Freud's two types of love-relations one rests on the object-choice of the mother, the other, on the attachment to the self. These are the two kinds of objects Freud mentions each of them resonating with echoes of history of the philosophical object of perception, each being summoned by the perceptual, or imaginary, apparatus that renders object *present*, in the sense of perceived reality, even ideally present as its presence presents it to the subject, the I - or is it the eye? - which is at the same time, in Freud's model of narcissism, the object. I am anticipating here the fate of what will eventually be labelled as the object, not that of the mother, as her presence is merely a form of concealment of her desire, but that of the I. Also, we must be more alert to the distinction between the self and the I, *sich selbst* and *das Ich*, the latter taking on a form of the first person pronoun and the former designating the auto-reflective function of the ego's relation to "its" image; it is this *its* that for Lacan renders every object imaginary, the object of the subject, the *objet petit a*.

Given then that the love attachment follows two directions, one moving towards the primal Other, Freudian maternal object, the other seeking the self *as* the object, the narcissitic object *par excellence*, the question is this: are they still ob-jects in the sense of

extraneous presences, fixed and permanent, and how do they differ, the external from the internal, the object-love which women can give to a child, from the one that he creates for himself as if out of the lack of such presence, or, already, out of the libidinal remainder that goes in neither direction, neither inward nor outward? What Freud calls an object appears as a libidinized alterity of the subject, a small and objectified alterity, or better still, an infinite and undefinable "otherness" framed, as it were, in an imaginary moment that represents a collapse of the narcissistic totality in the process of what Lacan calls "differentiation from the external world - what is included inside is differentiated from what is rejected by the processes of exclusion, *Aufstossung*, and of projection".<sup>25</sup> But this process could only account for the formation of the imaginary self, heralded by Freud as narcissistic to the extent that it does *not* attach itself to the desire of the Other but stops at the object of the drive and *jouissance*. Thus the choice of the direction of the drive will depend not solely on the structural resources of the sexual drives of the subject, which, we recall, has both the source and the object inscribed within the same economy, nor on desire which is oriented by the lack of an object, but on satisfaction which has Lacanian object *a* on the horizon of the drive.<sup>26</sup>

Freud's inquiry into the typology of love has a number of classifications, the narcissistic one being at the forefront of interhuman relations.<sup>27</sup> In his study of narcissism the initially defined two types of love bond are characterised further. There are four kinds of what can be called imaginary presence towards which the narcissistic ego projects itself in love:

1. the self he is (himself),
2. the self he was,
3. the self he desires to be,
4. that which in the past was a part of himself.

All are imaginary to the extent that the desire to be this or that is not without a relation to the mediating image. For the first time narcissism receives a temporal dimension, a kind of temporal chart or calendar, which allows Freud to take as yet another step towards "a necessity to transcend" the narcissistic "desire". The passage of transcendence is no longer represented in solely spatial terms of topography. It will rather be regarded as a crossing of time, a temporal difference that separates the drive from the object in its temporal itinerary. Accordingly, we have four directions which the drive takes to develop temporal relations: the present, the past, the futural-projectional time, and the metonymical time. There is no

one time for the narcissist, or narcissism, in which to orient itself and to remain at home. There is no one time because the future towards which they are oriented in their narcissistic disorientation belongs to no one. And when the promise of homecoming cannot be kept there is only an exile and alienation, not only a displacement of uncertain destination but also, perhaps, of time itself.

In the *present* hides the danger of losing that which the narcissistic ego thinks it is, or that which one identifies as his, the body with its erotogenic parts, the penis, the clitoris, the self which these embody. We should not forget here that for Freud the ego is above all the bodily ego. The castration complex, which Freud introduces in the third part of his paper, poses the danger of loss of auto-erotic pleasure on the one hand, and, of the image of the body identified as *mine*, on the other. We could say that here the castration revolves around the imaginary phallus, the image of a part of the body excessively charged with libido. The difference between me and others is at stake, while the threat of loss is identified as the lack of self-sufficiency and self-identity, i.e. of being-one-with-self, that constantly undermines the ideal economy of narcissistic presence.

What is lacking is repressed in the present - but not *as* the present - in what Freud calls "self-respect [*Selbstgefühl*] of the I", the sense-of-self. In so far as the narcissistic subject accepts, incorporates and appropriates the given time in its epistemological and cultural dimension, thus submitting to the norms of his *ÜberIch*, he represses *other* "impressions, experiences, impulses and desires" projecting "an *ideal* in himself by which he measures his actual I [*actuelles Ich*]"<sup>28</sup> It is this ideal, but above all, an identification of the ideal as constituting *his* ego or as arising from his narcissistic self and confirming the self-satisfying interest in it, that is to a large extent responsible for repression. Idealisation is here to be distinguished from sublimation. The former is one of the concomitants of narcissism in that it involves an immobilisation and perpetuation of an object, again, an objectification of what can only be the self that one *was*. The "ideal I [*Idealich*] is now the target of the self-love [*Selbstliebe*] which was enjoyed in childhood by the actual I" (ibid.). In the present, the time in which the self has promoted to that of an ideal, the former self, indeed, the *I was*, is reincarnated. The *Idealich* recovers not only the rudiments of the infantile self, but also the lost narcissism thus displacing the primary one into the ideal I. Idealisation is a temporal process which brings the actual I face to face with the past. Sublimation by contrast directs the libido towards "an aim other than, and remote from, that of sexual satisfaction; in this process the accent falls upon deflection from sexuality"

(ibid.). Secondly, sublimation does not involve repression. It is perhaps not possible to speak of sublimation in the dimension of love between humans as it excludes not only the narcissistic type of attachment, but also the anaclitic one.<sup>29</sup>

The object on whose presence Freud insists in the process of idealisation is what we could call a prototype of the Lacanian *objet a*. It is no ordinary object of perception of traditional empirical philosophy nor is it a mental object of psychology. The object veils the Other. In one of his lectures, Heidegger captured this moment in the following way: "And when man no longer sees the one side as *one* side, he has lost sight of the other side as well. What sets the two sides apart, what lies between them, is covered up."<sup>30</sup> The object covers what is absent in them, or behind them, thus taking on a form of a one-sided veil that, so to speak, brings us to our senses; one-sidedness becomes totalized into all-sidedness where the perceptive-imaginary sets the rules. The narcissistic space has become one-dimensional but in such a way that it is not evident to the eye. It is only when the structure of the eye is unfolded as an awareness of the body of which the eye is an integral part, that the optical illusion of clustering into an undifferentiated totality of that which sees *and* that which is seen can be dispelled.

The narcissistic object of identification covers that of which it is a mimetic creation, namely, the relation between the I and the self. That is why for Freud the object redirects the drive back not to its source, which would lead to homeostasis, but to the materiality of the *objet a* which veils the Other, this transparent screen being, or rather functioning as both the image and the damming up of libido. The image of the self generated in the work of *mimesis* demonstrates how the libido of the drive is blocked and, as it were, returned to the space in which time is petrified in the gaze. Narcissus looks, and his look *speculates* on the imaginary boundaries of the self-object with which he both identifies as his and which he idealises in the projectional tendency (Rank) to recover the originary past, the *I was*, or should we say, following Heidegger, the *has-been*. How otherwise could there arise a trace of the former or originary self that is loved were it not for the image - for Lacan the visual one being the primary one - as the medium in which a reflective spectre assumes another, imaginary life imposed upon and alienated from the symbolic order of which the image is but a mere shadow?

And yet Freud does not say, only Lacan after him does, what the object is except calling it that which exists "without any alteration in its nature, is aggrandised and exalted in the subject's mind".<sup>31</sup> He does not say whether the object is imaginary or symbolic, and



whether, at the time of *libidostauung*, it is a fantasmatic construct of *traumdeutung* or an already formed subject of language who, just as Narcissus had done before he was seen, speaks to himself. If Freud's investigation leads us to say that the self is imaginary it is only in the sense of it being rendered immobile, changeless, and opaque. Not only does it *seem* not to strip the Freudian object of its "otherness", of being other than me, other than the I speaking and addressing itself beyond the reflective feed-back, but it affirms it as "essentially" other than me. It is just that the little other has to do with the body-image which always seems to come back to that of which it is an image, the ego. What comes to the fore in both instances is that the other self, the love object of narcissistic desire, exists in another time, for example, as Freud already indicated, in the past, which is why the libidinal investment in it is also anxiety-ridden. The fact that the "past" is imaginary does not mean that its actual translations are "pure" symbolisations. Such adequation is as remote from harmonious reconciliation as its constitutive elements are remote from each other. In narcissism, however, there will always be an attempt to stabilise this relation, to immobilise it, to appropriate its objects, to render it nonrelational and thus to summon the thanatos which, like in Ovid's story, emerges as its irremediable destination. Let's attempt now to relate Freud's findings and constructions about the narcissistic futility of self-investment to what appears as a root of speculative philosophy.

The *Ichideal* is the replacement for the primary narcissism. (In this sense idealisation is also a failure of sublimation). The value of the ideal is measured, in relation to the "actual I", by the agency on which Freud will elaborate a few years later, the *Überich*. It is the strangely seductive power of this agent that creates persecutory delusions of "being *watched*". The agent of *Überich* is not without some participation in supporting the ideal but, as Freud points out, this support, although it sustains the imaginary being as a specular watchman, comes from the presence of the Voice:

Delusions of being watched present this power in a regressive form, thus revealing its genesis and the reason why the patient is in revolt against it. For what prompted the subject to form an *Ichideal*, on whose behalf his conscience acts as watchman, arose from the critical influence of his parents (conveyed to him by *the medium of the voice*).. [my ital.].<sup>32</sup>

There is more to the imaginary presence of the narcissistic object than the specular reflection. The vocal image seems to have the same *function* in the formation of the ideal, even if the *ÜberIch* comes into existence much later than the relation with the mirror. The

emergence of the vigil supported by the specular, and vocal, images puts a clamp on the temporal economy of desire enclosing it within a space represented by a set of imaginary-mimetic relations. How is this structure to be described, given this description is already a temporalizing representation?

The I-ideal is not only an imaginary reincarnation of the former self but also a slavish response to the Other, to the Law. Its revolt against the Other, so reminiscent of the master/slave dialectic that in Lacan will find a new meaning, signifies the paranoiac moment of an attempt to liberate the overburdened libido. The emancipated libido is thus, if I can put it this way, homosexualized generating a hostile and aggressive attitude to the *heteros*. As S. Leclaire commented, the *Ichideal* is imposed from without "as a displacement of libido on to an I-ideal" which satisfies the narcissistic ideal.<sup>33</sup> Satisfies, that is to say, retains the self-critical function in the place of the libido, drawing from it the ambiguous pleasure of vigilance. But Freud goes further than to describe some infantile mechanism that is to be dismantled in adulthood as if these were successive phases.<sup>34</sup> The agency of conscience in which resounds the call of the imaginary other takes on a form of "philosophic introspection" which spreads the wings of critical judgement over the libido folding it into an observation of the object that is called narcissistic, what we can refer to as the *me*. For Freud, the narcissistic libido, represented by *Selbstgefühl*, which has the *me* as its object, functions as the libido of the same, the homosexual economy of desire, although "passion" would be more suitable a term. Homosexuality sustains itself in this *ideal* form, yet charged with aggressive tendencies, because it at the same time wards itself off against dangers of loss of *jouissance* generated in the process of imaginary identifications spawned in the *speculum* of speculation. It is therefore between the little other of homosexuality and the Other of heterosexuality, where we must seek the fundamental difference that points to the conditions for "transcending" narcissism.

Philosophical reflection scans what lies at the root of the agency that approaches and reproaches the activity of desire, primarily in dreams where it takes on a form of a "dream censor", but also in waking states. Leaning on Silberer's observation of the "functional phenomenon", "one of the few indisputably valuable additions to the theory of dreams", Freud writes how

we can directly observe the translation of thoughts into visual images, but that in these circumstances we frequently have a representation, not of a thought-content, but of the actual state (willingness, fatigue)... Similarly, he has shown that the conclusions of some dreams or some divisions in their

content merely signify the dreamer's own perception of his sleeping and waking. Silberer has thus demonstrated the part played by observation - in the sense of the paranoiac's delusions of being watched - in the formation of dreams. This part is not a constant one. Probably the reason why I overlooked it is because it does not play any great part in my own dreams; [my ital.] in persons who are gifted philosophically and accustomed to introspection it may become very evident.<sup>35</sup>

There is a state in which representations signify the actual perception of the subject. The philosophical insight, provided it is distinct from the scientific evidence of psychoanalysis, and, provided it is subject to the critical agency of the *ÜberIch* which facilitates the delusions of vigilance, works as a kind of narcissistic gaze into the work of the I-libido and the extent to which a particular perceptibility takes part in the formation of the subject. The object of this observation not only structurally belongs to the space of the self but, indeed, is the very self in its idealised, i.e. self-investing, self-loving, self-aggrandised, in short auto-erotic form. Thus the mode of observation vacillates between the sense-of-self [*Selbstgefühl*] and self-criticism. The philosopher is the one who, feeling he is watched, watches himself. The philosopher, or rather, philosophical observation, produces the effects of self-observation and self-analysis, given that this "self" is a homosexualized - or self-libidinized - *Liebeobject* which regulates the libidinal balance between the libido of the gaze, I watching, and the libido of the imaginary object, the *me*, the self, the *ego* being watched. I-watching-myself-being-watched is constitutive of an equally ideal and paranoiac circuit which is "frequently" accountable for what happens in observation and introspection.<sup>36</sup>

The speculative observation is a good example of the primitive temporality which relies on its mnemonic resources and on the mediatization of its effects. What is missing in every narcissistico-speculative elaboration is love for the Other, namely, transference, that necessarily relies on linguistic constructions to the extent that its demands can only be articulated. Thus narcissism appears as a mute love (*infins*), an absence that gives rise to self-observation as an attempt to retain the given time and to exhaust its possibilities among which the time for love has no place or no time *to* love. But it will never suffice to invite Eros into this path for love to happen. Something else will follow alongside the path of Narcissus to facilitate the relation between the sexual drive and the I-drive, and the subsequent sublimatory and ideational formations, the two terms whose confusion gives rise to the *imaginary object*. This something else is what Freud does not mention in his *Introduction*.

For it is only in so far as the subject - being framed in the narcissistic-critical observation of relations with what concerns us here, what directs blindly our "passion for origin" and the desire for difference - signifies "the desire of the Other", that the movement towards realising the truth outside the narcissistic dialectic of the other takes shape in the alterity of what is realised. The narcissistic *otherness* is a kind of desire that is insufficient to transfer the libido onto another. If, according with the project of the "necessity to transcend narcissism", the imaginary other is to be "degraded" in the libidinal investment because of the danger of the illusion of being caught up in the act of the perpetuation of the self, or self-perpetuation, how is the Other of love to be addressed and understood?

Let's rewrite the Freudian narcissistic scene. The formation of the I aims at transcending narcissism which is never a pure and simple arrival at a given place. The I stumbles on the primary narcissism (the former self, the *I was*) and the libido is displaced on to the I-ideal which is given support by the agency of conscience mediated by a voice or, etymologically speaking, *vocation*. The *Ichideal* blocks the object-libido from taking, at the same time, the place of the "original" object, and idealisation leads to the investment of the I-drive into an object within the spatial domain of the I. However, the love object is not a unitary one. It is, as Freud seems to indicate in *Narzissmstypus*, a multiple object. Its presence is fourfold concealing four temporal itineraries: the past, the present, the futural-projectional and the metonymic object. Likewise, there are four major components of the narcissistic space of *das Ich*, the scene of fusion, and confusion: the I-ideal, the actual I, the I-drive, and the temporal image of the *I was* (visual or vocal) mediated by the critical agency of conscience. On the face of it, is not this quadripartite structure a step towards Freud's elaboration of the structure of the drive which he will construct a year later? In the topography of the drive there are also four elements: the aim, the source, the thrust, and the object. To what extent is the hypothesis about a structural resemblance between the narcissistic spatiality and the drive's dynamics legitimate, given that it derives from the fact that the drive that is present in all other drives is not discussed in Freud's account of narcissism?

## CHAPTER 2

### DEATH IN THE MIRROR

Not a word of death from Freud concerning narcissism. Neither the anguish of death nor any form of deadening threat to the limits of narcissistic postponement is mentioned in the *Introduction*. In fact, in his complex and at times capriciously elliptical meditation Freud recognises all facets that are tractable in the mythical story for their relevance to the psychic functioning, all but one, the thanatos. One possible reason for such omission, such displacement, is that there is no "necessity to transcend" narcissism, for it has, as Freud says it anyway, a legitimate place in the course, or rather dis-course, of the unconscious formation. There is no transition or passage from the narcissistic to the nonnarcissistic, whilst the critical account in the discourse of which the "empirical observations" are named, is as much subject to commentary as the experience of the narcissistic subject. There is no "necessity" for transcendence, for there appears in the text, and I will come back to this, a form of renunciation, even a sacrifice, of narcissism that produces nothing but symptoms of abandonment and disillusionment on the side of the one who observes them and reflects on them at the same time. Freud or the subject's signifier that misses the target?

That is why the omission of the anguished mortification of the whole narcissistic reflection plunged into the moment of death, but, above all, of the *thanatophobia* that in the course of writing presents itself as the power of *the death drive* already operating in the psychographic task as a wasteland, not without therapeutic benefits of course, of narcissistic speculation, does not strike us as incidental. That moment of death of the presumed imaginary wholeness consummated in the identification with the image, be it visual, vocal, or other, is a trembling anticipation of the double, or doubling, that reintroduces into theoretical meditation and self-referential signification the symbolical insignia of death. Do we not hear in this the echo of Hegel's words that "the word is a murder of the thing"? Do we not suspect in Freud's exploration the mark of Lacan's "return" to his symbolical father? The Other, that which precedes every imaginary relation

and construction, is addressed not in the synthesis of narcissistic experience and reflection on it, but in a kind of literary or symbolic "experience" which bears the effects of the death drive - displacement, effacement, substitution - already inscribed in the signifying act.

We need not resort to Rank's account which demonstrates the thanatic excesses of narcissistic love to notice that the death drive makes its first appearance in narcissism, that is to say, in relation to the narcissistic object. It attracts Narcissus to bridge the gap between the imaginary and the symbolic, or, as Freud will say in the *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* a few years later, between the inanimate matter and the ecstatic character of human sexuality. The ambivalent relation to the image of the *I was*, to give an example of the narcissistic love "object", is resolved in the mythical story as a failure of incorporation resulting in the collapse into nonexistence, absence and death. For a human being, as Rank shows, there is a form of resistance at work - a resistance that can only manifest itself in the symbolisation that erases rather, than re-presents the image. Thus the ambivalence reveals a strong self-preservational drive that counterbalances the suicidal tendency of self-destruction. "To live or to die" is the question that the narcissist fails to answer, not because he chooses death, but because he does not choose to listen to the empty echo of the question. If he finds himself in a pendular hesitation as to where to go, it is because he fails to comprehend the letter addressed to him.

There are at least two reasons which allow us to reread Freud's letter, and raise some ethical questions arising from mythography of narcissism:

1) Concealment of the death drive to which there are nevertheless certain indications in the Freudian *text*. These traces derive from various moments of *disillusionment* that appear mostly in the middle of his paper thus wedging a hiatus in its composition - "For it seems very evident that another person's narcissism has a great attraction for those who have renounced part of their own narcissism and are in search of object-love"<sup>1</sup> - and summoning a voice of renunciation that will from now on cry out louder than before. On the one hand, Freud will relate the narcissistic object's displacement to the loss of ideal, on the other hand, the object of love will be sought outside the dialectic of the ideal. But where is it to be found if the sexual beings that are object of psychoanalytical study are narcissistic too?: "Women, especially, if they grow up with good looks, develop a certain self-contentment which compensates them for the social restrictions that are imposed upon them in their

choice of object. [...] it is only themselves that such women love with an intensity comparable to that of the man's love for them" (ibid.) The abandonment of the narcissistic object, in this case that which *she is*, desire of the m(O)ther, is not replaced with the love-object which, since it can only love itself, is lacking in reality. Since man's love for a woman comes up against her narcissistic inaccessibility, he has to either confront a possible renunciation of his vain love for her or contract the narcissistic virus. Finally, there is one more sound of disillusionment with regard to children, the moment in which another narcissistic object, this time the *I was*, is called into play. Its presence is its reminiscence: "The charm of a child lies to a great extent in his narcissism, his self-contentment and inaccessibility, just as the charm of certain animals which seem not to concern themselves about us, such as cats and the large beasts of prey" (ibid.). Thus all potential candidates for love-objects, namely, women, children, and animals, are disqualified as chief exponents of narcissism. Their brimful "self-contentment" and self-sufficiency are effectively a sign of our own isolation, perhaps alienation, certainly estrangement from the seductive inaccessibility of the object. Growing disappointment, a sense of abandonment and desertion by the loved ones, among whom should be included the most promising of disciples, and a slim tone of envy of the playful and self-loving ones sets in. Somewhere, a dirge of melancholia can be heard. The signs of ageing, and the barrier between himself and those around him for whom narcissistic desire provides the source of vitality and creativity, grows.<sup>2</sup> And if we add to this Freud's disillusionment with religion, its gradual renunciation which lashes him into guilt, and then to obligation to debunk its illusions and translate narcissistic sentiments into the truths of psychoanalysis, does it not become incumbent on the pursuit of science to sacrifice narcissism? This is no doubt an example of the real making itself present, felt, perhaps even becoming Freud's symptom when he exposes, with an inseparable honesty, the price and the stake in his encounter with the real. And this should include some of Freud's hesitation and indecisiveness about the relation between the inside and the outside, the internal and the external "object". Does such renunciation of narcissism become then a renunciation of the thanatos, or is it rather that its concealment bestows on the narcissistic moment an uncertain conclusion? For there would be no "necessity to transcend", or duty to sacrifice "a part of our own narcissism", were it not for the inexplicable presence/absence of:

2) The object. In relentlessly emphasising the significance of the object, Freud invites a paradox. If in his topography the narcissistic subject becomes an *object for itself*, what is the subject, or rather, what comes after its deobjectification? Although narcissism of the subject - of the "actual I"? - is defined solely in terms of the bodily object, the latter is nonetheless *presented* as a fragment of the subject who confronts it in place of the *absence* of the Other. Since the Other does not reciprocate the gift of love or answer the demands of love, the former, the subject, becomes the narcissistic object of the Other. It is the parents' narcissism that demands of their child to be an object of unceasing delight. The subject's imaginary satisfaction consists in fulfilling this demand and being what the Other wants him to be. On the second plane then, narcissism raises the question not so much of an isolated and mute malady or pathological self-sufficiency fuelled by the moral *ought* of the subject, of which women and children are the most striking examples, but, *essentially*, of the locality and temporality of the object. But if in Freud's account the I addresses the self in a loving and sexually satisfying way, it is because in doing so it also addresses all other objects, or rather, the other selves, from which it *demand*s love. Now, it is only in Lacan's account that the symbolisation of the demand as addressed to the Other stumbles upon the lack, the m(O)ther not having it and not satisfying it, that will generate desire which ultimately cannot be satisfied. But this already involves the death drive which is not mentioned by Freud at this crucial point. It seems that only in addressing the double as the other *me* in so far as this relation is not and can never be transferential, can the Other, what Freud designates by the real love-object, be open to desire's address. The *me* was once the addressee of the Other's desire after all. Freudian desire of the mOther shows, however, not only how the writing of *The Introduction* wrestles with the relationship that throughout his life appeared overshadowed by the love for his father, but also sets up a new route of exploration into the realm of the maternal, taken up, although in different ways, by both Rank and Lacan. It can therefore be said that narcissism has to do with the absence of the privileged (maternal) object of love,<sup>3</sup> that there is no *given* or ultimately satisfying and to be taken for granted object in addressing the demand but an anguishing lack that signals arrival of death. Thus, the fundamental ambivalence concerns, on the one hand, the sexual drive which allows for the possibility to formulate the demand - Lacanian symbolic - and, on the other hand, the death drive that poses a threat to the ego's identification being swept into silent chasm beyond signification should the demand fail to become transformed



into desire that ex-ists in the face of the lack. Hence the lack of unity with the m(O)ther, which appears as a failure to incorporate the object, that which she does not have, is also what provokes and revokes transference. If the narcissistic object takes precedence over the "real" love object, it is because the former forces to implement an impossibility that the work of the death drive has already brought to rapturous pinnacle. It is an impossibility to transfer libido onto the projected object, and, with it, a disillusionment of the supposing I to become the object of transference. Since the object is not really there but is spawned into being through the projectional display of the unrepresentable lack, the libido has *nowhere* to go. That is to say, it goes to where there is *nothing* to come back from, nothing except for the imaginary resemblance of the flight of love unmatched in a symbolic leap, and an autoerotic *jouissance* that accompanies this no-return. Hence the anguished turning away from the unbearable abyss of absence. Hence the relinquishment of what seems to offer itself as a projection-based and therefore imaginary identity. Hence the withdrawal into sleep, or hypochondriac lament over the punctured body, or into a vacuous stare that sees nothing and says nothing. It is therefore not by accident that Freud related these despaired moments to the illness of melancholia which I will discuss in detail in part II.

Concealment of the death drive from Freudian writing of Narcissus, and the ubiquity of the absent object to which the former nevertheless testifies, open up another stratum of phenomena. First of all, the question of the object, the multiple object as it appears in Freud's paper, touches upon temporality as *temporal presenting* that is not devoid of a projectional import in so far as this presenting is also marked by and echoes the history of discourse in which philosophical inheritance reaches its turning point in the psychoanalytic discourse.<sup>4</sup> But before we follow this path to find in the Lacanian conception of the mirror-object the "remainder" of philosophical reflection of the past ages, a memory of Rank's myth should be evoked again for its particular stress on what hides in Freud's exposition, a signifier of death, its looming to be sure. For what seems to be covered in Freud's study, bursts out in Rank's into fireworks of the work of death, suicide, self-destruction.

The lack of unity with the mother, the patheme Rank develops in depth, serves to underline the ambivalence, the drama of division of life as it is lived, and an extraction of death from its history, which has an effect of life turning towards the past, the mother. But

it would be a prejudice to assume that for Rank the ambivalent object of fascination is nontemporal and empty. (For Freud it is temporal as well as empty). The imaginary self begets terror of the end, termination, totality, because the image, the medium in which the I is held hostage, holds within its *iconomic* frame the key to the present, its unrepresented anguish. For the subject the projected image is a residence for history, or, to be more specific, for the unsymbolized reversal of time. The incomprehensible aspects of this history, among which loom unrepresented residues of the archaic unconscious, e.g. the fundamental fantasy of the intrauterine existence, stirs waves of guilt and indebtedness. To whom? To that which is imaginary in the sense that *it has been given away as jouissance and not taken up as representation*. The suicidal tendency collides with the anguishing emptiness of the unsymbolized, i.e. repressed representative, in a repeated attempt to give something back to that which is presumed timeless. In narcissism the suicidal destruction is on a par with the projective assumption, for what is to be destroyed is what has been projected. And further, what has been projected does not clear the libidinal debt. But is not the debt itself, the guilt, a token of the imaginary construction to no less imaginary creditor, where something real is already at work? The suicidee is tormented by

the conscious idea of [...] eternal inability to return, an idea from which release is only possible in death. Thus we have the strange paradox of the suicide who voluntarily seeks death in order to free himself of the intolerable thanatophobia.<sup>5</sup>

Or, indeed, by the image in which lies unrepresented by that which bypasses his desire to symbolise, for the simple reason that it is desire itself that is as lacking in the double sense of the word.

The imaginary relation with the double assumes a paranoiac function of the other being persecutory and indelible. Not only is the guilt held in abeyance of unpayability, but also is the imaginary creditor indestructibly persistent:

The frequent slaying of the double, through which the hero seeks to protect himself permanently from the pursuits of his self, is really a suicidal act. It is, to be sure, in the painless form of slaying a different ego: an unconscious illusion of the splitting-off of a bad, culpable ego - a separation which, moreover, appears to be the precondition of every suicide. The suicidal person is unable to eliminate by direct self-destruction the fear of death resulting from the threat to his narcissism.<sup>6</sup>

Given, of course, that the "self-destruction" has the narcissistic self as an object and that

destroying it would amount to destroying that of which it is an object, the I.

The splitting of the self marks the division within the subject, in the part of which resides the imago of the mother. The destructive impulse towards that which has not been represented by the love-object relation, Rank continues, but nevertheless remains as a trace of some fragmentary portion of it, seems to echo Freud's schema of initially two sexual objects, the self and the mother (or her substitute). The other self (the term used by Freud is either *eigenen Person* or *selbst*), often thought of as an inseparable shadow, is represented as a "second body", a dead body in fact, that has to be given an imaginary status and rank among the living, so that the symbolic eternalisation of the former may subsequently allow to eternalise the latter. Numerous examples of it can be found in the funeral rites, burial ceremonies, spiritual exercises, and "cult of graves", as Heidegger called it, in general, in the relation to the dead.

The images of the dead, Rank notes, serve as a protective aegis against destruction. But, he adds, in the prehistorical times there was no concern with immortality. The concept of immortality is of a recent breed and its origin can be attributed to narcissism. The "splitting-off" of the double in the process of immortalization of the image of the dead furnishes the other with the capacity to give them both a fixed locus and an iconomic meaning. Such economy and such place could then withstand the ordeals of history and the structural shifts. Only the dead are immortal. The phantom of the dead is a displace-ment of the image summoned to affirm the dialogue with the imaginary other to prolong the not-coming of the end, the timeless duration which is the living dead. Here, the examples used by Rank are similar to Freud's: "For the primitive, as for the child, it is self-evident that he will continue to live, and death is conceived of as an unnatural, magically produced event".<sup>7</sup>

Narcissistic disposition pays tribute to the dead giving veneration to death itself. To be sure, a meditation on death is a moment of conceptualised mourning over the ambivalent object of fascination, the other, displaced onto the image of the dead. "The thought of death", Rank confirms throughout his study as if making up for the absence of thanatos in Freud's *Introduction*, in abundance only to be matched by Heidegger, "is rendered supportable by assuring oneself of a second life, after this one, as a double".<sup>8</sup>

Somewhere in the subterranean time of death, Rank's thanatography runs into Heidegger's narrative. Their paths conjoin in the fraternal pact, just like the one D. Farrel

Krell signs between Heidegger and Freud of the *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Although we live and write in different times, and although *there is no one time for us all to live in*, sooner or later our idioms are bound to be staged up in an imaginary dialogue that, as in this case, plays the Heideggerian signifier against the Freudian one. In the case of the three, as it is with brothers and their secret pacts with death, their distinct meditations take them one by one from the dead to the image of the loved one.

The harbingers of death like Rank, Heidegger, and Freud of *Jenseits*, reincarnate the narcissistic tradition by invoking the dead, death, death drive, mourning each patheme transmitting the traces of a mortified bond with the beloved m(O)ther. The illusory investment of desire in the spectral otherness lives on as a reminiscence of the time of *desire of the Other*. To this extent the dead are an effect of the imaginary death of the other that survived in the emptiness of the Other lacking. Heidegger, for example, does not embark upon full existential analysis of death before bidding ontological farewell to the dead: "We are asking about the ontological meaning of the dying of the person who dies, as a possibility-of-Being which belongs to *his* Being".<sup>9</sup>

Heidegger's move is twofold. Firstly, the site of mourning is designated by the notion of the deceased [*Der "Verstorbene"*], severed from the dead proper [*dem Gestorbenen*], and being the object, the imaginized object of our preoccupation with death. Secondly, the deceased are given a certain status among the living, in the sense of both having undetermined *end* with respect to Dasein, and in the sense of the latter commemorating the departure of those who died as "'still more' than just an item of equipment". As for the living the essential sense of death is disclosed in the impossibility of experiencing the *loss-of-Being* of the dying person. The experience [*Erlebnis*] belongs to the living who suffer as those still remaining, to be more specific, who still remain "*with him*", who experience the loss of "the deceased *himself*".<sup>10</sup> The deceased will always be him, not Heidegger's father, not the real person, but the signifier designating some masculine, paternal, fraternal object (of love, hatred) that is reiterated in the son's/brother's preliminary remarks on death. The impossibility of being-united-in-death-with-him, the impossibility of being one with the other who, even if he "*himself* is no longer there", making him think in anguish and in mourning, becomes the displacement of love of the son for the dead father. Or the living mirage that makes thought possible as its reflective relation with the mediatory image is always a relation with the unconscious history that the

*time* of reflection both suffers and enjoys.<sup>11</sup>

The loss, the true manifestation of death, is not the loss-of-Being of the Other, the father - "*No one can take the Other's dying away from him*"<sup>12</sup> - but the loss lived by those who survived as divided and fragmented. And since the end of the Other is essentially beyond our experience, that is to say outside that which the subject can say, barred as he is, what remains with us is the "not-yet", the elusive truth of Dasein. To this extent Heidegger remains ambiguous about the end of Dasein. The "not-yet" of a particular Dasein renders its end undecided and unfinished. It is the living who must bear the meaning of the "not-yet" taking it with them to death. With the "not-yet" being beyond our grasp and comprehension, the end is equally outside, just like the "ontological meaning of the dying of the person who dies". The "not-yet", the never ending end, which belongs to Dasein (and is so reminiscent of Lacan's *Encore*, or, *en-corps*, in the body more *jouissance*, more *jouissance* of mourning!) is a kind of lack, what Heidegger will call the "lack of totality". This lack names the breach between the living and the dead - that is to say divides the subject - the notorious narcissistic gap which cannot be bridged to the extent that the living bear within them that which is still incomplete, albeit not "unfulfilled", which pertains to non-human beings like plants and animals. Dasein, being always divided between the image of the deceased and the significations of the living who suffer from the real (loss), Dasein as Being-towards-death in that its unfolding carries the anguishing burden of the "not-yet", not yet come-to-an-end, "must *become* - that is to say, *be* - what it is not yet".<sup>13</sup>

Human existence and the lack it becomes, that is to say the divided subject, as Lacan elaborated it - the "not-yet", the "lack of totality" - becomes the lack in the face of the impossibility to appropriate the death/dying of the Other. This impossibility has a bearing on the perceptual grasp, and symbolically impedes what is to come to the place of lack, for example, the living experience of the loss of the originary Other, the uncertain beholder of the gift of love, gift of death, the primordial father. If anything is to put an end to the narcissistic excess of caring for the other self, be it the image of the dead or living, it is the lack, the cut, already resident in those who remain, that is to say who speak, or more precisely, who give a signifying value to the dead letter.

The imaginary other, the beholder of mourned passion, is a poor yet indispensable substitute for the inaccessibility of the Other's death. As Heidegger consoles, the Other is

never fully comprehensible except for "the way *we get it in our grasp* perceptually" (ibid.). Is not the lack, then, the absence pro-voked by the distance between the living and the dead, which seeks substitutes in the practices of mourning - or in the "cult of graves" or funeral rites or, no less, in the meditations on death - a lack of the Other, indeed, a lack *in* the Other? Does not the lack of the Other render our perceptual grasp inadequate, insufficient, discontinuous? It is only the dead Other that can give us the unexpected assurance: the Other is only a guarantor when dead.

But the most thought-provoking instance comes from Heidegger's claim about death being in each case mine. It is difficult to concede that the *death* of the paternal Other, or the *dying* of the maternal Other, discloses death's *mineness* [*Jemeinigkeit*] in the case of every Dasein, if death/dying of the Other is beyond any possibility of continuation or appropriation. Is it not that Heidegger, before turning to the full analysis of death, must first render the lack *as* death phenomenal, indeed, *substitute a death for the Other*, so that the signification of "death" could be masochistically enjoyed in undertaking the task of such analysis? What then does such an analysis reveal except for its very impossibility and the *jouissance* it perpetuates? But by doing this, by distinguishing the end of Dasein from other kinds of end, he is bound to revert to analysis which is *self-relational and not to be heterogenized*. It is only if death itself is in the place of the Other, as it is for Heidegger, the Phallus that cannot be named, that Dasein lacks the end (being the "not-yet"), or simply lacks, thus extending and projecting itself, as that which it is *not* but wants-to-be, Being-whole, being Nothing. In this identificatory relation with the mourning subject, Dasein rises, although Heidegger does not say so, at this Hegelian moment, over and above myself, or, what Heidegger calls, "ahead of myself". But since this identification is only a prophylactic approximation, never bringing me closer to the dying Other, except for its tormenting *jouissance*, to death that cannot be taken away from him, nor "mine" from me, this identification has as its object the mediatory, and mimetic, remainder. What remains is not only the living but the spectral *souvenir* that fuels the *jouissance* of mourning. Such object of narcissistic meditation, the present/absent of the past, can only generate dis-cord in the form of dis-course that symbolises in the face of the lack and always already returns to the impossibility of being one with the Other.<sup>14</sup>

It should not come as a surprise if we conclude, although I will come back to this theme in the concluding chapter, that Heideggerian Being *works* as such identification. To

put it more generally, *Being mediates*, and its mediation links up the moments or stages which Heideggerian reflection undergoes: from the real loss of the Other to the mourning of the dead to the phantom presence of the deceased to the phenomenon of death which becomes an aim of ontological meaning and existential analysis. Being mediates, for in the first analysis being is being for the Other. At the same time, its gravitational traction translates it into the object of fascination of the living in so far as it names the placeless, which is not to say timeless, place of the death of the Other. If no one can take death away from me, to render it *mine* is to erase it, to attempt to separate the death drive from Eros, which can only bring the "not-yet" to its suicidal end and conclusion, not to the work of death in Dasein, but to its intensification, imaginary no doubt, in the face of the One which has at all times been guaranteed to me by the love of the (dead) Other.

Let's now follow more closely the work of identification and the imaginary aspirations it generates. As we shall see, we can find in their formations the birth of the very "Being" Heidegger sought to name.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE BODY IMAGE AND THE ORIGINS OF SPECULARITY

Heidegger's introductory remarks to the meditation on death are caught as the moment of mourning. Just like Freud, however, and to this extent Rank, he is involved in the relation with the object which guides his discourse. Although the problem of fascination with death, to the extent that it is a fascination with the *guarantee* of love and *certainty* of the object of the Other, the "not-yet" of *jouissance* that seeks substitutes of satisfaction, is far from exhausted, we are, again and again, confronted with the reappearance of the *object*, its repetition, its history, its oblique sources. Freud called this object narcissistic but its complex existence calls for more thorough exploration. To begin with, four things have to be said:

1. By distinguishing two sexual objects in the unconscious formations Freud names only one of them as narcissistic. The other one, the *anaclitic* love-object on which the subject leans [*Ahnnehmung*] or to which it is libidinally attached, since it is rooted in the bond with the mother, will inevitably fall into the category of the mediatory image through which, and in which, the relationship with the mother is sexualised. This suffices to say for the moment that there is in fact only one object whose complexity transcends the context of Freud's *Introduction*. The itineraries of the narcissistic object and of what Lacan calls the "ineffable object" of the Other, the love-object, cross at the juncture where it appears as a loss. To the extent that mourning reveals the loss of object, and its presence as lost, analysis attempts to "retrieve" it as a lack that generates desire. The lack is in Lacanian terms the demand for love hollowed within itself "in articulating the signifying chain". This lack is, what Lacan calls, the "cause of desire"

2. But the object retains an imaginary status to the extent that it remains subject's object, or, to be more specific, the ego's object. The neurotic locates it in the Other, and wants it back, whereas the analyst is the one who succeeded in *refinding* it for himself by separating from it. Thus the object functions as a transparent *souvenir* or the image of the



bond with the mOther (gaze, voice). We have called this object multiple for its presence/absence is, as Freud showed at the end of the *Introduction*, conditional upon the temporal mode in which it is retrieved and played out. In other words, the object's existence is designated by the *when*, although for Lacan more stress is put on its "place" in the structure of the subject.

3. The question of the narcissistic relation can therefore be formulated not only in terms of economic sufficiency of the self, or economy of self-consciousness, but also in terms of temporality of the object, its appearance as a lack. Time of the object, which for Lacan is the name,<sup>1</sup> is a history of displacements and a history of failed transferences [*Übertragung*] or transports to that which is projectional in the "narcissistic folding back of the *libido* [Freud's *libidostauung*] and a disinvestment of reality [the Other]".<sup>2</sup> For Freud the real problem is that of the choice and of subject's "preference" for one object (narcissistic) over the other (maternal love-object) which leads to the formation of the *Ichideal*, but also to a vicious circle.

4. Since there is no nontemporal object, as Freud was the first one to point out, there is no object in its objectivity as such.<sup>3</sup> The object is caught up in the perception of the self which is, for Lacan, the locus of *misrecognition* [*méconnaissance*], and, which is subject to the structure of the drive where the object is inscribed as a moment of the temporal circuit of the libido. There is no object as such - the bastion of the traditional empirical philosophy which Freud so carefully avoided - because that which is present can only be manifested as the effect of its disappearance/detachment, and involves mediatory requirements of an image formed by the eye, the ear, the nose, which is unconscious. That is perhaps why we will no longer find the concept of "perception" in Lacanian theory but its conceptual inheritor, the imaginary, which is always to be found laden with illusions and prejudices that bring every object to the realm of the subject and his/her relation with the Other. At this point the subject is only left with signifiers and the *object a*, the name Lacan confers upon the interface between the subject and the Other as a "locus of speech" and a "guarantor of meaning". The object *a* both covers the signifiers, covering up their otherness, and causes desire to appear in the sexual discourse of the Other.

The question of identity, as we can see from the above, has to pass through the

threshold of *identification*, which has the *real* at stake, namely, the unrepresented body withheld from the scopic dialectic the child has entered. Thus the question of identification appears as a certain staging of subjectivity, which for Lacan is played out in the relation between the I and the imaginary other, that is to say, between the *object* and its counterpart, *not* between the subject and the Other. For Freud the narcissistic myth presented itself as an urgency to overcome and transcend its illusions that have not necessarily been jettisoned or dispelled because of the intent to do so. On the contrary, they have been taken aboard and carried out in the task of psychographic interpretation. To this extent the future of Freud's narcissistic mythography remains uncertain. In Lacan's *return to Freud* a gap has emerged to show what has been left outside Freud's own conclusions, and it is to this gap that we must now "return". But it is also true that in his return Lacan's pursuit of the imaginary relation at the heart of which narcissistic identification reigns deep, can be comprehended on another level both in the sense of the new insights and the terminology introduced as a further expansion on Freud's topographies.<sup>4</sup> One of them, the one which seems indispensable for understanding the work of narcissism, is the *mirror stage* to which I will now turn. We are at the root of the Lacanian imaginary and on the verge of origins of identification.

In the most general sense the *mirror stage* is the time of assumption of the "spatial identification". It is a drama in which is staged "the succession of fantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image [*d'une image morcelée du corps*] to a form of totality that I shall call orthopaedic [*orthopédique de sa totalité*][..]."<sup>5</sup> The object of identification appears to be an image which the *infans* takes to constitute the whole it wants to be. Lacan is very specific about the moment of specular encounter the child experiences. The *infans*, the *mute* as he might be called instead of *enfant*, is captured by the image - a resemblance assuming, in the moment of looking, an identity - when its body is captured in the position amenable to looking. The two are mutually supportive and fall into place when the gaze is fixed. To look one has to immobilise one's body if only for a moment and *stay put* as a "leaning-forward" child does when it pries into the mirror to find within its alluring spatiality that which freezes it, the body-image as another. This is not an instance of some enigmatic synchronicity of the image looking at that which is looking at it, for it is the body itself, with its tendency to stand out and lean forward [*penchée*], that is the seeker of the self-identical and indivisible whole, namely, itself.<sup>6</sup> The captivating lure of the image

has the power to *present* the image as looking *like* the (fragmented) body that is on the lookout for unity. At first glance, the identification with the mother, which Lacan does not mention in the 1949 article and which Freud places alongside the narcissistic identification, remains hidden from the view and does not constitute at this moment child's relation to the mOther:

We have only to understand [*Il y suffit de comprendre*] the mirror stage *as an identification*, in the sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image - whose predestination to this phase-effect [*effet de phase*] is sufficiently indicated by the use, in analytic theory, of the ancient term *imago*.<sup>7</sup>

On second thought, the instant of identification can be understood as culminatory of the quest for the residue of the *imago* of the mother which dwells in the specular medium just discovered. These two elements, the mother and the me/self, reappear, though not directly, in Lacan's amendment to the story of Narcissus. The *imago*, one of Lacan's key-terms, is the host of images and imaginary relations with the outer world, as well as the inner, and serves as a primary point of reference, the first exteriority, against which the child can begin to learn how to co-ordinate its movements and organise its motor activities.

The assumption of the image constitutes the primary identity not only because in the *identical* resounds the *eidon*, the visible, which throughout the history of philosophical discourse left the mark of empirical insufficiency and inadequacy answerable for the deceptive lures of the eye, but also because the reflection is the first other, something that is neither the property of the mother nor properly mine, but something that the subject nevertheless imagines to belong and to galvanise the fragmented body [*corps morcelée*] that is in need of a binding agency. The assumption of potentiality for being-whole lies at the root of the subsequent *discovery* of such medium as *speculum*. That which is missing, the hole in the real, can only be imaginized as the cementing moment in which the fragmentation would integrate into a corporeal totality. The uniting "tendency" thus requires an exterior mediation that would provide the binding link of such moment. Can the image serve as such agency? Can it fill in the invisible cracks? The body lacks when, at the moment of "motor powerlessness" [*l'impuissance motrice*], to which Lacan does not add *symbolic powerlessness*, the representation is absent. It lacks when during transformatory process the *petit homme* attempts to append the representation *as* bodily image to the originary lack failing to put the "primordial Discord" and division on the bind.

I say "append" in the sense that the child tries to supplement it to the lack leaning on the image, leaning-forward and reaching out towards it, like in the Freudian *Anlehnung*. The uncertainty of such moment concerns whether this imaginary propping is effected by a failure of the anaclitic relation to the maternal object, which would lead to an emergence of the lack "proper", namely a symbolic one, or whether it is already a kind of projectional repetition, and imaginary solidification of it in child's own terms.

The attempt to incorporate the image into the "lack of totality" is as fatal as it is inevitable in the face of inaccessibility of other means than those of mimetic reduplication of the mother's gaze and voice to the extent that it modulates and directs child's imaginary orientation before the mirror ("you are so cute"). But in the untouchable image the child sees more than an object of identification, more than a totalizing *Gestalt*, and more than a simple exteriority in which to mimic the movements of the body. The fact that he does not pass by the mirror in utter indifference but returns to it, often laughing at what he sees, indicates that the other is seen as distorted, disproportional and asymmetrical, the truly funny object that can only be found in mirrors.<sup>8</sup> To turn to the *other* side of the empty yet significant laughter, the perceptual experience involves child's temporality of *being* an object, mother's in the first place. As Julien puts it: "The child is constituted in conformity to and by means of the image [...]" or as an effect of "transmission by means of identification, that is to say, by a passage from the outside to the inside".<sup>9</sup> The outside is not only the specular image which prosthetically props up, as in Dali's *Sleep*, the paralytic body with the view to integrating the whole corpus, thus allowing the child to move from the insufficiency to anticipation (narcissistic self-sufficiency). The outside is the mOther who gains her symbolic position in relation to the phallus.

When the little man sees himself as *being seen*, and therefore seen as a phallic embodiment of her desire, this will suffice for an instant to find in it a dwelling place in whose spatiality the dweller assumes his identity as the *me*. *Being me*, or *having* what his mother does not, is the first effect of imaginary assumption, the first effect of existing in the eyes of the Other. That is why the phallus in question is designated here by Lacan as imaginary. It is not the phallic function as facilitated for the child by the Patronym, which I will discuss in the second part. *Being me* is as primary as deceptive materialisation of the subject. The "little other", as Lacan sometimes calls it, is born. The object *a* comes to existence as the interface between the child's body and the m(O)ther. It is just that in the

mirror stage that which "corresponds to object *a* in the visible is the image of the other".<sup>10</sup> The image conceals the gaze of the Other, or covers it and, at the same time, reveals the interfacial veil of the image of the other, the *me being-seen*, or simply, the *being-me*. The identification is not so much with the visual image in the mirror as with the imaginary object *covering over* the Other's gaze and lashing the child to fascination - being-fascinated - with the specular, and spectacular, presence of the corporeal reflection. On the one hand, the experience of bodily movements is duplicated, and affirmed, by the moving image that "responds" in the form of *virtual reality*, on the other hand, identification with the imago of the mother already carries an effect of the body moving and responding to her desire.<sup>11</sup>

Without the imaginary *being seen* - of which the identificatory being-with-the-other seems to be a correlate - without being the object of the Other's gaze in whose image infant's primary relations are formed, the mirror stage would not exhibit the characteristics Lacan attributes to it. We find there the terms we have already encountered, the "double", "object-projections", "mimicry". Projection, to begin with, seems inseparable from introjection which in this case concerns mother's gaze and the history of the Other her look seems to transmit. In this respect, the mirror image appears first of all as a projectional displacement, that is to say, a *narcissistic* displacement of the *Ichlibido*; it displaces the repressed object-libido - which Freud ascribed to the mother, the part of her body that has no longer to do with her breast but with her eye and "the medium of voice" - onto the image of the *me*. The projection onto the looking glass is a subsequent confirmation of the introjected material that the infant translates from the imago of the m(O)ther into the imaginary lack in the scopic form. In so far as this projection echoes the maternal image, its specular import is formative of the *me* assumed in this process. The *me*, therefore, is not a subject, but an object in its eidetic form.

What Lacan tends to stress over and over again is the aspect of illusory unity that the identification aims at:

The fact is that the total form of the body by which the subject anticipates in a mirage the maturation of his power is given to him only as *Gestalt*, that is to say, in an exteriority in which this form is certainly more constituent than constituted, but in which it appears to him above all in a contrasting size [*un relief de stature*] that fixes [*fige*] it and in a symmetry that inverts it, in contrast with the turbulent movements that the subject feels are animating him. Thus, this *Gestalt* - whose pregnancy should be regarded as bound up with the species, though its motor style remains scarcely recognisable - by these two aspects of its appearance, symbolises the mental permanence of the *I* [*le je*], at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination: it is still pregnant with the correspondences that

unite the *I* with the statue in which man projects himself, with the phantoms that dominate, or with the automaton in which, in an ambiguous relation, the world of his own making tends to find completion.<sup>12</sup>

This is not the only time when Lacan refers to the realm of the animal to demonstrate how the *morphic* identification conditions the possibility of reproduction of the same (species).<sup>13</sup> Such identification is an example of a passage from the solitary to the communal existence. The little human is no exception when he confronts the reflected figure in the tain of the mirror to find in it its imaginary destiny. This is a reintroduction of the narcissistic scene in full thrust. Its object is an imaginary construction of the totalizing ego or the me, in relation to the imaginary counterpart, the other, on which the fabric of child's relation to the outer world could be woven. But although the narcissistic identification situates, Lacan following Freud, the narcissistic libido in relation to the sexual libido whose object is to be found outside the dialectic of the ego, there is another way of describing the libidinal opposition. The emergence of the image has to do with the deflection of the libido, following the bodily separation and the anaclitic attachment to the mother, in the process of in-divi-duation. As the child leans on the object of the mother, the encounter with the imaginary other offers a possibility of displacing the libido and its attachment onto the object of its own creation. As this discontinuation is imaginary, the identification based on it has to be understood within spatial rather than temporal categories. Here, the narcissistic and anaclitic attachments, as I have said earlier, seem to be making appearance as epiphenomena. In both cases a being leans forward onto the present, on what presents itself before the eye, namely the image. On the other hand, it could be said that being the object of the mother, the *petit infans* seizes the first opportunity of a detachment - a temporal detachment that becomes anchored in the spatial identification. A primary temporality makes indeed its manifestation here as a movement, around imaginary constructions, that is none the less moored to the place of symbolic structure. Freud's insight into the narcissistic object testifies to this. It also provides us with the clue as to why being for the Other does not translate into being for self. In both instances being is being what one is not, on the one hand, the Other's *jouissance*, and, on the other, fantasy and *wish* which deals with the lacking object in symbolical terms. Both displacements are yet to be subjected to what begins with the mirror stage: the subjectification of the *object a* to which the infant has been reduced, and which emerges as a *remainder* of the specular

dialectic. In this respect, primary temporality will be spurred by the structural differences and the movement of the signifier, in the form of the voice, which, as I have said earlier, position the uncoordinated body of a child before the mirror.

Is the imaginary identification then a prelude to the symbolic tussles which the temporality of the *petit homme* could only enter when the ordeals of the imaginary detachment have been surmounted, especially so that in both cases the work of *mimesis* provides the temporal conditions for the difference between the addresser and the addressee, given that outside *specular* relation one of them is not me? Or is an identification an hindrance, an impediment to symbolic relations which condition the former from the start? Why to identify at all? Why is the general tendency of the libido that of the object-seeking?

In Lacan's discourse the formation of the I - the place from which the subject speaks, which is not to say that he *knows* what he is saying - is inseparable from the body-image as responding to "the congenital insufficiency" and disarray of the body. As Lacan writes two years later in the article *Some Reflections on the Ego*, narcissistic conflict is located at the juncture of the image being a *reversal* or at least "a metaphorical representation of the structural reversal we have demonstrated in the ego [*le moi*] as the individual's psychic reality".<sup>14</sup> This reversal is akin to Rank's notion of the hostile double and sheds some light, or rather casts the shadow, on the self-destructive/suicidal inclinations. But, it could be argued, it is also a spatial reversal of time in the sense of structuralization of the narcissistic scene to the point of arriving, which seems to be Lacan's design, at the project of "structural ontology". This is how Derrida understands or misunderstands Lacan's conceptions, and how he renders the latter "metaphysical" in *Positions*. As for Lacan, he takes the *reversal* in terms of the relation to the real, in this early part of his teaching, namely to the body structure: "the cerebral cortex functions like a mirror, and [...] it is the site where the images are integrated in the libidinal relationship which is hinted at in the theory of narcissism".<sup>15</sup> The sources of the specular identification are rooted in the child's "real", i.e. unrepresentable body, to be more specific, in the concave shape of the skull which is physiologically responsible for the distortions of the image projected before the eye and the *méconnaissance* of the ego instituted herewith. Although this does not answer the question of the infant's tendency to move its body to the position of leaning forward onto the image understood as a counterpart of the fragmented

body - rather the contrary is shown in Lacan's example, namely that the reflected image is a reflection of the body [cortex, skull] as it really, *ontogenetically*, is, not as it lacks - it certainly points to the formation of the I as rooted in the narcissistic fascination with the body-image:

we must place the reversed image in the context of the evolution of the successive forms of the body image itself on the one hand, and on the other we must try to correlate with the development of the organism and the establishment of its relations with the Socius those images whose dialectical connections are brought to us in our experience in treatment. [...] Now the child's behaviour before the mirror is so striking that it is quite *unforgettable* [my ital.], even by the least enlightened observer, and is all the more impressed when one realises that this behaviour occurs either in a babe in arms or in a child who is holding himself upright by one of those contrivances to help one to walk without serious falls. His joy is due to his imaginary triumph in anticipating a degree of muscular co-ordination which he has not yet actually achieved.<sup>16</sup>

On the one hand the "striking" and "unforgettable" image makes up - as the 1949 and 1951 articles whose main features can already be found in the 1938 Encyclopaedia article on the *Family Complexes*, confirm - for the lack of total being and for the lack of mastery over a fragmented body. On the other hand, the image is in itself a reversal, an optical, and economically intact, transposition of the *essential* bodily feature which the child is bound to project before himself to see in it the scopic representation of his corporeal form. And it is the optical illusion resulting from the concave shape of the "projector" that renders impossible for anyone to see himself as he *really* is. The lack must therefore have to do not so much with the chinks in the bodily structure or its physiological function as with the *symbolic* inadequacy *at the level* of these imaginary constructions. Thus narcissism is not so much a "failure" of the imaginary dialectic, as a lack of a symbolic communion, because of an exclusion of the mOther from the subject's position.

There are therefore *alienating* effects of the detachment from the maternal object in the sense of the imaginary identification barring the access to mother's desire. Now, since it is mother's desire where the child's desire originates, the object *a* marks the separating gap that causes the subject's desire to appear as mine. Thus narcissism can only be seen as a moment of transition from mother's *jouissance* to child's *jouissance*, which does not touch upon an emergence of desire, understood by Lacan as symbolic, and the formation of *the I of the symbolic* that will occupy us later. It seems to me that the discontinuity that takes place in the transformatory process from the specular identification



that assumes unity to the symbolic relation that rests on the lack, concerns the complex passage from the imaginary to the symbolic relation, which is also a passage from the visual to the assumption of the Human Voice. It is between these where we can seek the origins of alienation that is already a derivative of primal *aggressivity* that Lacan links to narcissism.

Lacan's understanding of aggressive tendencies in humans must be from the start divorced from aggression in animals. We have seen that the destructive disposition is in the first place a self-destructive one in the sense that its object is either the image of the dead beloved or a mummification of the loss of the past image of the *me* (the *I was*). In both cases, and that goes not only for Rank's conception of the double, the death drive emerges as a function of life not only in the subject's internal and imaginary dialogue, but also in the relation to the Big Other which for the neurotic is never present enough to help form more imaginary support, thus throwing the subject into a deeper and deeper mourning of the lack of the object. For Lacan aggressivity will be bound with the presence of the *imago* and its alienating power to the extent that both are concomitants of the Gestaltism of the ego:

There is a sort of structural cross-roads here to which we must accommodate our thinking if we are to understand the nature of aggressivity in man and its relation with the formalism of his ego and his objects. It is in this erotic relation, in which the human individual fixes upon himself an image that alienates him from himself, that are to be found the energy and the form on which this organisation of the passions that he will call his ego [*e moi*] is based.<sup>17</sup>

The libidinal organisation of the ego leads - by virtue of the unitary structure assumed by it and imaginary assimilation of every object that, being in the vicinity of the identification-seeking *Ichlibido*, is subsumed under the name of the I - to a conflict that "determines the awakening of his desire for the other's desire" (ibid.) The desired object, the maternal object in the first place, is the object of the other's desire. By opening access to the other, I desire the object which is not mine even if it appears to be given to me, laid before me as my desire to desire it. This given object of desire is the lack.

There is a *temporal* split between the desire and its object, a split which exists even when the *object a* emerges as a split between the subject and the Other. Thus the aggressive impulse becomes manifest as a form of rivalry with the imaginary other, the object of the Other's desire. This is especially evident in the case of jealousy.<sup>18</sup> Not only

does Lacan distinguish human aggressivity from the animal aggression but also does he carefully avoid associating the *object* of the narcissistic/aggressive drive with that which threatens imaginary unity or with the protective shield against its collapse or loss. Boothby comments that "Aggressivity is a drive toward a violation of the imaginary of the body that models the I".<sup>19</sup> Why then is the aggressive tendency not directed outward against the potential trespasser of the territorial unity that grants a temporary abode? Why does aggressivity not have some self-preservational function like in animals? It seems that the answer has to do with the image that *mediates* between the organism and the body, and between the human subject and the animal. It is when the subject, or in this case the I, takes the imaginary other for the self that his aggressive impulse turns inward not outward. Since the specular unity as formative of the I is the source of alienation, the subject finds himself locked out from the original dwelling of the sexual drive, or, in Lacanian terms, from the Other's desire. Such is Lacan's answer to Freud's question of the *Libidostauung*. The subject is caught up in the narcissistic/aggressive grip of the ego that alienates him from himself, and exacerbates his hostility, at the moment of imaginary confrontation of his exact replica, towards his other. Why? Because at this moment the transferential relation, namely, demand of Other's love, is "experienced in the form of strangeness proper to the apprehensions of the *double*" rousing "an uncontrollable anguish"<sup>20</sup> on the part of the subject. Anxiety is an affective culmination of the alienating process in which the moment of nothingness opens up the yawning abyss of origin, "the horror of the ultimate Real before which the words stop",<sup>21</sup> the signifying act as such. Such is the anguish of the analytical transition from the specular to the symbolic or from the imaginary identification to the symbolic one. Since "the signifier induces signification in the signified", to signify is to separate from the imaginary meaning that was assigned to the signifier in the first analysis by the gnawing yet unrepresentable real and to experience the Other of signification.

There are at least two more consequences of the aggressive drive that can be observed in the intersubjective relation. One is that of *resentment* which tips the scales of aggressive ambivalence in favour of the whole atlas of abusive and destructive behaviour towards others, which includes punishment, revenge, magical spells, persecution, defamation, etc. all having as an object the alienating other and in effect the paranoiac I. But Lacan goes much further in exploring the range of human aggressivity and aggressive

negations of the triumphant mirage embraced and cherished by the I as a representation of psychic reality and a basis of human knowledge. In this his move takes on a form of critique of philosophy and ideology reigning in his time. But before we get there let's reformulate Lacan's depiction of the iconomy and ethics of narcissism. At least four paths could be singled out in passing the scene of Narcissus:

1. The *mirror stage* as formative of the I testifies to the congenital insufficiency that through the initial stages of the specular identification with the body-image reaches its refined conclusion in the "adult" metaphysics of self-consciousness. Such doctrine is an expression of a spurious prophecy, as its source lies in the child's relation to his other in which he *sees* the representation of a totality of his body.

2. Life in the mirror, whether taken metaphorically or not, is generative of two primordial affects: aggressivity and jealousy. Jealousy, which Lacan calls "an archetype of all social sentiments", commits the subject to an imaginary rivalry with what undermines the ego's "specular satisfaction". Such identification breeds competition - "rivalry and agreement" - with the object that is formed out of the imaginary relation with the other, the object of mother's desire. It is in relation to this "third object" that his rivalry is played out while ensuring libidinal circulation between the other and himself. He thus finds himself in relation to the third object as either its imaginary possessor or jealous usurper.

3. The self-destructive aggressivity is directed towards the imaginary other who is taken for the image of the "true and unique self". Not only does Lacan assign to the aggressive drive a tendency to rebel against the imaginary master, the image of the corporeal unity, but also he sees in it a spectacle of the "sado-masochistic and scopophilic drives (desire to see and to be seen)". Aggressivity is thus related to "the slave whose response to the frustration of his labour is a desire for death".<sup>22</sup>

4. Alienation as central and inseparable from the specular fixation marks the appearance of the death drive and pushes the narcissistic passion to the anguishing boundaries of its fantasmatic existence. What is alienating is the imaginary unity which, as we will see, has vast implications for the subject's relation to the Other. Alienation is an ambiguous and

powerless cry for destruction/preservation of the union with the specular image and tendency to maintain the object of this union as a stable guarantor of meaning. At the same time it is an anxiety of separation that can lead to a conclusive emergence of the object *a* as lost.

Lacan is interested in consequences - symbolic, social, ethical - that the imaginary identification engenders in the formation of the subject. These implications extend far beyond the analytical context, and Lacan provides legion instances of tensions on various levels that seem to be structurally evolving from the narcissistic passion. It is worth noting some of these criticisms as they ride dialectically head-on against the masterly presuppositions of the ideological constructs experienced in his time. The assumed identity of the I is not only epistemologically reductive but also contributes to general misorientation of the subject throwing "the whole of human knowledge into mediatization through the desire of the other" and turning "the I into that apparatus for which every instinctual thrust constitutes a danger, even though it should correspond to a natural maturation [...]".<sup>23</sup> To this should be added a vitriolic remark that does not spare any of the existential advocates, led by Sartre, flouting the customary futility of self-consciousness with which, following Hegel, they espouse

a freedom that is never more authentic than when it is within the walls of a prison; a demand [*exigence*] for commitment, expressing the impotence [*l'impuissance*] of a pure consciousness to master any situation; a voyeuristic-sadistic idealisation of the sexual relation; a personality that realises itself only in suicide; a consciousness of the other that can be satisfied only by Hegelian murder.<sup>24</sup>

This string of fallen ideals, the *Götzen Dämmerung*, that philosophy always hailed, with all its anguishing awareness, until Freud's *discovery*, is thus extended by Lacan's warning about the *speculum*-based origin of the ego, that indeed pervades the history of the subject from Descartes to Hegel and beyond, and which the psychoanalytic discourse, as practice and theory, must radically work to oppose. The aggressivity "of the voyeuristic-sadistic idealisation" degrades every transference relation to the neurosis of the master/slave dialectic until "the satisfaction of human desire is possible only when mediated by the desire and the labour of the other. [...] The problem is knowing whether the Master/Slave conflict will find its resolution in the service of the machine".<sup>25</sup>

Such machine, according to Lacan, names the narcissistic spatiality of the order that

rests on the "'geometrical' structure" of the specular field of the other. This *kal-eido-scopic* organisation gives support to the "narcisstic tyranny" of the ego-based I, while the imaginary shifts and shuffles of forms create illusion of "the universal ground". The I, the visual image, the narcisstic *iconomy* of space form a delirious alliance that drives us - but who are we?- deeper into the alienation of the care of the body which subordinates and represses the death drive. Lacan's ordering is an exclamatory onslaught on space and spatial domination which

reveals, right down to the depths of his [man's] being, a neurosis of self-punishment, with the histerico-hypochondriac symptoms of its functional inhibitions, with the psychasthenic forms of its derealisation of others and of the world, with its social consequences in failure and crime. It is this pitiful victim, this escaped, irresponsible outlaw, who is condemning modern man to the formidable social hell, whom we meet when he comes to us; it is our daily task to open up to this being of nothingness the way of his meaning in a discreet fraternity - a task for which we are always too inadequate.<sup>26</sup>

Not "even" psychoanalysis with its discovery of the unconscious, "the law of the signifier", and "the instance of the letter", seems adequate to redeem the "modern man", his cure being all too short of the pharmaceutical means to point the way to the future of "discreet fraternity". But what is this "modern man"? Is there one? Is there the one who, from Descartes to Hegel and beyond, succeeded in maintaining the wholeness and unity in his posture to spur the attack and critique that by this virtue remains bound up to the dialectical law of negation, even if the space of synthesis has been "replaced" with the time of analysis? How long has it been by now since the notion of "the modern man" remained exposed to a radical reformulation, beginning with Nietzsche, of which only the concept, and the spectre, survived haunting our ideological abodes? What we are faced with here is not only the question of the subject and the "formidable social hell" that he brings with him, when he comes "to us" with his suffering perversely clothed in the imaginary pretences, and the one who listens to the anguishing horror of "the ultimate Real" that speaks of the Other. It is also a question of a certain retro-spection, a temporal *reprogression* of the much discarded by Freud inclination towards intro-spection, that retrieves the history of critique of the subject to give it a distinct, yet not quite dissociated from the theoretical insights of the past decades, footing of analytical experience. Does Lacan's criticism of the pseudosocial forms that have orbited around the symptom of the I coincide with what he credits himself to discover, namely the *mirror stage* with all its

epistemological and historical aspects? Or does the Cartesian narcissism come as a result of a certain representational doubling understood as a resurrection of the *infans* playing before the mirror-image of his history? Are we not confronted here with the theoretical heritage - thus faced with its distribution, dissemination - when engaged in the task of interpreting the narcissistic iconomy as spatiality of forms and ontology of subjectivity to which Lacan wants to provide an answer that would transcend what it ineluctably re-collects? Finally, what *kind* of repetition is at work here, what *kind* of death has already heralded the arrival of the *kal-eido-scopic* machine? <sup>27</sup>

Lacan's *mirror stage* stands out in his discourse as a unique moment. Firstly, in the general sense, it brings to mind all those subjects who, like "children and primitive people", are assumed as silent yet linguistically capacitated *objects* of analytical study. Secondly, the *mirror stage*, just like Freud's observation of the child playing the presence/absence game, is the only instance, except for Lacan's, and Freud's likewise, *interpretations of the text*, whether scientific, literary or philosophical, which does not involve the speaking subject. The signifier in analysis. It is not the status of the symbolic order that is in question here, but the silence of the first person of the *petit homme*, silence of the *symbolic I*, that assumes other, i.e. nonsymbolic, although, as it appears from Lacan's depiction, not symbolically meaningless, means of representation. These have to do with *mimesis*, and Lacan limits his account of the place of *mimesis* in psychoanalysis to alluding to it as a faltering alternative between "homeomorphic" and "heteromorphic" identifications to which mimicry [*mimétisme*] offers no future. This of course does not mean that we should situate the imaginary as in some sense *inferior* to the symbolic order of social relations. Nor does it mean that by devaluing it, which is already a wish, perhaps even an "idealisation" of the symbolic, we are on the way to reduce or dissolve it. After all, it is the melancholic position, as we shall see in chapter 6, that the imaginary as informed and motivated by *mimesis* is underplayed and lapses to stagnation.

Moreover, one need not equate the imaginary with the specular, the point to which I will come back, or imaginary with the identificatory, to give *mimesis* time to play out the vanishing objects in the discourse of the subject. It is a question of Being as essence raised to the point of self-reflection that worries Lacan, not the mimetic operation in the dialectic. It is only in so far as the refusal of castration plunges the subject into the deep sea of identifications that one is led to construct an image of totality and wholeness. Is it the case

then that the narcissistic position works as a postponement and impediment to the work of the sexual drive as initiating subject's symbolic relation to the Other?

If what the specular stage misses out is the fact that there is more to the body than what can be *speculated* on, and that it is this nonidentificatory lacuna which drives desire to its "authentic", i.e. symbolic existence, the relation of the observer to the child has a peculiarity that deserves more attention. As Lacan stated some time later, the child in analysis is treated as a subject, not as an object. There is no doubt that the object of interpretation, such as the mirror stage for instance, is already within the textual narrative of the observer. In other words, given that "the unconscious is structured like a language", observation is inseparable from signification in the sense that only that is observable what is sayable. Thus the commentary on the play of the child is always already grounded in the signifying capacity of the language that works as an instrumental medium of commentary. The "striking" and "unforgettable" spectacle of jubilation of the subject before the mirror is perhaps not without traces of the observing subject testifying to some degree of celebration over the discovery of specular dialectic. Lacan must have been aware of a certain weakness of his *discovery*, which, in this respect enjoys a different status, and perhaps different place, to the Freudian discovery of the unconscious. That is why we could call the observation of the "subject" playing before the mirror as in some sense standing out from the rest of Lacan's work. Its *outstanding* feature will no doubt dominate his account of the imaginary as a mimetic construction that opposes the work of the signifier which guides specular meditations. It is not difficult to deduce that Lacan's early preoccupations with psychoanalysis bear marks of echoing philosophical imports that would reach him from all directions. It is perhaps also in response to these that he attempted to stake out the imaginary and specular traps awaiting those who immerse themselves in the study of language.

For many of Lacan's critics, this would doubtless give an ample opportunity to take up narcissism once again, to rehabilitate and promote it as a some "neutral" relatedness, not devoid of the mediatory traits, to the other not in the sense of the fixed body-image of perfect unity, but to a *temporal image* that Freud constructs in the concluding remarks on *Narcissm mustypus*. In other words, the narcissistic phase unfolds in the most radical sense a scene of mimetic production in which the *I-libido* imitates, *that is to say*, forms a mediatory relation with that which it *was*, that which it *is*, that which it

*desires* to be, and that which it was once a *part* of. Finally, such perspective would also bring to focus the origins of the *object autre* as temporalized out of the *imago* of the mother, or more precisely, out of the *I was* which bears witness to it.<sup>28</sup>

Lacan was attacked for confusing the imaginary with the specular and this is the second criticism that could be directed against his conception.<sup>29</sup> Not only could the imaginary and the specular be understood on separate planes and not only can the imaginary "free the *I* from the fixed figures of the specular, from the alienated images that it creates for itself but that are also created for it".<sup>30</sup> Linking the formation of the *I* through the specular impression to the economy of narcissism, as Lacan does, *also* reinforces a prejudice that the image is always visual and related to the eye, gaze, and scopic field in general. In my approach, I think of the image more in terms of Freudian *Bild*, a "form", an "image". Such understanding brings the "image" closer to a form without essence, which in terms of the auditory field and its unconscious memory, is a neighbour of Lacan called a "signifier".

The imaginary is indeed to be linked to the mediatization, but it is only as an effect of the mythical legacy of Narcissus that such mediatization has subsequently become fixed to the *visual medium*, and by turn prioritised over, for example, the auditory function in the first years of human life. If the visual takes over child's early relations with others, it is perhaps because the visual does not demand from the child to speak back. Speech, by contrast, asks for an answer. It is this prejudice of reducing the image to the visual that urges us to seek the conception of the imaginary in other fields, as for example auditory one. Subsequently, has not the visual, the eidetic become the closest possible ally of the sign as letter, and further, of *meaning* in which the eye and the "object" come into agreement of code, contract, regulation, ideology, etc? Has not such bias been supported by philosophical archives in which can be found the first attempts to account for the concept of deception in terms of fallacy of the visible, the *eidon*, which paradoxically arises as a specular ground for Plato's invention of Forms, not as *morfe* but as *idea*? Lacan's limitation in his understanding of the imaginary is therefore not without amplifying the effects of the ancient echoes in which reverberate not only the imaginary dialectic with the Similar but also the metaphysical, and political, tones of exclusion of *mimesis* as an ecstatic temporality of representation which will create the horror of resemblance.<sup>31</sup>

It is for the reasons that should be left aside that *mimesis* did not earn respect



among the Ancients like Plato, and for the *same* reasons, that deserve to be mentioned, that *mimesis* appears as utterly marginal in Lacan's discourse. Is it because *mimesis* leads to an increase of *jouissance* of the body, or is it because it represses the signifier of the subject leaving it alienated from the sexuality of the Other? For Lacan the *mirror stage* is a mark of "organic insufficiency in his [man's] natural reality". The specular other is a response to his fundamental deficiency, his *holleness*, which still seems insufficient and inadequate as it allows him to perpetuate the interactive *mimesis* to grapple with the strangeness of form without god. In the anxious encounter with the other the I erected in the mirror reflection remains a *mistake*. And yet it is the work *mimesis*, whose object remains concealed from its function, that will nevertheless reappear in the discourse of Plato commenting on the philosopher who does not write, and in Lacan who remarks on the *infinis* who does not speak.

Lacan's movement beyond *mimesis* and representation in his presentation of the *mirror stage* seems then, the view I will challenge later, to constitute a step towards ontological transparency, a structure that in the rhythm of elaboration testifies to the narrative and drama of the subject. The truth of *mimesis* *would* be the imaginary conduct in which resemblance and difference are played out in the face of the other that is already in me yet outside me. The *mimesis* of the *object a*, the analytical object *par excellence* to the extent that it is *extimate*, neither inside nor outside, the true resemblance of loss and a temporal remainder of desire, "the object in its original reality, the object whose role would be to enlighten the other sciences - science itself - about their own objects",<sup>32</sup> is the *metaspecular* Real that binds the Borromean triad of the imaginary, symbolic and real. But it is the *object a* that in his later works Lacan calls the *semblant*. Should we not link here the *jouissance* of the *mimesis* as an imitation of the *semblant* to the *object a* of representation that is already manifest in the primary relations with the other? *Mimesis* then would be a construct of re-semblance of the other in whose image (*Bild*) the lack remains to mark the insufficiency and inadequacy of any identification, because it is the Other that is lacking in it, does not have or is a phallus.

Such identification would already be seen in the Oedipal triangle, which Lacan will rewrite adding to it the phallic component. It is this signifier of desire of the Other that will open a relation to the Other's demand and desire, where the *semblant a* comes to manifest the lack, the shadow of the object lost/reassembled at stake, the faeces and breast in

demand, as Lacan elaborated them, and the gaze and voice in desire. If mimesis is at work in the drive whose sexuality is animated by language, specularity appears as neither its condition nor effect. This is no doubt a view espoused by Borch-Jacobsen who notes that the object little other (which Lacan insisted on being left untranslated) is not the object of knowledge, not

the ob-ject in which a subject would pose himself before himself in order to retrieve himself in it, [...] Not that Lacan really rejects the possibility of the 'object' of desire's being the subject himself (or, if you will, of the subject's being transcendence, exit-from-himself); on the contrary, the subject actually continues to desire *himself* (to transcend *himself*) in his "object" [...] But so completely is this subject transcendence that he can no longer find or recognise himself in any object except by abolishing what he lacks - as what he is in terms of 'lack-of-being', want-to-be [*manque-à-être*], and ek-sistence without essence. The 'object' of desire is therefore not symmetrical with the subject, not the specular and imaginary object of ('paranoiac') knowledge. It is the 'lack of object' in so far as the subject finds himself in it as the object he *isnot* - that is, as a desire.<sup>33</sup>

Here then, we have an example in which Borch-Jacobsen shows us clearly that the subject transcendence and narcissism are not mutually exclusive. In fact, the transcending, the self-sufficiency crossing and going beyond its speculum, which is insufficiency and lack, is the becoming outside of the self. The passage points to the subject's exclusion from the object and to being excluded from it. In some sense the subject is ahead of *its* object, the object being ahead of desire. The temporal difference puts the desire on the track of the Other, which is perhaps the transcending moment of narcissism that forbids appropriation. The subject transcendence remains in the mimetic relation to the object, and it is this mimetic movement that restitutes his desire as desire of the Other.

The *mistake* of narcissism can therefore be taken as a tragedy of appropriation of the cause of desire, *object a*, which is in fact "that most unreal and most impossible of all 'objects', death". To identify the object as absent, as "word without the thing", is to sign a pledge of the death drive. That is why signification, understood as a temporalisation of discourse of the subject, whether through the medium of speech or as writing, is always already committed to the thanatic erasure which reinscribes the radical impossibility of absolute identification and appropriation. The mimetic drive is the imaginary spring of symbolisation, "before the intervention, at the moment of the Oedipal complex, of the paternal function, and the support of the law, of language, and of social values".<sup>34</sup> In the Lacanian sense, the symbolisation is the flash of the signifier, the *other* signifier of the chain, were it given that death is the master one.

If we agree that Lacan's move is to link, indeed to identify, the imaginary with the specular, and *mimesis* with the homeomorphic identification, does this amount to the rejection of *mediatization* in general? <sup>35</sup> The formal gesture of subordinating the mediating other to the symbolic order, would more or less secure an immediate access to the signifier of the unconscious, that the imaginary mediatization hinders. Even if that is not to say that Lacan tries to exclude the imaginary, which he certainly does not, knotting it as that which gives consistency to the symbolic and real of the topological triad, the attempt to melt down the mediatory function of the image is tantamount with a certain prohibition of *mimesis*, which as Plato's project of the State shows, can only be executed if, to use Derrida's expression, a "theontological" agency is set up - an agency that mediates without mediation. For the work of *mimesis* has to do with narcissistic overvaluing of the sexual object immobilised into a dead passion for a beautiful form. Only the renunciation of the specular identification in its mute character could render the mimetic drive not reducible to a harmonious symmetry between the miming and the mimed, as Derrida has already shown.<sup>36</sup> Thus *mimesis* would serve as a preliminary step, in its imaginary function - *the immediate of the mediatory* - to institute differentiation of the symbolic, and open up, from within the anguishing lack that generates it, a symbolic dialectic that testifies to the division of the subject.

In the following chapter we are going to discuss the work of *mimesis* in relation to the proximity of the letter and visual form, namely writing.

## CHAPTER 4

### NIETZSCHE IN THE MIRROR OF NARCISSUS

I am going to devote the last two chapters of part one to Nietzsche. Let's begin with the following questions: given that narcissistic relation aims at idealisation of the "former self" it recovers (Freud), that it is concerned with the image of the dead other (Rank), and that it is constitutive of the imaginary identification understood as a dialectic that sustains the inseparable pair of the I and the other (Lacan), to what extent is Nietzsche's discourse a reply to the question of narcissism and subscribes to the narcissistic economy of self-love and self-reflection? Does it at all? Where are we to place the notorious and ubiquitous I that identifies Nietzsche as a subject in the reflection of the fabric of his thought, namely, the language of writing? And secondly, how do Nietzsche's criticisms of philosophy and philosophers translate his psychological insights to what was later to become the language of metapsychology and psychoanalysis? I am interested in Nietzsche's use of what Lacan calls "the I of the symbolic" and its relation to its counterpart, the little other, and, on the other hand, in the route by which Nietzsche arrives at the "discovery" of prejudices, lies, falsifications, and self-indulgent confessions of his predecessors. These two pathemes are not unrelated.

It has been said that the phenomenon of identification is an effect of the libido passing through the imaginary mediatization which, to the extent that for Lacan to identify is to lean on a bodily image of specular sort, assumes a position of totality and unity. But we have also said that such inquiry into *spatiality* of narcissism should take into account the image that is not only visual, e.g. voice, as well as the temporal difference which allows the unconscious to be staged as an effect of a time delay or deferral that becomes manifest in the task of interpretation. The symbolic relations are in this sense not distinctly opposed to the imaginary or mimetic constructions, but rather inseparable from, and even interlaced with them. Mimesis reiterates both the lacking object, the division of the subject, and opens a possibility of signification as nonnegation.<sup>1</sup> If writing is a task that insists on maintaining a relation to the letter, and therefore the visible, and, if it affirms the letter of the subject as an object as at the same time veiled from the signifying chain, then, this

object remains at the core of the mimetic drive. It is therefore in the mimetic, in so far as it is also symbolically retrospective, relation to the temporality of *I was*, as singled out by Freud, that the specular dimension has been provoked, this provocation being already a species of symbolical translation. In other words, it is in relation to the operation called writing as tracing, marking, re-marking and re-iterating of a texture of signifiers that the imaginary emerges in plurality of forms - forms that are nothing else than mediatory passages of retrospection that can be found in both Plato and Lacan alike.

What I am suggesting from the above is that in so far as Nietzsche *writes*, his writing does not make a distinction between the imaginary/specular me and the I of the narrative. He only attempts to describe such difference when the Cartesian equivocation of the subject of thought (signification) and the subject of knowledge (being) come under the pen of his critique. But the extraction of the unconscious subject (*das es*) from the subject of discourse (*Ich*) still says very little about the imaginary relation between the me writing and its love-object that his writing raises to the point of the I-ideal. In the autoerotic relation that sustains Nietzsche's task as a writer, indeed, finds his *self* in play of absence/presence, "nothing represents the Other", as Lacan sums up the narcissistic position, "the radical Other, the Other as such".<sup>2</sup>

Nietzsche does not speak about the imaginary other he addresses in the midst of a series of luminous insights. Perhaps that is his secret just as the subject in analysis has secrets. But for Nietzsche, the secrecy of analysis is the secrecy of self-analysis conducted against the backdrop of philosophy. Of course, in the former case of analysis the Other has a function and place occupied by the analyst, whereas the self-introspection does not distinguish the Other from the other, which is, as we recall, what Freud said about narcissistic investment without necessarily relating it to the task of writing. But the important question here is whether the writer like Nietzsche addresses the demand of the Other or desire of the Other. In this, and Nietzsche knew it all too well, the Other, the dead God, is not so dead after all. If the letter we receive from Nietzsche tells us something about the subject of discourse, it must by this stroke also tell us a thing or two about the suffering subject, as "flesh and blood". Thus writing becomes inseparable from self-introspection and this one in turn from self-knowledge. However, the subject of this knowledge is not the speaking I, not the conscious I, against which he was warning us in his work, but the I of enunciation, the spoken me of *jouissance*, the effect of the primary

love bond that is now addressed in the act of doubling as writing. This “spoken me” which in its passivity nevertheless speaks as active I, this *infinis* of Nietzsche is an object of psychographic reflection and awaits a touch of awakening. It will tell us something about Nietzsche’s symptom and *jouissance*.

We are not interested in the specular dialectic of the mirror stage in terms of a historical moment in the phylogenetic development of libido.<sup>3</sup> Rather its performative presenting *as* writing will touch upon the experience, analytic throughout, of the subject who in the process of psychographic interpretation stumbles upon the latent cosmos of the “former self” whose primacy he initially ascribed to the object of his illumination. That is why we should make a distinction between two subjects, the subject of suffering or the subject as pathos of the real, and the subject of discourse. Only the latter one unfurls open to reading, deciphering. But if so, how are we to separate the projectional drive of narcissistic existence from that *doubling* that always already intervenes in the process of reading which is writing? But must we? Is not Freud’s urgency to cross the territory he found himself trudging through already an echo of a demand of the Other - a demand that he renounced in favour of desire of the Other? Did not Nietzsche, Freud’s most admired writer and philosopher, know it all too well to ever attempt to separate the imaginary plane of self-inquiry from the so called “explanation of reality” that found his predecessors in the maze of mythology? Did he not voice this difference?<sup>4</sup>

Nietzsche’s reflection opened a possibility of philosophy that for Freud constituted a certain ideal. Psychoanalysis was merely to pave the way. It will perhaps remain paradoxical that the objections Freud brandished against philosophy will eventually be seen as the very goal he wished to accomplish. Also, that his pursuit of knowledge, later taken up by Lacan, points to the sources of the unconscious which Nietzsche’s critique of philosophy hoped to inaugurate. Two paradoxes then. Both Freud and Lacan owe, with so little acknowledgement, the debunking of philosophical prejudices to Nietzsche, and secondly, the epistemological “ideal” of psychoanalysis is, as if ahead of its time, the very object of Nietzsche’s critique.

The whole series of misrepresentations of the subject, mentioned by Nietzsche in a fragment I will shortly turn to, represented by *Selbstbekenntnis*, *Erkenntnis* and *Verkenntnis* testifies to the unknown division of the subject and to a disastrous in consequences favouritism of conscious apparatus. Such favouritism, already a sort of bias

in epistemological claims, supports another prejudice that "being-conscious" opposes or contradicts the unconscious drive. Or that the imaginary me, the being-spoken, is opposed to the symbolic *matrix* which for Lacan constitutes the fabric of signifiers (the symbolic Other) as pre-existing the relation between the I and the other. Not so for Nietzsche for whom the *matrix* of language is nothing more, and nothing less, than the matrix of the mother tongue in which hysterization allows him to capture the imaginary (me) at work as the object of misunderstanding. In other words, the object, for example the object in fantasy of the uterine existence, is always misplaced. It is not the "real" object of desire - the mother as object, or, the mother tongue as the object of meditation on language - but an imaginary one, perhaps a specular one, certainly the lack of the real object. To the extent that it is misplaced from the position of the object of the drive or desire, it generates misunderstanding, that is to say, produces *Selbstbekenntnis*. If the object of desire could be changed - one of the aims of analysis - that still would not guarantee some unerring "objectivity" of knowledge but rather the lack of knowledge of *objectality*, to use Lacan's term, the lack as operative in discourse. Nor would the production of truth take a form *other*, than that of self-confession or of a lie that tells the truth. On the contrary, this would merely show to what extent conceptual theorising is rooted in the analysis of desire, in the object of fantasy, in misrecognition, in short, in the symptom. Such lack as operative in the philosophical task of introspection, reflection and conceptual construction, would merely stress, such is Nietzsche's wish, perhaps a more honest and truer *style* of interpretation of the object of subject's desire as it lacks (lack of totality, of absolute knowledge, death of God).

The imaginary object is the lure by which a philosopher becomes seduced to allow himself to think that he deals with concepts and explanatory discoveries that, in so far as he speaks to himself, prevent him from telling lies about himself and his discourse which, as it were, speak "through" him. Such delirious practices are not foreign to philosophising, for the philosopher is spoken before he has begun to speak, or write, supposed by the Other before he stands his own suppositions, the mark of a philosopher, on the heavy feet. There has always been multitudes of reactionary thinkers in whom Nietzsche recognises a contemptible part of himself and therefore a first rate material for self-criticism. He recognises a thinker by virtue of his confession or confession-like conceptualisation. But he also does so using the first person, *εγω*, on which he scores as well as Lacan. Writing

indeed insists on maintaining the relation between the I and the imaginary object in a mimetic alliance that constantly reproduces the time delay effect: I will have written in so far as the Other has written me. But if this effect, this temporal difference places the object between the present perfect and future perfect how are we to distinguish the imaginary/mimetic I from the specular image that assumed me before I started to speak? I cannot unless "I" is the effect of the imaginary *being-me*, as Lacan demonstrated, which has not only to do with the specular image but also with the vocal one. The voice plays a major role in Nietzsche's writing by no doubt addressing him, speaking to him, as in *Zarathustra*, even if the voice, as we shall see in the concluding chapter, does not exist as such, i.e. as a subject. The voice does not exist as such because it is always lost, displaced, like the object, or in the place of the lost object, and always resembles the voice of another, mother, father, or as in the case of the psychotic, the voice of God.

To whom then does Nietzsche speak, given that he speaks in the tongue of the mother, or sister, and sends himself, or his self, always back to the image? From the symbol to the body, from Descartes to Nietzsche, or, from the other to the lack. One could even say that it is a pro-vocation of the I that summons the Other, and the question of the Name of the Father in general, to the discourse in which "the Other as such" remains unrepresented. Nietzsche seems to be heading always ahead of the specular dialectic, always heading for the future *to* the future, always leaping ahead of himself, to the Other, to the name of the Other, in a flight of love for the dead father. Until, again, he finds himself speaking to the unknown *matrix* of the tongue (the Other as such?), this time in vocal images which return to the former. And when such future of the always-already-heading-ahead-of-himself is addressed, his symbolic and *père-verse* identification with the name of the Other brings him to a moment of pause, perhaps self-reproach, perhaps even shame, an affect Nietzsche would not venture to shun. All in the language of the mother. From the mother to the dead father, from desire of the Other to the prejudices of moral law, then, back to the mother and the object of desire. The lack. Such is Nietzsche's imaginary conversation with the object of his desire. The future belongs to no one.

Perhaps Nietzsche does speak to the mirror - we should consider such possibility nevertheless - speaking to the mirror outside the mirror.<sup>5</sup> And in doing so he admits no less jubilatory *jouissance* than the *infins* of the speculum. Nietzsche, as we know, likes to play by the ear, or by the nose, keeping his drives at random vigil and giving the symbol of his



thought to objectification of desire. Vivid expression and ecstatic language momentarily assuage the anguish but never fill the void. If he so often pushes his ineffable *infinity* ad infinitum, it is with the view to enjoyment over another object, not the sight of the image that does not see but the voice that the ear never ceases to hear. Could the voice then be such other object, the object of writing, the object *in* Nietzsche's writing? And if so, whose voice is it?<sup>6</sup>

Solitude is for Nietzsche a source of constant flight of inspiration. But solitude is also a mark of duality whose imaginary and symbolic components are difficult to distinguish:

Everything happens involuntarily in the highest degree but as in a gale of a feeling of freedom, of absoluteness, of power, of divinity. - The involuntariness of image and metaphor is strangest of all; one no longer has any option of what is an image or a metaphor: everything offers itself as the nearest, most obvious, simplest expression. [...] (Here all things come caressingly to your discourse and flatter you; for they want to ride on your back. On every metaphor you ride to every truth... Here the words and word-shrines of all being open up before you; here all being wishes to become word, all becoming wishes to learn from you how to speak').<sup>7</sup>

Nietzsche reflects here on a passage from *Zarathustra* as if he was reflecting on his body, rapt in the *jouissance* of the letter, or the image of his body. That one is not identical with the other, even if it is an inexhaustible source of symbolic and imaginary *jouissance* makes itself evident in the discrepancy explained to us, as he usually does, by W. Kaufman. The German edition of *Zarathustra* has "me" in the place of "you" and English translation of *Ecce Homo* "you" instead of "me". Hence Nietzsche's reflection on his own text seems to effect a certain kind of translation that relates imaginary to the real. What is a translation of what? Is there not, apart from the *interlingual*, another kind of translation already at work here? Does not "me" translate to "you", and by this stroke *being-me* into *being-with-Other*?

It is indeed striking how this relation appears to us, especially if we consider it alongside a parallel transfiguration of a single German term *Bild* into two English terms "image" and "metaphor". What the "original" does not distinguish, appears as an impossibility of translating this indistinction into *another* lexical system. But, it should be said emphatically, *it is this impossibility of translating the lack of difference in the mother tongue into another tongue as a lack*, that creates a confusion of symbols, which for us, in so far as image is not a metaphor, is a confusion of terms that psychoanalysis always

ventures to distinguish. The impossibility of translating the lack into the lack would allow us to take the view that the unconscious is not so much a kind of "secret" to be translated into consciousness, a belief that has its origins in Plato's attempt to "translate" the particular present into the universal present, as that which facilitates translation. The unconscious makes translation possible to the extent that, in the interlingual translation, it is both symbol and image that are translated. Nietzsche, of course, does not translate in *this* sense but his writing none the less maintains a self-reflective and self-referential relation to the mother tongue, which already involves "translation", as the autobiographical fragment shows, and that is why for him the image and the symbol are involuntarily "identical". Speaking in the mother tongue and always coming to reflect on the *matrix* of language, Nietzsche translates into his "own" language as an associating subject, as if the tongue in which he speaks was not primary or maternally archaic, but secondary in the sense of being imaginary and mimetic, a true language of camouflage. The image of the letter, as in Nietzsche's reflection on *Zarathustra* above, functions here as a kind of reflection on the symbol. In other words, and in more Lacanian terms, the signifying chain of reflections always "returns" to that initial and primary master signifier, which in this case is the phallus as the signifier of the desire of the Other. What says *no* to realization of such project, the theme I will elaborate in part two, is precisely the Name of the Father, the patronym as naming *and* saying *no* to the *jouissance* which as such is forbidden in the act of speech. For Nietzsche, such return to the mother tongue via the Name of the Father, works as a disguise of his own subjectivity, i.e. of the relation between "I" and "you".

This camouflage then has a double sense, firstly, because it covers the lack of the object that conceals itself and remains indeterminate in mimesis, secondly, because it covers the truth of such substitution - substitution of "me" for "you" and "you" for "me". There is finally a confusion of the image with the metaphor or the imaginary with the symbolic and conversely. Both appear as "nearest" and "simplest", both are involuntary and such moment of *immediacy* of their mediatory functions renders them indistinguishable. Such indistinction, even indifference, of which Nietzsche speaks elsewhere and I will come back to it in the next chapter, happens in solitude and at the solitary moment of the body when the lack, the real hole, is most anguishing.

In this most alienating moment heard as a music of solitary *étude*, the lack of distinction between me and you, the image and the symbol, makes the Other most distant

and most near at the same time. The imaginary other to which Nietzsche speaks, seems as if he was speaking to himself, and conversely, speaking to himself he speaks to another. Having lost the *me* as the object of his affection, he addresses you, always you (you would have noticed if you had *not* read him), not the object that separates him from his mother but the *jouissance* that connects him, in this alienating yet in all its pathos enjoyable bond, with the mOther, the distant and near at once. In this, however, he desires not the little other of his imaginary constructions but the Other as that unconscious representative that allows for such constructions, and so his desire that comes to life becomes caught in the fantasy of symbolic production generated by the *semblant* of representation. Who is more near, me or you?

The question brings us to the boundaries of narcissism, but, to the extent that it is a question, the threshold of love and the difference between the love of the self and the love of the Other remains unanswered, that is to say, *unheard*. It is rather the demand of love that brought philosophers to the dead end, bringing Nietzsche to the border between me and you, the demand that appears as desire. While wishing to be always ahead of himself and thinking of the future, of philosophy of the future, of the mother tongue of the philosophy of the future, Nietzsche comes to be entangled in his image and in the fantasy that the access he thinks he has, unlike other philosophers, to the Other gives him.

This both “nearest” and “most farther” object has here a status of *extimacy*, something excluded from within, and seems so intimate that it allows him to keep close to the solitude of the body, the real body that can, however, only come to be marked as a *mediatory image* of the body, namely the image that separates the *organism* from its perception. At the same time, the only distance Nietzsche's writing opens in his invisible body is that of an encounter with the voice. Melody, rhythm and changes of tempo are dominant in his rhetorical discourse just as “The art of *hearing*” was for example the condition for writing *Zarathustra*. It was written while being heard. Hearing the voice of the mother tongue is how the temporal difference operates; it separates, namely, distances the voice of the mirror from the mirror of the voice. One is always ahead of the other. The ear is always ahead of the other. Once again, what Nietzsche does not distinguish at the peak of his ecstatic *jouissance* of the body, the image from the metaphor, opens a hiatus between the vocal and the specular. Although both derive from the elation of the body - “The body is inspired; let us keep the 'soul' out of it”<sup>7</sup> - while the latter cements the

disarray of the *corps-morcelée* into a mirror image of totality, the former resolves "tremendous tension" and "subtle shudders" of the flesh into the anxious mark of writing, or philosophising, Nietzsche has no doubt about that. The subject of discourse - the all-pervasive "I" that sounding in all mouths the same distinguishes the speaker from you or me - is linked to the voice and the ear, the vocal image mediating between the voice and the ear.

This then, although I will expand it shortly, is how Nietzsche philosophises writing. He listens to the voice which has some relation to the "symbolic matrix" of the mother tongue but he does that in the Name of the Father, that by naming removes him from his shameless ecstases of his mother's body. Listening he reflects on the vocal image to reinscribe it, retranscribe it and send it off to the future from which it will have not come back. This is a point of no-return that separates those who have found the object as the void, the Nietzschean destiny of *amor fati*, from those who lost it as the lack of the lack, never tired of misplacing it, the moral philosophers and the prejudiced surveyors of consciousness alike.

## CHAPTER 5

### WHAT ARE PHILOSOPHERS FOR?

Let's take up again some of the themes from the previous chapter. They concern the question of philosophy as raised by Nietzsche's interventions that gave psychoanalysis some theoretical footing. Who or what is a philosopher? To what extent must philosopher be also a "psychologist", and Nietzsche himself, as he tells us, had most to learn from those who were not philosophers, say Dostoyevsky. To begin with, the philosopher, such is Nietzsche's message to those who come after him, does not only speculate but also vocalises. When P. Ricoeur says that Nietzsche's "attack against the foundational claims of philosophy is based upon a critique of the language in which philosophy expresses itself",<sup>1</sup> it is with respect to the relation between reflectivity of the voice and language of philosophy that we can read Nietzsche's critique. At this point we should recall some of the criticisms that Freud and Lacan address against philosophers. They could be formulated as follows:

1. Freud - philosophical introspection falls under the category of speculation which has the *Ichideal* as its object, and to this extent remains in the pangs of narcissistic illusion.
2. Lacan - the pursuit of totality, which has always shone as a distant ideal of metaphysics, has its sources in the specular-imaginary nostalgia for the imago of the mother and a wholeness of the body.<sup>2</sup>
3. Lacan - the ego is a construct of the specular identification as a bodily image, the other being its counterpart, and as such has always cast shadows on the epistemological procedures under the name of philosophy.

There are three principles that Nietzsche observes in linking a possibility of philosophy to his psychological insights. In a psychogram sent to Freud, and no doubt Lacan, Nietzsche draws our attention to the following: the dynamic of the unconscious (drive) in the philosopher, the inseparability of the subject (writing, language) from the task of thinking (object as voice, fantasy, symptom), and thirdly, the development of

concepts as invented not independently of the "invisible spell" that founds philosophical constructions. A certain "ideal" has emerged, and with it a belief in an ideality of notions. This belief lures us to a production of knowledge without our realising that these concepts are merely signposts on the long way that returns us to the spell-casting and spell-binding horror of the "ownmost" yet most excluded real (*eigentlich* is one of the key-words in *Beyond Good and Evil*):

something within them [philosophers] leads them, something impels them in a definite order, one after the other - to wit, the innate systematic structure and relationship of their concepts [*Begriffe*]. Their thinking is, in fact, far less a discovery than a recognition [*Wiedererkennen*], a remembering [*Wiedererinnern*], a return and a homecoming to a remote, primordial, and inclusive household of the soul, out of which those concepts grew originally: philosophising is to this extent a kind of atavism of the highest order.<sup>3</sup>

An atavism? Is philosophy a "primitive" remainder that does not take place because it never did take place, never realised itself in its body but only appeared as a retrospective and retrovocative bewitchment of language ("We really ought to free ourselves from the seduction of words") against what remained temporally deferred, the archaic, the ancient, that is to say, the unconscious? The future that Nietzsche envisages for philosophy, or rather for philosophers of the future worthy of this name, concerns among other gestures the change of the object. This would subsequently imply subjection of concepts to a certain kind of analysis that release a symptom that supports their discourse. One cannot do philosophy without doing at the same time self-interpretation and remain in some reflective/retrospective relation to the history of the subject, history *as* subject - in short in relation to the Other of language from which it can then be constructed, reconstructed, deconstructed, that is to say subjectivised - even if what is to remain and be addressed to the future is only a concatenation of signifiers and the subject of discourse. In other words, there is no philosophy without some relation to the real and the body of pathos, the recommendation that Schopenhauer took no doubt too seriously, was led to despair at the lack. Something else is desired, a desire, precisely, and the object that, as separated from desire and therefore causing it, is at play in every discourse, and a philosopher must learn how to admit its lures.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps there has never been a philosophy, or, if it ever existed it was either as an ideal or as a clumsy and dishonest piece of psychology. There never was a philosophy but either a despaired mourning at the loss of the object of desire or a perpetual covering up of the object as subject's primary alterity, this leading up to certain blindness and one-

sidedness that becomes a totality of all-sidedness. Some explanation of the function and mechanism of writing philosophy is desired and this cannot be done without the retrospective move towards that which brought us before philosophy. One cannot be a philosopher without becoming a psychologist, not the "ego psychologist", but an archeologist of the unconscious, a psychographer. Nietzsche's last book opened such perspective and confirmed to what degree his own rhetoric had sprung from the background relations with his desire.<sup>5</sup>

Nietzsche then is faithful to Freud and Freud to Nietzsche. That is perhaps because there was no exchange of letters between them, or between Freud and Heidegger for this matter, one being always the Other, the symptom and lack that reflects the lack of the one. The future belongs to no one, because future has no memory. And to create a memory one has to first create a past. How can the teaching of forgetfulness be practised if what is remembered is not all, the Present lacking? What do the philosophers lack then? Certainly not what can be supplied in abundance to fill this lack, for example concepts. What they lack is the lack, the lack of the lack which, because it produces nothing but dark anguish, prompts to a kind of premature forgetfulness, that is to say forgetfulness without remembering, namely repression. The question of the demand of the Other, and for the Other, must always come first. This is so because an imaginary answer to the demand may lead wayward to an unlimited amalgamation of concepts in which is lost the way to desire the object of desire which is different for me and for you.

There is also the drive, the unconditional, and "undestructive" as Freud called it, pressure in which the vital function, be it of death or of life, reenacts the body of language. Nietzsche's writing inaugurates a philosophical discourse of the body, the "subtle body" of the unconscious as Lacan called it, in which philosophical theorising finds its beginning. In fact, there is nothing more active in philosophising than the philosopher's *instinct*: "most of the conscious thinking of a philosopher is secretly guided and forced into certain channels by his instincts".<sup>6</sup> By the same stroke, philosophy turns in a new direction whilst the philosopher begins to reorient his position in the world from being a scientist of "objectivity" to becoming a subject of discourse. That the latter is not a self-identical and fixed term but subject to and of the unconscious traces and vicissitudes of drives, is one of Nietzsche's crucial discoveries. The critique of the Cartesian *cogito* places Nietzsche in the position of, to use Ricoeur's expression, "the privileged adversary of Descartes".<sup>7</sup> Moving

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in the direction of the drive, philosophy comes to take its primal contours in the form of self-analysis. Philosophers have been always engaged in it but seldom, if at all, admitted to practising it. By one and the same stroke, philosophy of existence becomes a sort of philosophy *jouissance* and lack to produce lies of self-introspection from which foundations for psychoanalysis could be laid. Freud's "discovery" is at the beginning rooted in self-analysis and hypnotic therapy to pave the way, but also to mark indebtedness to the Nietzschean heritage that Freud came to acknowledge only in passing,<sup>8</sup> for fantasy and transference without which there would not be psychoanalysis. To whom and how will the psychoanalytical heritage have paid off its debt?

The employment of the drives, say the "drive to knowledge" [*Trieb zur Erkenntnis* - also perception, understanding, cognition], in which Nietzsche did not believe much himself, is not yet a guarantor of a philosophical honesty, let alone does it produce what psychoanalysis calls the moment of truth. The desire for knowledge, for immortal life and truth does in fact the opposite; it invites and provokes prejudicial formulations. Nietzsche's "rhetorical interpretation of philosophy", which for Ricoeur was "directed at subverting the claim of [Cartesian] philosophy to set itself up as science, in the strong sense of a foundational discipline" should therefore be understood as a "discourse on truth as a lie".<sup>9</sup>

The fact that we turn our blind eye to the way the drives of the *psychic body* inspire us to philosophising, leads to a production of lies and fiction which would allow us to interpret not the "objective" truth of knowledge but the relation of the desire to the Other. What anguish, what guilty mourning and what demand of the Other make desire bypass the Other and deflect its object, or, in other words, what is it that the subject does *not* desire, does not seek to learn as a knowledge of his/her desire, is the *symptom* of how philosophy progressed hitherto. In which case Nietzsche might not have wanted to tell us the truth in the series of fragmentary documents, but precisely the untruth, the myth of philosophy. It is in this light that we might follow through one of such fragments. It bears witness to what it does *not* say, what philosophers have never come to say:

Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosopher so far has been: namely, the personal confession [*Selbstbekenntnis*] of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir. (...) Accordingly, I do not believe that a 'drive to knowledge' [*Trieb zur Erkenntnis*] is the father of philosophy; but rather that another drive [*anderer Trieb*] has, here as elsewhere, employed understanding [*Erkenntnis*] (and misunderstanding [*Verkenntnis*]) as a mere instrument. But anyone who considers the basic drives of man to see to what extent they may have been at play just here as *inspiring spirits* (or demons and kobolds) will find that all of them have done philosophy at some

time - that every single one of them would like only too well to represent just *itself* as the ultimate purpose of existence and the legitimate *master* of all the other drives. For every drive wants to be master - and it attempts to philosophise *inthat spirit*.<sup>10</sup>

Confession, cognition, understanding and knowledge belong to a family whose membership has always depended on the libidinal function of the drive. The complexity of knowing, of coming to know and of having knowledge, is thus inseparable from the familial bond cemented by, but also founded on, the Other. It is to the Other that the subject, whether the subject of the family or of philosophy, has always been subject to in the dis-course of self-confession and self-analysis.

There are at least two axes on which the passage rests, the I and the drive. There is also an object. Somewhere there is the real at work, the stigmatised body that does not speak. Nietzsche's solitude has by now mobilised into work the ingredients that constitute Lacanian specularity. But does Nietzsche speculate? Philosophical solitude facilitates a dialectic in which echoes, as I have said above, the voice of the other, the voice as a lacking object *in* writing. The discourse is constructed somewhere on the borders between the two, the me and the I. Lacan, for example, makes it clear that it is a dialogue between the two, the I speaking and the me being spoken or supposed by the signifier of the Other, that grants us the conditions for "dealienation of the subject". They are not identical with each other, and it is this division of the subject that prompts Nietzsche to turn the philosophical truths inside out. But then, is he not saying something else in this rendezvous?

During imaginary conversation with the object, Nietzsche maintains an ambiguous relation with the dead (Other). Sometimes it takes on a form of a myth of the Other, another time it is a psychic document presented to him as a fragmented and disrupted text, the witness to his mother's tears, mourning. Does she still have a son? Having learnt of his own insufficiency, and the insufficiency of the Other, "the Other as lacking" as Lacan often put it, Nietzsche calls out the name of the Other, summons the absent father. He then idealises the dead (Other). Idealisation goes hand in hand with the fascination that immortalises the living: "Only the dead no longer die". The "I" as subject is therefore not to be taken for truth, as Nietzsche warns us in *Beyond Good and Evil*, by him who speaks it.<sup>11</sup> At best the "I" is a fictional character whose speech already reveals what he does not write, his death. To desire the future is to desire death of that which in the first

place desired him, the mother. Hence the dress, the masks and masquerade of language, the truth as woman. And hence the future as belonging to no one, no simultaneous presence of subjects for the signifiers that represent them to circulate, which he addresses by writing the reversed reconciliation with its destiny, namely, that it will or has been taken for fiction. No one will have taken *me* for truth.

The second axis which carries the cited passage is the *other drive* [*anderer Trieb*]. Generally speaking, the drive has always been found active in philosophical writing, and as an activity assumed certain function. It has employed subterfuge and misunderstanding, fiction, even confusion. Its power has been dominating and of paramount importance for the reading of philosophical text because, seeking the ultimate truth, it has come to erase it and leave in this place the naked power to deceive, evade, conceal and, above all, to nihilate. In fact, the other drive is nothing else but the power to erase the truth as myth-telling, which in the first analysis always strikes as a suicidal quest for self-effacement. It is the terror of the real, that before which words stop, that turns narcissistic passion for self-nihilation into a drama of a solitary writer like Nietzsche - drama manifested in the ambiguous impossibility of appropriation/nihilation of the image, which nevertheless functions as a mediatory drive. Doubtless, such power is active in writing; it is, perhaps, writing itself.

Such is the provocation of the last one who is also the first, where philosophers do not tread and the analytic discourse can be heard in the vicinity as a series of supplementary notes. He who writes truth does not want to be referred to or quoted as truth, which is why he speaks of another drive being at work without naming it. He would rather be untruth and unknowledge. He performs what others think they do *not* do, doing what Nietzsche, for example, does undoing. He does not want to be seen as a prophet of truth or as a teacher of truth because he recognises the ambivalence of the other drive that does the opposite, represses, forecloses, negates, erases the written, mimes the voice, substitutes, displaces, wrongfoots, and lures to satisfaction that is dissatisfaction. Nietzsche does not want to be taken for what he is not, a living being that has once and for all written out his death, nor for what he lacks, the name Nietzsche for example, given to him by the Other yet the same name you and I play with as if it was a little souvenir from the past. He does not wish to be taken for truth for it is a fiction which has since echoed after him in Lacan's formula: "truth is structured like a fiction" For a philosopher it always

comes back to the question of the subject, to deciphering his desire in the self-inscription before the mediatory other. Nietzsche is one of those philosophers whose relation with the real transports him to the extremes of *jouissance* of the body. Writing has to do with the body and with the irreversible of the body: "Of all writings I love that which is written with blood. Write with blood: and you will discover that blood is spirit", thus spoke Zarathustra.<sup>12</sup>

The question that Nietzsche addresses to philosophers is the same question that Freud raised confronted with what later became the "ego psychology". How do the philosophers propose to bypass the work of the other drive that metaphorises the repressed time of a signifier, and dissolves, time after time, the power to seduce and to go astray when it realises that the reader's eyes do not follow where it does not go? Another drive does not seek alibis. It itself is beyond alibis because being at work it does not speak with the mouth whose movement we could follow or with the "I" we seek to recognise as properly mine. Another drive does not in fact speak or write at all, it signifies. As for Nietzsche, he writes what he does not know to obviate that "there is nothing in the philosopher that is 'impersonal'", especially his "knowledge", his resistances, defenses, ruses, refusals, and reproaches. Philosophers never stop beating the drums of truth.

Everything that comes under the heading of philosophy, enters, in one form or another, into a relation with psychoanalysis, cannot be disassociated from it, the latter appearing as philosophy's Other. It is just that philosophers, with their "drive to knowledge", cannot *know* it. In relation to the non-philosophical Other the philosopher finds a pretext under which to refuse to unravel the work of the "other drive". Then, Nietzsche notices, one finds such refusal already active in the mimetic identification which casts an irresistible charm on the writer who exercises the art of self-deception. If the psychoanalytical temporalisation of the body "redeems" experience (this is not necessarily Freud's recommendation), it is on the level of this symbolic/literary experience that a philosophical writer is subject to the unconscious "body" that sends him to the limits of language. Such experience is "liberating" only in so far as it, at the same time, does not liberate, certainly not the power to liberate, the desire to signify without the one who writes it.

Finally, and this will bring us to the end of this chapter, Nietzsche tries to ensure how the unconscious becomes manifest in the philosophical discourse. It appears as a

certain indistinction, a truly insouciant power of difference that subjects us to an ordeal of patience:

Imagine a being like nature, wasteful beyond measure, indifferent beyond measure, without purposes and consideration, without mercy and justice, fertile and desolate and uncertain at the same time; *imagine indifference itself as a power* - how *could* you live according to this indifference? Living - is that not precisely wanting to be other than this nature? Is not living - estimating preferring, being unjust, being limited, wanting to be different?<sup>13</sup>

According to another provocation, the future philosopher will have found inspiration in the power of indifference which itself is responsible for both the capacity to differentiate and the unremitting postponement for the thanatic drive to write without reserve. But this "indifference itself as a power" also concerns the mentioned earlier lack of distinction between the imaginary and the symbolic functions in writing - a lack that Nietzsche only brought to our attention as an experience in psychoanalytical terms, opens a labyrinth of alienation.

It took centuries for philosophy to speak with an indifference to the "norms of objectivity" (Derrida) which are still hailed in the theontological institutions and their scientific quarters. To-day one can see that Nietzsche's arrogance, although not without a price, paid off. It has even become an inspiration for the truth of the subject when it is at the same time deciphered as fiction. But the spectre of "objectivity", which for Descartes functioned as an agent of the objectifying "I", and whose subjective origins Lacan so brilliantly demonstrated in his aesthetics of the *mirror stage*, is not identical with the subject of the unconscious, its *objectality*.<sup>14</sup> Here, the symptom is alluded to in a particular style of philosophy that Nietzsche opened, the ambiguity between the lacking object in the subject's discourse and the lack as object of desire. It is the philosophical pretension for the exclusive omnipresence of the so called "objectivity" that Nietzsche subjected to questioning:

'Objectivity' in the philosopher: moral indifference toward oneself, blindness toward good or ill consequences: lack of scruples about using dangerous means; perversity and multiplicity of character considered and exploited as an advantage (..)

(..) I desire no advantages from my insights and do not avoid the disadvantages that accompany them. Here I include what might be called *corruption* of the character; this perspective is beside the point: I use my character, but try neither to understand nor to change it - the personal calculus of virtue has not entered my head for a moment (..)

(..) To revolve about oneself; no desire to become 'better' or in any way 'other'<sup>15</sup>.

These words, again, set a certain pattern for the homage of thought that a philosophical writer pays to his double, his imaginary other as well as to the "indifference" that nevertheless facilitates rhetorical dissemination, which is no doubt the case with Nietzsche. For the writer there is perhaps nothing more insignificant, more inconsequential than what he writes. It is of no consequence to me what I say because it does not come back to me, ricocheting in the ear of the Other, echoing my desire in the future to come. Whatever comes to me has been sent away another time. If this letter ever returns to me, I will not be there to sign for it. The three of us live in different times, never belong to one and the same. It can only return in the time of this chance turning to another.

It is of no consequence to me what I say, but it is not by chance that I say this or that, having been supposed by the Other in the first place. Nor does it not mean that a statement is without consequences which especially in the case of a writer reduce his ethical act to a moral blasphemy. If the philosopher is for everyone and noone, as *Zarathustra* makes it clear, he will soon recognise what defines him, that is to say, what does not finalise his preoccupations. Philosopher's desire is engendered not by the duty to or from the academy, and Nietzsche's case tells us something about the Other's demand which he abandoned after his academic career for the sake of desire. But this desire could not have come to existence were it not for the power of death, the *thanatic drive*, that for Nietzsche disrupts every contract, infringes the law of his predecessors, turns inside out the tablets of Truth to bring us closer to lies and fiction that underlie the facile privileges of the philosopher as master-legislator.

The death drive, then, is one of the conditions of dis-course that at the same time renders the subject of discourse, the impassioned *jouissance* of enunciation, possible. Despite the often euphoric tone that underlies his writing, Nietzsche's provocation is at the same time an invocation of "sad passions", melancholia, sometimes mourning. Often there is also guilt or debt that always accompanies the gift. If for Lacan guilt is a sign of giving up on one's desire, Nietzsche's notion of guilt is inseparable from the dialectic of receiving/giving a gift. But since writing will have never paid back to the dead Other, if only for the freedom of having another life to give and for living the gift, we must give what has made us, the Other, to the living. If there is a duty for a philosopher to fulfil, it has to do not with melancholia, but mourning which will place him on the border of the

lost object that is no longer his; there is his place. He must keep his vigil by the grave, where there is nothing to see, but where the fantasy of his "Being-one-with-self" is buried. He must therefore mediate not between the gods and humans, but between the dead (Other) and the living. He will only write by the candlelight. Its blink is the sign of communication and communion that the living have with the dead (Other) by way of mourning. Psychoanalysis is a site of mourning over the lost object which gives desire life. As a guardian of the quiet luminosity, Nietzsche's philosopher *goes under* the dialogue with the living to signify another time of unconscious desire. Ecstatically, yet motionlessly, he goes under the tomb from where his name is called and where his body had been marked. There is no One to return to but the void that has summoned his signifier to this threshold.

Although Nietzsche lacks the desire for "becoming better", he senses that such desire has been at work since Plato, and that at the core of such compulsion lies a drive to preserve the narcissistic *me* of the master. The spirit of *ressentiment*, which is the spirit of revenge, and as such paved the way for Lacan's concept of aggressivity, sustains the narcissistic-obsessional desire for mastery, that is to say, for *maintaining* the Order erected on the imaginary reflection that sutures the lack and retains the drops of *jouissance*. The *ressentiment*, as Deleuze commented, is, among other operations, a moment "by which active force is, simultaneously, separated from what it can do (falsification)".<sup>16</sup> The separation of the active force of desire of the Other from the passive of being signified, spoken, written, to which the imaginary other offers helpful hand, is how Nietzsche distinguished the dialectic with the narcissistic object of the master from the conditions of this relation. What the aggressive impulse does (mythologises), and what it is capable of doing, is how one distinguishes between "the discourse of truth as a lie" and the discourse of the master desire as it turns against desire's *dunamis*.

Such, according to Deleuze, is Nietzsche's answer to the question concerning the difference between the desire of the Other (active) and the demand of the Other (passive): "while it is true that active force is fictitiously separated from what it can do, it is also true that something real happens as a result of this fiction" (ibid.). This "something real" is "the body with which philosophers think", that which guides the philosopher-legislator like Plato to establish an order which is mythical from the start in the sense that it gives priority not only to the drive to revenge but also to the possibility of desire as a whole. The lack is

lacking, again, and what takes place is a saturation of the void in the body that can produce nothing but fiction, indeed, restore narcissistic desire to the place of truth as a lie.

For Nietzsche, the philosopher-legislator is not the executive of *logistikon*, and does not rule according to reason's faculty, which one also finds in Kant. Instead, the philosopher appears as unconscious thought of the body that can only be affirmed by way of falling on the lack, the moment that also confirms reason's futility and powerlessness. One must not create a philosopher in one's image to rule and master. It is the body, the unconscious, that gives rise to representations among which is found, and founded, the discourse of philosophy. If the discourse testifies to the chain-like concatenation of signifiers, which comes nearest to the psychoanalytic "knowledge", it is not in order to restore them to the narcissistic splendour of specular and speculative unity. The collection of fragments takes place as a caprice of time, his time, to live by the side of the broken, fractured spectre of presence. Although it is true that "nothing in the philosopher is 'impersonal'", it is also true that nothing in him is "personal", nothing in particular except for *jouissance* affirms him as a unique "individual", nothing constitutes the "essential self" of thought that presses from thanatos and from his indifference to whatever could mould him as "other", or whatever creates him as an event, the event of nothing. Nothing except for the symbolic experience of the loss of *jouissance* and lack that, to the extent that "the signifier represents the subject for another signifier" (Lacan), is also an experience of the incommunicable. The subject can only be affirmed as a desire to die.

Let me end with the following note. Philosophy is a gravity, the discourse its levitation. To levitate is to turn according to the principle of free fall. To be gravitation-free, is to be drawn to where the signifier acquires the weight of meaning. *Nothing else defines the subject but the gravitation of the signifiers*, a falling in the direction where they will have attempted, again and again, to wear out the burden of superfluous meaning, its *jouis*-sense, and lift the remaining weight, the surplus of *jouissance*, back to where desire has been, the gliding pace of nonbeing "in a discreet fraternity - a task for which we are always too inadequate". Nietzsche's subject never grew tired of preparing us for the later discoveries and supplements of psychoanalysis as it took up this impossible love - the time of the unconscious Other and its gravitation: to ex-ist to give time to name in the face of the lack - my gravitation: where it turned me there I will have turned to it. And then to have some knowledge of one's weight, and to experience falling as a kind of freedom - is it



for analysis to answer or to signify with the light feet as Nietzsche always said he did?

## **PART II**

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### **PASSIONS OF DEATH**

To go under - if this is the route Nietzsche takes, where is it going, in what direction? We have heard some fragmentary echoes of his dialogue with the dead, encountered some marks of the solitary descension towards the site of loss and symbolisation that takes its place. A quiet vigil, anguishing yet ecstatic tone of Nietzsche's writing, mark the way towards the vaults of the lost ideal, to be more specific, of the narcissistic *me*, which Freud marks as *I was*, one of the epitaphs on the tomb of writing.

This temporal denomination which Freud lays out in his *Introduction to Narcissism*, which Lacan's commentary on the question of imaginary identification takes up, is not without relation to Freud's paper, written a year later but published two years after he wrote it, that returns to *Introduction*. Returns, that is to say engages in a strategy of reiteration that produces, again, certain doubling effects. Thus reading *Mourning and melancholia*, in accordance with Nietzsche's recommendation of infinite repetition, shows signs of such strategy and can therefore be regarded as a supplement to the theory of narcissism, to its introduction as Freud was careful to call it. Its development sends us therefore in two directions: the new material (empirical, theoretical) and a certain style of normalisation which emerges in leaning on the past discoveries and formulations. A return to *Introduction* repeats some of its pathemes rendering the former text supplementary to the latter - a supplement that ex-ists in the light of its "predecessor". *Introduction* thus informs *Mourning* of its discoveries to reform and modify them as a repetition of difference.

Our main concern here is not a theory of affects but a further problematization of the time and place of the object, namely the temporal, economical and mimetic additions to the subjective formation. In so far as the narcissistic subject, the one which takes the *me* as its object, is caught up in the cobwebs of libidinal homeostasis, and subjected to the specular image that makes it prone to fixations, what does the melancholic condition tell us about objectal position, as it were the lostness of the vanished object which for Freud fundamentally orients the libidinal dynamic.

It was Nietzsche in the first place who, in an attempt to take the Platonic ideal by the horns, representation that represents nothing save being, shed some light on its formation thus anticipating, but also retroactively acknowledging, the losses to come, tipping the scales of alleged equilibrium that the theory of Forms was no doubt to support through the ages. The ideal and the object have thus become two of the key notions in Freud's return to the question of illness, pathology, pathography, but above all in his

introduction of libido theory that was to separate him from Plato's disciples of whom at least one rose by Freud's shoulder. The ideal which over the centuries permeated and governed philosophical discourse arose not as an effect of historical legacy of the Greeks but, such was the turning point of Freud, from the imaginary maintenance of the object on the horizon of symbolisation. Some inconceivable presence of the object allowed for a philosophy to rely on consciousness as a centre point, and on the object as an upholding principle of its surveys. The lost object, no doubt most clearly embodied in Lacan's discourse but whose shadowy traces founded Freud's libidinal theory, has thus become not only one of the crucial issues, and which perhaps lies at the root of the discovery of the unconscious, but also wrongfooted and tripped metaphysical and phenomenological passages translating them into what evolved in opposition and parallel to psychoanalytic formulations and what could be called philosophy of *jouissance*.

A resemblance of this lost object came to embody an ideal which, since Nietzsche and Freud, can now be placed nowhere else but in the pits of microcosm of subjectivity of which it is formative as a lack, a disrupting gap closely, that is to say, intimately tied up to discursive practices on the one hand, and on the other, to the objectal loss of which we have already spoken. It is in this light that we should regard *Mourning and melancholia* as a reflection on narcissism in the double sense to find in it nocturnal marks of losses and withdrawals that gave rise to a certain kind of writing, a thanatographic inscription in search of the object lost, not just any object but that whose alluring absence makes writing possible making it trail the voice under the dead letter. Not only would this reflection, with all its deferral effects of temporal difference, be Freud's own recapitulation of the terms that emerged as an effect of schism in the analytical milieu, but it would also open new pathways in which the old ones re-mark an echo with which we seem to be already familiar. But are we?

## CHAPTER 6

## INTRODUCTION TO THE READING OF *MOURNING AND MELANCHOLIA* - IDENTIFICATION, INCORPORATION

It is not necessarily to be decided in the present account if melancholia constitutes its own clinical morphology, an ontology that would be structurally distinct from other clinical models. If Freud assigns to it the traits of transference neurosis, it is to emphasise its narcissistic aspects. For narcissism and melancholia are libidinal allies. They are inseparable and mutually intertwined. Whereas narcissism is responsible for the retreat of the libido into the me and emergence of the ideal-I that will remain associated with the narcissistic object, melancholia supports imaginary death *in the name* of this ideal; within its vaults can be found a dialogue of the crypt, the dead body, the cadaver.

But it is not only by way of support that the melancholic passion draws the intelligible means it gleans from and towards meditation on death. Such death, which no doubt is not all of it, has already been erected as a (mimetic) agency that will persecute and prosecute the residual me following the emergence of the ideal.<sup>1</sup> I said "imaginary" death, not specular, for melancholia underscores in making use of the imaginary me which in narcissism saw its emergence due to the specular reflection. After all it is the body-image that is missing here. Still, it is no reason for it not to give way to language, the sad passion which gives rise to the forlorn praxis of the word. Freud's observations of this fact in the clinic are not to be taken without reference to poets and philosophers who speak of oblivion and loss. For what is encountered in melancholia is a relation to the death of the imaginary other, in other words to self-mortification which keeps death alive. But does not this "keeping death alive" provoke certain dissatisfaction with death, a desire for death, that confirms with every word an inadequacy of metaphor of death, perhaps of metaphor in general? Melancholia's intimate relation with the jouissance of the body, the enjoyment of pathos that keeps coming back to the ever growing intensity of the symbol granting it more death and less life - this melancholic jouissance is but one of many tortuous features that Freud singled out in his study. But he was not the only one. Freud managed to draw them up on the basis of clinical experience and, as we shall see, they are not at all foreign to what can be found in a certain style of fiction, literature, philosophy or writing in

general. What are these traits as they appear to Freud and what can we make of their relation to the "melancholic" writing, the relation in which a degree of reciprocity allows us to extract from it its *general* traits?

In Freud's account, with which I will begin, the characteristics of melancholia oscillate between "profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss in the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity" to growing self-reproaches and self-criticism that "culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment".<sup>2</sup> How then should we take the words of a subject who indulges without measure in the presentation of self-debasement and self-reproach, and unremitting complaints about his or her unworthiness, what in everyday language has come to be known as "complex of inferiority"? How are we to interpret the verbal picture of his or her unworthiness that demands punishment?

We have learnt from the lessons of psychoanalysis that the discourse in the analytic process reveals *another* layer or dimension of libidinal fixations whereby representations [*Vorstellungen*] or signifiers are incarcerated at the time of painful/pleasurable repetition. The development of signification echoes the holes and gaps around which repetition has found its deadly dwelling giving rise to jouissance. Melancholia is not exempt from these general procedures that stem from the discovery of the law of the unconscious, but rather, together with other symptoms, testifies to the repression of the signifier to the extent that what is subjected to it is a speaking being. And yet, in his analysis of melancholia, Freud considers, not without irony, another possibility, what at least seems to be another possibility.

What is at stake here is the question, or should we say a practice, of the symptom formation and truth. It is Lacan who reminds us in this respect of a certain convolution which involves "double reference to speech and language":

In order to free the subject's speech, we introduce him into the language of his desire, that is to say, into the the *primary language* in which, beyond what he tells us of himself, he is already talking to us unknown to himself, and, in the first place, in the symbols of the symptom.<sup>3</sup>

Since what is repressed in the unconscious is the symbol or the signifier, the articulation of wishes, complaints, recollections and surprises, that is to say symptoms, will lead to a production of metaphorical displacement which, in so far as they make themselves *heard* and recognised by the subject, do not by this virtue constitute the realm of truth but rather a succession of lies that bend towards truth at the moment of fall or lapse in the discourse

thus constructed. Metaphor in the discourse appears as "a guide [...] whose symbolic displacement will neutralise the secondary meanings of the terms that it associates".<sup>4</sup> The place and function of the *secondary meaning* will interest us here for it reintroduces the duality, and often a duplicity, of references one of which is concealed from the subject. This occult element, whether it is operative in the form of mimicry of an image (meaning) or symbolical association (signification) is that without which metaphor could not work. But the metaphor, Lacan tells us, is not a mere juxtaposition of any two names or signifiers, which would no doubt produce an effect of *automatic* signification gleaned from such an intention, but a pairing of symbols between which the unsaid image is sparked off, so that something else comes into view. In "traffic was a bitch" we are encountering a displacement of meaning which constitutes the metaphorical axis. *Something else is meant*, that is to say imaginized for the simple reason that something else is identified by the subject, that is to say, is subjected to identification. For Lacan the place of the metaphor in the discourse is a mark of identification that reveals the subject, rather than comparison between two values outside subjectivity:

The dimension of metaphor must be less difficult for us to enter than for anyone else, provided that we recognise that what we usually call it is an identification. But that's not all - our use of the term *symbolic* in fact leads us to restrict its sense, to designate only the metaphorical dimension of the symbol. Metaphor presupposes that a meaning is the dominant datum and that it deflects, commands, the use of the signifier to such an extent that entire species of preestablished, I should say lexical, connections comes undone.<sup>5</sup>

The metaphorical displacement revolves around the production of "primary" meanings which can only be generated by way of the "secondary" meanings falling, as a result of identification, into place. But just as metaphorization is unthinkable without the subject - Fink even goes as far as to say that: "metaphor's creative spark *is* the subject: metaphor creates the subject"<sup>6</sup> - so the subject caught up within identification is inconceivable outside the field of the value of truth. Freud speaks of truth in relation to melancholia and we should pay heed to its place and function. Is the truth of the melancholiac merely to remind us of the "true understanding" or "self-understanding" that allowed philosophers to speak in the place of the Other while concealing the subjectivity of their discourse where the symptom always already revealed itself in such metaphoricity? Does the truth of philosophy and "true understanding" find themselves in the place of melancholia where

*something else*, as Nietzsche showed us, is already at work? If so, then every truth which has embarked on the adventure of becoming self-evident and self-manifest must have risked self-exposure to the ambivalence and manifoldness of meanings in the sense of producing subjectal identifications, that is say, metaphor as a symptom. Freud's contributions to the study of melancholia are not devoid of allusions to how philosophising, in so far as it attempts to bypass the work of the unconscious, falls into *misunderstanding*, what Lacan called *méconnaissance*. We cannot be certain any longer if his "contribution" is to be understood on this level. If metaphorization, which orbits around the pathemes of subjectivity, symptom and truth, has *something else* to declare, the analysis of melancholia will not necessarily solicit intervention, let alone interpretation, but leave the analyst enigmatically silent.

It would not be surprising if, in the light of Freudian psychoanalysis which has always priority to neurosis, we took the discourse of the melancholiac as an instance of articulation. This would from the start allow us to place this articulation in relation to the Other, as a repressed discourse of the unconscious. It is the repressed signifier after all that renders articulation possible, always leaving something out, omitted or forgotten, something else that escapes while soliciting another symbol to make sense. In melancholia, this something other, which in the first place echoes the narcissistic attachments to the I-ideal and the specular passion over the body-image, on which the subject relies to the same degree to which he cries out for transcending the boundaries of his nose,<sup>7</sup> is not given a recognition it would otherwise receive. The truth is not to be taken for a lie *as* truth but, such seems to be Freud's recommendation, for what it is worth, that is to say, for what it says: "The patient must surely be right in some way and be describing something that is as it seems to him to be. Indeed we must at once confirm some of his statements without reservation".<sup>8</sup>

A remark worth commenting on for, contrary to what we have learnt from psychoanalysis, it places the ruses of the subject's self-expression on the same level as the unconsciously repressed signifier of the Other placing the melancholiac in the place *of* the Other as if there was no place for a symptom addressed *to* the Other, which would in turn place the subject in an alienating distance *from* the other. As if such a subjective separation were not already linked to an identificatory metaphor that conceals *another meaning* of the Other's jouissance, subject to his complaints about the lack. As if the love-object were not



already an object-loss sadly and intimately intertwined with the me. Indeed, if we rely on Lacan's formula, absence of a metaphor would turn out to be an absence of a symptom. For Freud then melancholia seems to be endowed with a power to express the affect roused by the intimation of the mOther rather than signify the gaps between the signifiers ("traffic", "was", "the bitch", for example). Such an expression, which I have called here *as if*, takes precedence over what does not yet seem discernible, thus constituting a fundamental resistance to the analytic process. But Freud attempts to demonstrate that, what might be called, *melancholic resistance* should be taken literally. We must therefore return to our initial question: how is the melancholiac's discourse to be heard and interpreted, given that "resistance is always on the side of the analyst"? Freud continues:

He really is as lacking in interest and as incapable of love and achievement as he says. But that, as we know, is secondary; it is the effect of the internal work which is unknown [*unbekannt*] to us (...). He also seems to us justified in certain other self-accusations; it is merely that he has a keener eye for the truth than other people who are not melancholic. When in his heightened self-criticism he describes himself as petty, egoistic, dishonest, lacking in independence, one whose sole aim has been to hide the weaknesses of his own nature, it may be, so far as we know, that he has come pretty near to understanding himself; we only wonder why a man has to be ill before he can be accessible to a truth of this kind.<sup>9</sup>

An illness at the service of truth whose "internal work" remains hidden, unknown to both the subject and the analyst. Freud does not resist the resistance in melancholia. He takes up his position by granting a special privilege to the melancholic confession which places it in the proximity of truth. As for the subject his ambivalent privilege is taken at the price of "heightened self-criticism", which already appeared in the *Introduction*, and self-negation or negation of the me.

What *kind* of truth is at stake here, given that it does not appear as a lie or as a metaphor that conceals the unsaid yet operative value of another meaning? Is it not the *same* kind of truth that Nietzsche brought to light in his attempt to rock the boat of old truths of philosophy from which one cannot expect anything more and anything less than a "host of metaphors" and an avalanche of symptoms that at some point began to bear heavy on us? But here we should distinguish the position occupied by Nietzsche's writing from the one of the analyst, namely, that whereas Nietzsche's fundamental revaluation of all values and fundamental critique of all metaphysics to come turns on the axis of the imaginary ideal, the analyst's silence that responds to the question of the melancholic loss

has come to reflect the emptiness of the *same meaning*, which Freud brought into existence by inserting in his commentary a *symbolic repetition* and, in the distance of irony, allowed for the lack of opposition to resistance to be heard in it.<sup>10</sup> Freud's "silence" in response to melancholia does not promote interpretation as truth but effects an awaiting for the lies as truth to burst through, so that a response to the demand of the Other of silence disrupt the anguish of waiting.

What kind of truth then does Freud propose inhabits, and doubtless inhibits, the melancholic space when taking melancholia for what it says - is it the one of anxiety which *tells* the truth of resistance in the discourse of the Other or the one of the divided subject which speaks without knowing that it *signifies* in the face of the real? The former would doubtless tell us something about all meditations on death given that they do not render it ideal.<sup>11</sup> The anguished truth of the melancholiac speaks from the Other to the Other as if there was no Other. In Freudian terms the breach of transference and the libido's withdrawal from the object - due to "*real sleight or disappointment [realen Krænkung oder Enttæuschung]*",<sup>12</sup> the terms I will come back to - has no other object to be attached to, is neither substituted by nor displaced onto another object. Such truth speaks at the cross-roads where no truth as lie is yet possible, in other words, where it is not inhibited by the "unknown loss". An absence of inhibition making the truth possible? Such would be Freud's ambivalence as regards his treatment of melancholia, the ambiguous inheritor of narcissistic ideal, in the proximity of unforgetfulness as truth. Here, we should not reduce this ambivalence to a contradiction of the terms that constitute it, but examine them further as a certain ironic provocation.

It is true that Freud speaks of such inhibition which I have taken for a hindrance to the emergence of truth as *aletheia*, unconcealment. But that is not so. I would only be led in this fashion to what in the *Introduction* Freud called idealisation, namely, the sexual overrating of the object, that leads to its aggrandisement and alienation of the subject. Inhibition on the one hand, and anguish on the other, would, if I were to follow this line of objection, appear as major obstacles to both symptom formation, and further, to the assumption of the symptom by the subject, broadly speaking, an assumption of the lack as an object of desire.

The absence of substitution and displacement would invite us to consider a psychotic phenomenon whereby the signifier of the Other, as in dreams for example, has

been appropriated by the subject in such a way that the work of displacement - alongside condensation or metaphor and metonymy in Lacan's terms - is out of place, has no place to take place and no time in which the temporal difference to work. If self-reproach and self-negation are the undeniable accomplices of the melancholic passion, its constitution, understood outside metaphorization, would acquire a hallucinatory character. It is taken for truth only because the melancholic subject expresses his worthlessness for the Other in the form of a projective reversal of the Other's lack for the subject. The absence of a metaphor would thus signal a lack of inhibition, as mentioned above, in which the signifier of the Other ( $S_1$ ) is taken for the real, which in turn would indicate that the real, that "before which the words stop", has not been recognised as a certain impossibility of signification beyond a point in which a signifier cannot be substituted for another signifier. Such phenomenon of the return of the real where the symbolic fails, would give rise to a delusional construction where "words are taken as things, as real objects".<sup>13</sup> Jouissance of the Other takes over the "truth of the subject" in signification. This impossibility points to the "unknown loss" which thus remains unrecognised in the play of metaphors. This may sound strange for we are accustomed to think that melancholia concerns nothing but the loss and that according to this logic the arrival of the melancholic jouissance was effected by the occurrence of loss. But in fact, if viewed in such a way, in melancholia no loss has taken place.

Following Freud's work on dreams, R. Samuels points out that in dreams the movement is from primary perception, which holds the subject hostage to infantile sexuality, towards thought which opens the symbolic gates of the signifier.<sup>14</sup> The projective reversal in melancholia shows that instead of the recognition of a loss giving rise to symbolic signification - metaphor on the level of identification and metonymy on the level of desire - the impossible and unsignifiable real, Freudian *primary repression*, is given a name (a "loss" for example) every time it happens. In Lacanian terms, the movement towards *another* signifier ( $S_2$ ) is thus hindered for it is presupposed by giving meaning to the master signifier ( $S_1$ ). As a result the signifier of the Other takes on a function not of representing the subject for another signifier ( $S_1$  for  $S_2$ ), but of the "subject" being represented by being perceived, thought, spoken. An appeal to the signified aids a psychotic delirium which centres on what Lacan called *foreclosure* of the patronym, the paternal/symbolical cut in the jouissance-pervaded mythical union between the child and

the mother, in contradistinction to *repression* which is fundamental in neurosis. In hallucination the already discussed identificatory *being-me* remains, structurally and temporally, within the corpus of the Other. Hence the psychotic trait in narcissism. The lack of difference between the subject and the Other,  $S_2$  and  $S_1$ , which is only indicative of the death of the subject, shows an impossible passage from identification to object-choice, and remains incarcerated in the "*regression* from one type of object-choice to original narcissism".<sup>15</sup> In temporal terms the lack of difference, the lack of the "sense of time", as Freud put it, does not imply the lack of difference between, say *before* and *after*. The absence of difference appears as an absence of the *after* in the face of the real which precedes symbolisation. Since the temporal difference works in relation to death as a loss in the real, it is the *after* that symbolises the lack of *before*, that is to say, retroactively metaphorises what is "fundamentally" missing. But why in melancholia does the Other, whether as an object or a signifier, become devoid of value for the subject, given that, due to the projective reversal, the subject perceives himself as worthless, keeps his self-negation intact?

Freud tells us that something significant happens here. In narcissism the me becomes an object but in melancholia the difference between the me and the object ceases to exist. Instead of the displacement of the object onto another, there appears an eclipse of the me by the object and, instead of a metaphor, an incorporation comes to an aid. In the intimacy of incorporation the merging of the me and the object emerges not as a substitution but as a fundamental foreclosure of the condition of signification which can only be operative metaphorically and metonymically in transference. Incorporation of the object is therefore played out against identification to which Freud has always imparted a much greater significance.

Secondly, the incorporation of a love-object, which confirms the loss in the psychic economy, becomes, as Freud points out, "an excellent opportunity for the ambivalence in love-relationships to make itself effective and come into the open".<sup>16</sup> The diminishing of the subject's value is unthinkable without the splitting of the me and without one part of it turning against the other to blame it for the loss. Although the object has been abandoned, as Freud writes a few lines later, love persists with the immediate effect of setting the ambivalence of love and hate to work. This division has a narcissistic feature attached to it. The hated part of the me - the process is sustained by the participation of the "critical

agency" that has already introjected the voice as a medium of parental intervention concerning law and prohibition - is held responsible for the loss of the loved object and itself becomes an object of destructive tendencies of the other (part), among which Freud mentions sadism, self-torment and a suicidal fantasy. This hatred of the other is translated, with an aid of the mechanism of projection, into "the Other hates me", which gives rise to the persecutory self-punishment. Such fulfilment and satisfaction are not constitutive of the *neurotic* subject, neither in Lacanian nor Freudian terms. Instead of signification that resorts to metaphor for the first yield, the Oedipal dialectic is altogether bypassed leading to an irruption of *jouissance*. Such omission, to say the least, takes on a life of the guarantee of uninterrupted access to the maternal body and forecloses the symbolic function of the father as a certain failure of intervention, the cut. On the one hand, the child becomes overwhelmed and enveloped in the mother's *jouissance*, and on the other, an attempt to sever himself from it extends onto both further refusal of castration and a grievous acceptance of life's only meaning, his melancholic *jouissance*.

According to Freud love persists even if the love-object has been abandoned, persisting in relation to the object that takes place of the loss, the object-loss [*Objektverlust*]. Freud remains ambiguous about "a loss in regard to an object", as he prefers to call it rather than "loss of an object", and love for it as if it was only the place it occupies that underwent alteration. He remarks for example that the *me* can only be destroyed if "owing to the return of object-cathexis, it can treat itself as an object - it is able to direct against itself the hostility which relates to an object and which represents the *me*'s original reaction to objects in the external world".<sup>17</sup> The suicide, in which "the murderous impulses against others" turn back against the subject in the form of self-destruction, is therefore conditioned upon the existence of an other. Despite the fact that the object shows itself to be always "more powerful than the *me* itself", the overshadowing of the object in love differs from that of suicide. Although we have ascribed some psychotic features to melancholia (melancholic *jouissance* of the *mOther* in the place of signification, projective reversal in the place of the imaginary self-reflection, hallucination rather than metaphorization), we can now see that melancholia is not without the other.

Due to the envelopment of the object, the *me* itself has undergone a peculiar disappearance overshadowing, even consuming itself. Given that the *me* is an agency of *mecomnaissance*, its vanishing contributes directly to the melancholiac's self-negation that

has a way with truth. That is to say, which Freud says without saying it, self-negation as truth is not to be negated. This would indicate that, in some cases, neuroticization of psychosis is possible. If the truth of melancholia is hallucinatory in effect, resistantly leaping to capture *literally* the perception of the Other, its "literality" speaks with anguish of the Other of death. But anxiety gives melancholia support of the lost object. Has the melancholiac attained the kind of self-understanding and the "kind of truth" Nietzsche always took with the pinch of salt, a state of ecstatic beatitude that catapulted him outside philosophical discourse as truth?

Truth, self-understanding, literality are but facets that raise epistemological claims in their own right. That is to say, although we can hear in them the echoes of philosophical tradition that goes back to Plato, in our analysis they appear as constitutive of the "unknown loss" giving rise to "the impoverishment of the me" and sense-of-self [*Ichgefühl*]. But it is not the lowering of self-image and expectation of punishment that triggers off the melancholic passion. What "causes" it, what disrupts object-choice and ruins identification, is the "*real insult*" [*realen Kränkung*] which comes from the loved person. The lapse into self-worthlessness and emptiness are provoked or called forth in the patient [*Kranke*], which does not happen without the voice, by the Other for whom *I am* lacking. Hence the crucial distinction between *who* and *what* of the loss. The melancholiac who claims to know *who* he has lost must have failed to symbolise *what* he has lost in him. He fell out of favour with the Other for whom, it can be said, the me is lacking. I am lacking for the Other because the object of the Other is lacking for me. And if I am not the object of the Other's love, or if *I am* is not an object of the Other's desire, this object is lost for me. This reversal has already its roots in the division of the me where the loss of the love-object is confirmed in the act of hostility towards that which should be blamed and punished for allowing it to have happened. I have been lost as an object of desire of the Other. Hence the regressive traits of melancholia that appeals to oral support for having a bite of the Other. Consummation of the object has come to be identified with the erasure of the me, and with it, of the imaginary mediation. What cannot be said of the narcissistic position which strengthens the me as an object, is articulated in melancholia as an emptiness and absence of the me which appears to the Other without the veil of representation. If it is not without some justification that we should take the words of melancholia as truth-telling, it is because it has no relationship to the imaginary. In

melancholia, the point we will come back to later, there is no time for the imaginary. Should one be surprised that for Lacan it is the imaginary which represents the locus of truth? And, by the same stroke, of fiction and lies that sustain speech.

The melancholiac - the patient *par excellence*, if we can call him so to the extent that his *jouissance* binds him to the body of the mOther whose desire, not entirely without the traits of perversion, he seems to have grabbed by the horns, and who, by being guided back and forth in the delirium of inferiority and emptiness, nevertheless embraces the signifier of truth about the Other - knows. Such would be Freud's suspicion or ironic suggestion which will lead him to consider melancholia as a preamble to mania on the one hand, and on the other, as an economic factor of the release of "a large expenditure of psychological energy" which, due to resistance in analysis, enables him by means of action to throw off his compulsions.<sup>18</sup> Leaving these aside we come to the question of melancholiac knowledge. What does it consist in, what is it a knowledge of, given that a loss is usually associated with the knowledge of *who* was lost, if not a knowledge of the Other. Not only does the melancholiac know what the Other lost in him - or what is the object of the Other that is lacking for the subject - but he also knows the cause of his own predicament. One does not exist without the other. He knows, for example, what is wrong with him and it is to this aspect that Freud draws our attention. Nothing is wrong with him, that is to say everything is wrong which his self-reproaches and accusations confirm; he is simply worthless and inferior to others. But it may well be that such a shift towards neuroticization in melancholia serves here merely as a point of illustration how the symptom, the complaint of the neurotic subject, has already come into place, and does not necessarily show the clinical status of a relation between psychosis and neurosis as separate structures. In such anticipation one after all overlooks the subtleties on which an analysis of a particular case rests and which, as in the case of Schreber, would make the sad passion as touched upon above recede into a distance.

Freud indicates that the melancholiac's passion for literality has its sources in self-destructive attempts to erase in advance, that is to say retroactively, metaphorisation of failed identifications. It is when the analyst responds with silence to the subject's call for such negation that the subject becomes provoked to find in this call an already reversed reply to the demand of the Other.<sup>19</sup> If the melancholiac does not hear himself speak in the mode of a reply to the lack of the Other, it is because melancholia devours its own secrecy.

Melancholia has no secret, which strangely opposes Freud's remark about the enigma of its "internal force", because it has consumed its enigma. Secrecy guarantees the lack of guarantees whereas melancholia, by erasing secrecy, can only admit to the immanent truth devoid of the lack. Melancholia's seductive power has therefore to do with the sacrifice and renunciation of concealment. Melancholia stands in the open in the unconcealment of truth. Mediating without mediation it circulates its lack of secrecy which renders it transparent. If that constitutes melancholia's secret, it is to be divulged as nonsecret, unconcealment. But in doing so, in resisting imaginary mediation and seductively concealing its concealment, in burying itself in what is buried in it, does it not become a crypt of a cryptogram occulted by and received from the Other? To whom does the melancholiac address himself for he does not address no one?

Writing of melancholia solicits meditations which are not devoid of a certain insufficiency that places its intricacies on the opposite pole to narcissism. A lack of empirical material, however, did not prevent Freud - who in the course of writing his paper acknowledges a shortage of observations that would confirm his theory along with the "unknown" character of the melancholic *ergos* and its somewhat "enigmatic" and "uncertain" manifestations - from considering melancholic economy and structure in view of what was accessible to him. This includes not only his own observations on the cases in which he was at the time involved but also, and maybe above all, the exchange of correspondence with Karl Abraham who prided himself on being an expert in the field.<sup>20</sup> Abraham introduced in this respect the term *incorporation* which for him was a valid candidate to replace Freud's notion of *identification* that is on the limp in melancholia. Secondly, Abraham used and confused in his studies the notion of *incorporation* with that of *introjection* introduced,<sup>21</sup> again, not by Freud but Ferenczi. Freud duly confirms Abraham's contributions which include his study on the oral phase in the regressive tendencies in melancholia. But by confirming them he does not necessarily take them up to elaborate but leaves it to others Abraham himself included.

*Melancholic jouissance* floods the child like a ballast bearing heavy on the ship of desire that is likely to sink. Since the imaginary me is eclipsed by the shadow of the object-loss, its disappearance can only be seen as a blind suffering of jouissance in the darkness of the crypt. The Other of jouissance, in contrast to desire, invades the melancholiac as something foreign, which in effect produces an inclusion of the object into the me.



Although it is difficult to imagine how identification is to operate when the object-choice [*Objektwahl*] has been ruined by the invasion of jouissance, Freud seeks a relation between the two in the following way. The alleged consummation of the object, Abrahamian *incorporation* or its "devouring", is never successful, since the me only "wants to incorporate" the object into itself but fails. It is therefore identification that provides conditions for object-choice not the other way round. But in melancholia the specificity of the object makes it unlike any other. At the crucial moment, when the *real insult* [*Krænkung* - which also means *injustice, grievance*] causes the ruination of object-choice, and when no displacement to another object seems to take its place, something of radically different nature comes to work. Freud calls it the release of "free libido" and designates to it sources other than those of the libidinal investment which failed to find another object. Does not Freud confirm here Abraham's observations about the increase of sexual jouissance following the loss of a love-object? The "free libido" then aims at something else outside the objectal chain and is "withdrawn into the me" which forms "*identification with the abandoned object*". The failure of incorporation, Freud's reply to Abraham none the less, takes us into the egotic crypt of shadows and losses. Identification allows Freud to establish a link between melancholia and transference neurosis. What perhaps remains enigmatic about this renewal of identification is the sudden emergence of fresh libido at this point. What is also enigmatic is the fact that its sudden inflow seems to serve two different purposes for Freud and Abraham thus giving their correspondence both an amusing and somewhat disorienting twist.

In the letter to Freud, Abraham enthuses over his discovery of "the heightened sexual need" and "the increase of libido some time after 'object-loss'" comparing it to the "'feast' of the manic", but fails to find a "normal" passage from melancholia to mania. Freud is amused by the term "normal", which has somewhat become an outcast in psychoanalysis, and in his reply points out that he is not so much interested in "normal" transition from one state to the other as in the "explanation of the mechanism".

Abraham, as it seems, tries to envisage the maniacal consequences of melancholia while examining melancholia's neurotic-obsessional aspect by means of incorporation. Freud, on the other hand, focuses in his analysis on the primacy of identification which is reinforced despite the objectal loss. It is not at all clear how identification works in this respect although, suffice it to say, as Freud suggests, it survives the failures of

incorporation. Saying that "identification is the expression of there being something in common, which may signify love",<sup>22</sup> Freud espouses the view that not every identification involves an object. In *Group psychology* Freud makes it clear by showing how identification works in the Oedipal setting:

It is easy to state in a formula the distinction between an identification with the father and the choice of the father as an object. In the first case one's father is what one would like to *be*, and in the second he is what one would like to *have*. The distinction, that is, depends upon whether the tie attaches to the subject or to the object of the me. The former kind of tie is therefore already possible before any sexual object-choice has been made.<sup>23</sup>

The analytical distinction between the categories of *being* and *having* is decisive in Freud's attempt to find his way with identification in melancholia which, as I showed in the third chapter rests primarily on the specular identification of *being-me*, and, as it were, his disposal with the rival concept of *incorporation* that forecloses on identification. For the latter brings into work a mimesis which aims at the subject giving itself a name to affirm the resemblance between the subject and the Other, not the Other of jouissance of course, but the Other of language, what Lacan called the Name of the Father, the paternal agency set up to jettison the ballast of the melancholic jouissance over board on the ship of desire. Indeed, for Freud identification with the father is decisive for its ambivalence of love and hatred - the ambivalence that, as Freud notes, not only determines one of the three factors towards melancholic predisposition, but also reveals for a child an ambivalence in identification itself, on the one hand, identifying as being like the father (symbolical), and on the other hand, identifying with the object in the sense of an appropriation of the imaginary phallus. Freud examined these differences in his famous study of the function of the Army and Church.

The increased libido, as observed both by Freud and Abraham, is not, according to Freud, the *I-libido*, but the erotic one which, since it has to go somewhere, seeks the abandoned object rather than meets its own abandonment. As Freud says in his early sketch, melancholia is "longing for something lost".<sup>24</sup> In its work identification is formed with an abandoned object, which would not be possible in the case of incorporation. Melancholic identification attempts to give itself a name which is the name of the lost object of the Other, the name of the dead or the repressed signifier of the Other. As it was so often the case Freud remained suspicious about the concepts introduced by his disciples

and, in this particular case, retains his reservations about incorporation. Not only does he mention it only once in the *Mourning and melancholia* but also his "priority" of the mechanism of identification enables him to take a decisive step back to his first topography and analysis of the structure of the unconscious re-presentations from which Lacan will derive his conception of *das Ding*.

As we have said, the withdrawal of the libido from the object does not so much demonstrate the absolute disappearance of the other as the appearance of a symbolical term that mourns, never satisfactorily enough, the object-loss. There is no other object but the lost one, the lost object as a lack, not a lack of an object, that sustains anguish on its orbit. Identification in melancholia poses certain difficulties for its formation depends on the libidinal yield of giving the subject a name, a name of the object lost. The narcissistic *I was*, and to this extend the I-ideal, is thus insisted upon to the effect that the study of melancholia and its losses must to some degree rely on the temporal difference of the relation to the master signifier echoed in the chain of significations.

Freud clearly demonstrates to us that his insistence upon identification rather than incorporation in melancholia is in effect capable of resuscitating metaphor to life. In constructing a metaphor, as we have said above in relation to Lacan's elaboration, an identification is established, *being* like the other or speaking/writing in the (auditory/visual) image of the other. Self-negation in this respect supports identification with the lost object as the other (part) of the me. As Mannoni described it: "one half unmercifully criticises the other, and the half thus attacked represents the lost object itself through identification".<sup>25</sup> The splitting of the me, which Freud examined in one of his last papers, gives rise to the dialectic of love and hate and can, as Mannoni remarked, be transformed into mania. This transformation is not without the traces of narcissistic regression, as the accusing and negating me *preserves* itself as negating, that is to say establishes itself in the position of the ideal.

Freud preserves identification with the object-loss in the way in which Lacan tried to define this elusive concept in relation to desire. The object is the ineffable sediment of the real and therefore a remainder of the jettisoned jouissance, that which "survives" its renunciation. Thus the remainder takes us from the field of the drives to the one of desire which it causes to emerge. In other words, identification with the object serves as a condition for the Oedipal realisation of desire that activates the function of the patronym.

We will come back to this.

The symbolical identification inspires the subject, not without anguish, to practice mimetic representation or to give itself a name. But what is a name and, if its origin remains unnameable, what does it do? It gives meaning. It thus clears the path of a transition from the analogy to the metaphor, and at the same time, raises an obstacle in the signification of the unconscious by presupposing a common object as a prerequisite in the intersubjective communication. In resonating a meaning for the subject, the meaning both opens the path of desire and hinders it to metonymise the lack of being on which identification has to rely. In the first place the name is given to the object by the Other, the subject hears himself name himself, as if to call himself, by the name that is foreign, close and yet most alien to him. Incorporation is without the name, without the other. When the subject says "I am a fake", he establishes an identificatory relation with the loss of the "original" (ideal) other the negative reversal of which is taken for the object of identification. This self-reproach, which would not be possible without the "critical agency" of the superego, relies on the relation with something lost, as if loss was longed for. Melancholic desire longs for loss. And because it seeks a lost object it also finds it in identification. Lacan's "metaphorical dimension of the symbol" is reintroduced again here.<sup>26</sup> It is on the level of desire that alterity of the Other (sex) is encountered by the subject, subject to castration, in a relation that cannot be satisfied. That is why, as Lacan says and Miller explains, desire can only work in the open as the desire of the Other, whereas the work of the drive is restricted to the jouissance of satisfaction and the work of death.<sup>27</sup>

Identification in melancholia is therefore conditioned by the object-loss which functions as a lack. In order to give itself a name the kleptomaniac subject borrows or steals the signifier from the Other to fill the lack and discover the futility of identification. By the same stroke, however, identification becomes the "royal road" to the desire of the Other which is, in the work of metaphorical identification, always already confronted with the fundamental prohibition - the prohibition of incest, for example, which is not the only one. In its ambivalent aspirations for love, identification brings the subject in relation to the law, while the object-choice, at least in melancholia, turns into an impossible choice of *having* or incorporating the object-loss. In Lacanian terms the lost object is the lack that generates desire which is an impossible desire to the extent that it is confronted with the prohibition attempting to raise from its ruins the lost object as the lack of desire's

satisfaction. But where and how is this prohibition established, how does it come into existence? Is it not founded, as Lacan suggests, by virtue of the *No of the Father*, the paternal agency that installs itself in the Oedipal drama in the form of the eleventh commandment which lies at the heart of psychoanalysis - "Thou shalt not have access to that which is your supreme jouissance"?<sup>28</sup> I will come back to the relation between prohibition and the loss, which is as significant as it is fascinating, in reference to the work of M. Torok and N. Abraham. For the moment let's acknowledge, following Freud, some of the topographical alterations between the systems.

In the work of melancholia, Freud writes, there is a particular case of the lack of the libidinal investment in the unconscious *texture* that would allow for a signifier to appear at the level of the preconscious. This is so because, if I can put it this way, a certain hibernation of the thing-presentations takes place. The isolation of the *Dingvorstellung* at the deepest unconscious level renders *das Ding* somewhat absolute, that is to say, detached from the word-presentations. According to Freud a formation of *meaning*, and subsequently of symbolical identification recognisable on the level of metaphor, is only possible when the *Dingvorstellungen* and *Wortvorstellungen* are linked. In psychosis the difference between the two is not operative. Here, the word-presentations act as the *primary processes*.

They undergo condensation, and by means of displacement transfer their cathexes to one another in their entirety. The process may go so far that a single word, if it is specially suitable on account of its numerous connections, takes over the representation [*vertretung*] of a whole train of thought.<sup>29</sup>

When the word and the thing do not coincide [*decken*], as Freud says a few pages later, a psychotic effect takes precedence over transference neurosis. Briefly speaking, in psychosis the truth is homogeneous; its "literality" excludes the work of metaphorical or metonymical figurativeness. In neurosis, by contrast, not only are the thing-presentations and the word-presentations libidinally invested, not only the objects are not given up and the two overlap, but also are they topographically localizable in the conscious presentation, "while the unconscious presentation is the presentation of the thing alone".<sup>30</sup> The path for the signifier to appear in the preconscious is cleared (Freud's *Bahnung* is translated by Lacan as *frayage* - "clearing", rather than "facilitation") due to the supplementary investment of the libido in the thing-presentation, which is effective when the thing- and

word-presentations become linked, that is to say, when the ideas and words undergo a connection [*Verknüpfung*]. Only on this level does repression become conceivable, i. e. the repressed material becomes subject to new appearances and registrations. The supplementary investments of the object occur on the proviso that the primary investments have already taken place. This allows for the primary processes in the unconscious "to be succeeded by the secondary process which is dominant in the preconscious". Repression is a failure of translation [*Übersetzung*] of the idea (presentation) "into words which shall remain attached [*verknüpft*] to the object" due to the lack of supplementary libido.<sup>31</sup> Thus the primal condition for repression is an already successful libidinal investment of the object on the level of the thing.

Freud goes on to say that just as the investment of the thing-presentations guarantees repression, so the corresponding word-presentations come to form the preconscious. If the mechanism of repression [*Verdrängung*] is common to neuroses (lack of supplementary libido facilitating translation of one register into the preconscious), it is the mechanism of foreclosure [*Verwerfung*] that characterises psychosis. Without going further into the clinical differences between the two, suffice it to mention the term of the drive which we will come to in considering the work of incorporation in distinction to identification. In psychosis, Freud ruminates, the drive-libido would be withdrawn from what is represented by the "*unconscious* presentation of the object". Repression, as we have said, is operational between the unconscious thing-presentations and the preconscious word-presentations and is not constituted by the investment of the word-presentations. Such an investment would, as Freud says, indicate an attempt to regain the lost object "*via* the verbal part of it".<sup>32</sup> A failure to accomplish this would leave the word in the place of the thing. Indeed, as we have said earlier, the psychotic confuses words with things and vice versa. The psychotic way of thinking, as Freud concludes, pivots around taking "the concrete things [*konkrete Dinge*] as though they were abstract". The activity of the drives in this process remains restricted to the investment of the words *as if* they were objects (things). It is because the jouissance which orients the work of the drives, and of the death drive especially, is not "evacuated" or renounced at this juncture, that the thing-presentations remain libidinally frozen.

And this brings me to the notion of the formation of meaning, which requires not only a degree of correspondence between thing- and word-presentations but also, so to

speak, a libidinal touch that would illuminate a form into an enjoy-meant of the thing-word disunity. This disunity, which is disrupted by Lacan in reference to Saussurian sign and its components, the signifier and signified, does not disqualify the level of *das Ding* from taking part in the operation. The passage which comes from 1891 monograph, in which Freud criticises philosophers (J. S. Mill) for disregarding the significance of the thing, is worth quoting here:

A word acquires its *meaning* by being linked to an object-presentation [later thing-presentation], at all events if we restrict ourselves to a consideration of substantives. The object-presentation itself is once again a complex of associations made up of the greatest variety of visual, acoustic, tactile, kinaesthetic and other presentations. Philosophy tells us that an object-presentation consists in nothing more than this - that the appearance of there being a 'thing' to whose various 'attributes' these sense-impressions bear witness is merely due to the fact that, in enumerating the sense-impressions which we have received from an object, we also assume the possibility of there being a large number of further impressions in the same chain of associations. The object-presentation is thus seen to be one which is not closed and almost one which cannot be closed, while the word-presentation is seen to be something closed, even though capable of extension. The pathology of disorders of speech leads to assert that *the word-presentation is linked at its sensory end (by its sound image [Lacanian signifier]) with the object-presentation.*<sup>33</sup>

It is the already mentioned tie or connection [*Verknüpfung*] between the thing and the word that captures Lacan's attention in his analysis of unconscious structures. If Freud has already divorced himself, as the fragment above shows, from the classical perspectives of philosophy whereby the thing designated an essence or pure being around which orbit myriads of "attributes", Lacan will nevertheless return to it not without a philosophical taste. The operation of the signifier is not without a link to the thing whose existence is in turn oriented on the horizon of the opposition between the pleasure and the reality principles. It is just that for Lacan *das Ding* "is the true secret" outside the relationship. It is what in the subject's experience emerges as radically isolated in relation to what is nearest, the *Nebenmensch*, and therefore as something alien, homeless. But *das Ding* is not only to remind us of the Freudian notion of the *unheimlich*. It is what for Lacan fundamentally orients the development of the subject, its dreams, identifications, figurative progressions, as that which is always already *outside*, the very core of what he will call *extimité*. In Lacan's presentation

it is, of course, clear that what is supposed [*qu'il s'agit*] to be found cannot be refound. It is in its nature that the object as such is lost. It will never be refound. Some thing is there while one waits for something better, or worse, but which one awaits. The world of our experience, the Freudian world,

assumes that it is this object, *das Ding* as the absolute Other of the subject, that one is supposed to re-find. It is to be found at the most as something missed [*regret*]. One does not find it, but only its pleasurable associations. It is in this state of wishing for it and waiting for it that, in the name of the pleasure principle, the optimum tension will be sought; below that there is neither perception nor effort. In the end, in the absence of something which hallucinates it in the form of a system of references, a world of perception cannot be organised in a valid way, cannot be constituted in a human way. The world of perception is given to us by Freud as dependent on that fundamental hallucination without which there would be no attention available [Trans. mod.]<sup>†</sup>

The hallucinatory presence of the thing is how the primary perceptions are organised. But what is most important, what relates to the lost object while at the same time preceding all repression, is a fundamental affect of *das Ding* which as the function of "the outside of the signified" [*hors-signifié*] supports the symbolic order of signifiers. The Thing is thus the Unchangeable and has its conceptual roots in Freud's *Entwurf* where he describes it as an isolated neurone which is severed from other neurones whose paths it nevertheless helps regulate. Since for Lacan *das Ding* or the object - although he distinguishes the two later - organises the primary forms of subjectivity, it is subject to the pleasure principle of investment and discharge.

Although this position takes its grass roots from the texture (signifying chain) and function (pleasure principle) of the neuronal organisation as described by Freud in the *Project*, Lacan grafts it into the field of ethics which I will explore at the end of this work. In doing so Lacan acknowledges a debt to Kant situating *das Ding* in the place of the lack as a universal maxim - the lack of the subjectal relationship with it.

After this long detour we can now return to Freud's conclusive remarks in the *Mourning and Melancholia*. His diversion in the topographical analysis of the systems is well informed by his earlier formulations in *The Unconscious* to which my detour was ineluctably driven. In summing up his findings Freud once again hesitates, seems uncertain due to the shortage of material and observation. The question he now poses seems nevertheless to derive from *The Unconscious* paper, completed before *Mourning and melancholia* earlier in 1915, and focuses on the problem of libidinal investment of the registers. Is the work of melancholia wholly affected by the underinvestment of the object (thing) or is it generated by the identificatory investment [*Identifizierungersatz*] of supplementary libido as he seems to suggest in the current paper? Once again, an answer is to come via a reflection on the structure of the systems:

In melancholia 'the unconscious (thing-)presentations [*(Ding-)vorstellungen*] of the object has been



abandoned by the libido'. In reality, however, this presentation is made up of innumerable single impressions (or unconscious traces [*unbewusste Spuren*] of them) [which is what he says in the 1891 monograph], and this withdrawal of libido is not a process that can be accomplished in a moment, but must certainly, as in mourning, be long-drawn-out [*langwieriger* - also wearisome] and gradual.<sup>35</sup>

and further that in melancholia

countless separate struggles are carried on over the object, in which hate and love contend with each other: the one seeks to detach the libido from the object, the other to maintain this position of the libido against the assault. The location of these separate struggles [*Einzelkämpfe*] cannot be assigned to any system but the Ucs, the region of the memory traces [*Erinnerungsspuren*] of *things* (as contrasted with *word-cathexes*).<sup>36</sup>

These struggles - separate to the extent that their outcome is decided in isolation - certainly ensure the survival of the *Thing* over which the struggle erupts, the object-loss as the lack that is, even if their result, the outcome of the melancholic *Kränkung*, remains uncertain. Out of the three factors which facilitate the fall into melancholia - object-loss, love/hate ambivalence and the libido's regressive tendency to withdraw to the egotic crypt of death - the first two, Freud has no doubt about that, belong to and support the mechanism of repression. We should now consider if the third factor may be decisive in staking out the boundaries of melancholia in terms of neurotic and psychotic phenomena. It is, perhaps, the work of this third component that would allow us to shed some light on the difference between writing and speech.

If the former, to say it in a word, depends according to Freud on the visual images of the letter, reproduced, which does not happen without the mimesis of the other as reading, the order or dis-order, the course or dis-course, of speech relies not only on the connections between neurones, which Lacan "translated" into signifiers, but also on the degree to which the thing-presentations in the unconscious are invested. Given that psychoanalysis has only one medium, the "medium of speech" as Lacan famously declared, the order of speech seems to derive its determination, i.e. its analysis, from the *missing signifier* (failure of the translation of the unconscious thing-presentations into the preconscious word-presentations). Writing by contrast, to follow this logic, becomes analysable within the framework of the theory of the letter as the mnemonic trace without, not necessarily, as Freud suggested, the participation of the auditory image. And this in turn would suggest, although we should wait a little before jumping into conclusions, that the operation of writing does not necessarily and directly depend upon the mechanism of

repression as speech does.<sup>37</sup>

Let's say further that if we were to pursue analysis of writing and speech on the level of distinction between the narcissistic self-investment of the imaginary and the melancholic abandonment of the imaginary which seeks the truth outside the identificatory or metaphorical inadequacy, the implications of such pursuit would indeed take us to the threshold of philosophy. If, in this respect, such link between narcissism and melancholia exists, and there seems to be even more than one, it turns around the Ideal. It can be said that the lack which Western metaphysics always tried to repress has to do with the loss of the ideal that would ensure and guarantee an infinite conversation of writing - with whom/what if not the idealised other that, in writing at least, does not speak back. Such a "guarantee" would not be possible to imaginize other than by way of speculative reflection that sustains it and indeed fuels its mortifying gaze through which it is always on the way to renew and reestablish itself as infinite, inexhaustible. The limit comes perhaps from the Echo that mythically, yet already symbolically, reiterates the last words that Narcissus wishes to hear thus closing, with every word uttered, or foreclosing the function which made him hear what he refused to reply in the first place. (Not so with Orpheus, one could interlude, whose voice comes about in the absence of the gaze he must sacrifice as the sole object of his *fascination*) For it is beyond the imaginary realm in which Narcissus always restitutes his vision of the word, its ideal, to become subject to the castration by which the divine Other deprived the poor filly of her power to reply. If he therefore takes what he hears for the other's response his quest on this path may seem guaranteed, as philosophers till Husserl kept us assured.

But the question here lies not only with various species of speculative discourse already drawn from its imaginary well. The question concerns the division that Lacan, following Freud, structurally brought to our scrutiny, namely that of the difference between foreclosure and repression. The very least philosophers seem to have acknowledged regarding the loss bearing heavy on them, was to place its burden on the shoulders of repression as if such a speculative recognition of loss, via preservation of the ideal spectre, were to fill the emptiness and answer the enigma of the concept of repression already extracted from psychoanalysis.<sup>38</sup> The flourishing of the imaginary under the slogan of the repressed loss - and thus a gradual loosening up of the terms in which this conversation, neither philosophy nor literature, unfolds - still manages to bypass some of

the more fundamental questions raised by psychoanalysis. One of them would be that of the father, not its repression or avoidance performed under the elegance and seduction of literary style, but its foreclosure which guarantees the conditions for perpetuating "literary" meditation on the maternal body of *jouissance* (one of the sources of our guilt in the absence of castration) to which it has somewhat unlimited access. The loss is thus paired up with death, death with the lack and the lack with the castration which inevitably becomes idealised as a philosophical partner worthy of such a discourse of mourning. But if the loss as the lost object already bears witness to the loss of the ideal, as I propose melancholia could be approached, the regressive step, which one feels like calling *reprogressive*, towards the maternal object hardly takes us anywhere save the Kleinian and Abrahamian resurrection of the Platonic myth. Can it be that this surface-borne forgetfulness of the question of the father, this literary flirting with the maternal body, be it dead or alive, as Melanie Klein, following K. Abraham, always enticed us to do, and all the species of the imaginary reincorporation of loss as *object appropriated* in the place of the lack that are already discernible on the horizon of the production of the word that essentially forecloses castration in the refusal to renounce *jouissance* of the Other, amounts to this extent to saying *no* to the *no*, to refusing to turn to where it comes from and subsequently to foreclose the absolute singularity of the question.

In writing then foreclosure would seem to preserve the repression of repression. A double repression. The notion of the secret, for example, as it appears in the writing of M. Torok and N. Abraham, maintains such "metaphysical" status. Metaphysical only to the extent to which it attempts to point to a common feature in all repressions, their fundamental unrepresentability, their secret. The secret would therefore foreclose repression in the sense of repressing the identificatory dialectic *present* in the theoretical problematic of the subject and subject's relation to both the Other and its object, that this problematic tries to grasp. The secret, like the crypt as we shall soon see, is situated to act as a binder, a place in which the inside would meet the outside in the *synthesis* of things and words. In his study of psychosis Lacan inadvertently brings out the notion of foreclosure as a mechanism *distinct* to that of repression to illustrate, perhaps, how the discourse of metaphysics escapes, that is to say altogether forecloses both the castration in the formation of subjectivity and the question of symbolic representation *as* the subject. The mechanism of foreclosure operates, if we accept the view above of which this one is

an implication, *outside* subjectivity, before or "after the subject", and beyond the identificatory promotions of figurativeness which, to the extent that the neurotic subject made himself heard throughout history, wields a cut between the body and the jouissance of being spoken. I will And this could raise the following question: Does the function and structural place of the patronym, the paternal metaphor as Lacan called, serve to guard repression, to which Freud attributed "the greatest achievements of mankind", against ..?

## CHAPTER 7

### WHAT IS A CRYPT?

The work of melancholia raises some of the paramount problems. The lost object, to begin with, the lost object of love of the Other takes up a function of generating desire. But it will not do so, as we have said, should the patronymic agency fail to install a skimming device to glean jouissance from the libidinal tie with the mOther. To do that, as Lacan often pointed out, the letter must always already be there as *distinct* from jouissance of the Other. How does it find its place then, how does the symbolical intervention succeed, given the drive will have always found its satisfaction, could and can do without desire's relation with prohibition and law?

I have showed some relations between the subject, identification and metaphor as decisive in the emergence of what Lacan, following Hegel, Kojève and Freud, called desire. Let's say, somewhat dogmatically, that if Lacan in his "return to Freud" goes beyond Freud, it is because he has always distinguished the order of the drive from that of desire. Nor should we confuse, as Lacan often insisted, the me or ego [*le moi*] with the subject. The subject emerges in the relation with the Other of language and literary figurativeness, of which the metaphorical and metonymical representations he always promoted above others, and the object. For the subject the object is forever lost, which is why "subject's first appearance is its disappearance". To the extent that the problem of the lost object as the lack takes us to the field of ethics and to the notion of prohibition - which is why the letter will always be homeless, always on exile, in the field of foreignness where no part of the mother tongue, can be named by it - the life and death of the drives lie elsewhere. The drive is immune to the Other of prohibition for the simple reason that its existence depends on the satisfaction of the drive-libido whose repetitive function always returns to the jouissance on the path of death. Life and death have to do with the real of the drive. It is not identification therefore that would sustain drive's vicissitudes but incorporation. By including the embalmed object into its cryptic economy the drive has ensured its preservation, and its thanatic power, to draw from it the ecstatic elation of

satisfaction. The drive is ignorant of prohibition and ignorant of the loss, for its expenditure and gain come to constitute an economical balance of its function.

In so far as the work of incorporation appears in this light in the study of M. Torok and N. Abraham, desire is not considered, as in Lacan, as a distinct order operating on the level of language. It appears from their work that neither the secret nor the crypt belong to the order of repression. If incorporation of the object were to succeed there would be no residue left to generate desire, as understood by Lacan, nothing that would allow us to legitimate the Oedipal conflict where the paternal agency of the letter becomes operative. Nothing but death. Did Lacan reserve the place of the egotic crypt of the embalmed object for *das Ding*?

The difference between the drives and desire seems to revolve around the difference between the economical view of the libidinal dynamic and the work of language. The question of metaphorical identification - the mimesis of *being* (speaking, writing) like the other - and objectal incorporation - *having* as cryptic preservation/mortification - should be distinguished likewise. After all the mimetic identification is always confronted with the sexual alterity, the Other as anguishing and castrating. Since Freud's study demonstrates without the shadow of a doubt that it is an identification with the abandoned object rather than abandonment of identification in favour of incorporation, that constitutes the vaults of melancholia, it comes as a surprise to learn, as Torok states, that "according to Freud, the trauma of objectal loss leads to a response: incorporation of the object within the ego".<sup>1</sup> But what would psychoanalysis be without surprises? Incorporation would serve to compensate, even complement the lack thus rendering it lacking. Introjection, on the other hand, which Freud mentions a number of times, operates as an inclusion of the object into the me in the form of the parental agency mediated by the Voice, as Freud said in the *Introduction to Narcissism*, and in this way constitutes the superego, which in turn facilitates the surmounting of the Oedipal complex. Introjection of the vocal object - as much abandoned on the outside as its re-finding on the inside - makes it into a symbolic Other, an auditory image *sensu stricto*, even if it does not do justice to Ferenczi's definition, and becomes an ethical "substitute" working *in absentia* of the Categorical Imperative or the extraneous powers of destiny which the subject takes for its own morality.<sup>2</sup> For Lacan ethics is above all the ethics of speech.

Introjection is a brother-in-law of identification and we can find it on the side of

desire. Whereas introjection concerns the I, identification aims at the object. Not so with incorporation. Firstly, incorporation refuses identification and remains constrained to the drive-work. Secondly, it confuses words with things thus incorporating whatever fills in the mouth, and thirdly, it is antimetaphorical. Abraham & Torok call it "*demetaphorization* (taking literally what is signified figuratively)".<sup>3</sup> All three, as we can see, are interrelated as they incorporate a common feature of orality. In this respect:

incorporation is the refusal to acknowledge the full import of the loss, a loss that, if recognised as such, would effectively transform us. In fine, incorporation is the refusal to introject loss. The fantasy of incorporation reveals the gap within the psyche; it points to something that is missing just where introjection should have occurred.<sup>4</sup>

Given that introjection allows for the subject to institute "the harsh and painful" superego, and therefore allies with the paternal agency having previously identified with the father, incorporation takes over the function of desire by ensuring that the drive reach satisfaction. That is to say, that the drive enjoy to death the *presence of the pleasure object* by introjecting it into itself. The introjection of the object of pleasure into the me defines Freud's description of his use of the term in his paper *Drives and their Vicissitudes* (1915) What is missing then and would "to acknowledge the full import of the loss" mean, given that resistance does not relent to some ready "expression" of the loss? It is not only the lost object, not only, on the topological level, the underinvestment of the thing-presentations, but also the mechanism which regulates the work of repression, the inevitable homelessness generative of repression that involves symbolical identification of the subject. Incorporation, which Torok calls "instantaneous and magical" is a substitute not for introjection, which cares only for the object of pleasure, even if its experience is always dearly paid for (death drive), but for identification. But although it is subject to the primary process of the pleasure principle, it returns as the real and works by way of "hallucinatory fulfillments".<sup>5</sup> Incorporation constitutes the process of bodyfication which is why, as Torok writes, "the fantasy of incorporation is the first lie, the effect of the first rudimentary form of language".<sup>6</sup> Incorporation, and therefore consumption, eating, devouring, as Freud says, is the first area around which children begin to form their ideas of child bearing. Some Oedipal questions arise here opening the path which due to the "incorporation fantasy" lapses prematurely to an end. Hence K. Abraham's intensive effort

to demonstrate the importance of the "oral stage" in melancholia whereby the subject begins to construct his body by means of oral assimilation which is the first fantasy, the first lie of the melancholiac. Is the melancholiac without the body?

To incorporate would be to produce the first lie, to become, as the saying goes, full of it. Given the foreignness of the repressed signifier, every incorporative attempt is a failed domestication, a hallucination of "literality". I say "failed" because if it takes place it can only happen in the "crypt" (one of the key-terms in the Torok & Abraham's text) of the me. In speech the way of the lie of incorporation on the level of the drive is established by way of identification and its relation to the "hallucinatory fulfilment". Hallucination would be the name of literality of narration about the lost object were it ever safely deposited in the me rendering the subject pregnant and phallically potent. When an attempt to assimilate the xenography of the object is endeavoured - and with it the shame of its loss and guilt over the prohibitive step towards regaining it - when an oral appropriation is destined to speak empty words, the lie of incorporation triumphs. For how can the lie be literal, or truth, given it is always already a translation, a lingual operation in which some-thing, the real, falls off and is missed? How does the "first lie" of incorporation fail to produce literality as *distinct* from metaphoricity if this failure is already encrypted in the description of a secret relation to what tries to conceal itself while miming this presence of an absent object? In short, how can "literality" be anything else than already a fantasy - a fantasy of the melancholiac that Freud ironically reiterated to show that the unconcealment of truth, *aletheia*, works as a concealment of the other? Torok & Abraham adopt the view that the function of fantasy of in-corporation allows for the subject, thus situating the subject in the place of the specular me, to retain a "status quo" that preserves his immunity to the topological changes in the unconscious. A lie is therefore, pure and simple, a resistance to the "metapsychological reality" of topographical movements which doubtless incorporate the activity of the missing letter or, as we might have thought, an effect of repression which structures the indecisive duplicity of lies and truths, their ironic indistinguishability, which always signals a distant presence of another, the unspeakable letter. Immunity to the Other then? And if so, would not such a definition of fantasy reinstate a secret agency beyond the play of signifiers and outside the presence of an objectal absence that, according to Lacan, structures the fantasy of the subject through identification with the lost object?



Torok & Abraham are concerned with the realm of the dead. For the "desire lies buried (the pain being a kind of 'here lies', an inscription on which the name of the deceased long remains indecipherable)" in the tomb.<sup>7</sup> Desire lies in the crypt of its object, where it has been buried or incorporated together with the name of the dead. Hence the cryptic object must be taken for the lost signifier in the discourse that keeps spinning round the hole of the missing referent. Or the lost letter, the "dead letter" as Lacan called it, if such cryptography involves a writing that is unable to attest to the last word enjoying the signifier in its stead. Hence our fantasy of the vigil at the grave (described in the previous chapter) and of mediation between the living and the dead, which is precisely the place of the crypt, the subject's denial, over and over again, in this place of death, of its metaphor that insists on the words of mourning.

The relation of jouissance to symbolisation is of crucial importance here. It describes what Lacan called "the truth of the subject". In melancholia, as we have already said, the flooding of jouissance has a hindering effect in the emergence of the signifying chain. But, as Lacan pointed out in the seminar on *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, it is not without some delirious stir of jouissance that the relation to *das Ding* would allow for the symbol to take its step out of the river of jouissance; to step out but also to step into the signifying mode where some sediment of jouissance remains under feet.

If the hallucinatory regression succeeds in making its way to the oral satisfaction, the mouth becomes the centre piece of, on the one hand, acquisition and appropriation, and, on the other, dispossession and expulsion causing "the debased object of love" to be *faecalized*. Such is the thesis of Torok & Abraham regarding the failed domestication of the signifier. Satisfactions of the mouth, and of the anus at the other end, since they relentlessly destroy the maternal object in the process of consummation, are replaced with words as another type of maternal object, its substitute. The drive does not distinguish between the two, objects and words, for it is not meaning (identification), as it is clearly the case with *Finnegan's Wake*, that would mark their difference. Whether it is the way of words or objects the satisfaction of presence is marked without doubt and the jouissance as the way to death prevails. From emptiness to empty mouth. What such a denial signifies for us is the failure to institute the introjective agency that would prepare for surmounting the Oedipal complex, which begin with the fantasy of origin as incorporation, by means of founding the superego within the subjectal economy. As Freud said, the superego as the

conscience or the voice of the other brings the Oedipal tussles to an end by replacing it with the representative [*Repräsentanten*] of the outer world. The "community of empty mouths", crying for the object to close them by filling them, exemplifies the lack of meaning particular to the subject and the lack of identificatory connection that would relent the lost object. The failure of incorporation is the failure of the drive trying to take over the work of language in the face of loss:

Because our mouth is unable to say certain words and unable to formulate certain sentences, we fantasise, for reasons yet to be determined, that we are actually taking into our mouth the unnameable, the object itself. As the empty mouth calls out in vain to be filled with introjective speech, it reverts to being the food-craving mouth it was prior to the acquisition of speech. Failing to feed itself on words to be exchanged with others, the mouth absorbs in fantasy all or part of a person - the genuine depository of what is now nameless. The crucial move away from introjection (clearly rendered impossible) to incorporation is made when *words* fail to fill the subject's void and hence the imaginary thing is inserted into the mouth in their place.<sup>8</sup>

The secrecy of empty mouths demonstrates the effect of what Lacan called "empty speech" [*parole vide*], which is not without history, given Heidegger's earlier elaboration of the "idle talk" [*Gerede*] which "closes things off" in uprooting Dasein from the "relationships-of-Being".<sup>9</sup> It thus becomes a mark of Dasein's "floating unattached", another term to which Freud would not turn a deaf ear. The empty speech echoes the emptiness of the mouth. The empty mouth fills itself with what is common or commonly present on the level of superficial dissemination in so far as it lacks in distinguishing itself from its "primordial sources". The empty mouth is without history and the discourse thus constructed takes place without paying the price of dropping what is average and common in the sense that only identification strips the signifier of its "objectivity", that is to say its ideality. From the emptiness of object-reference to the full - not fullness of - speech that for Lacan designates self-referentiality of the I, truth, lying.

The empty mouth which wallows in the empty floating does not say anything, unlike I, truth, lying, does, because it is the nothing it attempts to say, to *understand* the absence of quality, as the melancholiac does, by naming the cryptic object of the Other's desire. The feast of incorporation takes place at the cryptic site of the loss of the me - the loss which, because it is celebrated on the level of the drive, fails to engender the desire of the Other.<sup>10</sup> Is the object-loss then pertaining to the loss of the specular me and therefore of the deceptive I-ideal that tries to excavate the supremacy of the gaze? If so, we should

note that the cryptic object has its mediatory role in summoning the voice in the process of introjection. The constitution of the cryptic object is not purely specular but refers to a structural position of, as I have said, the concealment of concealment or the secrecy that has incorporated the mechanism of repression. It would seem then that the cryptic object does not prevent the play of signifiers in general but, on the contrary, since it has been for ever encrypted by the voice, remaining "indecipherable", impossible to decipher at the time of encrypture, maintains the position of the privileged letter that in writing facilitates the fantasy of the subject, what Lacan designated as  $\$ \diamond a$ . In speech, however, the crypt prevents what Lacan called the phallic signifier from being deployed to guard the subject from the Other of jouissance. At this juncture we should turn our attention to this enigmatic notion, *the crypt*, as elaborated by Torok & Abraham for it signifies a place of confusion of two fundamental Lacanian concepts, *object a* and *das Ding*. Perhaps such confusion would not arise were we to examine the findings of different authors in their own right, which is not the case here. We should thus consider the notion of the crypt in its duality and ambivalence; on the one hand as a place of the secret, the foreignness of the me lashed into shame over the loss of the object of love, and, on the other hand, as a place of *das Ding*, the absolute alterity of loss which, as Lacan says, "raises the object to its dignity".

What is the crypt then and how does its metaphorical device account for what we have said about the loss, for what we have *not* said or been unable to say regarding the working mechanisms in melancholia? A consideration of the crypt and its concealments will take us to the end of this chapter only to open the perspective in which I will explore writing as a particular species of encrypture that is not without the relation to the cryptic object. According to Torok & Abraham the crypt shakes the foundations of "the subject's topography" by dividing, splitting it. In the grave of the crypt the spectre of the lost object is awake. Freud already suggested it and it now remains to be said that what is awake is me as a dead other. The "death of the object" functions as a life of a dead object, a dead letter of writing, perhaps. The spectral dwellers of the crypt or "the shadow of the object", as Freud called it, are the survivors of loss. An imaginary scene has to be constructed, a fantasy rise to its feet, to allow for the identification to make room for the metonymy of desire. These symbolical survivors, whose ship has evaporated into the misty fantasy of their demand addressed to the Other (and which should not prevent us from building the

"ship" by means of the signifiers it carries), must in the first place live on the secret of the cannibalistic desire, consummate the corpse which inhabits the underside of their unknown abode. In his 1924 study, K. Abraham recalls a work of Roheim in which the latter speaks of necrophilia as the ultimate solution to "mourning" practised in the "primitive" societies. What could "primitive" mean here if not to indicate the "civilised" society's way of naming the cadaver whose remainder is spiced into our daily meal made of "organic food"? Is such "imaginary meal" a form of "protection against the danger of incorporation",<sup>11</sup> or does its very enjoyment guard itself against the prohibitions of culture? Necrophagia, as Torok and Abraham write 44 years later, reinstates the name of communion which absorbs not our presence but the dead letter of the deceased. Although we "will bury the deceased in the ground rather than ourselves", we will not have ceased to identify with the dead who live symbolically in the place of our desire. It may be then that incorporation is a fantasy of necrophagia, even if Torok & Abraham say the contrary, as if divesting the laws of fantasy of the lost letters it is made of. It is after all in the fantasy of loss, the "myth of loss", that the communal devouring has survived, i.e. took on a symbolic dimension of a ritual that amounts to linguistic repetitions and sanctification of words. Language mourns. It allies prohibition with symbolisation.

In dividing the subject into the secret place of the mortified me, the crypt hides hiding what is hidden in it; its walls are clayed of shame. Here *jouissance* lives and dies when the "object also functions for the subject as an ego ideal". The shame of the loss of the ideal withholds the *jouissance* within the limits of these walls. Hence perhaps, as Torok & Abraham point out, the subject's excessive anguish at the possibility of the metaphor that would divulge a meaning which has bound the secrecy to loss. And hence the vicious circle of the metaphor which holds within its vaults *being* as the principle of identification repressing the metonymy of desire to which we will come back later. Two metaphors, or two species of metaphoricity, emerge from this account, what we have tried to distinguish in relation to the neurotic discourse and the psychotic expression. The repressed metaphor as a repressed meaning is guided by identification with the object. Lacan's notion of the paternal metaphor is thus designed to enable identification with the Other sex to the extent that the facilitator itself, called also phallic function, come to the place of the Other. Castration supports the fantasmatic quest for *refinding* the object. Not so with what Lacan called "delusional metaphor" which operates precisely where the signifier is taken for a

thing present, aiming at self-cure by means of a prosthesis that glues the letter to the body. In psychosis then the subject remains to be the object for the Other of jouissance while refusing to be one through the delusion of having sloughed off the skin of the letter.

To incorporate would be to encrypt the lost me, to encrypt it *in* the me, so that the difference between the me and its object, the difference that could only be articulated in the imaginary terms, be obliterated in the unconscious. But this obliteration also reveals a conflict which *appears* to be of a formal nature. We have already shown that for Freud, but especially for Lacanian reading of Freud, the me takes on a function of the imaginary, specular to be more specific, object. In the function of incorporation the conflict makes use of the me as that which incorporates *and* is incorporated. How does the me perform these two functions simultaneously?

Incorporation encrypts the dead other as the imaginary partner of the me. This other bears the trace of the Rankian double objectivised into that which ambivalently appears to be both hated and loved, mortifying and immortalising. The crypt is the place of ambivalence, of the lost object as encrypted and encrypting, which Derrida, for example, presents in the form of a paradox "of a foreign body preserved as foreign but by the same token excluded from a self [*le moi*] that henceforth deals not with the other, but only with itself".<sup>12</sup> The me, to refer again to the Freudian term, is thus overshadowed not so much by the object in the sense of extraneous presence, but by itself. This simultaneous exclusion/inclusion shows the lack as an absence of temporal difference between the me and an object which through the ruse of simultaneity renders the lost object always already incorporated. The signifying subject is thus caught up in the alienating relation with the other. The difference here is indeed the difference between the imaginary and symbolic orders which have the real at stake. If Derrida says that "The more the self keeps the foreign element as a foreigner inside itself, the more it excludes it", the reference here is not so much to the "foreign body" and "foreign element" as the real body, but rather to the banished foreignness of the signifier which I have called the cryptic object, indeed, an impossible signifier of the Other's desire for it is unsignifiable.<sup>13</sup>

It is this dubious relation of the subject to the signifier of the Other - dubious not only because of an impossibility of retrieving it as the master one, but also because the melancholic crypt holds hostage the signifiers which this lack, this real impossibility, makes possible, *given it is in place* - that Freud brings to the fore under the pretext of truth; if the

melancholic subject tells the truth and nothing but the truth, the crypt must have structurally displaced the phallic signifier from the place of the Other, so that this mis-take has failed to produce mistakes (imaginary lies), and, it is this failure that Freud *reiterates* in his commentary.

It is doubtless the ambiguous character of the crypt, already a metaphor, whose enigmatic diversity will be retouched upon in the following chapter, which calls for a reiteration of my thesis regarding the place of the imaginary in melancholia. Since the imaginary is constructed by way of mimesis on the level of various images, the fantasy of melancholia has a hunch to carry. Not only is incorporation disparate from identification, but also the latter, and with it the ontology of the subject, gives way to the insistence of *having*. So much for Torok & Abraham's contributions which I do not wish to diminish here. The incorporative mechanism, omitted by Freud in his analysis of melancholia, functions in our picture as foreclosing both identification and the lack by which repression operates. If *being* like the other opens the path of the lack, *having* what the Other lacks, does *not* have the phallus, turns the subjectal development into what is now called the "object relations". The lack, instead of being installed, is gradually expelled from analysis that seems to work with good and bad objects.<sup>14</sup> What incorporation mourns is not even the loss of fantasy but the loss *as* fantasy, which the study of melancholia, as presented to us by Torok & Abraham, misses out. And yet it is not without their fantastic language that we could fully appreciate the deafness of the melancholic subject as presented by Freud. Since the melancholiac does not make himself heard in saying the reversed message received from the Other, and since turning a deaf ear to the metaphor he nevertheless produces, makes him keep the dead other alive, the function of incorporation and its cryptic secrets has proved valuable enough to show how the repetition of the melancholic confession could be heard.



What is the relation between *cryptonymy* and *patronym*, the name being at the heart of the relation that is not at all clear. Given that the question of the name is at stake here we should be cautious not to confound it with the problem regarding the lost object in the crypt. And yet we should ask: in the crypt or *as* the crypt? For such would be a metaphor of incorporation, its "first lie", even if Torok & Abraham do not say it. To show the "demetaphorization" of incorporation they nevertheless invent a language, a vocabulary that cannot be taken *literally*: crypt, tomb, secret, exhumation, cryptophoria, cryptonymy.

"Demetaphorization" invites a metaphorical invention as a means by which to show "incorporation as antimetaphor". If these names carry us across the place of concealment they resonate, at the same time, with metaphorical revelations. There is perhaps no way of telling the lie, and truth, without naming the other in whose resemblance the truth/lie of the subject appears as a disappearance. And so the alleged "literality" is but a masking device to conceal what is concealed in it. Literality would be merely another term for the operation of the letter whose performative, that is analytical, power in so far as the discourse is "a discourse of the Other", can only make itself heard if it refers to the Other, the symbolical foreigner in analysis.

The crypt, it should be remarked again, is not merely a place of an unconscious secret as a repressed signifier. In their later study of the Wolf-Man case, Torok & Abraham devote numerous passages to elucidate the concept. What Freud showed us in making a distinction between thing- and word-presentations is brought here, in the topography of the concept, into conclusion as synthesis. The crypt is not simply a place of concealment, nor even a grave made of the walls of shameful jouissance. This jouissance of the Other becomes unrenouncable because the metaphor which operates in the Torok & Abraham's text is not a metaphor of the concealed lack. Instead, the metaphor of the crypt, the metaphor *as* the crypt, preserves the synthesis of words and things thus leaving us with nothing concealed. No other signifier would ever emerge in this chain, save the master one, because the "nothing concealed" already constitutes the unconcealment as truth and its interpretation. Freud's suggestion of taking this claim seriously in the case he described, and which most likely refers to the same Wolf-Man case he finished less than a year before writing his paper on melancholia, should be repeated again here. For Torok & Abraham the signifier *tieret*, the "magic word" from the Pankeyev story, earns no other place in interpretation than that of a "word-thing", as if the wish to masturbate (*tieret* means "to rub") were not a remainder of repressed castration, that allowed Freud to think of the whole case as that of an obsessional neurosis. The notion of the crypt, as a metaphor that substitutes the repressed signifier, is thus devalued by Torok & Abraham allowing them to reduce the unconscious to an imaginary reservoir of hidden "word-things". Although in Freudian terms the place of the crypt would have to be identified with the investment of the thing-presentations, no consideration is given to Freud's topography in which the concealment of words is already an effect of the libidinally invested things which render

signifying associations possible.

As far as *das Ding* is concerned, the name of cryptonymy is given to a psychogram sent by Freud and received, though not signed, first by Heidegger in his refusal to read the former, then by Torok & Abraham, and finally by Lacan in his reading of the concept which subsequently receives a reformulation. For Derrida, by contrast, the metaphor of the crypt is inseparable from the question of the thing, and to this extent the answers to both questions, about the crypt and the thing, seem interrelated. The Thing is found in the place of the metaphor of the crypt to indicate both structural and spatial dimension as a precondition for thinking the problematic and acknowledging a certain "crypt effect" in the Torok & Abraham's text. If this *cryptic effect* responds to the problem of metaphoricity of death in melancholia, which interests us here, it does not necessarily present us with a measure to account for *das Ding* as it appeared in the above mentioned authors. If to ask "what is a crypt?" is not the same as to ask "what is a thing?", which Derrida admits, it is nevertheless the case that the latter question does not receive here the attention it deserves, its, shall we say, cryptonymy. Are we on the level of metaphor then? "Neither a metaphor nor a literal meaning" is Derrida's immediate answer which leads him on to consider "a different *tropography*" of the crypt.<sup>15</sup>

The crypt is a place, but not a natural one if one were to take Heraclitus' dictum about the  of  seriously and literally. The crypt is not of the natural order, as formulated in the Ancient aphorism, but an artificial construction, "an *architecture*" of spatiality with partitions and divisions that have nothing to do with signification and the order of the letter. Thus we find ourselves in the space of a "*forum*", a place where the free circulation and "exchange of objects and speeches can occur".<sup>16</sup> It is within this general enclosure of the forum that another, "more inward forum" of particular kind is founded, the crypt. The space of free exchange of "objects and speeches" is thus that of a market place, an *agora*, to follow the metaphor, a forum of Platonic characters and sophists who, given the setting of their interlocutions, amount to speakers, or an internet web site, where indeed, the signifiers are exchanged at will circulating from one part of the world to another without crossing the inner space of the crypt, or what Derrida calls the "*safe*". Being at the centre of the signifying space of exchanges, this central and internally excluded place can only make us think of the secret object as *excluded* - hence in Lacanian terms referred to as *extimate* - from the symbolic contract of representational



circulations. Not so in Derrida's *Foreword*, where the status of the object (thing), paradoxically, earns the place of *inter pares* among the signifiers. The *safe* as a secret object sealed from the order of signification is, of course, not a bank's vault storing the reserves of the mythical gold which will have, partially at least, at some point been released and exclusively included in the circulation to regulate the value of the current units. No, the *safe* of the crypt does not conceal what is invisible to the public *in terms or symbols* of what is already accessible, although temporarily withheld from the effects it is bound to produce when released; rather it can only be preserved when installed inside me or "inside 'myself' *beside* myself". The *safe*, or "simply" the crypt, is me within me.

What appears problematic here is the status of the crypt as that which excludes, being already internally excluded from the generalised spatiality of the forum, both the "objects and speeches". The question concerning the "nature" of the secret, the ultimately alien Thing, is therefore likely to provoke all sorts of speculations, specular in the first place, which will leave us with as little epistemological satisfaction as before we started speculating. The crypt, given it is not natural, has been installed in the me [*le moi*], but not by me, as the imaginary status of such procedure would leave us with no less specular product than the one arising from the construction of a fantasy.

It is rather the case that the crypt, not as a "metaphor or literary meaning", divulges a secret of its being-there as the Thing to the extent that what appears in the circulation around its place is always already assembled within the order of the Other. Is the crypt then the lack of the Other, the mythical loss situated, in the awe of its fundamental irretrievability, at the heart of discourse in which it echoes as the *lack* because it is its "lost nature" that put it there in the first place? To answer this question we would have to consider succinctly two categories of *absence* that inscribe the "secret" object in the middle of the signifying space or *agora*: the absence of the object as present and the presence of the object as absent. To subscribe to the first category would place the object, and with it the crypt, cryptonymy, secret, safe among the signifiers, which, to the extent that they are symbols representing the subject of the meaning for other symbols, is the case here. As for the presence of the absent object as lacking, the concept of the crypt would have to be revised. Or does the crypt allude here to a completely different order on which Lacan, as perhaps a foreigner to the cryptic device, and therefore excluded from this dialogue, has already shed some light. I am not even thinking of what has been illuminated

here regarding the loss and the preservation of "what takes place secretly, or takes a secret place, in order to keep itself *safe* somewhere in a safe", namely, what Freud saw at the centre of the paranoiac watching oneself "being watched", as discussed in the first chapter. Also I am not thinking of the ideal whose loss is always an invitation to a strangely inverted process of idealisation of death as the ultimate preserver and mortifier of life. I am thinking of the phallus.

The crypt, to come back to the clandestinely philosophical theme in analysis of melancholia, is given a further description that deserves our attention. According to the speculation on the secret: "caulked or padded along its inner partition, with cement or concrete on the other side, the cryptic safe protects from the outside the very secret of its clandestine inclusion or its internal exclusion".<sup>17</sup> The ambivalence of frigid stone on the outside and the folds of warm lining on the inside is no doubt a particular choice of words that give the intimacy of the place of exclusion, or the intimacy of the exclusive place, to vivid associations. Hence the cryptic place will so often be identified with the "sepulchre" that, again, "can signify something other than simply death",<sup>18</sup> or a tomb that hides, as a tomb, a trace of the dead to be followed alongside Blanchot's path. The scene of the crypt, which for Torok & Abraham is associated with the preverbal trauma and which to some extent tells us why a linguistic symbol can for them be both a word and a thing, remains within the site of the forum to the extent that, as Derrida says, this site has a judiciary side or even a structure of the court of law.

Thus the crypt as a metaphor of incorporation has assumed a relation to the law and prohibition. If the crypt means anything, in court it will have been heard not as what it means but as a meaning. But, as Lacan reminds us in the Seminar on Ethics, the meaning of the statement is subject to the "general assembly of the people", the jury, in which echoes the etymology of the Thing as *chose* and *causa*. What would the crypt represent in the grave atmosphere of the court, given that on the whole the latter is but a host of representatives and representations whose circulation is internally excluded from the alleged truth of the subject doubly represented, in the court at least, by the solicitors and barristers? If the crypt has a place in the courtroom, it is certainly not a legitimate place to the extent that only representation, as the crypt, can be represented here thereafter. We are unlikely to find out the truth from the empty mouth of representation save the signifier addressing another signifier. Irrespective of whether it is a case of conviction or acquittal.

the cryptic place, in its illegitimacy, could only be that of a secret pleasure of jouissance. That is perhaps what Torok, N. Abraham and Derrida refer to when speaking of the loss of "the object of pleasure", and which situates us again in the dimension of the drive. The crypt as a loss of the ideal and a place of jouissance. But what *kind* of jouissance, what kind of the real is at stake here, provided it is not a sexual one but rather, so to speak, a jouissance of secret representation? If we are to consider this possibility, as we have in the discussion of the difference between psychosis and neurosis in the previous chapter, it is not because the notion of the jouissance of the Other allows us to see it as a world market place of free exchanges and circulation of "objects and speeches". Rather these exchanges are allowed because of what is not allowed, namely to transmit the symbol but not the absolute singularity of the object lost in symbolisation.

It allows us to see the incorporation as a secret pleasure/displeasure of the drive as opposed to the impossibility of finding the object other than "refinding" it. Why then is the phallic jouissance forbidden? The signifier of the Other is forbidden because it is a signifier of the lack. The object is prohibited because it is lost. It is not lost because it is forbidden but, because it *has been* lost, it is prohibited as impossible, as the real. In other words, and in Lacanian terms, since in melancholia the object has not been experienced as *causa (chose)*, not giving rise to the phallic function, it can only return as a jouissance. In Lacan's formula, what does not emerge in the symbolic reemerges in the real. The historiography of loss leaves us with little doubt about its relation with prohibition. In asserting that "the loss works as a prohibition" (1968), Torok was neither the first nor the last to have done so, clandestinely perhaps acknowledging what Lacan had to say earlier, which in turn makes Miller's remark about prohibition being "the myth of loss" (1994) sound familiar. Jouissance of the symbol is forbidden for the speaking subject not only because the subject "is subject of the Law and the Law is grounded in this very prohibition",<sup>19</sup> but also because prohibition of the "myth of loss" conditions identification on the level of desire, for which in analysis one pays for with jouissance. One is certainly not forbidden to pay this price but one certainly has to pay for the loss.

Derrida's considerations of the crypt as a place of secret pleasure on the one hand, and as a "padded" safe, internally excluded from the exchange of "objects and speeches", not only fly in the face of the link between prohibition and loss, but also are caught in what I would call two Lacanian moments. Firstly, and this brings me to the crypt as the phallus -

the phallic signifier standing for the always already *outside* of the signifying chain and circulation of signs - incorporation is marked by a simultaneous appropriation and rejection of the paternal phallus as "the object of pleasure". It is at this point where the illegitimacy of the crypt comes to light. For the crypt to be legitimate it would have to be smuggled into the courtroom, to return to the metaphor, concealed as nonrepresentation. Having appeared, however, before the jury, the superego no doubt, it is already a representation "forbidden" to tell the truth of its own jouissance unless it lie, lies thinking it tells the truth, there is no other way. That is why for Lacan the phallus is neither the object of enjoyment nor a fantasy which relies on the symbolic construction. The phallus is not a cryptic "safe" that would shelter the beyond of language:

The fact that the phallus is a signifier means that it is in the place of the Other that the subject has access to it. But since this signifier is only veiled, as ratio [*raison*] of the Other's desire, it is this desire of the Other as such that the subject must recognise, that is to say, the other in so far as he is himself a subject divided by the signifying *Spaltung*.<sup>20</sup>

"Desire of the Other" is recognised by the subject in relation to what Lacan called the little *other* in fantasy. It is on this level that the "padded" safe, or "crypt", comes to existence, but it is not fantasy that gives the "crypt" existence *as* fantasy. According to Torok & Abraham, division of the crypt is a prerequisite for the crypt to come into existence, that is to say, to enable the metaphorical function of substitutions of meaning. But this precisely would not take place should the phallic signifier not come to the place of the Other by being incorporated as "object" or "word" in the fantasy. If the phallic signifier is extimate then, if it is not an object but a lack, its "cryptic" character makes it an object of jouissance. Hence, the question of desire and law.

The second "moment" concerns prohibition. As Derrida says: "Incorporation negotiates clandestinely with a prohibition it neither accepts nor transgresses".<sup>21</sup> It is by virtue of the *imaginary* character of this negotiation that jouissance, which concerns the real of the body, is only granted as prohibited, as *phallic jouissance*; since the prohibition functions as an impossibility of both inclusion and exclusion of the *object a*, the object remains internally excluded, *extimate* to the extent that refinding it on the level of signification is only possible if the phallus as a paternal metaphor has been deployed in the place of the Other to enable the production of meaning.

If "secrecy is essential", as both Torok and Derrida agree, it is essential not for the sake of the crypt which orders signification from its secret place, as for example the preverbal trauma of the Wolf Man, but in order to allow articulations to be heard by the subject of interpretation. Secrecy is essential not in order to preserve the crypt as a place in which is preserved "a disguise hiding the traces of the act of disguising", unless this were either a metaphorical meaning or a literary device deployed for the sake of therapeutic effect by the subject who invented it, but as subject of the unconscious chain.<sup>22</sup> As a place of double disguise, "a disguise hiding the traces of the act of disguising", the crypt, to say it again, is not the place of repression. The secrecy, in the cryptic sense of the word, that is to say in the analytical sense, is a *foreclosure* of the patronym revealed in the conspiracy of verbal delirium of the one who both accepts and transgresses it while remaining in the embraces of jouissance that refuses to the end to pay with castration.

In the view of this, and of Derrida's silence to the psychogrammatic messages from Lacan, the former's claim that "the crypt is the vault of desire" can only remain analytically valid if it remains metaphorically seductive. The reason why it is difficult, if not impossible, to contribute to the view that desire can be operative in the crypt, as a secret pleasure that "neither accepts nor transgresses" prohibition by which the symbolical terms of this desire are called into ex-istence, is an indication of difference, initially given by Freud, between the order of the drive which is always satisfied, and desire which never is. But this is a distinction that neither Torok nor Abraham are prepared to take on board.

The crypt has a value of the melancholic symptom to the extent that the melancholic discourse leans on to signify the meaning of death as an imaginary death of the ego. If melancholia keeps the dead other alive, one already finds in the signs of this maintenance the invention of the crypt as an enigmatic and ambiguous meaning encrypted on the place of burial which *appears* as the death of the ideal, or the ideal as death. The mortifying inhibition as opposed to an attempt at exhumation and necrophagia in the sense of incorporation will owe a great deal to the regressive character of melancholia, Freud's third factor, and to the oral satisfaction of effluvium of jouissance. For if the subject is, as Nicolas Rand put it, "divested of metaphorical reach", it is an inaccessibility of the dead other that silences the imaginary operation. The analysis of melancholia has led us to employ metaphors invented by those who studied it, including Freud, finding their use indispensable in accounting for what in representing they do not represent. This should not

prevent us from attributing to the attempts to metaphorise death an element of failure in so far as the melancholic's quest for truth, which Freud duly acknowledged, of the lost object always slips into an abyss of pathos and disappointment. The signifier wielded in such a quest is never powerful enough to effect an induction of structural transformation and to bring the cure to an analytic conclusion outside transference or *in absentia* of castration, or, as Freud's ethics would recommend, to the place where the lack would allow to love and work outside the conditions that do not.

To return to our question about the relation between *cryptonymy*, and the *patronym*, what *appears* as two "rival" terms in our discussion, the latter designating the signifying transmitter as both the *no* of the father and the father's support, melancholia reveals the unexplained concealment of the latter. The crypt would thus remain to support the ambivalence of both failing to activate the paternal metaphor and producing a metaphorical prosthesis to extract and detach what would otherwise seem sunk in the literal stupor of *jouissance* as it is in the case of *Finnegan's Wake*. The ambivalent function of the cryptic term must therefore be regarded as pertaining to the melancholic symbolisation which has as its object the "longing for something lost". To this extent the paternal metaphor is an enabler of metaphoricity as such which opens to the function of language while prohibiting to satisfy the "supreme *jouissance*" of the mythical unity. For the signifier cannot be eaten leaving incorporation to feed on the indigestible Nothing. What it "incorporates" instead is the horror of loss on which *jouissance* wears the death drive to death.

It must be therefore be noted in the same vein that the already mentioned term of the "*word-thing*" not only confounds object (object of the lack) and symbol (signifier of the lack) but also situates both in the dimension of drive's satisfaction. This attests to a certain impossibility of synthesis or unity of "words and things" which neither Torok & Abraham, nor Derrida for this part, help disentangle. Why is the Wolf Man's signifier *tieret*, "to rub", removed from the status of a signifier and from allowing the subject to associate a meaning that in the discourse arises in the vicinity of the fantasy of masturbation which Karl Abraham situated at the centre of melancholia? The "*word-thing*" is erected in the place of the phallus which would, for Torok & Abraham, give it to phallic *jouissance*, the unthinkable hotchpotch of body and language joined in fusion. The answer to the question hides in the lack of distinction between the lack and the signifier, which is bound to

diminish the value of the prohibitive function of the loss Torok herself elaborated.

It is with respect to the inhibition of loss therefore that we can see how the function of the imaginary becomes inoperative. After all it is only when the metaphor is taken literally that the symptom can be produced. If in melancholia the symptom focuses on self-negation in relation to the agency of conscience or the voice, it has become clear by now that in analysis, as Freud demonstrated, the inhibition of self-negation does not prevent the commentary from keeping the secret by means of a metaphor that signifies what has not been said.

Inability to lie about himself is the source of melancholic illness. How can there be lies without the semblant of identification, without the self that misrecognizes itself in the other taking the other for the self, for the me, to whom the imaginary owes its subterranean whereabouts? In melancholia the function of the imaginary is suspended leaving no room for the production of fantasy to the extent that fantasy centres around the lost object. If for Nietzsche truth is a "host of metaphors" made up of literary ruses, in the analytical sense "I, truth, speaking" is made of lies and errors and therefore constructed as a fiction. In other words truth operates on the level of the metaphor which produces what constitutes the essence of the imaginary, namely a meaning that suffers from the lack of knowledge. Although the life of meaning attempts to retain at its very centre the specular object of identification thus promoting a tendency to totalize, round up, close and fill the gaps in the chain, as an imaginary product it is also a place subject to the unconscious textuation of the symbolic where meaning always lies by telling the truth, the truth of the imaginary. The appeal to the resources of the other remains fictive in their effect of representative manifestations, always subordinate to the laws of intervention and interpretation, that is to say, to the discourse of the Other.

This dislocation of the imaginary, this resistance to mimesis, doubling, substituting and, generally speaking, to fictionalisation of meaning when giving due to jouissance within the cryptic walls which echo the emptiness of repetition - these characteristics, this melancholic profusion is already a symptom through which an appeal is made. The question is to whom. Or to what. For when the melancholic cannot cease to flood his listener, the analyst otherwise a reader, with his self-accusations permeated by shame and guilt, he has already accused an other issuing a demand to be heard in the appeal to the agency that keeps silent. For it is not without pleasure that the appeal to half-baked truth

will make him heard by the other when he comes back to the *same* meaning of either well regurgitated wisdom expressed by an individual expressing or as a subject emerging in the uncertain articulation of what his truth is, the truth that like an invisible partition separates the body from the letter. It is to this moment that Freud lends his ear literally and why should we not listen to him?



## CHAPTER 8

### AUTOPSIES: BLANCHOT'S IMAGINARY VERSIONS

In the last two chapters we have discussed the space of melancholia. It has remained undetermined whether this space, its morphology and dynamics, remains within the structure of psychosis or neurosis. Such determination - indispensable in the clinic to the extent that the clinic analyzes solely the subject's relation to language - is of secondary importance in this study. What has gradually acquired more interest for us in the last chapter is the space of writing, the place of the letter in melancholia. It is to this that I will now turn my attention.

By way of outlining the problematic that concerns us here I propose the following. Nothing suggests that it is possible to accede to any *other* way of reading literature than by way of a psychoanalytical detour. That is not to say that psychoanalysis is the only way to "read" literature/philosophy, the crudeness of this statement not being worth exploiting and equalling perhaps its self-defeating wish. But rather that reading inevitably subjects its statements to the other of the unconscious, which is the other of reading. Nothing testifies to a reading more eminently and erroneously than the truth of the subject of the unconscious. Any *other* way is therefore already the way of a subjectal difference, one of the demands of reading in general, especially that psychoanalysis is concerned with the alterity of reading.

To repeat our task then we shall concern ourselves with the *other of reading*, rather than, as it was suggested by De Man, with the "ontological priority" of work. The task of critique in this instance responds to the division that separates the voice of an author and his elusive charm that deflects his wishes. One could say for instance that *Noli me legere* functions, in its ambiguity, as such a vocal attractor. No critique can perhaps withstand resistance to the unconscious laws of the letter and sexuality, which only translate this resistance into an effect Freud saw in producing a joke, namely, a production of jouissance in the Other or a jouissance of resistance. On the other hand we should note that if there is an enjoyment in writing, its suffering, its pathos or pathemes, appears to us in what Lacan called knowledge's "dialectic with *jouissance*",<sup>1</sup> that sustains a relation of

the letter to a lure. Such a seduction, never simple or univocal, serves to guide the reader as a beacon of deflection. Even if it could give us some direction it could do no more than that; it does not illuminate where it shines and the way to it is not without rocky traps. That is perhaps, in one glimpse, what Blanchot's writing has given out, the letter without guarantees, the light without sources, identification without objects. Some patience is required nevertheless to test this premature promise that Blanchot throughout his work attempted to show under an enigmatic command *Noli Me Legere*, where a secret preserves the secrecy of the crypt. It is in response to what we might call Blanchot's imperative, that De Man spoke of a certain intimacy between work and its origin giving the reader somewhat secondary place:

What we are reading is located closer to its [work] origin than we are and it is our purpose to be attracted by it to the place whence it issued. The work has undeniably ontological priority over the reader. It follows that it would be absurd to claim that in reading we 'add' something, for any addition, be it in the form of an explication, a judgment, or an opinion, will only remove us further from the real center. We can only come under the true spell of the work by allowing it to remain what it is. This apparently passive act, this 'nothing' that, in reading, we should *not* add to the work, is the very definition of a truly interpretative language.<sup>2</sup>

This Heideggerian "passivity" is indeed what De Man tries to resist here by yielding to it and by adding 'nothing' to reading. Yielding to what then? To "the real centre" of the origin that precedes every subject of reading? To an extent this eagerness to leap over to the site of "the truly interpretative language" confuses here two levels of linguistic operations which bear witness to the divide I spoke of above. Lacan, throughout his work, emphasised a difference that separates the enunciation [*énonciation*] from the statement [*énoncé*]. The play of the two constitutes interpretation. For Lacan enunciation is an enigma. It marks the cryptic side of the discourse, which he encourages his listeners and readers to make into a statement or utterance. Lacan gives an example: a citation. In citing De Man I say *he said*. I suppose another by introducing this *he* for it is not I who said it of Blanchot. It is not me and yet it is I, hence the two registers. A citation is a statement not an enunciation. A commentary is supposed in this way by an invocation of a sense stated by the supposed reader. In other words, a reader supposed to know emerges as an effect of a citation only to inspire a commentary that is merely a proliferation of statements. An enunciation is what Lacan calls *mi-dire* which takes the power of the statement from a citation that is always half-said. This play of registers not only affirms an indeterminacy of

such dialectic but also does not permit us to take De Man's distinction between "the author" and work, the reader and origin seriously. The division of the subject of the unconscious must therefore be read in view of bringing out the play of signifiers which operate on the level of the statement only. If citation aims at persuasion it is not certain as to what the "supposed reader" is to be persuaded about except the enigma of the enunciation thwarting the very project, and with it, as in the case of De Man's critique, the supposed subject of reading.<sup>3</sup> Suffice it to say that the crypt, the patheme discussed in the previous chapter, serves here as a place, and a structural moment, of the subject of the enunciation on the one hand, and on the other, in so far as it appears in the form of a statement, the imperative above, as a beacon of deflection. The question of distance rises to significance here and so we should remain in the distance, neither too far nor too close the concealment which enables an encrypture.

We will thus remain in this chapter in the proximity of the image. It concerns us when the praxis of death and the possibility of time emerge in the immanence of writing. It is perhaps in writing that the problem of the image as immanent death comes closest to us. The image remains proximate to the letter despite their estrangement, a distance without which nothing could be said. We speak of distance here, not opposition, for the relation between the image and signification resembles a relation of an absent present to the presence of an absent. That is why in his consideration of the image, Blanchot goes to the extremes to trace the relation between the image and the dead letter by situating death in the impossible place where the image becomes identical to itself. It is not the dead man or the dead woman that rouses him to vigilance at the site of the dead but the cadaver *as such*, a resemblance as such. Can such self-identity, to the extent that it is image's self-resemblance, be regarded as a moment at which writing begins? Is a self-resemblance of the image the site of the letter, its crypt? The cadaver as self-resemblance will constitute one of the three themes to be discussed the other two being the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice and the song of the Sirens. Neither the choice of themes nor their order are accidental.

Blanchot's writing fascinates us. But what is it that draws us most to it? This fascination, in its strangely pacifying effect, has to do with proximity of the image and a liaison between the image and the letter. One is perhaps never ready to read Blanchot, as Krell remarked,<sup>4</sup> never prepared for a distance necessary for reading, and which, as in

Blanchot's text, becomes a power to attract. Does the reader have to arm himself with a certain resistance - resistance as a condition of sensitivity according to Valéry whom Blanchot never really grew fond of - to approach the distance in which writing marks? Or is it a question of a certain jouissance of passivity that would allow us to live through the distance of pathology, or pathography, in a mimesis of the letter, as Derrida does in his reading of Blanchot in *Living On*? But above all this is perhaps not a question of choice between styles or modes of reading but rather a matter of a response in which the choice lies in the very ambiguity of what responds in relation to the real, not the "real centre" of De Man, but the impossible real as formulated by Lacan, the inarticulable density of what has escaped us: "It is not to his consciousness, that the subject is condemned, but to his body, which in many ways resists actualizing the division of the subject".<sup>5</sup>

It is in view of the lost jouissance that Blanchot's question of death is reinstated in relation to writing. But what kind of passion is Blanchot's *passion of death*, passion *for* death, that always haunts him as essential, solitary and at the same time inadequate and unsatisfactory, passion *to* death, that would allow him to avoid death and turn writing into what death is not, the *No* of death? Is it the literary fascination that, coming from the contemplation of the image reflects its emptiness by leaving us anguished and at a loss; what has remained is only a sense without reference, a letter without an object? Or is it the seductive singularity of Blanchot's aleatory wandering across imaginary landscapes where the passion of death, and death of the object on which it is suspended, becomes possible in the terror of its impossibility? In preparation to broach these problems one is somewhat disarmed in dismay to give the necessary rigour which would do justice to reading, just as mourning does justice to the loss. It is with this rigour, at the risk of putting justice at stake in the face of law, that we must advance when we come to the point of disappointment. The steep serpentine of Blanchot's step, hanging over ascending edge, is certainly no more vertiginous than the path of descension. These two possibilities then - of writing without an object and of writing as an *objet perdu* - seem closely related in the intimacy that guides Blanchot's meditation alongside the edge. Their closeness appears as a distance between mourning and melancholia, between the justice of exile and melancholic indictments of the law over the loss.

Two possibilities then and also two versions, *deux versions*, for the signification to take place where the image is concerned. And further, but always in the same direction,

two directions which on the way multiply, digress to become diversions or *diversions*. That is perhaps Blanchot's way of writing and writing as a way of Blanchot, a perpetual diversion that submerges itself in a detour, off the road, *de version*, of the version which remains as structurally manifold as it is ambiguous in meaning. Thus the work of diversion becomes subject to exposure of a passivity in relation to that which it operates. In fact, diversion facilitates a certain disengagement of letting "oneself be taken by it [*c'est s'y laisser prendre*]",<sup>6</sup> a passivity of a distance that always already emerges as a divide between a "free decision" and an associative fall which is never free but directs us where the signifier comes to mark the direction. It is a direction of the subject which disappears as an appearance of the mark, the signifier that constitutes its truth.

This surrendering, to which I will come back later, this submission and a peculiar delight in submission to identify with a representation that holds us in a distance by making us submissive to it and to its freedom, is what Blanchot recalls when he speaks about the subject's ideal and the opposition between an event and its image. Blanchot speaks here of an outside, a primary outside, if I can call it so, of submitting to ourselves or to the self [*moi*] that the passion for the image entices me to. Somewhere, and we never know when it begins or ends, we are in the embrace of the Other.

Blanchot demands that we follow him, which is already inexact a formulation. Not to follow him but to follow the diverse path of anxiously mournful meanings in which, nevertheless, something rather than nothing is said, not only said but also marked, cut, engraved in the thought of those who come near, perhaps too near to capture the distance of seduction. For if seduction is possible, as Freud in his abandoned theory showed it was, the letter opens up a site of the image that attracts, that is to say fascinates. Such a step seems necessary whenever the image gels up in a letter, and the latter's restricted movement seems to be an effect of it being pervaded by the image of fascination. Something else then appears here whenever the movement towards the image that seems to hamper the production of words is in question. Something else than this observation concerning the petrifying power of the image over the sense of words. It is true that the image holds words hostage giving them out to death, but it is also true that it is the image that frees them into alleys of signification cutting loose their estranged self-love and univocality that stills them. The image does both, freezes the diversity of words and melts the hard ways in a fantasy that lets univocality burst open into another sense. Blanchot's

meditation on the cadaver may seem to be just a good "example" of such a manifoldness if one takes *example* to mean that which serves a prescribed purpose, for instance that of an operative structure that underlies the practice of discourse. Underlies, that is to say, subjects the "discourse of the Other", to reading. A statement in which desire as subject of enunciation remains veiled. There is a temptation then to which we often yield to seek sense but in such a way that it succumb to a previously elaborated formulation. But there is also a way of reading which writes the sense of this *previously*, which is the direction towards the image just as the former movement, the progressive forgetting tends to drive us away from it thus falling, submitting to its dark power.<sup>7</sup>

Freud's analysis of melancholia showed us that at its heart lies an identification with the loss which to the extent that it deprives - as a loss that in its absence is nevertheless present - the subject of an imaginary support, if by that one means an *imaginary unity* with an object, a me, it turns me against myself. But the claim that melancholia suffers from the lack of the imaginary, that in the melancholic discourse the imaginary is impoverished or that it is lacking, which produces a psychotic effect of delirious "truth-telling", must again be reread. It is, after all, in the spoken discourse that such impoverishment, as Freud analysed it, in favour of all-knowing truth, comes to an effect. Does Blanchot, for example, by putting Orpheus on trial, not evoke a metaphorical landscape of the "other night" which raises the scene of mourning over Eurydice to an anguishing point at which the loss becomes potent of conceiving the image? The meditation on the cadaver which gives nocturnal voice to him who in the night searches for "what the night is concealing" is not therefore without a relation to Orpheus' guilt of impatience and to the metaphor of mourning. Who mourns? No one mourns, such would be an answer gleaned from *The writing of the disaster*. Language mourns. What remains a mark of dissolution, what hovers in the distance of the *other* night mourns over the objectal eclipse of the I. But that is precisely a paradox which deserves some attention. No one mourns because there is no one to mourn, certainly not a subject in the "philosophical" i.e. Cartesian sense of the word, no one, that is to say, the unconscious desire, the metaphor of mourning mourns. Yet the image of the cadaver, which I will now approach, and which Blanchot presents to the reader as an image of self-resemblance remains to function as a cryptic object in Blanchot's text, even if desire for it is in advance pre-empted by the object-loss. Pre-empted but also generated for it is the lacking object, which philosophy took as an object

of knowledge, that causes desire to signify. There is no me to mourn because it is the shadow of the me that is mourned, and that is why Blanchot always seeks the night, the "other night" of language in which mourning could become a nonmourning, a writing without the loss or the lost writing.<sup>8</sup>

Why the cadaver? There is a preliminary movement in Blanchot's text *Two versions of the imaginary*. It aims to establish the terms in which the path towards the dead could lie open. We find the cadaver, the image of the dead flesh, thrown into the middle. A fathoming analysis of the image, of what the image might be, serves as a preamble. One does not approach the grave dead, that is to say, one does not go there without the tools and instruments with which to approach the cadaverous site and with which to pay it its respects. But, above all, this funereal procedure, and a ritual in its own right, takes place only *post mortem*. It is its condition and its secret motivation.

In these preliminary steps, which perpetually draw from the ambiguity of the French *pas*, Blanchot attempts to gauge the relation between the image and the object, the image and the thing. Each thing seems to have an image that rescues it from nothing. When things fall into nothing, when repetition loses its force and ceases to exert change, then the changeless image emerges, and the thing, "sunk into its image", follows it like a shadow, like a no-thing. That is not exactly the order, the chronological order, in which Blanchot places the image in relation to the object. In Blanchot's literary investigation perception precedes imagination. There is a difference, Blanchot seems to suggest, between the object of perception and the image. Surely, it is not a thing that we "perceive", so that, when it disappears, the image remains holding itself out of the abyss of disappearance. What we "see" is already an image raised to this position as a result of the loss of the object. This is at least what we have said in the discussion of the specular relation.

But Blanchot seems to run against it: "We see, then we imagine", "After the object comes the image".<sup>9</sup> What does this *after* mean here, what does it signify? It designates a place of break or removal, a crisis of repetition, where the ever renewed satisfaction does not resume its function in the circular trajectory around the object. Something is taken away from the demand for satisfaction and what has been taken away does not return to its economy. The *after* then does not replace the *before*, nor does it come after *before*, as if *before* ever existed. The *after* signifies the lack of *before* by assuming the latter's imaginary

existence. In other words, the image is not what remains of the thing but what appears in the effect of "the thing as distance, present in its absence, graspable because ungraspable, appearing as disappeared".<sup>10</sup>

It is only in this way that we can grasp the horizon of time; the image of the dead will have earned its context and its middle place in that order. Although Blanchot says that "the thing was there",<sup>11</sup> this *it-was* of the thing, even more than the "thing-itself", has always already become subject to dissolution or distance followed by the image. Still, the image in this sense is not a trace of something that existed in "reality". Rather it is a peculiar species of what has fallen off as a result of the crisis of repetition - a certain death. It cannot be doubted that the image mortifies, but it cannot be determined what kind of death awaits him who looks. The image comes after this indefinite moment of, as Blanchot calls it, appearance as disappearance, only to the extent that there has never been a perception of some-thing. And yet this moment finds perception.

Since the image does not reflect some past reality, some memory to be reached out for - even less the *real*, which for Blanchot embodies the dimension of the living and their active, that is say subject-based "initiative", and which Lacan places at the highest stake in the subject's discourse - its reflection is doubtless a place all the more significant for a writer. It is a signifier that speaks of a loss or a lack. This lack, however, has nothing to do, as we shall see, with something missing in the field of perception but constitutes a lack in the field of the Other, a lack operating in the symbolic order. Hence a metaphorical inadequacy that haunts Blanchot in his pursuit of the image of the dead, hence his perpetual disappointment with the metaphor of death, and hence the symptom of unyielding persistence to articulate what is impossible to articulate, what yields to the temptation of seeing beyond that which is to be seen.

The image not only idealises the emptiness of the object by giving it a second life, a life of death, but also, as Freud observed, overvalues the object in the subject's libidinal economy giving it a narcissistic quality of self-sufficiency. This claim is elaborated by Blanchot in relation to art, as if marginally, in a series of interim reflections on what is nothing else but a moment of mourning, the externalisation of "impersonality" and the insistence of nothingness. Writing too is committed to mourning, and sometimes to melancholia which is the former's symptom and ruination, the imaginary idealisation of loss and the conflated complacency of being. Is the image in Blanchot's meditation already the



Freudian shadow of an object cast upon the I? To answer this question we must move towards the place where the image, as Blanchot tells us, finds itself.

The image tempts us. The image of woman's breasts does not appear as pure transparency without him who looks at it. Such appearance is not indifferent to us, blurred in the interface of night and day. It is a "passivity which makes us submit to it [*passivité qui fait que nous la subissons*]",<sup>12</sup> in our appeal to the return from the obscure future to the essential past. Is it then the power of the image of the breasts that seduced us to its lure? Or is it the gaze that follows it, under the seductive charm of dissolution, still active in *another* time, following that which severed itself from it? The gaze appropriates the subject when he says to have seen this or that, what in the image remains of the object. There is a relation then, if we follow the gaze's attachment to the lure, in what the subject says about the lure's essence, between the image of the breasts [*le sein*] and being [*das sein*]. But what kind of a relation? Is it, for example, a relation resembling that of a lack of a living person to the corpse? For Blanchot it is never a question of a simple relation between the living and the dead. What he elicits in such a relation is its dissymetry, its distance of alienation. The mortal image of the immortal body is neither "any sort of reality" nor "another, another thing". Here the repetition inscribed in the moment of gaze does not transport us into a dimension in which, simply, something *else* will have been recovered, say another sense. It is a question of the *other* of sense. The reason for an insufficiency of *another* sense effected by this moment of mortification is due to the fact that we do not speak about the relation of places. The place of the dead is without a place, even if there is a grave to attend, a tomb with an epitaph or, indeed, a crypt.

We can thus say that what intervenes in the relation of fascination, the relation that couples the imaginary ego, as Lacan defined it, with the image in which echoes the loss of jouissance, is the fantasy of unity. This fantasy is not without a legitimate status that involves a relation to the law, and occupies a place where Blanchot situates death. The relation to the place is fundamental for Blanchot. What makes death, and in particular the dead, stand out, is the lack of place. Death is not in its place. Again, it is not a mere displacement of death that is in question here but a lack as operative in language - what Blanchot calls *l'éloignement* [remoteness, distance, postponement] - that sets displacements in motion, for example rendering repression possible. That is why I call it a fundamental relation; not a lack of the signifier of death but an absolute alterity of *das*

*Ding*, that allows for the missing signifier - the phallus - to make the lack operative in language. What makes it operative is that the signifier "death" [*la mort*] has a place in the reality of discourse, even if the real of death, the lost *jouissance* is without place. We spoke about it earlier. But how are we to justify this strange lack of place death has always already found? Death is only for the living and that is so, because only the living have a relation with death. Although, as Blanchot remarks, "Death suspends the relation to place",<sup>13</sup> and further that "the corpse is not in its place", the logic of displacement becomes effective due to this lack and any possible determination of displacement, of the *other* of sense, pertains, in accordance with Heidegger's preliminary remarks to the analysis of death, to the living, to those who remain. Blanchot's confirmation of the placeless place of dead should not, however, be read without the repeated reference to the cadaverous flesh, as if thrown into Heidegger's meditation as that which it lacks. The *nowhere* of death is the *here* of the corpse, the missing other that supplements the second version of the imaginary to Heidegger's analysis. The urgency of corpse's presence contrives a rigour of response to "Someone", which is why there is an inadequacy in speaking about death's "unity", and which has been said of Being's potentiality. Nothing comes to the place abandoned by death. In fact, Blanchot goes on to say, evoking a profoundly narcissistic estrangement of those who contemplate it, the dead "jealously" clings to his place as "a basis of indifference, the gaping intimacy [*l'intimité béante*]",<sup>14</sup> which is on the one hand the place of the Nietzschean drive, and on the other a resonance of the Lacanian *béance*, that alienating and anguishing gap that divides the subject.

The indifference of the deceased finds its location in the *here* to which the *nowhere* becomes attached. Like in Freud's concept of the death drive, the indifference of death, its *silence*, pro-vokes *post mortem* readings and interpretations, *Mourning and Melancholia* not excluded. And when Blanchot says that "he who dies cannot tarry [*demeurer n'est pas accessible B celui qui meurt*]",<sup>15</sup> we can hear in it an echo of Nietzsche's words "the dead can no longer die". But here it is not a question of an ideal, or melancholic triumph of immortality. The dead both expose the living to the lack of shelter and open them to the field of ethics of mourning which by admitting to the inappropriateness of moving the corpse from place to place venerates the placeless place and fragility in the living. But this does not leave death without a relation to the ideal where the subject who writes it is inclined to find it. The word "death", after all, seems like a suitable shelter for the dead.

Blanchot does not follow this path which would meet dead end in suspending the *nowhere* elsewhere. Where? Where the dead are missing, in the analysis in which death reigns erect as a house without inhabitants, a temple without mourners. But this is also why it is not the dead who jealously cling to themselves but the living who hold out the image clinging, if they can, to what has remained, to the remainder that moves their desire to speak. To whom?

Blanchot's meditation aims to establish a relation to invite us to witness what cannot be witnessed and what falls into a singularity of articulation: "It is striking that at this moment, when the cadaverous presence is the presence of the unknown before us, the mourned deceased [*le défunt regretté*] begins to *resemble himself* [*ressambler B lui-même*]"<sup>16</sup> It is a striking moment and one of the most formidable passages in Blanchot's text. We are summoned to give a testimony of the dead coming to himself to form an image, the self-resemblance, of itself within itself. But is it self-resemblance? This first impossibility articulates also a moment of mourning in that it marks the absolute departure of the real, the unassuageable disappearance of life. There will be an accusation following this event but not here. It is not that there has never been a "perception", as Derrida remarked, but that perception binds the subject to the imaginary object as the object excluded from within, so lyrically intimate that it is always already extimate at the moment of commemorating the real.

On a different level, this is also a moment when philosophy stumbles on the dead body of the philosopher, the *jouissance* of writing that brought him there. Blanchot, too, struggles ascertaining that "resembles himself" is the right expression, the only one and yet both excessive and insufficient. It is not certain whether *himself* owes its existence to the grammar of the masculine *le défunt*, which thus excludes *elle-même* or *soi-même*, both herself and itself. What is certain is an insufficiency of the other affirmed in a failure to grasp the outwardly in the world and seize the "not in this world" where I, who uttered it, lack in the Other who is therefore lacking Other. The excess in Blanchot's choice of words rests on the affirmation of the other whose loss makes us wrest the words that remain from the beyond where they vanish. The question of "love and work" is decided here: the former as a loss inaugurates the latter as remaining. What remains, these words *resembles himself*, is not a resemblance of nothing, which is why *himself* is excessive, already saying too much when the question of the father is brought into view. Hence the ambiguity of

*who* - who dies, who is nearest - remains at the heart of ambiguity about the other, not the "real" person, but a metaphor at our disposal, whether mythical or not, in this case Eurydice, as we shall see. The "impersonal himself", the paternal, fraternal, is therefore at the same time the most personal, the *only* there is, given *he*, the other, is not an object as a semblance, but what corresponds to the loved object. Paradoxically, though not without justification, the moment of such intense suffering reveals itself in the pathos of enjoyment, *jouissance* which enjoys its subterranean liaisons with suffering. In Blanchot's text this enjoyment of suffering lapses into ecstatic admiration, and the appearance of a lure, the *semblent*, is indeed a moment of a certain death:

Yes, it is he, the dear living person, but all the same, it is more than he. He is more beautiful, more imposing; he is already monumental and so absolutely himself that it is as if he were *doubled* by himself, joined in his solemn impersonality by resemblance and by the image. This magnified being, imposing and proud, which impresses the living as the appearance of the original never perceived until now...<sup>17</sup>

The moment of pathological trembling is pursued, in the waves of exclamatory admiration, if I can say so, to the backbone, to the extreme unknown or to the place of the real which does not change place. This moment aims to affirm, in the delirious spasm of image's self-identity, the beyond enjoyed in the letter. But it is also the moment of the burst of the signifier as resonating, not without pathos, in the testimony of self-resemblance as Blanchot articulates it. This symbolic moment marks the departure of the real: "Let us look at this splendid being from which beauty streams: he is, I see this, perfectly like himself; he resembles *himself*. The cadaver is its own image".<sup>18</sup>

But who is this I, the I that has been avoided throughout only to appear where there is *nothing* to see? It should not escape us that the I appears at the moment which is, as one says, breath-taking, the moment of instant nihilation burst into *I see this*. This breath-taking and, it would seem, speechless moment which takes our being away with it [*essere*] occurs in a sudden display of beauty of which Rilke said that it is "nothing but the beginning of terror, which we are just able to endure, and we are so awed because it serenely disdains to annihilate us".<sup>19</sup> What is striking even more is the sudden convergence of the breath-taking and speechless instant and the emergence, as in the Rilkean self-annihilation, of the subject as the first pronoun signifying an encounter with the corpse as resembling himself. That is why, when writing out this grave and speechless moment, one

must immediately remark that it is not really I who can see the moment of death, or look at the impossible image of the cadaver as it becomes identical to itself. Rather it is another I, an already displaced, separated and distanced [*s'éloigné*] I, which speaks from the place of "gaping intimacy" where it is not: the I as subject to desire of the Other.

The subject of the testimony does not speak from "here" to which these events would come, allowing me as thought to remain always outside being, as it was for Descartes. The subject speaks from "nowhere is here", or from a nonbeing, what Lacan called *desêtre*, the speechless instant which opens into I speaking. *Je le vois*, I see this, speaks to us from the outside, I would even say, from where it was. In this sense, before I see this or that what my image reflects back to me in a deadly manner, or as a certain death, I am seen by the other, looked at by the empty gaze that sees nothing. Thus the I emerges not as a subject of the statement, where the gaze and voice, are locked in the drive that satisfies a certain dissatisfaction of impossibility of seeing, but the subject of the unconscious as enunciation, placed where it *has been* always missing. This is how Blanchot names it; he brings to focus in the course of his meditation a fragment of discourse. In this fragment the I speaks as a lack of having been seen.

This is also why Blanchot's words "*like himself*" never ceases to puzzle us, especially that the statement: "I am like myself, *like I was*" does not alter the sense of Blanchot's meditation but attempts to maintain the relation between the signifier and the imaginary field. The I can only appear where the cadaver is missing. I speaking outside of where *I was*, and dying the death of the other, is here in the crypt of the Other to which there is no return because the ego, as the object of the Other, lies buried and bound to the identification with, and love of, the dead other. Such appearance of the I, in the place where the dual character of the cadaverous object as both real and imaginary becomes manifest, the I which follows the real object to become trapped, in the grave of the other, as an imaginary one, is what I would call a melancholic moment in writing. It is true in this sense that the cadaver does not resemble "the person he was when he was alive". It is more than he, resembling what the Other loved in me, as me, and where I, enveloped in the shadow of the object cast upon me, speak as a bereft I.

What the order of imaginary resemblance establishes in Blanchot's text is the law of signifier in which the object is always absent as present, the lack. But this goes even further, for what is affirmed in the likeness of the cadaver, in the "what is it like? Nothing",

is the affirmation of language which occupies no particular place to the extent that in signifying it signifies nothing. The image of self-resemblance is therefore "the dissolution of the thing", the dissolution that persists in speaking. What does the signifier resemble? Nothing. This is what we can say about the signifier: it resembles nothing because in its singularity (outside the chain) it means nothing, which is not to say that no one speaks or that it does not make sense in the subject's ear. Not only does it make sense but it also induces signification in the signified which, as one says today, is on the side of the real. It is these signifiers that we must find in order to remark on what does and what does not have a relation to *jouissance*. They can be found on three levels. For the moment let me mention just two. On the one hand, there is in Blanchot's texts a whirlpool of homophones - *la mort, demeure, mer, l'amour* - whose ambiguous work allows us to situate them as not just a production of *another* meaning, as Blanchot will say at the end of *The Imaginary Versions*, but as the *other* of sense, the ambivalent identification with the imaginary father of love, the identification that sustains, in the melancholic enjoyment of the mOther, that which is inseparable and irreducible, an intimacy of the extimate distance [*l'éloignement*]. On the other hand, what appears here as a concept, and what is to be associated with the work of the *death* drive, is also manifested at the level of recurring signifiers that shift and distribute significations in the text. They appear not only in the texts discussed here but throughout Blanchot's work. These key signifiers - absence, the inaccessible, the impossible, death, corpse - are not simply concepts but signifiers as missing objects that assume subjectal singularity of sense in the persistence of ambiguity in which Blanchot situates them. In addition, given Blanchot's concern with the "real" that places him on the threshold of what is called the language of psychoanalysis, there is also, as if in the middle of this experience of pathos, a series of terms to be found in the later phase of Lacan's teaching. The encounter in which writing as a remark on the dead letter awaits a commentary, comes to the fore here. The power of resemblance would manifest itself in such comparative reading: does Blanchot's commentary resemble Lacan's central themes, or is it the other way round? And further: does the language of psychoanalysis resemble the language of literature/ philosophy? The question seems however illegitimate for it aims to delineate two dimensions, or what Lacan called *dit-mension*, by relating them to the place of origin, the twofold origin of literature and psychoanalysis, which each of them has inferred in the relation which can only be sustained as a relation of the sign, as *le réel*. Still,

I do not raise the question in vain. Blanchot's entrance to the symbolic serves as the next *step* in his meditation. The reflection on the symbolic comes second in the order of the text working as a certain thematization by way of negativity. Some jouissance have been jettisoned and the pathography of the cadaver is subjected to a reversal. I will come back to it.

In the year *L'espace littéraire* was published, Lacan was conducting his *Seminaire* which would later appear as the second volume in the series of twenty six. Much of it is devoted to the three registers of the real, imaginary and symbolic, the cornerstone of his doctrine. The real stands out as one of the most radical ones. We have grown used to speak of it as unspeakable, impossible. In this Seminar II Lacan shows how to delineate the boundaries between psychoanalysis and psychology, or indeed philosophy, by saying that "the real is without fissure".<sup>20</sup> It has no fissure for it already wedges a crevice in the body, a traumatic disruption of the Other. It has no cracks or gaps, unlike the symbolic, for, as he will interpolate in the Seminar XI, it does not change place. Although the existence of the real is only inferred, it emerges as a result of a critique of the psychologists of his time (von Fritsch, Fairbairn) who tried to construct a "reciprocal holism" of coexisting psycho-organic systems, the kind of parallelism against which Freud already warned us in his paper *The Unconscious*. This unified corpus would allow for the objects to be maintained at will. The question of qualifying them as "good" or "bad" would be left for Melanie Klein to answer.

The real slips and evades such constructions. On this level the object remains inaccessible because it can only be approached, as a lack, on the symbolic one. According to Lacan, the psychologists try to invest the real with the symbolic to imagine the former's "qualities" as reflected in the symbolic constructions. In effect, the symbolism is set to operate in the real "not by virtue of projection, nor as a framework of thought, but by virtue of being an *instrument of investigation*".<sup>21</sup> If the undisplacable and uncrackable *réel* refuses translation, indeed resists, it is because of the image's resemblance of the object. Lacan proposes therefore a twofold nature of objects:

On the one hand, they are imaginary in so far as they are objects of desire - if there is something which analysis from the beginning brought to the fore, doubtless it is the fecundity of the libido in the creation of objects corresponding to the stages of its development. On the other hand, these objects are real objects - it is taken for granted that we cannot give them to the individual, that isn't within our power. What's at issue is allowing him to make manifest, in relation to the exciting object, that is to

say eliciting the imaginary reaction, the libido whose repression constitutes the knot of his neurosis.<sup>22</sup>

There are no symbolic objects. But that is not to say that a letter of writing cannot function as an object of such dual nature. In writing the letter often slips into an imaginary hole which it both covers and discloses. Both mourning and melancholia in writing, although they certainly deserve a distinction, seek the dead letter as an object of desire - desire which seeking the image finds an imaginary whole, a mimetic product of autopsy, what Torok called the "word-thing", to commemorate *la béance* of the real. But it is the traumatic real that sets the imaginary to work symbolically provoking "the imaginary reaction". The place of the phallus as the facilitator of signification is of great importance here. For Lacan it is neither an object, nor a part of the body it represents, to the extent that the imaginary body desires a lost object. In writing, does the phallus come to the place of the letter concealed in the crypt, excluded from the production in so far as this production's sole condition is the cryptic hole? In which case it would be the object of desire of the mOther that, excluded yet indispensable as excluded, writing has some relation with as a writing of the imaginary phallus,  $-\phi$  as Lacan marked it, and, to this extent, writing's relation to the patronym, that in Lacan's economy regulates the melancholic jouissance, remains problematic. To what degree does writing of Blanchot rely on the intimacy between the object of desire and the phallus, and to what extent these two seem indistinguishable in the metaphorical crypt, is what concerns us here: can the loss in writing, played out around the signifiers which name nothing and which in Blanchot's autopsies are gathered under the name of the *cadaver*, have any relation to the lost writing as the place marked by the crypt, the void through which writing must pass in order to mark?

At this point we come to realise that Blanchot's fascination with the corpse, the name he gives to the image as a remainder of the (real) object, has come to an end. And when the symbolic agency is, if I can say so, called upon, the difference between the statement and enunciation opens agape. Has the imaginary been employed by Blanchot as a *pretext* that serves as a preamble to signification? And is not this "pretext", precisely, constituted as an *instance of the letter* or insistence of the letter that separates the subject from being? Having pointed out the dual nature of the object Lacan goes on to "introduce" the subject at this juncture:



The subject does not have a dual relation with an object with which he is confronted, it is in relation to another subject that his relations with this object acquire another meaning, and by the same token their value. Inversely, if he has relations with this object, it is because a subject other than himself has relations with this object, and they can both name it, in an order different from that of the real. As soon as it can be named, its presence can be invoked as an original dimension, distinct from reality. Nomination is invocation of presence, and sustaining of presence in absence.<sup>23</sup>

The subject is a breach and an instant of naming in relation to another subject, where the present absence of the object induces signification. Or rather provokes it. Blanchot's text vacillates between these two: seduction and provocation. On the one hand there is a movement of drawing closer to the image, towards the imaginary pits of anguish and death, on the other hand, there is a moment of cessation, the terror and abandonment of the vicinity of *jouissance*, as well as drawing away, coming to sense of the encounter. Only the latter dimension - which is not to say that Blanchot will once and for all renounce the endeavour to return or the recurrence of that which returns to him - speaks of the subject as he signifies where the real and the imaginary do not meet.

When Blanchot says by way of a provocation that "man is made in his image",<sup>24</sup> echoing in it both religious and phenomenological traditions, as well as the above mentioned psychologism which brings "man" to self-reflection that attempts to inject the real with the symbolic, his provocation aims to reveal the knot of negativity in language. As I have said above, the signifier arrives - we could call it an event - at the site of the image as a reversal of that which is dropped, indeed mortified in naming.

This affirmation of the signifier, in terms of negativity to the extent that it leans on the love of the Other to return to desire as nothing, finds its articulation in Blanchot's symbolic formula that immediately follows the imaginary precept above: "*man is unmade [défait] according to his image*".<sup>25</sup> The process of undoing [*défait*] weighs upon the imaginary axis supported by *according*. Thus the linguistic operation and its power to name works in Blanchot's meditation in a reverse order. It is not from the image but to the image that, in his poetics, the signifier is addressed. This is so despite the fact that, as Blanchot often repeats in his paper, and as I have done so likewise, the image precedes the linguistic operation. Although, unlike in Lacan's doctrine, Blanchot does not introduce the notion of the primacy of the signifier or the letter which must be in place, as the lack, for the linguistic symbol to take an effect, such primacy is an implication in his writing. And

yet if his fascination with the cadaver ends here it is because it has never begun; never did the *post-mortem* appear as a *pre-mortem*. Death is the reason to write. This is no doubt Blanchot's case. Also the case of Orpheus. Nor has there ever been an attempt in Blanchot's writing to stand *vis à vis* the cadaver. Not only is this relation a symbolic one but it also involves a retroactive slide, temporal difference, perhaps a memoir. Is this the end of the image?

Blanchot demands that we put an end to the interminable. Not that putting an end would mean to render the interminable terminated. Under the disguise of ending the interminable is named or termed. It is a moment of the cut: "We do not cohabit with the dead under the punishment [*sous peine*] of seeing *here* collapse into the unfathomable *nowhere*..".<sup>26</sup> The intimacy of encountering the present absence of the dead (*les morts*, although Blanchot uses most often the term *la dépouille*: skin, snake's slough, carcass, the stripped and therefore emptied remains) is subject to punishment [*peine*] should the dead drag the living to fill the lifeless carcass, or should the living love too much the object that excites them to love. But the difference between *here* and *nowhere* seems too subtle to hold. Earlier Blanchot says that "*nowhere* is *here*". To distinguish the two, to breach the bond of melancholic *jouissance*, to breach prohibitions and to blaspheme between the most nigh and most distanced, where the distinction comes to be named, implies an existence of the third term. Thus I return to add to the earlier mentioned two levels of reading Blanchot's text the third one, promised but not executed appointment of the ethical *dimension* where the symbolic value of the patronym is situated. We have already said that the name in the place of the Other guarantees meaning in the series of passionate approaches, and that it is the breach of the impossible desire that gives subject its existence as enunciation.

Blanchot inserts the name of the term *peine* [penalty, punishment, sorrow, aporia] somewhat in passing to acknowledge a few passages later how signification comes to existence in conjunction with truth and law. Punishment, and its implicit relation to melancholic self-punishment, is given a name which is closely associated with condemnation and execution: the term *peine de mort* is a synonym of *arrêt de mort*, death sentence *and* the revocability of death, the step towards "the absolute neutrality of death" *and* the No of beyond. Thus the intervention of the symbolic turn in Blanchot's paper, and the suspension of the mortifying *vision* immersed, as it were, in the haunting emptiness of

the carcass, is not without a wave of shame, perhaps guilt. This is further illustrated by Blanchot's sudden disassociation of signification from the image. Somewhere Lacan asks: "Up to what point can a discourse that seems personal bear, on the level of the signifier alone, a sufficient number of traces of impersonalization for the subject not to recognise it as his own?".<sup>27</sup> It is on the ethical level of the relation between the subject and the "depersonalised" third person, between the "I" and the Other, that these limits come to be recognised.

In the *Republic* Plato recounts a story of a certain Leontius who on his way home encountered corpses lying on the ground. The temptation to look at them led him to approach the dead flesh in this *ad hoc* vivisection and evoked a cry of terror: "there you are, curse you - a lovely sight! Have a real good look".<sup>28</sup> Leontius is caught up in the face of terror and admiration only to appeal to what is not there. The voice of love and condemnation testifies to the division as effected by the necrophiliac fantasy and prohibition. Although Leontius is horrified by the imaginary passion that lashes him into shame he is not prepared to renounce it as this passion for death places him in relation to what is forbidden as much as it is desired. After all this is what the fantasy is, that is to say, it concerns the imaginary object of desire, the object which can only be refound in the ambiguity of the call. To whom would he appeal in the cry of passion *in flagranti* if not to the other from whom he demands an answer and a solution. But in addressing the other in his terror-stricken voice he must hear the other calling him, and it is in deciphering this call of the other as voice of conscience coming to him that he will the meaning of his desire. That is why love should not be equated with desire. One cannot desire the dead without breaking the law, which is what Orpheus is found doing, and to love them is to love what they loved in us giving us what we do not have. But if love reveals a fundamental lack, that whose absence persists in presence, desire knows no bounds in desiring what is prohibited. Thus the necrophiliac desire, in some way more "fundamental" than the incestuous one, would signify the metonymic lack of being, the relation between desire and an object, which is renewed amidst reproaches that keep coming back as flames, old and new, of the passion of death, a voice of accusation and a voice of renunciation sustained by the impossible love of the father. I will come back to it in the next, concluding chapter.

This is how Blanchot stages the mythical scene of Orpheus. In it Orpheus plays the main, and the sole, character in proximity to repetition and to betrayal, guilt, that both

ensures the satisfaction at the sight of an object and remains unsatisfied in the face of prohibition. It is not necessary that we see Eurydice on stage as she does not have a role to play. Blanchot's theatre of thanatos is not devoid of monologues and imaginary dialogues around the names - for most part names of the harbingers of death such as Kafka and Rilke. The function of these proper names, to the extent that they refer to the third person - naming not the subject, but what corresponds to the object - and which is how Blanchot envisages the passage of writing, is as yet uncertain for us. Orpheus proves to be an important figure to consider in the imaginary schema and Blanchot situates him in the metaphorical order that sheds some light on the nature of work. Thus the aleatory relation of Orpheus to the dead other which, as Blanchot makes out, resembles *himself*, also bears the traits of Eurydice who is twice lost.<sup>29</sup> For Blanchot it was Eurydice by contrast to Antigone as chosen by Lacan to embody the birth of the signifier. Just as the image appeared essential for Blanchot to establish the missing connection between it and the work of language, so the gaze works towards the unfolding of space in which the threefold relation of Orpheus with Eurydice, the work and the night, undergoes a series of betrayals:

But not to turn toward Eurydice would be no less untrue [*ce ne serait pas moins trahir* - no less betraying]. Not to look would be infidelity without measure, imprudent force of his movement, which does not want Eurydice in her diurnal truth and her everyday appeal, but wants her in her nocturnal obscurity, in her distance, with her closed body and sealed face, [...] not as the intimacy of a familiar life, but as a foreignness of what excludes all intimacy, and wants, not to make her live, but to have living in her the plenitude of her death.<sup>30</sup>

To wish her dead and absent in her presence, and to revive her in her exuberant death of which she does not tire as long as he who wants to see her dead will not cease to mortify her. Orpheus? The cruel work demands so, but above all, so does inspiration. The dynamics of desire in search for its imaginary object must thus appeal to the metaphorical sacrifice to ensure the work of desire which will subsequently guarantee the work. It is interesting that Blanchot sketches the demand of work in relation to an elusive object, the semblant, which allows for elaboration of that which reissues the demand. This loop-like circuit of work suggests that it would be more appropriate to place its itinerary on the level of the drive. Not that it matters most here, but the repetitive effort that Orpheus puts up to keep the dead alive, and the order of writing that seems inseparable from the work of the gaze, resemble a schema, ambiguous in its meaning, in which we have already found

Nietzsche. Blanchot, too, by closing her body and sealing her face, makes a necessary requirement for writing's self-referentiality. Something must be removed from the view to allow for the invisible, the feminine invisible, to guide the hand which will remain at rest unless its movement is generated by the lacking object.

Again, the anguish of writing, and perhaps the anguishing voice that accompanies the production of work, stumbles upon the lack of him who demands that it be so. Orpheus, not without reason, and not without fault, is thus put on trial, indicted for betrayals, impatience. But we must wait, adjourn it for a moment, for, according to Blanchot, Orpheus is already endowed with the gift and power to create. In which case it remains uncertain why the impatience and betrayal, given they take nothing away from him, nothing that make him lack were it not for the dead other he demands to be there to gather his potency at its sight.

Although we are on the level of melancholic utterance what is at stake is the subject of the unconscious. The hermetically sealed landscape of the mythical/metaphorical, characters serves, here as elsewhere, to successfully conceal the place of the I. But to what extent does this concealment succeed despite Blanchot's statements to "preserve" the I, for example in his remarks on the "automatic writing" to which I will come back shortly. Blanchot's insistence on the passage towards the third person, the truly *no one*, "the neutral", the absent and unsignifiable other whom I can only address as I, can only happen at the price of either foreclosing the I or substituting it for an other that is metonymically reinstated. For Blanchot it is not I who respond(s) to the cry of the other at the site of the dead object, but *writing*: "writing responds to the demands of this uncharacterizable 'he'".<sup>31</sup> Thus, in this most radical substitution, if it is one, writing occupies the place of the letter and the place of the subject. In the place of I who address him, or her, whom, in order to ensure they do not exist, I have to mortify mortifying myself, writing reveals the crypt as that which is always already lost. The orphic cryptography serves two purposes here: firstly it denies the ego in which and through which the other is addressed, and secondly, it replaces - the move Blanchot wants to avoid - a possibility of the speaking subject with the practice of the letter in which the I remains encrypted. But can it be that this consideration discerns writing in terms of the laws of speech?

In the collection *L'Entretien infini*, published fourteen years after *L'Espace*,

Blanchot seems to contribute to the desubjectivised concept of speech, which would support the above claim of writing as the power to signify *outside* the subject. Further, despite the fact that his additional remark that speech, "spoken by no one", precedes the gaze of Orpheus, the gaze from which, as he says in *L'Espace*, writing ensues, it is not possible to adopt the view that writing is a repressed speech. Hence the term foreclosure, as introduced by Lacan, or exclusion, seems more adequate, for it designates an absence of the I in effect of the lack of the Other, with which I have identified, and not merely its metaphorical displacement. This is the case of the automatic writing. What is at stake in Blanchot's writing, and not in the scenes written, is the enigmatic identification with the dead other and the passionate liaison with the terror of absence. As Blanchot remarks, an encounter with the nudity of Eurydice's image takes place "in order to discover that this nakedness is what one encounters but does not seize".<sup>32</sup> There is a limit to exercising the power of self-reflective understanding of the loss, the limit which appears at the moment of what Blanchot calls "the experience of the outside". The violent terror to grasp what has slipped, "the unseizable desolation of the desert", is subject to error. That is what Blanchot says but it is not the only way in which articulation can get off the ground. The crime of impatience awaits a castratory disruption of the law which is not merely a law of *re-iteration*, but a law that sets the dialectic of impatience - the impossible autopsy of the naked intimate - and patience - the passive impossibility of waiting and non-acting - into work: the law of the signifier. But if speech *is* the gaze of Orpheus, as Blanchot confirms retrospectively, the power of the drive for that which does not exist, and which nevertheless supplies enjoyment to writing, must already have some rooting in the symbolic law. Such is, what we might call, Blanchot's modification of the early "theory" of the image, in which the image and the gaze appear as an inaugural moment for writing. At the end of *The gaze of Orpheus* Blanchot speaks about opening of the space of writing at the instant of looking as if the semblant, the lure that glued the gaze to the night in which *nothing* appears, was that radical shadow of the thing with which writing exchanges its essence. Not just in relation to the imaginary other but in the embrace of the big Other from which writing never departs repeating the Other's errors and effacements.

At the same time Blanchot ventures to speak against the exclusion of the I. Even if the I does not appear in the text as the first person pronoun and writing takes over as the missing letter that is nevertheless pervaded with the sense of tragic enjoyment that sustains

it, we should not identify writing with the dubious procedures of automatism. In fact, Blanchot strongly opposes the mode of literary production that would "suppress constraints, suspend intermediaries, reject all mediation".<sup>33</sup> In the automatic writing, notoriously treasured by the surrealists, the

hand seems to put the depths of language at our command. But in reality, we cannot use this language at all, any more than we can use this hand, which is as foreign to us as if it had forsaken us or as if it were drawing us into the very milieu of forsakenness, where there are no more resources, where there is no more support, no more grasp or limit.<sup>34</sup>

The constraints here concern the "aesthetic, legal, moral" dimensions. Can writing overcome these constraints by putting into focus what establishes them? In the automatic writing "the language whose approach it ensures is not a power - is not power to speak. In it I can do nothing and 'I' never speak". In the automatic writing the subject is obliterated in favour of it being spoken, but is it manifest in writing that is not automatic? In writing that perpetually mediates, that like *the immediate of the medium*, deploys the signs as if they were objects, I do not speak either, but rather *it* does, it speaks, the law itself perhaps, the transgression *as* constraint. Besides, I cannot speak in writing because, in writing, which speaks for me as *no one*, the letter precedes thought, coming before the subject, as the letter of the unconscious.

We could consider Blanchot's opposition to the "automatic writing" as seductive and deflective of what is nevertheless guarded as "the experience of the outside", not as if the relation to the law did not exist, but as if writing itself were the law, the forbidden jouissance of writing as law; taking on a form of the "narrative voice" that speaks in the third person, is it the Other that speaks as writing? *He* is what happens in telling a story. But *he* is also what the story shrinks into, the relation to "the banality of the real" and "uneventful everyday life when nothing happens".<sup>35</sup> It is also *he*, Blanchot replies to our earlier question, that eventually becomes a character, he who speaks in the story, for example of Orpheus and Eurydice. Let's note this: *in* the story but not *as* story, for example *The Gaze of Orpheus*. There are two sides to the third person, fiction as a real object, and *another*, the veiled and fictionalised subject, on the one hand, "objectivized reality", on the other, the masked I. But that is precisely what Blanchot does not admit, perhaps cannot afford to admit lest he ruin the relation in which death reigns as the

absolute Other. Blanchot admits neither literary reality in which the object of the writing subject is missing, nor the veiled I of the subject's fantasy. Only the veiled other is given an ideal footing, that is to say appears in the silence of the I as an idealised loss of the I. He does not allow it by issuing, if I can repeat it, a command: *non me legere*. Can it be that the elaborate meditations on the works of, for example Rilke, Kafka, work as disguises, at least where the question of writing is concerned? And of death. What is it that fascinates Blanchot about death? "Why death? Because death is the extreme. He who includes death among all that is in his control [*Qui dispose d'elle* - has death at his disposal] controls himself extremely [*dispose extrêmement de soi* - has it/self at his disposal]. He is linked to the whole of his capability; he is power through and through".<sup>36</sup> Is death, to ask it again, an imaginary ideal which prevents us from encountering death in language?

The limit and limitation encountered in Blanchot's texts, the double impossibility of waiting and grasping what one waits for not only deprives us of the terms in which writing could be analysed *via* the laws of speech but immediately establishes a relation to the paternal law, both the patronym and the *no* of the father, namely the ethics of desire. Although it is an imaginary other to which I respond in anguish of realising that I might not exist, something in the place of the Other enables me to address this little other when my desire remains unsatisfied. We thus come to the judgement day which Blanchot reserves for Orpheus by way of instigating him to repeat what is impossible to satisfy. On the one hand, the "infinitely dead" Orpheus is presented by Blanchot as guilty of a murder he infinitely commits when surrendering to the gaze which renews passion for dissatisfaction he at the same time demands, *and* as guilty of another betrayal when, avoiding to look, he tries to save and preserve her. On the other hand, this twofold impossibility is how Blanchot's desire speaks: in a symbolic relation to the law, a prohibition of necrophiliac cohabitation. Blanchot does not seek a reconciliation between these two impossibilities but rather makes room for the letter in whose emptiness the I remains doubly concealed, as I who speak to an other, and as I who does not write. What writes under the penalty of death [*peine de mort*]? Jouissance of the Other. Who speaks?

Paradoxically, Blanchot's obsessive pursuit and fascination with death is not, as I have already suggested, doomed to failure of production but guarantees work as that which does not judge Orpheus. But this pursuit of fascination nevertheless always already returns to the impossibility of immanent seeing, seeing the letter of writing as an impossible



cohabitation with the dead, from which writing that is yet to come attempts, over and over again, to wrest something that is not there. The melancholia of such imaginary insistence is a torment, both enjoyable and unbearable, which is what the term *jouissance* designates, a torment that lies in the vicinity of the gaze. But the effect of the attempt to uncover or discover the truth of the dead is already the truth of what they do not say, namely the truth of the subject. This effect is a quest for nothing else but a dead letter to which the I can only respond as an empty testimony, a signifier which says nothing in particular, nothing of the singularity that constitutes a subject.

The orphic song would appear as a dirge of mourning and as a literary justice that a writer pays to the enigma of loss, were it not for the melancholic refusal to mourn. It is this refusal that makes Blanchot issue accusations and stage a trial. But who is Orpheus? Or rather what is the function of the name, in so far as it names an absent other? A name of a man, an artist, a writer or indeed a "universal" image of a writer and his dark obsessions. It is not just a name of a mythical character, not just a metaphor that assuages, whether in the cadaverous scene or orphic music, the anguish of identification at stake. It is rather a name of being, and Blanchot does not hesitate to stake out the redundancy of being in the literary funeral. Here, in court as well as in the crypt, where every sentence scores a death, *peine de mort*, it is a question of a certain structural moment in which discontentment is articulated, accusations issued, reproaches circulated and accounts to be settled as an effect of a breach of law by which the living live and habitate. With the I in the crypt, and the object dead, will not the orphic *jouissance* be always condemned to the error of impatience? In the last analysis it is work, Blanchot lingers, that sur-vives the judgement of the dead Other - "If the world judges Orpheus, the work does not"<sup>37</sup> - to which Orpheus, or the mysterious narrator of the death scene, is exposed from the beginning, from the moment of appearance of an image.

If Blanchot ventures to entice us to follow the imagery that the scene of death holds for us, whether we enter it or not, this temptation has the power to make us believe that what is not there exists, not behind or beyond the words, but as that which makes them appear and brings them always nearer to the distance in which they speak. That is why Blanchot manages to instigate his ideal "hero" - a name in the place of the ideal I resurrected yet at the same time fallen - to infringe the law by sending him back to the vacant image in order to regain not what was lost but the desire to speak it, the signifier

that marks in absence that which it says. But it is not the desire of Orpheus. What Blanchot calls *forgetting of the law* names the ambiguous *inspiration* and it is from there that Blanchot draws his.

Let me return at the end of this chapter to Blanchot's imaginary versions in their allusive rather than elusive impact. To rearticulate the distinction between the imaginary and the symbolic: how does the imaginary serve as a *pretext* in Blanchot's meditation. How does it introduce the symbolic dimension? The emptiness of the image - its remainder [*reste*], the term so often used by Lacan in his scattered elaboration of the *objet a* - determines the *here* of the cut that intervenes as the world, the law. But this choice between the image as, what Blanchot later calls - in a Hegelian fashion which was not entirely foreign to Lacan either - "the life-giving negation of the thing" and its burden that pushes us towards "not the absent thing, but to its absence as presence, to the neutral double of the object in which all belonging to the world is dissipated",<sup>38</sup> is laden with undissolvable ambiguity. It is an ambiguity which leaves the sediment of the real of *jouissance* in the open where the image makes its constant reappearance. This ambiguity, like an *aversion* of Leontius, is an ambiguity of the double sense around the remainder of the real that animates and annihilates it. The symbolic associations in the production of discourse, and in pursuing the dead letter to which writing melancholically testifies, are performed, as I said earlier, in terms of the "instruments of investigation", the *post-mortem* examination as the present case suggests. In my analysis of Blanchot's image of the cadaver I have not yet mentioned his allusions to Heidegger's meditation on death. Firstly, Blanchot's image echoes the work of the Heideggerian tool which, when put out of use, seems to stand out of the function it served. To this extent Blanchot will not tire to emphasise the ambiguity in which the image as a left-over of repetition in which it served to satisfy its user - this is how Blanchot imagines the image of the useless tool - is implicated and inseparable from the thing it revives to an ideal. If Heidegger's meditation on death, which I spoke about earlier in this work, revolves around such an ideal, Blanchot seems unable to resist the temptation to present him with the *real corpse* to deal with in the face of the idealised, that is to say *abstracted* from the dimension of *jouissance*, practice. And this shows that the symbolic itself is laden with the imaginary versions that constitute it and somewhat inaugurate it. Heidegger might not have wished to recognise this dimension. Secondly, when Blanchot employs the image in order to arrive at the

symbolic, “which has nothing to do with the image”, he himself does not eschew what in the production of discourse is unavoidable, using the Heideggerian tool as an “instrument of investigation”, a writing in which that which stands out as lost in its repetitive function, is precisely also that which always reenters its faltering use. The phallic signifier of the Other as the symbolic lack thus assumes its function in writing as the lost letter being both an instrument of the operation and the image which draws us towards its never finished performance (does a mechanism take its function from a metaphor?). That is perhaps the double sense of ambiguity, as alluded to by Blanchot. If he brings it to our ears in a certain opposition to Heidegger's philosophy (two passages in *Two Versions*) he has nevertheless used these imaginary tools to no less effective degree than his predecessor.

Blanchot's “image” never escapes, despite its masquerading function as a *pretext* to the symbolic operation, the void that renders it buried in advance; its only “proper” place is the grave from which it radiates with “terrifying beauty” towards those whose gaze seeks the tarnished epitaph. Thus the Heideggerian and Blanchotesque diversions seem to run back its course to bump against the elaborations of Lacan who greeted them both in his doctrine to be unfolded year after year without ever recognising, to the astonishment of his readers, his theoretical legacy other than that of Freud. In the final analysis it is striking how this psychogrammatic dialogue between Blanchot and Lacan dispels the prejudices about psychoanalysis not being informed by literature which the former finds on the side of resistance. Thus it is not only the question of some reciprocal resemblance that allowed us to establish the connection between the language of Blanchot and the doctrine of Lacan in his later teaching. If *semblance* puts being at stake, the Lacanian formula of *in nomine patri* intervening in Blanchot's meditation is itself not without traces of Lacan's relation to Heidegger, a reply which we will put into question in the next, concluding chapter.

## CHAPTER 9

### TO CONCLUDE: ON THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE, BEING -GUILTY AND LOVE.

We have arrived at the point where some concluding remarks deserve their place. But “concluding” does not mean “conclusive”, which is why in the last chapter I am going to continue the task of bringing the discourses of philosophy and psychoanalysis into a direct confrontation. How direct? To what extent can these two discourses be brought face to face, as if in an interview, in which case it would have to be asked who is the interviewer and who the interviewee? To what extent would such face to face confrontation, such interview be evocative of an impossibility that psychoanalysis testifies to when it tries to deal with the real? This is the question that was posed at the beginning, at least at the beginning of this work, and we must now try to readdress it despite the difficulties arising in the course of themes or pathemes we have followed around this question. That is why we are going now, again, as if caught in the snares of repetition, to speak about the real, about *jouissance*.

But how does one speak about *jouissance*? How does one speak about the philosopher’s *jouissance*, given that it is precisely *jouissance*, as Lacan always claimed, that the philosopher does not speak about? If Nietzsche attempted to gauge the terrain of suffering one nevertheless enjoys traversing thus bringing philosophers face to face with the real, that is to say with the symptom, he only showed the fragility and uncertainty of what they asserted as “universal truths”. But it was not until the Freudian discovery of the unconscious and Lacan’s return, one of many no doubt, to the linguistic structure and *ethical status* of the unconscious that pointed in the direction of how the stammer of ontology should be, could be heard. Hence we could say that Nietzsche’s case, if we can call it so, served as an inaugural step, as I have already pointed out, in the motion of psychoanalytical theory to come. For should we not call inauguration that suffering of the subject which gave rise, as a fantasy, a symptom, an ideal perhaps, to *another* problematization of old questions? Nietzsche’s discovery and “teaching”, as Lou Salomé called it, of the doctrine of Eternal Return is perhaps only one of many examples of how,

in the words of Klossowski, a concept can become “a means of concealing behind an ontological problem a completely different problem of a psychological nature”.<sup>1</sup>

But with psychoanalysis it is not a question of looking under a mask to discover there another mask, another layer of fiction. Such a procedure has never been either an aim or an intention in this study. Under the mask, it could again be said, there is nothing; the object behind the gesture of desire to uncover is missing. With the entrance of psychoanalysis then we are no longer satisfied with dissatisfactions about existence, so passionately evoked in Nietzsche’s pursuits, for these are merely an introduction to the questions about the subject, that is to say about the return to the question about *jouissance* and symptom. If Lacan was adamant in criticising the philosophers for not dealing with the real, it was because to question existence instead of questioning Being constitutes a no less myopic undertaking. And this indication already points to the fact that the question of the meaning of Being - as painstakingly delivered not only by life-long obsession of Heidegger but also interrogated by those who still try to *transgress* him by taking *his* question “beyond” ontology - cannot even be raised *qua* theory because it resists, deflects and postpones from the start the analytic experience of loss and the condition of mourning from where it was raised in the first place. And this, in the second place, brings me to the concerns of this chapter, to the very deflection and its repetitions, so vital in neurosis, namely guilt and debt.

This fundamental guilt, which simply permeates the philosophical questions and in advance responds to the call of the Other, concerns *either* the primary presuppositions, the enigmatic site of the pretheoretical, *or* an attempt to glide over or bypass this impossibility. Psychoanalysis asks about the meaning of *jouissance*, the *jouis-sense* or the enjoyed sense of suffering in repetition and therefore the sense of symbolical fixations which promote suffering despite, and because of, the insistence of the Other as language. Thus Heidegger’s question about the meaning of (lost) Being - whether as a narcissistic being-me, as I proposed in chapter 3, or as a being-with-the-other, which generates a profusion of *jouissance* engulfing the subject in prophetic delusions, as has been discussed in chapters 7 and 8 - reaches its pinnacle in the analysis of conscience and guilt, which I will now pursue. That is why, to be more specific, I would like to begin by bringing to our attention a voice, a voice of conscience most likely, which can be heard in the work of Heidegger and Freud alike.

In the opening pages of his celebrated *Discours de Rome* Lacan wrote his equally famous pronouncement:

Whether it sees itself as an instrument of healing, of training, or of exploration in depth, psychoanalysis has only a single medium: the patient's speech. That this is self-evident is no excuse for our neglecting it. And all speech calls for a reply.<sup>2</sup>

If speech is the sole medium in the analytical process, does it imply that voice is its sole vehicle? To speak does it imply that at the heart of speech it is the voice that speaks? What is the status of the voice in speech? Is voice that which speaks or that which is heard? There is a philosophical tradition in the light of which the answer to the first question would be affirmative. It is the tradition which gives to the voice, to use the words of its most prominent critic, a "privilege" of full expression.<sup>3</sup> There is also another tradition, that of Kant, which identifies the voice with the subject, and from which Heidegger's analysis of the voice of conscience takes its momentum. As for the first stream I am not going to enter the debate which revolves around the dialectic of "privileging/disprivileging" for it only reminds us of two wrestlers in the middle of arena, or forum, fighting over access to the "safe", the centre excluded from the space of combat (see chapter 7).

Instead, I will pose a question of the status of the voice as *object*, the voice in the place of the object which is always missing, a voice which calls saying nothing. It is not just that there is a long way from the Husserlian tradition to psychoanalysis, that the ideality of fullness collapses into fragmentary presence of what is absent, there is an interim in this "passage". This interim, this midway between Husserl and Lacan, could be situated in the word of Heidegger. We are going to start by reading closely Heidegger's innovations and contributions to what has already become a "history" of voice, which in his thought receives the treatment that is not indifferent to the interests of psychoanalysis, and in particular Freud's elaborations of the 1920s. This will subsequently take us to structural considerations of the relation between the voice and the subject, the voice and what Lacan called *objet a*.

As a point of departure we could situate Heidegger's account of the voice of conscience in opposition to what I would call *vox populi*, the common, universal discourse understood here as a seat of alienation. He calls this common, populist register *das Man*, the term which has somewhat awkwardly been translated into the "they". It is perhaps what in English is designated as "one", the assumed totality of opinions, the general

outlook which one can only refer to at the expense of a particular subject speaking. Dasein is lost in the chatter of all, sucked in by the estranged character of all-speaking. It thus fails to listen to the possibilities that are offered it existentially, that is to say as ek-sist or stand out of the “they” of the public voice. It is this singularity that is in question for Heidegger, a singularity of Dasein as alienated from itself, as lost in the self of the Other, in the one of the Other. Dasein, which always already is a potentiality-for-Being-its-Self, must find itself by finding the way out of its lostness in “one”. Dasein’s singularity is a choice and a possibility it can take for itself, and this requires *attestation* in the voice of conscience. The question for us is whether these bonds of alienation, which already indicate beyond any doubt Dasein’s place in language, its being-there as being entangled in the net of signifying structure, i.e. the Other, are to be cut by way of existential analysis guiding Dasein’s steps towards the potentiality-for-Being it already is, or whether this *jouissance*, this suffering of alienation has to do with Dasein’s Being-guilty.

Heidegger’s preliminary remarks aim at, as it is done by Freud in *Civilization and its Discontents*, debunking conscience of any supra- or metaphenomenological pretences. As we shall see, the voice of conscience is employed in order to execute this separation and to provide Dasein with the means for encountering its own singularity. As a phenomenon the voice of conscience has its structural foundations in Dasein. Not only is the phenomenon of conscience related to *hearing* - or subsequently to Dasein’s failure to “hear its own Self in listening to the “one-self”<sup>4</sup> - which is why Heidegger speaks of it as an appeal, a call [*Ruf*], but also this appeal is revealed in “wanting to have conscience”. Before the voice is actually heard, not that it says anything, anything in particular, or anything oracular, it is wanted, desired as that which is missing in the world of empty talk. This desire to have conscience, this lack-of-conscience accounts for Dasein’s choices, its “choosing” called *resoluteness* [*Entschlossenheit*]. It would seem that in so far as discourse is constituted by calling of conscience, desire to have conscience is generated by this call, this voice as lack. If Heidegger contests the “lack”, what I called the lack-of-conscience, it is because he chooses to relegate conscience to a different ontological species than what is present-at-hand, what on occasion becomes manifest as conscience. For Heidegger then it is not a lack-of-conscience in the first place that founds Dasein as guilty. It is rather Being-guilty that provides Dasein with the possibility of conscience.

If in the discourse the subject is nevertheless in the position of being guilty, it is

because, Heidegger says, this Being-guilty is a primordial reference, a “position” to be summoned into if one is to bring oneself back from the “lostness in the ‘one’”. Despite this denial to approach guilt as a lack, a division of the subject, a subject divided between the voice and the locus of the Other, we shall soon see, that the lack as barred subject is situated in the heart of the call; desire to have conscience is caused by the lack, by the lack as voice standing for the missing object.

We could say from this perspective that desire to have conscience, which Heidegger understands as an effect of the appeal, our response to the call, is an effect of Being-guilty. Clearly, neither for Heidegger nor for Freud, should conscience be confounded with guilt. It is the fundamental guilt [*schuld*] that makes an appeal to conscience possible making its call, its voice appeal back to me. The call, the voice of conscience is what is wanted because it is what is lacking. But this allows us to stress, here and elsewhere, the function of a certain alterity which is constitutive of the very character of disclosure, shall we say the revelatory truth, of conscience. This alterity, whose space Lacan divided between the imaginary other and the symbolic site of the Big Other, as we have discussed it, remains for Heidegger located in the other voice, be it the common or the singular, in what calls in the voice, in the appeal made from the beginning.

To the extent that the voice discloses the site of speech, it involves the Other, which Heidegger always treats marginally as if the so called “self” [*das Selbst*] was not always already a sign of the Other.<sup>5</sup> The alterity of the voice, as for example commented on by Agamben, and I will come back to this, is what allows, I would even say precedes, Dasein’s orientation as potentiality-for-Being, its *Seinkönnen*. If the voice of conscience “gives us ‘something’ to understand”,<sup>6</sup> as Heidegger keeps saying, it is because in the calling of the voice there already resounds an ambiguity which for Heidegger at least renders its locus, namely the Other whole and complete. It is only on the basis of such complete Other that the call, and the summons to the self in the midst of repetition as empty talk, can be heard.

The voice then, even if it does not say anything in particular, does not voice some secrets or truths, acquires a status similar to the one it had for Kant. It appears like a signifier informing Dasein of its singularity and potentiality. Once the fundamental guilt has been acknowledged, the voice of conscience, saying nothing in particular, addresses and imposes itself on the subject in the form of a certain imperative. After all for Heidegger the



voice of conscience is identified with what Dasein always already is. Thus just as for Kant, as Miller remarked in his commentary on Lacan's *Kant avec Sade*, the voice is a part of the subject, so for Heidegger the voice of conscience is a part of Dasein.<sup>7</sup> Miller also notes that in Kant the voice has a status of a remainder, that "the voice appears at the very moment that it makes the object disappear. What remains is the voice of conscience, a voice which has something of a signifier about it because it is a voice with a formulation, a voice that says something".<sup>8</sup> In Heidegger's analysis the situation changes, to which I will come back later, since the voice has nothing to say and remains silent. That is why, as I will also try to stress, for Heidegger, unlike for Kant, the voice does not have a character of a moral imperative but of a somewhat "magical" and salvational agent to which the subject tries to appeal rather is appealed to.

The "lostness" of Dasein in the *vox populi* and the tacit promise of the individuating voice of conscience as a *remainder of the Other* of language constitute a consistent whole, a certain totality. And yet, in this supposed totality, as we learn from Heidegger, the voice is not at all "given" or ready-to-hand but is desired and therefore lacking.

This amounts to nothing else but postulating a division of the subject which is always severed from the object because the latter, as a remainder, does not belong to the subject or to the Other. On the contrary the object, *objet a*, is a scission that is unrepresentable *as* scission. Should we not cut in here by reintroducing a distinction that underlies Lacan's whole teaching to the extent that it articulates the division of the subject in relation to the lost object as desired? Although the division of the subject as one of Lacan's chief motifs runs across his entire opus, and I have already referred to some of its instances, this time I propose to take up briefly a passage from *Seminar XI*:

What I, Lacan, following the traces of the Freudian excavation, am telling you is that the subject as such is uncertain because he is divided by the effects of language. Through the effects of speech, the subject always realises himself more in the Other, but he is already pursuing there more than half of himself. He will simply find his desire ever more divided, pulverised, in the circumscribable metonymy of speech. The effects of language are always mixed with the fact, which is the basis of the analytic experience, that the subject is subject only from being subjected to the field of the Other. the subject proceeds from his synchronic subjection in the field of the Other. That is why he must get out, get himself out, and in the *getting-himself-out*, in the end, he will know that the real Other has, just as much as himself, to get himself out, to pull himself free [*B s'en dépatouiller*].<sup>9</sup>

The division of the subject between *jouissance* and the signifier, between the prohibited, impossible, unspeakable *jouissance* and the signifier or, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, between the enunciation and the statement, is here given voice in the first person. Is it necessary to confirm that it is only when speaking as subject, taking my position as subject, that such division comes into play, that it plays out the impossible difference between what I say and what I enunciate? It is therefore not by accident that when speaking about the effect of the subject speaking in the field of the Other Lacan speaks as I. What then is at stake in such a position has precisely to do with the absent object to the extent that in the metonymy of desire it is lacking. How does the subject “get-himself-out” of the attachment that like a mirage of Being holds its pretences tied up with the Other that grows beyond fiction?

When speaking about wanting-to-have-conscience, Heidegger already testifies to this lack, even if he does not say so, even if he places desire-to-have-voice outside the opposition to the lack: “in existence”, Heidegger says, “there can be nothing lacking, not because it would then be perfect, but because its character of Being remains distinct from any presence-at-hand”.<sup>10</sup> But to exclude the lack at the level of discourse is to exclude the division between the unspeakable real and the subject as divided in this manner. And it is precisely this denial that Lacan calls exclusion of the real by philosophers, whereas Miller accuses the philosopher, Heidegger, of guilt and silence about his *jouissance*.<sup>11</sup>

This lack, as manifested at the level of the voice of conscience, is thus assigned a place of presence-at-hand which is always superficial for Heidegger and not without traces of inauthenticity as the popular voice.<sup>12</sup> Since we should not give any serious consideration to the lack of object at the level of presence-at-hand, we ought to disregard the lack where the ontological primordially of Being-guilty is readily decided. In fact, to understand *schuld* as in anyway related to the lack, as he says on the previous page, is, again, to misconstrue it or misunderstand it or, at best, to situate it falsely where there is “nothing lacking”. This “nothing lacking” will be later linked by Heidegger with “indebtedness” not as an effect of the loss of the object, say voice, but as an ontological condition of all indebtedness and all, as Miller calls them, “at-fault” or “in-debt” called *Schuldigsein*.<sup>13</sup>

When we pursue Heidegger’s division between presence-at-hand, where the lack appears as not present-at-hand, and therefore in some way commonly confused, and the fundamental dimension of Being-guilty where there is “nothing lacking”, we will soon

notice that this enables Heidegger to situate the voice of conscience as already incorporated in Dasein before hand. This principle of the voice being identified with Dasein, being already Dasein's essence or, as Heidegger says, that which both calls and is called in it, should not lead us to confuse the call with the statement as constituted in the signifying chain and which involves the order of speech.<sup>14</sup> In other words, what Heidegger tries to clarify, as if distinguishing himself from Kant, is the fact that the voice standing for the lack of object is not a signifier. This distinction, already pondered by Augustine, is significant given Heidegger's insistence on the enigmatic silence of the voice which only "gives to understand".

In analysing the nature of the voice from Augustine through the grammarians of the Middle Ages to *Being and Time* and beyond, Agamben posits a theory in which the voice is neither a sound nor meaning. And although on this basis the *vox* cannot be situated either in the order of writing or in the order of speech, it nevertheless has, as Heidegger attempts to demonstrate, a contribution to make. It seems to me that this "contribution", this participation of the voice lies in Lacan's situating it in the place of the missing object. Characteristically, Agamben's learned study ontologises the voice by resurrecting the illusion of unity between "intention" and "object", or at least gives this relation an ontological status. This will be effected by the necessity to remove the voice in order to render discourse meaningful, and will thus establish a link between *vouloir-dire* and meaning leading to an emergence of the "other Voice" which he calls "human language". Agamben describes:

an experience of the word in which it is no longer mere sound [*istas tres syllabas*] and not yet meaning, but *the pure intention to signify*. [...] The intention to signify without a signified corresponds, in fact, not to logical understanding, but to the desire for knowledge. [...] (Here it is important to note that the place of this experience that reveals the *vox* in its originary purity as meaning [*voler-dire*] is a *dead word: temetum*.)<sup>15</sup>

This, we should add, is a comment on the question raised by Augustine who asks:

Suppose someone hears the word *temetum*, and in his ignorance asks what it means. He must, therefore, already know that it is a sign, namely, that it is not a mere word, but that it signifies something. [...] If anyone, therefore, applies himself with ardent diligence to know, and inflamed with this zeal continues this search, can he be said to be without love? What, then, does he love? For certainly something cannot be loved unless it is known.<sup>16</sup>

Certainly this connection between *jouissance* and love is not without significance with relation to conscience and guilt, as we shall see more clearly when we come to Freud. It is this desire for meaning, exhilarated by the search of object - and always “successful” to the extent that it unfolds a signifying chain within which another signifier, say *te-me-tum* has emerged - that constitutes for Lacan the metonymical desire of an object that is always displaced because its “meaning”, its wanting-to-say is always elsewhere, just as its being is always elsewhere, that is to say, it is *not* where meaning as an enjoyed-sense is. For Heidegger, by contrast, the always displaced object - what Agamben refers to as voice and Augustine as that which is loved as known - or simply a quantum of *jouis-sense* and being constitute the impossible liaison outside the law. Such is the basis and the condition, but not necessarily the status of, for his taking up of Being-guilty, or indeed “the idea of guilt”, as situated outside law conceived as obligation, indebtedment. In other words, guilt must be placed outside the dialectic of compliance/breach, obligation/repayment in order for the voice to become active as silent and yet as *complementary* to Being-guilty.

This underlying *principle of complementarity* is thus given the same status Agamben gives to the *other Voice*. The other voice is nothing more and nothing less than *wanting-to-say* or a desire to speak whose singularity Dasein must find amidst its own possibilities. The only one it does not find, the only one it *supposes* as subject to know is its impossibility, the hole in Being. Desire to signify is the “origin” of Heidegger’s “wanting-to-have-(voice of)-conscience” which is based on the lack of the subject as Lacan developed it. Lacan linked metonymical construction in language with *wanting-to-be*, which is enigmatic to the extent that the lack of being, *manque-B-Atre*, has its source in the lack of the voice, the *other* voice to be specific, which neither says it all nor makes sense of it all.

Although the voice can only be assumed by the divided subject in the first person, it must also, by the same stroke, be removed or dropped as *jouissance* for separation to take place. Thus it is an ambiguous presence/absence of the voice that enables me to assume a voice that is both mine, to the extent that I speak knowing not what I love, and not mine in so far as it is always already another “voice” standing for the lack of the object, that only wants to speak not knowing of the sense to come. And could we not say that the silence of the voice is above all the silence of sense to the extent that its displacement reveals it as non-sense? This is what happens in analysis. The voice comes before sense but is missing

when the sense is made, that is to say when sense of assumed knowledge resonates in nonsense.

Silence of the voice is what Heidegger refers to emphatically at least twice in sections 56 and 60. The voice of conscience calls only in silence, it “gives to understand” as the other calling and it calls “back *into reticence of his existent* potentiality-for-Being”.<sup>17</sup> The call “comes from the soundlessness of uncanniness [*unheimlichkeit*]”.<sup>18</sup> Heidegger marks this moment of disclosure as “an abrupt arousal [*abgesetzten Aufrüttelns*]”. The call is from afar unto afar. It reaches him who wants to be brought back”.<sup>19</sup> Back where? On the one hand to the reticence of not-all, and on the other hand to the “original” Being-whole. And such aspiration would no doubt mark one of the moments that has been characterised in Heidegger’s work as “nostalgic”. How does this desire return to face up to the repetitive character of the empty speech in which the lack is always covered by wanting to have conscience?

To do justice to answer this question we should not hesitate to make a psychoanalytical intervention at the level where it is discarded by Heidegger in advance, and perhaps somewhat intuitively,<sup>20</sup> as ‘they’ always take on board what in covering the lack, the lack of the voice of conscience, insists on retaining a relation with the complete Other, and simply takes on a form of enjoyed suffering, namely *jouissance*. Thus when Heidegger repudiates in a number of places the psychological “Self which one has in mind when one gazes ‘analytically’ at psychical conditions and what lies behind them”,<sup>21</sup> we will take these “psychical conditions” as nothing but language conditions given in the discourse of the Other as Lacan outlined them. The call, despite its uncanny silence, can be situated in discourse as precisely that which the delusional elements, of which Heidegger speaks below on the same page, burst out in the form of hallucination, or what he calls getting “drawn by the one-self into a soliloquy in which causes get pleaded, and it [the call] becomes perverted in its tendency to disclose”.<sup>22</sup> That is why we must ask how this call appeals to Dasein, and how in this appeal does it plead, given that it calls upon Dasein’s authentic possibilities. What then is the relation between the desire to have conscience, the call for identification with the father, and conscience’s disclosure, how does this disclosure avoid a catastrophe of hallucination in which the real speaks deliriously outside the subject?

How does the voice of conscience participate in the silent discourse? Three things

are worth stressing in Heidegger's elaboration at this point. Firstly, the call always comes from the outside, "*from me and yet from beyond me [übermich]*". Secondly, the caller and the one to whom the appeal is made are present simultaneously, and thirdly, the character of the call has nothing to do with the predictable, expectable or intentional. The call surprises me, for it comes from elsewhere. By coming from beyond me, it appears as foreign in the midst of familiarity. We would be prepared to take Heideggerian phenomenological description as no less surprising were it not for the fact that something else happens in this surprising call. For is it not the case that what strikes us, us who read not only Heidegger, in his use of the term *übermich* is precisely its somewhat uncanny resemblance, in the way in which I have referred to it throughout this work as psychogrammatic, to the Freudian term of *ÜberIch* with which we are going to acquaint ourselves later. It is this familiarity which strikes us as uncanny when we least expected it, when it takes us unawares to the "other Heidegger".

This familiarity - of what for Augustine is both known and loved and yet senseless - anguishing to the extent that it imposes itself on our ears unawares confirms the alienating relation within the structure of Dasein. Dasein, in so far as it wants to separate itself from the *vox populi*, is alienated. What appears "beyond me", beyond our expectations as narrated in Heidegger's statements, is a link between the symbolical term and *jouissance* that is forbidden [*interdit*] as such, a link that I do not wish to overemphasise here but merely note, following Freud and Lacan, that what is most foreign, uncanny and unexpected is also that which is nearest, next to me, and which does not cease to concern Heidegger, both sexually and politically, namely *Nebenmensch*.

What Heidegger calls "the voice of conscience", and what merely conceptually echoes desire-to-have-conscience, already has, in terms of discourse, an alienating character, for Dasein is merely a possibility, revealed in the anticipation of death, of a "reality" distinct from what is vulgar or common, namely the generalised discourse. This "reality" of the voice of conscience, this "from me yet beyond me" also confirms for us the fundamental division, manifested as a difference between statement and enunciation. It confirms the presence of what is absent and what for Heidegger is nevertheless desired in the way in which I have called, in a note above, *salvational*. After all, the voice of conscience as that which testifies to Dasein's ownmost potentiality is supposed to disclose, that is to say to differentiate. That is what Heidegger insists on. But it will not do so unless

“wanting-to-have-conscience” has come to a realisation in which the call could be heard, that is to say given to understand. The voice of conscience is what authenticates and individuates the anxious Dasein giving it to understand its singular possibility.

On another level, the alleged “reality” of silent conscience also acknowledges for us the significance of the second topographical structure, as constructed by Freud, in which he designates to the voice a place in which the “parental medium” has found its successor, its internal heir so to speak, that confirms dissolution of the Oedipal relations. Does Heidegger’s voice of conscience have then the same status of an agency, or a judicial instance, that provides Dasein with the possibility of separating from the common *vox populi* in favour of its singular aspirations? And if so, can the voice be regarded as an internal part of the structure of Dasein, especially that desire to have conscience most evidently indicates that the voice is not identical with the subject, but indeed divides the subject in relation to the Other as the locus from which it speaks?

And this brings me to an already promised moment of interjection in Heidegger’s analysis. In this respect, I will echo some of the keypoints in Freud’s analysis of conscience and guilt as he elaborated them in section VII of *Civilisation and Its Discontents*. The term “home” and “unhomely”, and indirectly “homeless”, returns to us in the title Freud gives to his seminal work. *Unbehagen*, feeling unhomely, discomforted at home already indicates the type of relation in which Dasein is involved with that which is common, vulgar, the empty chatter as heard in the vicinity, in the neighbourhood of our home or, indeed, at home. This theme of alienation, which runs throughout Freud’s exposition, will be taken up by him not only in terms of the relation between the subject and *jouissance* as both excluded from the subject and as enjoyed by the subject as *jouissance* of the Other but also as attesting to what Lacan called “Freudian ethics”.

The views Freud develops in *Civilisation and Its Discontents* could be regarded as two sets, not unrelated as we shall see, representing topographical and economical perspectives. According to the former, but in the most economical way, conscience is defined as the turn of the superego against the ego which demands punishment. Following from this, guilt is viewed by Freud as a conflict or tension (Freud does not say “clash” or “combat”) between the critical agency of the superego and the ego. The development of conscience as a part of the ego turning against the other part, what we have already encountered in melancholia, could therefore be regarded as preceding what Freud calls

“the sense of guilt [*Schuldbewusstsein*]”.<sup>23</sup>

This leads Freud to take a broader view. Does guilt relate to a particular deed - the question also posed by Heidegger - or is guilt an integral part of the structure of unconscious desire? And if an intention to commit a bad deed already contributes to guilt, how would bad actions qualify as “bad” if they were not committed? In Seminar on Ethics, Lacan reflects on the “bad” deed of Antigone, who buried the body of her brother “against” the decree forbidding her to do so, and contrasts her action with the conservative position of Creon. Antigone is driven by desire which has a force of law in so far as it is an enactment of desire of the Other, and pays with life for disobeying the law as represented by Creon. Creon, by contrast, is driven by guilt which, according to Lacan’s formulation is “giving ground relative to one’s desire” [*céder sur son désir*].<sup>24</sup> In other words, to be guilty is to cede one’s desire on another. It is this *céder sur* that resonates in Freud’s account, remaining muffled in Heidegger’s, for what is at stake in guilt is precisely the subject’s relation to the Other in the sense of an assumption of metonymic desire in relation to the lack for which stands the object, for instance a voice.

As if following Nietzsche, whose genealogy of “good and evil” already paved the way beyond the classical frameworks of morality, Freud’s analysis attempts to reformulate the relation between the subject and the Other. From this perspective, “bad” is no longer considered as compliant with Aristotle’s ethics of “pleasure and good” (“good for whom?”, Lacan asks in relation to Antigone), for, if we followed Aristotle’s criteria, we would soon discover that what is harmful and unpleasant is not necessarily to be identified with “bad” or “evil”. We are all too familiar with the contemporary “hero” portrayed as a film character who says: “I am bad but it feels good”. What is unpleasant can doubtless be enjoyed and - whatever may be the case of the ancient, or medieval (think of chapter 2 of Augustine’s *Confessions*), writers - this is perhaps the sense, the enjoyed-sense, both Freud and Lacan render of what, as it seems, Kant and Heidegger, left unproblematized. As Miller stresses, and as we have said above, the philosophers have always been silent about their *jouissance*, and it is in this silence that one can trace the roots of their guilt, their symptom. Well, yes and no, for it is not at the level of concepts that guilt could await a problematization notoriously bypassed by the philosophers but at the level of the relation between the signifier and enjoyment its repetition generates. Since this leaves us in the order of the drive-satisfaction where *jouissance* is preserved rather than abandoned, the



problem of desire, which touches upon the lack of being, remains untouched.

For Freud the sources of what is called “bad” should be sought in the subject’s fear for the loss of love. It is this fear of loss of the love-object that solicits punishment. Unlike in melancholia, where the shadow of loss envelops the subject, guilt enables the subject to anticipate, in the way in which for Heidegger Dasein anticipates death, the loss by projecting it, and makes up for its possibility by building what would appear as a kind of *substitutive protection* of self-punishment, which is how the symptom is constituted:

At the beginning, therefore, what is bad is whatever causes one to be threatened with loss of love. For fear of that loss, one must avoid it. This too is the reason why it makes little difference whether one has already done the bad thing or only intends to do it. In either case the danger only sets in if and when the authority discovers it, and in either case the authority would behave in the same way<sup>25</sup>.

If this were to suggest that “at the beginning was love”, the problem of *jouissance* would immediately come to the fore as the stake and price in such a fantasy as articulated by the subject in relation to the lacking object. Hence Lacan’s insistence, and modification, in response to the prophets who promote love as preceding the order of language, on the primacy of the letter as a material for structuring the subject’s relation to *jouissance*. Leclaire remarks that the division concerning the subject could precisely be taken as a breach between the letter and *jouissance*. In commenting on the traps of the death drive he proposes that *jouissance* as the real and the letter as a symbolic mark of the body engender each other reciprocally to the extent that *jouissance* as such, the pure interval, the “pure difference” is prohibited or interdicted, the latter term showing perhaps with more precision, as I have already articulated, the impossibility of uttering the difference in the signifying order, the “forbidden saying” or the “intersaid”.<sup>26</sup> It is in relation to *jouissance* then that we should seek the origins of alienation to the extent that what this alienation involves, whether for Lacan or Heidegger, is the imaginary material, be it gaze or voice, that fails to cement the symbolic gap.

If the authority always has, whether from “outside” or “inside”, the same effect on the subject rousing him to guilt, the question is posed why Freud stresses the distinction between the two origins of guilt, “one arising from fear of an authority, and the other, later on, arising from fear of the super-ego”.<sup>27</sup> The answer has to do with the fact that Freud situates the super-ego in the developmental order and thus perhaps underestimates its status in the unconscious structure, especially its status in relation to the law and language.

The fear of loss of love implies that some of the libidinal satisfactions have to be given up. Freud points out that if such renunciation, which is also involved in repression, were the sole cause of guilt in subject's relation to the authority, then the accounts would soon be settled, the debt paid off, and no guilt would remain, let alone the fact that love would be assured and the Other guaranteed. With the arrival of the super-ego, however, things become more complicated and the question arises: why does the sense of guilt linger on despite the fact that some of the drive-satisfactions have been jettisoned?

This is how Freud prepares us for the return of one of the chief motifs in his work. I am referring here to his theory of the death drive whose early version, starting with Narcissism, as I pointed out in chapter 1, he re-elaborates in *Civilisation*. Secondly, the answer to the question above reinvites, if only briefly, the theme, also already discussed, namely the work of identification. It is identification with the castrating father that allows for the formation of the super-ego whose formation comes down to a deployment of the Other of law in the structure of desire. Finally, it is a question of *jouissance* with which Freud will have to deal in a more decisive way. Indeed, the renunciation of drive-satisfactions, and subsequently the practice of temperance and virtue, that underlined Aristotelian *ethos* and religious *ascesis*, is not only insufficient to lift guilt but also amplifies its imaginary resonances.

To repeat then the rudimentary fact from Freud's second topography, let us state that the deployment of the super-ego, the second theory of origin of the sense of guilt, is directly dependent on the identification with the father. We also recall how Freud created the myth of the primal or real father who had unrestrained access to women's *jouissance*, less likely to love, and was eventually killed by his sons. The myth of the real father, as Freud discusses it in *Totem and Taboo*, served in a twofold way to represent the order of fiction in the unconscious structure but, which is more important, this did not happen without a relation to the real. The legacy of guilt has therefore two sources, the myth and the dynamic development, which converge upon structure and castration that renders the structure, namely the symbolic Other incomplete. Although guilt is not suffered in mythical terms, no longer suffered in relation to feeling guilty for committing a particular deed (to which Freud gives a specific term *Reue* [remorse or repentance]), and which bears some resemblance to Heidegger's position, and no longer suffered in relation to external authority (Freud's first theory of origin of guilt), it is suffered *and* enjoyed in subject's

identification with the father, for such identification can only be consummated, and super-ego installed, in the symbolical murder of the Big Castrator that does not exist. Once the Oedipus complex has been dissolved, and once conscience, the voice of conscience, has been assumed as a substitute for the killed father, the renunciation of drive-satisfaction has not, as we have said above, diminished but increased. Thus, with *ÜberIch* becoming situated both within me and outside me “every renunciation of drive now becomes a dynamic source of conscience and every fresh renunciation increases the latter’s severity and intolerance”.<sup>28</sup>

How are we to understand this “renunciation of drive” if not as a giving in of desire to the imaginary other and its deadly force, which is how Lacan speaks of it in *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*? How else could we conceive of renunciation if not on the basis of procuring an alienating ideal in the name of which this renunciation could be executed and enjoyed, and which would only require, as in the case of Heidegger’s *vox populi*, further renunciation on the side of the subject thus divided or barred? The myth of the (real) father is valuable not only because it presents us with the work of symbolical fiction as generated between the letter and masochistic *jouissance* (punishment/enjoyment) but also because it stresses another important strand in the work of identification, and in the work of Freud, namely that of ambivalence of love and hatred. This would perhaps be Freud’s “solution”. To the extent that love is inseparable from castration anxiety, hatred satisfies the drive, the death drive operating at the heart of the super-ego, to the point at which aggressive action, whether it is called bad or not, is directed against the imaginary constructions of the ego. Hence love, which plays a crucial part in identification, always has a counterpart in hatred which unleashes aggressivity, as developed by Lacan, towards the other. When the metaphor, namely a symptomatic satisfaction of the drive fails to cheat the super-ego the latter retaliates and guilt ensues. That is why, as Freud always stressed, love and guilt are of similar breed, for to the extent that they rely on *jouissance* what gives their rise is anxiety. And this would point to Freud’s final theory of the drive, namely Eros and Thanatos as two opposing forces sustained in the *jouissance* of repetition.

With Freud’s markers of conscience and guilt as fear of loss of love, need for punishment, renunciation of drive-satisfactions, identification with father and ambivalence of love/hatred, we can now return to the “other Heidegger” only to reiterate the question about the origins of alienation of Dasein. This also implies that we reiterate the conditions

that allow him to question, ontologically, the “phenomenon of guilt which is not necessarily related to ‘having debts’ and law-breaking”. For as Heidegger insists

The idea of guilt must not only be raised above the domain of that concern in which we reckon things up, but it must also be detached from relationship to any law or ‘ought’ such that by failing to comply with it one loads himself with guilt.<sup>29</sup>

In other words, the formulation of guilt requires a renunciation of the common interpretation according to which the dialectic of guilt is bound to come into collision with Law, and be implicated in the relation with another. But what is this “common interpretation”, this vacuous chatter, or the *vox populi* from which Dasein, as entangled and perhaps ensnared, must separate itself to achieve its “goal” of potentiality-for-Being? What is this primordial Being-guilty *outside* law and debt, if not a solidified denouncement of what already constitutes one of the most crucial terms in Freudian ethics, namely *neighbour*? Is this perhaps how the real father of enjoyment of the Freudian myth makes its ghostly appearance in Heidegger’s work?

It is to the common voice, the imaginary other as Lacan distinguished it, that Heidegger opposes his existential analysis of the call of conscience. Its function is not only to address Dasein’s potentiality-for-Being, i.e. to address its own understanding of itself as Being-guilty, but also to ensure that we are “free from indebtednesses” that always refers to a particular deed. Freedom, however, is not a state but an impulse whose function, as Freud outlined it, is always directed at the persecutory ghost of the real father who is dead, or, from a slightly different angle, at the one-like-me, my neighbour.

Let’s explore it a bit further. If there is indeed a resemblance between Heidegger’s existential analysis and Freud’s analysis on the point of origin of guilt with relation, or without a relation, to a particular deed, there is also a distinction we should bring to the fore. For in so far as Freud’s concern lies with subject’s desire and the Other of law, and therefore includes the problematic of debt, obligation and fault, Heidegger’s attempt is oriented towards silencing of the fantasmatic creditor as a remainder of guilt, as deriving from a particular action, on the basis of the ontological Being-guilty. We will never hear from him about the genesis of “wanting-to-have-conscience” which would “call forth to Being-guilty, as something to be seized upon in one’s own existence, so that authentic existentiell *Being-guilty*”<sup>30</sup> would disclose Dasein’s Being. We will hear instead about

renunciation of *jouissance* as debt, that, as Freud observed, fails to lift guilt and plunges the subject even further into anguishing tussles with its alienation. It is this lack-of-enjoyment that, according to Freud's schema, makes him into a saint of ontological virtue. Not only does this renunciation of debt not acquit him of being implicated in "ontological patricide", but it also makes him guilty, i.e. indebted at the level which he wishes to set free from "vulgar" interpretations of conscience and, therefore, from libidinal relations or simply exchanges of signifiers of which one, the phallic one, the one of the desire of the Other, is missing. That is why Miller says that for the philosopher of Being the Other is "consistent". But the subject has no access to the Other except for the bar or lack, which is how the signifying exchange functions. Leclaire, too, in discussing a clinical case, sums up the relation of debt, to debt, as a fiasco of imaginary construct to which Heidegger's testimony bears fruit:

We live in a situation of insolvency: our conscience urges us to pay off our debts, while our unconscious gives us evidence that we cannot free ourselves from them for lack of an identifiable creditor. The story never ends. The account is never closed. Nothing will enable us to settle up with the missing creditor. Say what you like about the death of God, having killed father and mother and done away with the tyrant we are still burdened with an account to settle. But with whom?<sup>31</sup>

If Dasein is fundamentally guilty, this guilt, to which the voice of conscience testifies, should not, according to Heidegger, be understood in the ordinary sense of "being responsible for",<sup>32</sup> which merely refers to the common interpretation of conscience, but in an essential manner of Being-guilty, the term being discussed especially in sections 58 and 60 of *Being and Time*. The "essential" means here "primordial", namely that which precedes all interpretations as they are given in a present-at-hand manner, and which in this instance includes that of the debt to the "missing creditor":

the 'summons to Being-guilty' signifies a calling-forth to that potentiality-for-Being which in each case I as Dasein am already. Dasein need not first load a 'guilt' upon itself through its failures or omissions; it must only *be* 'guilty' *authentically* - 'guilty' in the way in which it is.<sup>33</sup>

Nor will we hear from Heidegger what "'guilty' *authentically*" implies, what the "properly own" [*eigentlich*] guilt is subject to save Being as such. No "failures or omissions" or lack are necessary for consideration of *schuldig*. This crucial passage in section 59 echoes in a distance Nietzsche's genealogy of *Schuld* in terms of the relation of debit and credit, and

shows that the German term *Schuld* or *schuldig* appears as far less enigmatic than the English *guilt*. But this does not mean that Heidegger dispenses, or wants to dispense, with the signifying weight that *Schuld* or *schuldig* carries for him. It does not mean that he dispenses with debts, that he pays them in advance, that he does not owe to the Other, or that having dispensed with the “vulgar interpretation” he is in any way in the position to disregard “the debt of *jouissance*” and its possible reimbursement.<sup>34</sup>

If by saying that “Being-guilty as *having debts* is a way of Being with Others in the field of concern”,<sup>35</sup> Heidegger persistently refuses to take up his analysis of guilt as a debt in relation to the Other - the complete Other to which nothing can be owed save *everything* - this is precisely how it would be possible to follow Heidegger’s inquiry, as a symptom of the desire of the Other, from which the debt to the Other emerges as formed in effect of a certain refusal, a refusal of the loss, for which he can only substitute the ontological, i.e. the *jouissance* of being or a failure of love. But is it a failure or a fear of loss (of love, of the other of love)? There is not much difference between the two, for the relation of lack, privation, theft, borrowing, infringement or owing are taken to mean something “present-at-hand”, i.e. are within reach of consciousness. That is why, as Freud says, guilt is always an “unconscious feeling of guilt”, what on the conscious level appears as remorse [*Reue*]. Does not Heidegger’s analysis appear at times as an attempt to empty the remorse or repentance precisely of the kind of traces of subjectal singularity that he then wishes to assign to every Dasein?

Heidegger is at pains to enumerate all the “inauthentic” instances of guilt that merely muddy the waters of pristine primordially of Being-guilty that remains reticent, nonrelational, “for the most part undisclosed” and “more primordial than any *knowledge* about it”.<sup>36</sup> Now, this is more or less where Freud started, although he did not refrain from pursuing it at the level where the guarantee of the Other takes on a form of a punishing super-ego, *ÜberIch*. we recall. For Freud this “basis of Being”, this “for most part undisclosed” state *reveals*, partly at least, the inexistence of the Other in the form of a persecutory voice of the superego.

Thus for Heidegger conscience, a voice of conscience makes itself heard - and implicates the subject in the production of discourse, i.e. statements, where the voice is *not* voiced, can only be voiced elsewhere as enunciation - when guilt is established as primordial dimension of Dasein, namely as successfully separated from “its lostness in the

‘one’”:

Conscience is the call of care from the uncanniness of Being-in-the-world - the call which summons Dasein to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being-guilty. And corresponding to this call, wanting-to-have-conscience has emerged as the way in which the appeal is understood. These two definitions cannot be brought into harmony at once with the ordinary [*Vulgär*] interpretation of conscience. Indeed they seem to be in direct conflict with it. We call this interpretation of conscience the ‘ordinary’ one [*Vulgär*] because in characterising this phenomenon and describing its ‘function’, it sticks to what ‘they’ know as the conscience, and how ‘they’ follow it or fail to follow it.<sup>7</sup>

The call of care is the response to the other to which, because of the call, something is owed, even if there is no one to pay it back to. The debt to this impossible creditor constitutes an impossible debt, which is not to say that Heidegger does not struggle with it, does not try to situate it outside law, does not try to close the loop in, emerging from the call of Dasein, on the kind of potentiality-for-Being that is called “Being-guilty”. Not only does bringing of these definitions in the face of vulgar interpretation fall short of “harmony”, but also the ensuing conflict, the disharmony or discontinuity, on the level of discourse, between the barred subject and the lack of the Other, is to be avoided in favour of working out the authentic relation between Dasein and its potentiality-for-Being-Self. But this relation is precisely what betrays, what reveals the relation of indebtedment, that is to say “the debt of *jouissance*”. For *Schuldigsein* is no other but a signifier that carries, as I have said above, the signifying weight and the Other that marks it, and, therefore, an excess that cannot be disposed of save situating it in relation to that which allows for Heideggerian considerations of the conflictual dialectic between the vulgar and the existential, the *neighbour* and the lack of *jouissance* that Dasein experiences. The testimony of the voice of conscience, or what could now be called the voice of the other (“it comes *from* me and yet *from beyond me*”), is what for Heidegger comes to supplement, as a *lack* of conscience, or, what Lacan called the lack of being. And this supplement or supplementation orients the whole of Heidegger’s meditation on conscience and guilt around the question of indebtedment to the Other. What we still need to define, and what will bring us to the end of this work, is the terms in which this Being-indebted takes place, and how the symbolic register comes to play such a significant role in Heidegger’s attempt to resist to make a payment *outside* the dialectic of guilt that such a resistance nevertheless reveals.

Pursuing the question why Dasein, as thrown into the world and wanting-to-have-

conscience is essentially guilty, indicates that, as Miller notes, it lacks possibilities, that its existence in the anticipation of death bears all the marks of *debt* and *fault*, and therefore of the Other. That is why Heidegger's appeal to conscience, to the voice of conscience as that which calls as desire to have conscience in the face of the alienating *vox populi*, has to be considered as marked by the *salvational trait* Heidegger seems to attribute to the call. The voice of conscience brings and gives to understand cutting loose him who, lost in the midst of neighbours speaking all alike, wants to be brought back, we assume, to himself, or to the Self [*das Selbst*], or saved from the generalised likeness of those who surround me, as the core or cradle of Dasein's ownmost potentiality-for-Being-whole, and *therefore* to the Other and its *jouissances*. Could we not take this appeal as an appeal to the real, that real, obscene, shameless and "perverse" father who, were it not for the fact of his mythical existence, would occupy just that primordial position Heidegger designed for him, i.e. the ontological place of *Schuldigsein* prior to, and outside of, any relation to law, sin, murder, indebtedment, infringement, guilt or shame? How can this primordial being be subject to any obligation or responsibility if the relation of debt, obligation (drive) and responsibility preserves this *Schuld* in the heart of the dialectic it wants to avoid? Is not Heidegger's attempt to salvage some predialectical real *as* a symbolical articulation of *Schuldigsein* a reformulation of Freud's myth of a general fornicator?

To have conscience would no doubt have a liberating power, as the renunciation of the drive-satisfactions did for Freud, to give Dasein back to its authenticity, give it the singularity it has always already lost. But how are we to consider this authenticating, to the extent that it is anxious and death-facing, voice of conscience, given that, as Heidegger says, it is already one of Dasein's possibilities, one of its impossibilities? How is this movement, this project Dasein undertakes towards itself to be analysed if it is grounded in the fundamental lack, namely Being-guilty or Being-in-debt?

As it is clear by now, Dasein's ownmost potentiality, as revealed to it in the truth of conscience, has to do with what Miller called "*jouissance* of Being":

*Schuldigsein* is already constituted at the level of speech whose structure entails for the subject that his being be always elsewhere, and can only at any point be inscribed in it under the form of a lack, a failure or a stumbling block. But the signifying *Schuldigsein* is placed in the essential relation to *jouissance*, which is the cash-reserve out of which "debit" and "credit" are calculated, of which *schuldig* is a precise expression. For us it is not a 'factual' or contingent indebtedment. On the contrary, this debt of *jouissance* is so necessary that it does not cease to be inscribed, so impossible that it does not cease not to be reimbursed.<sup>38</sup>



In other words, the symbolical relations which play out the ambivalence of difference between the imaginary neighbour and the real father, are illustrative of the lack - which has nothing to do with a sign of imperfection, or something that is “present-at-hand”- of *jouissance* as an *objet a*, as a necessity constituting indebtedment.

If Miller links the debt of *jouissance* [*manque-à-jouir*] of Dasein to the lack-of-being [*manque-à-être*], it is to show that the voice of conscience, the voice as desired is already linked to the lack-of-being. The voice is desired as lacking for the subject, and it is in this sense that this voice will have for Heidegger a quality of both an imperative of the caller as “*nothing* at all”, and of a liberating, even salvational agent. The promise of separating from the alienation amidst neighbours can only be solved by resorting to the possibilities of *jouissance* of Being (potentiality-for-Being) except this is precisely the very impossibility, as stressed by Miller after Lacan, namely, this *jouissance* is forbidden for the speaking subject. And further that since *jouissance* is essentially masochistic, is it not the case that the successful *jouissance* is “the *jouissance* of the one who places himself in the hands of the Other, who places back in the Other the voice with power, and the more so the less valuable the Other is”.<sup>39</sup> That is to say, the more one’s relations with the neighbour - and all that this term *neighbour* implies, i.e. not only vulgar, empty and imaginary but also sexual, ethical, political - bear the sign of alienation, the more significant and omnipotent the Other appears to be. The more the Other is *jouit* the more barred the subject is from accessing it. Since the dead father cannot be killed twice over, the question of guilt will always resurface as a satisfaction in suffering, an enjoy-meant in the philosopher’s symptom or as a problem of the drive at the centre of psychoanalysis.

That is why in Seminar *Encore*, Lacan calls ontology a “world view”. The discourse of ontology, despite an attempt to separate Dasein from its alienating other, universalises Being and stirs up its *jouissance*. By this virtue it promotes the discourse of being, the non-dialectical, the metaphysical, with every signifier that commands from the hand of being, to the level of the master of being-myself or *m’être*. The question of the master, and of the master discourse, although singular in the way in which Lacan posed it is not without a signifying value when it concerns the problems I have tried to discuss above whether in relation to Heidegger or others.<sup>40</sup> It is with respect to the place, functioning and position of the master, assumed by ontology, that Lacan asked, in a variety

of ways throughout his teaching, but here in a way that echoes the voice of Heidegger:  
“what would have been if you had understood what I ordered you to do”?<sup>41</sup>

# NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

1. Jacques Lacan - The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I (*Le stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du Je*) in *Ecrits*, p. 1-7,
2. Malcolm Bowie - *Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction* p. 106,
3. J. Lacan - *Ecrits* p. 42,
4. *ibid.*,
5. John Forrester - *The Seductions of Psychoanalysis: Freud, Lacan and Derrida* p. 171.
6. Claude Lévi-Strauss - *The Raw and the Cooked*, p. 15-16,
7. J. Lacan - *Psychoses, Seminar III*, p. 143,
8. Heidegger speaks about science in *An Introduction to Metaphysics* where he considers it to be a by-product of philosophical thinking which is “prior in rank” and stands “in a totally different and realm and order”. Science falls short of philosophy and poetry, and shows its limitations in the relation to nothingness “which” it cannot conceptually sustain (p. 26). Heidegger also criticises science for being put at a service of ideology, which, again, leaves much to be desired, considering science's failure to address being's manifestness of the essent. As a result science promotes the kind of knowledge which having emerged from the oceanic depth of metaphysical meditation, becomes useful and ready at hand (p. 107). By contrast, Lacan wants to create a science that would develop in relation to the lack, provided it can free itself from castratory claims to knowledge. In short, the science of psychoanalysis does not know the truth, the subject being placed between knowledge and truth (*La science et la vérité* in *Ecrits*, p. 855-879),
9. J. Lacan - *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* p. 20,
10. *Ecrits*, p. 147,
11. Having borrowed the formula of the sign from Saussure as represented by a unitary whole of the signifier and (over) the signified S/s, Lacan no longer gives any consideration to the sign as unit, but as the signifier barred from the signified, the acoustic representation barred from meaning.
12. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* p. 25,
13. *Ecrits*, p. 147,
14. *Ecrits*, p. 159,
15. Briefly then, two major criticisms target Lacanian structuralism as rooted in structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss. One is that structuralization runs the risk of totalization, and the other that structure represses history. Derrida attempts to counterweigh these dangers with two concepts: “the movement of *supplementarity*” and the field of *play*. In addressing Lévi-Strauss, Derrida sends a letter to Lacan: “History has always been conceived as the movement of a resumption of history, as a detour between two presences. But if it is legitimate to suspect this concept of history, there is a risk, if it is reduced without an explicit statement of the problem I am indicating here, of falling back into an ahistoricism of a classical type, that is to say, into a determined moment of the history of metaphysics” (*Writing and Difference*, p. 291). We are thus confronted with the classical example of repression, as I have said above, structuralism repressing history and temporalization which cannot

do without a certain reserve, such as play, mythography, troping. If history had a structure, it would appear to us as a slice of time that can be run through, to and fro, from beginning to end and backward, until it has been exhausted as history, that is to say, until *pure topological structure* was left in the place of history. (That would be the moment Derrida speaks of as *resumption of history*: falling back on signification of time). Such “pure structure” would be an utter and complete idiocy, a premature jubilation that closes analytic discourse, rather than reopens it, were it not for the fact that the analytic process, as focused on the structure, brings to the fore what Lacan called “rectification”. The inauguration of history in analysis, or temporalization of discourse, appears as a doubling of history that reopens the process of rectification of the subject as a structure with a crack.

16. S. Freud - *Historical and Expository Works on Psychoanalysis*, Vol.15 (Penguin Edition), p. 44,

17. A good example of such work would be Klaus Thewelheit's *Object-Choice*,

18. The question of how to read/write the absent within the present could be formulated as follows: the reading of a text is pro-voked by transference to the dead Other. This transference shifts in writing the enigmatic origin as the forgotten signifier, the writer's desire to write *it* which is the repressed voice of the reader. The reader confronts a text as a self-portrait of which he is a reflection and looks back, writing, into the mirror of the text read. The death of the author puts the reader on the look-out for the dead “author” which is the absent voice en-voked in the reading of a text. It is at the moment when we speak in the name of the other, putting, as it were, words into the mouth of the absent Other, that the writer mimetically represents the absent voice in the tapestry of reading in which no one speaks. I will come back to this remark in chapter 1. It will also be worth looking in this respect at Heidegger's reflection on the relation to the dead *Being and Time*, p. 282),

19. Freud's debt to Nietzsche is certainly incommensurable with his acknowledgment of it. In a few letters to Fliess Freud admits to Nietzsche's influence (as a very interesting study *Nietzsche's Presence in Freud's Life and Thought* by Ronald Lehrer, 1995, shows), and, somewhat defensively states in an article *On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement* that he had to deny himself the pleasure of studying Nietzsche “with the deliberate object of not being hampered in working out the impressions received in psychoanalysis by any sort of anticipatory ideas” (Vol.15, p. 73),

20. It is worth remarking that Lacan's notoriously difficult *style*, the incorrigible randomness of associations, the unceasing flow of signifiers, and heavily punned and metonymised strand of comments has nevertheless found its way into the university. Never having practised academic discourse, Lacan's work, and Blanchot's, became accommodated by the academy. This assimilation, if one can put it this way, has produced a fair amount of modification. Thus their insights have taken on a form of arguments, their Saying started reverberating as propositions studied laboriously word by word, phoneme by phoneme. It will perhaps be the very object of fascination for most of those who work in the academy, and how to have a way with writing that is unbound and unconstrained in the sense of being marked by impunity and the Other that does not exist.

21. *Ecrits*, p. 28,

22. The opportunity to give further account, which is not to say complete or exhaustive. of the *object a* (for example, its relation to the object of philosophy), will arise through our work. *Object a* is one of the most difficult, and omnipresent, Lacanian terms, like the real, and Lacan in no place gives a “comprehensive” definition of it. Close to it comes the passage at the end of *Function and Field of Speech and Language* in *Ecrits*, p.103, where Lacan seeks its definition in terms of a

child's repeated attempts to symbolically master the departure/arrival of his mother. Another passage, regarding the *Fort-Da* game, discussed by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, comes from Seminar XI, p. 66. A more general definition of the term, which I can only put forward here in a tentative manner, would be this: *object a* is a spectral transparency of the past caught in the materiality of the signifier,

23. The argument for psychoanalysis' debts to Nietzsche's insights and observations will be put forward in chapter 1,

24. Slavoj Žižek, *Metastases of Enjoyment - Six Essays on Woman and Causality* p. 31,

25. Jacques Lacan, *Ethics of psychoanalysis*, p. 70,

26. Bruce Fink, *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis* p. 189,

27. We need not necessarily resort to cogito as a truth and certainty guaranteeing agency to realize that the epistemological problem remains undecided irrespective of whether we shift the agency of knowledge from the place of the I to that of the me. Nietzsche was the first one to suggest such displacement not the only one to say that it still does not give us knowledge or truth (*On the Prejudices of Philosophers*).

28. *Ecrits*, p. 90,

29. The demand designates subject's transition from need to desire. To articulate his needs, the child enters the field of demand to realize that it cannot be satisfied (that the Other lacks) and is thus confronted with the lack which generates desire that defines *his* subjectivity,

30. *Ecrits*, p. 165-6,

31. Lacan places symptom on a par with metaphor. Symptomatisation is metaphorisation with the proviso that "if the symptom is a metaphor, it is not for a metaphor to say so" (*Ecrits*, p. 175). Elsewhere, he defines symptom as "the signifier of the signified repressed [*refoulé*] from the consciousness of the subject" (*Ecrits*, p. 69). The symptom is thus both what befalls upon the discourse of the subject, the very lapse in his/her signification, and the impossible *literality*, which gives itself to others as a displacement and substitution,

32. Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe in *The Title of the Letter* (p. 140), where the problem of symptomization/metaphorization is developed in detail. If Freud, being a symptom/metaphor of, allows to decipher the desire/truth of, Heidegger, it is because, the dual author claim(s), the reverse is also possible. This is no doubt what the work of the grammatical of the double genitive shows. Accordingly, since there is no metaphor of metaphor, Heidegger is no more desire/truth of Freud ("the *propriety* of the Freudian *letter*"), than Freud is a symptom/metaphor of Heidegger. What needs to be explored at this point is the nature of this anchorage, namely, "what is this truth about" and "what kind of reading is implicated" in this relation. Both questions point to Lacan, who commented on this work, in his Seminar XX, in the light of the function of the "subject supposed to know", namely that certain "ontological knowledge" was imputed to him; it is this presupposition that according to Lacan subsequently oriented the course of criticism by Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe.

33. The problem of the *sujet supposé savoir* and its relation to transference is considered in Seminar XI, chapter 18, p. 230-43. Elsewhere Lacan sums it up as follows: "*Un sujet ne suppose rien, il est supposé. Supposé, enseignons-nous, par le signifiant qui le représente pour un autre signifiant*" in *Proposition du 9 octobre 1967 sur le psychoanalyste de l'Ecole*,

# PART I

## CHAPTER 1

1. For Hegel this return is ascribed to the domain of the subject as "living substance", and consists in "self-restoring sameness" and "a reflection in otherness within itself". That is why the I of the subject is in the course of "simple becoming" which mediates *as* immediacy, "the immediate itself". Hegelian economy of the subject is therefore an economy of the same, for it retains itself as the subject's mediation that is nothing else but a "self-moving self-sameness". Every "becoming-other" in the process of doubling is thus contained within the self-same, in which every opposition is that of itself to itself. (G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Trans. A. V. Miller, Oxford University Press 1977, *Preface*, p. 1-45),

2. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Penguin Classics, London 1979,

3. O. Rank, *The Double, a Psychoanalytic Study*, Trans. and ed. H. Tucker, Jr., Maresfield Library, London 1989,

4. *Ibid.*, p. 73,

5. *Ibid.*, p. 74,

6. *Ibid.*, p. 78,

7. *Ibid.*, p. 74-5,

8. S. Freud, *On Narcissism: An Introduction* (1914) in *On Metapsychology - The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 11, P.F.L. 1984,

9. This is also the point to which Laplanche refers in his *The Ego and Narcissism (Life and Death in Psychoanalysis)*, trans. J. Mehlman, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) According to this definition narcissism takes in the first place the form of excessive attention given to the body as a whole. It is not certain if this bodily care has as its origin the relation to the mirror-image, as for Lacan, or if the object of care, the body in need of constant attention and stimulation, is imagined in the process of touching it, which is not the same thing,

10. The term was already used by Nöcke and Havelock Ellis,

11. Narcissus speaks before he sees the image, a point not without importance, even if his failure to be heard by another, in this case Echo, makes him hostage of his own soliloquy, of hearing-himself-speak,

12. S. Freud, *On Narcissism: An Introduction*, p. 65,

13. I am not going to enter here into the labyrinth of intricacies that envelope Freud/Jung relationship. However, it is worth recounting that it was not only the "theoretical differences" that led to the breach between the two men. As Phyllis Grosskurth notes, in the letter to Ferenczi (November 26, 1912) Freud admitted to have misjudged Jung's character, and was disturbed by Jung's "centre of insincerity". Two occasions on which Freud blacked out in Jung's presence have become anecdotally famous. The beginning of the end of their friendship, which is not an isolated event in the history and shows that "there is only room for one", came during their morning walk in 1912. Later Freud confessed, with his usual honesty, in the letter to Jones (December 8, 1912) "a piece of unruly homosexual feeling at the root of the whole matter" (Phyllis Grosskurth, *The Secret Ring and the Politics of Psychoanalysis*, Jonathan Cape, London 1991, p. 49),

14. S. Freud, *On Narcissism: An Introduction*, p. 81,

15. "Sexual dynamics is only one particular instance in the total field of the psyche. This is not to deny its existence, but merely to put it in its proper place. [...] As early as 1912 I pointed out that my conception of a general life instinct, namely libido, takes place of the concept of 'psychic energy' [...] I was, however, guilty, of a sin of omission in presenting the concept wholly in its psychological concreteness and leaving out of account its metaphysical aspect, which is the subject of the present discussion. But by leaving the libido concept wholly in its concrete form, I treated it as though it were hypostatized, [...] 'The libido with which we operate is not only not concrete or known, but is a complete X, a pure hypothesis, a model or counter, and is no more concretely conceivable than the energy known to the world of physics'" (C. G. Jung, *On Psychic Energy in The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, Trans. R. F. C. Hull, Vol. 8 of The collected works of Jung, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1981), p. 30,

16. S. Freud, *On Narcissism: An Introduction*, p. 81, (*Das Ich und Das Es - Metapsychologische Schriften*, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 1994, p. 64),

17. *Ibid.*, p. 78,

18. *Ibid.*, p. 75,

19. *Ibid.*, p. 77,

20. *Ibid.*, p. 78,

21. *Ibid.*, p. 79,

22. *Ibid.*, p. 81,

23. Freud's translator J. Strachey, who stirred so much confusion by introducing the Latinised and Hellenised names for the German terms in the second topography, explains that the English term *anacletic* is analogous to *enclitic*, the latter referring to the linguistic particles which in order to function in a sentence must be *appended to*, or "lean up against" a word. It is interesting that the *anacletic* function will thus have a broader meaning as that which is added or *supplemented* to that without which it could not exist (J. Strachey, Note on p. 81). The *anacletic* will also have a resonance of the clinical space, *ἀνακλίνω* meaning to *lean* one thing *against* another. Thus the relation to the object, to the body-image, as we will see later, the drive to the instinct, as Laplanche tried to demonstrate, and the clinical procedure are all based on the concept of support, the leaning on, which is also a *supplement* to that which is insufficient, incomplete, or which lacks,

24. In the topographical model the various points in the formation of the subject are subsequently the marks of the *gap* between the object and the libido, and, of the *lack* of satisfaction of the desire which, for Lacan, has not so much to do with the object but with the (neurotic) impossibility of reducing the desire of the Other into an object, desire of the mother into the breast of the mother, and, on the other hand, of ascribing the *object a* to the Other rather than to where it "belongs", namely, the dynamic of separation between the subject and the Other,

25. J. Lacan, *Seminar I*, p. 79,

26. Freud's structure of the drive, which Lacan examines in *Seminar XI*, seems to point to the limits of the imaginary construction which is why Lacan situates within it, at the same time adding to it, the specular and invocatory drives, each, as it is by now obvious, describing the sexual vicissitudes of the perceptual apparatus. The death drive has a "privileged" position in that it constitutes the very function of every drive undermining its economical potential and pointing to the limits of life itself.

27. In 1931 paper on *Libidinal Types*, Freud distinguishes and characterises three types: the

erotic-obsessional, the erotic-narcissistic, and the narcissistic-obsessional.

28. S. Freud, *On Narcissism: An Introduction*, p. 88,

29. Freud reserves a very special place for sublimation granting its power to transcend the labyrinths of sexuality, and even situating it, usually in the process of speaking about libidinal mechanisms, on the end of the road called "sexual development", a position not easily to be associated with the nonideal one,

30. M. Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking*, Harper and Row, 1968, p. 33,

31. Freudian definition of an object is much closer to what Lacan called "the thing", that which does not change places,

32. S. Freud, *On Narcissism: An Introduction*, p. 90,

33. J. Lacan, *Seminar I*, p. 136,

34. The move beyond the evolutionist idea of successive stages of development is more evident in Lacan's structuralism than in Freud's theory. As Carlo Vigano writes: "it is not a child that prolongs himself into the adult (the unconscious), but it is already at conception and during foetal life that we can track back the "adult" structure of human desire, inasmuch as it constitutes the child" (*Journal of the Centre for Freudian Analysis and Research*, Winter 92/93, p. 11). The question that could be asked at this point is this: is not a determination of the structure of foetal life on the side of the psychologising master of knowledge?

35. S. Freud, *On Narcissism: An Introduction*, p. 91-2,

36. There is no doubt that somewhere along the alley of inquiry which has drawn Freud to recognise and explicate the processes at work, there is a distinction "between a speculative theory and a science erected on empirical observation. The latter will not envy speculation its privilege of having a smooth, logically unassailable foundation, but will gladly content itself with nebulous, scarcely imaginable basic concepts [*vorstellbaren Grundgedanken*], which it hopes to apprehend more clearly in the course of its development, or which it is even prepared to replace by others. For these ideas are not the foundation of science, upon which everything rests: the foundation is observation alone", p. 69.

## CHAPTER 2

1. S. Freud, *On Narcissism: An Introduction*, p. 82-3,

2. R. Girard "defends" the narcissistic position by pointing out that since the subject *lacks* self-sufficiency it is perfectly legitimate and logically justified for him to desire such self-sufficiency. Using an example of Proust, Girard sees narcissism as a convergence of self-oriented and other-oriented positions. Since one lacks, as for example an artist such as Proust, Girard tells us, one desires to "acquire the richer self" and "become self-sufficient". But in renouncing Freud's position and putting into question his notion of object-seeking desire, Girard asks: "Could it be that Proustian desire is really 'narcissistic' in Freudian terms, in other words that it focuses on objects 'too similar' to the subject, too much like mirror images to deserve the badge of 'true love'"? This distinction, one could venture to respond to the question, is no doubt at the roots of the Freudian position, given that it concerns the real-object choice as an indication of the lack that cannot be sutured in the signifying chain of a writer, precisely because the narrative is always a substitute which blocks the object-libido. (R. Girard, *Narcissism: The Freudian Myth Demythified by Proust*, in *Psychoanalysis. Creativity*



*and Literature*, ed. A. Roland, Columbia University Press, 1978).

3. This theme will be again taken up in the *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* where the child attempts to master mother's absence/presence in relation to the extimate object that Lacan calls *objet petit a*,

4. It is worth noting that for some the notion of the object is the point where the discourses of philosophy and psychoanalysis come apart. In re-examining the prejudices of philosophy Merleau-Ponty speaks about the object as occupying the borders of the visual field in relation to the perceiving I. This leads to two kinds of bond with the object. One says: "When I do concentrate my eyes on it, I become anchored in it", the other kind involves a higher degree of intimacy: "To see is to enter a universe of beings which *display themselves*, and they would not do this if they could not be hidden behind each other or behind me. In other words: *to look at an object is to inhabit it* [my ital.], and from this habitation to grasp all things in terms of the aspect which they present to it, [...] thus every object is a mirror of all others" (*Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 67-8). If the debunking of the Cartesian prejudices leads to the intimacy of dwelling in the object or finding in it the specular universe, then this is how Lacan will propose such specular "habitation" to be nothing else but an imaginary identification of the *me* [*le moi*] with the body-image, which assumes unity outside the symbolic term on which it rests,

5. O. Rank, *The Double, a Psychoanalytic Study*, p. 78,

6. *Ibid.*, p. 79,

7. O. Rank, *The Double, a Psychoanalytic Study*, p. 84. It is not certain if Rank refers here to Nietzsche's insight in *Human, all too human*, where we read: "All illnesses, death itself, are the result of magical influences. There is never anything natural about becoming ill or dying (p. 81),

8. O. Rank, *The Double, a Psychoanalytic Study*, p. 85. Kieřłowski's film *Double Life of Veronique* illustrates the existence of the double in its tendency to immortalise the image which it is. At some point a Polish woman Veronique says to her father: "I am not alone". Soon after, as if in silent premonition of her death, but also in anticipation that the other, her double, live on, she dies during a concert performance on the stage. The double Veronique, this time a French woman, is on a visit to Poland and takes some photographs of which she later forgets while carrying them in her hand bag. When going through the contents of her bag a marionette artist (he who gives life) discovers the photographs she had forgotten about he recognises Veronique and shows them to her. At first glance she denies her identity but then realises something and begins to cry. It is a cry of mourning over the loss of her other, her double, in which she sees herself in realisation of her own death to come or to have come. It is the image of a dead other that she as a double has now assumed to live,

9. M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Basil Blackwell 1983, p. 283,

10. *Ibid.*, p. 282,

11. It would be somewhat presumptuous to impose the "historical event" of Heidegger's father's death on the nature of Martin's thinking. But it is worth noting that the subsequent deaths of his father, then mother, are reflected in a profuse way in Heidegger's early theoretical preoccupations with death, anxiety, nothingness, whereas his later works mark gradual distantiation from the *thanatos*, which still bears the insignia of melancholia and mourning. We will look more closely at the passions of death in the penultimate chapter of this work,

12. M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 284,

13. *Ibid.*, p. 287-8,

14. In Freud's schema of *Narcissmotypus*, the phantom of the dead exemplifies the third component of the narcissistic object, namely, what I have called the *futural-projectional* object towards which the "actual" I projects itself. The immortalised dead secure the futural being of the one the I would like to be.

### CHAPTER 3

1. The object is what Lacan calls a semblance [*un semblant*] which has a temporal existence as no object is indestructible. In assuming such object for himself the subject adheres to the "intermediary of the name". In other words, "the name is the time of the object" (J. Lacan, *Seminar II, 1954-55*, p. 169),

2. J. Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 260,

3. Lacan uses in fact the term *objectality* to distinguish it from *objectivity* by virtue of the "affective substance" [*substance d'affect*] of the latter. (*Ecrits*, p. 243),

4. There is a considerable underestimation of the degree to which Lacan's return to Freud produced a radically new fabric of conceptions that cannot be found in Freud's text. To say, for example that Freud did not arrive at the theory of language, as developed by Lacan, because he was not equipped with the terminology of modern linguistics, certainly does not answer the question of Lacan's new constructions (the objecta, the other and the Other, real, symbolic, imaginary. etc.),

5. J. Lacan, *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience*, English translation by Alan Sheridan (*Ecrits - A selection*), p. 4,

6. That this "itself" does not deserve in its primordial, i.e., imaginary form any attention as already a difference in part responsible for theoretical reflections on this illusory formations, is one of the guiding features of Lacan's article,

7. J. Lacan, *Ecrits*, p.2,

8. What seems to echo in this primary relation with the mirror is child's encounter with the mirror that is designed to produce a highly distorted image of elongated or broadened shape of the body. which always provokes an outburst of laughter,

9. P. Julien, *Jacques Lacan's Return to Freud - The Real, the Symbolic, the Imaginary*, New York University Press, 1994, (Trans. Devra Beck Simiu) p. 32,

10. A. Quinet, *The Gaze as an Object in Reading Seminar XI* (ed. R Feldstein, B. Fink, M. Jaanus), State University of New York Press, 1995, p. 140,

11. In virtual reality it is the body, the bodily me, that follows the movement of the visual image. In this following, which is takes on a form of a pursuit of the double, the me/self of the body identifies with the visual image and assumes unity with it. History ceases to exist. Or rather it culminates at the moment of closure or reciprocal latching of the body to the image and conversely. The imaginary locks the subject in virtual reality of its own dialectic,

12. J. Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 2-3,

13. In fact, in both 1949 article on the mirror stage and 1951 paper *Some Reflections on the Ego*. Lacan refers to the morphic resemblance amongst the species of pigeons and migratory locust thus pointing to genetic resemblance/identification via visual image,

14. J. Lacan, *Some Reflections on the Ego*, *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. XXXV, 1953, p. 15.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 13,

16. *Ibid.*, p. 15,

17. J. Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 19,

18. P. Julien illustrates the case of jealousy via mirror and extends its function first to a moment of paranoia and then to homosexuality: "jealousy is directed not toward the one who loves (his wife), but toward the one who is loved (the rival loved by his wife). However, at a certain moment, there is a trans-position (*Versetzung*) by means of projection in the optical sense: in the other as mirror, the jealous husband sees himself as loved by the one who loves (his wife). He then abandons his rivalry. The same thing occurs in paranoia: the subject's original rivalry - a rivalry as yet unsymbolised - appears outside in the real in the person of the persecutor. Finally, in homosexuality there is an abandonment of fraternal competition and conversion of the rival into a loved object". (*Jacques Lacan's Return to Freud*, p. 23-4),

19. R. Boothby, *Death and Desire - Psychoanalytic Theory in Lacan's Return to Freud*, Routledge, London, 1991, p. 39,

20. J. Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 15-16,

21. M. Marini, *Jacques Lacan - The French Context*, Trans. A. Tomiche, Rutgers University Press, 1992, p. 157,

22. J. Lacan, *Ecrits, Function and Field of Speech and Language*, p. 42,

23. J. Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 5,

24. *Ibid.*, p. 6,

25. *Ibid.*, p. 25-6,

26. *Ibid.*, p. 28-9,

27. Lacan argues elsewhere against Merleau-Ponty's notion of primacy of consciousness. There are in the world two simultaneous productions of forms, one on the eye's retina, the other, in the outer, physical world. Consciousness is merely the place of convergence of the two, therefore a machine, that synthesises and regulates exchanges between the two. This, however, is not yet an experience of the unconscious, but what Lacan calls the first moment of the dialectic of *le moi*. (*Seminar II*, p. 78),

28. In the narcissistic gaze there can already be found the *imago* of the mother. The idealisation of the imago is in fact the idealisation of the pre-natal bond immersed at the moment of fatal speculation in the recess and excess of the biological pit. Although Freud's exposition stresses presence of an object, in fact renders it indispensable in the narcissistic formation of the *Ichideal*, Lacan does not stop at an object and goes further. What is at stake in the narcissistic love of the image is that which looms in its depths, the mirage of unity, the fatal vanity of being-whole. From this phantom comes no less imaginary, though now armed with projectional tendency, notion of potentiality for being whole, - death of the one,

29. M. Marini, *Jacques Lacan - The French Context*, p. 39,

30. *Ibid.*, p. 39,

31. Such moment of horror is described by Blanchot in *Au moment voulu* quoted by Rapaport in *Heidegger and Derrida - Some Reflections on Time and Language*. Blanchot captures here the moment of the love of *semblant* when things "come out of themselves into a resemblance in which they have neither the time to corrupt themselves nor the origin to find themselves and where, eternally their own likenesses, they do not affirm themselves but rather, beyond the dark flux and

reflux of repetition, affirm the absolute power of this resemblance, which is no one's and which has no name and no face. That is why it is terrible to love and we can only love what is most terrible",

32. J. Lacan, *Le savoir et la vérité* in *Seminaire XX, Encore*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1975, p. 85,

33. M. Borch-Jacobsen, *Lacan - The Absolute Master*, trans. D. Brick, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1991, p. 200-1,

34. M. Marini, *Jacques Lacan - The French Context*, p. 39,

35. It is not a question of separating the imaginary from the symbolic, nor even the symbolic from the semiotic as Kristeva did, but of differentiating, on the one hand, the imaginary and the specular, the source of *speculatio*, to which cannot testify the signifier of "the invisible" body, and, on the other hand, the visual image from other images,

36. J. Derrida, *Plato's Pharmacy* in *Disseminations*, trans, B. Johnson, The Athlone Press, 1981.

## CHAPTER 4

1. In a short paper on *Negation*, Freud showed that negation is essentially repression, a division of the subject that always sends us back to what has been foreclosed. On the other hand, this returning manifests a different order of things which has to do with the ethics of psychoanalysis, namely, that *I must re-turn to where it was* [*Wo es war soll Ich werden*]. Thus, the subject, whose suffering as the unspeakable real prompts him to mediate his suffering through signification of his symptoms, in a certain sense re-returns to the unconscious body. It is the time of this re-turning that re-marks his lack as a singular event, the negation and nonnegation at the same time, hence the structure,

2. J. Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, p. 193,

3. According to such chronology, Lacan notes, the child undergoes the *mirror stage* between 6 and 18 months of its life,

4. Regarding the scientific pretences of his time Nietzsche responded: "One should not wrongly reify 'cause' and 'effect', as the natural scientists do (and whoever, like them, now 'naturalises' in his thinking), according to the prevailing mechanical doltishness which makes the cause press and push until it 'effects' its end; one should use 'cause' and 'effect' only as pure concepts, that is to say, as conventional fictions for the purpose of designation and communication - *not* for explanation [*Erklärung*]" (*Beyond Good and Evil* in *Basics Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. W. Kaufmann, Modern Library, New York, s. 21),

5. *Ecce Homo* would be a good example of a conversation with the image - mirror, mirror on the wall who is the wisest, the most clever of them all? The mirror, however, does not say,

6. When Lacan mentions the invocatory drive [*la pulsion invocante*], despite, but perhaps also because of, the scant description of it, he says that of all drives it is "closest to the experience of the unconscious". *Seminar XI*, p. 104,

7. F. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, s. 3,

8. *Ibid.*, s. 4.

## CHAPTER 5

1. P. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. K. Blamey, The University of Chicago Press, London. 1994, p. 11,

2. In an already mentioned Encyclopaedia article *Family Complexes*, Lacan says that the structure of the imago (of the mother) could be described as "a perfect assimilation of totality to being. In this formula, a bit philosophical in appearance, will be recognised the nostalgias of humanity: the metaphysical mirage of universal harmony; the mystical abyss of affective fusion; the social utopia of totalitarian dependency - all derived from the longings for a paradise lost before birth and from the most obscure aspirations of death", p. 13. It has become possible to trace the metaphysical notion of "totality", "unity", "wholeness" to the imaginary construction of *hysteros* to which leads the itinerary of repetition as if, as Kierkegaard remarked, we forgot something there,

3. F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, s. 20,

4. Lacan mentions seven objects, in contrast to Freud's two, and we find among them the gaze, the voice, the nothing (as in anorexia). The list includes the breast, the faeces, the phallus (imaginary object) and the urinary flow, "the unthinkable list" as Lacan calls it, given that they do not constitute the body as a whole but "represent only partially the function that produces them" [p. 315]. The function is the drive, hence the invocatory drive which has a voice as object,

5. I am referring to Nietzsche's controversial autobiography *My sister and I* that describes the torments of his last years, although he was imputed to have remained mute for eleven years prior to his death. We will never know whether this book was written by him or not. (F. Nietzsche, *My sister and I*, trans. O. Levy, Amok Books, 1990,

6. BGE s. 3. It is worth noting, which should shed some light on the postFreudian tradition both philosophical and psychoanalytical, that Nietzsche does not oppose being-conscious [*Bewusstsein*] to the instinctive, but rather, by separating it from consciousness, includes it in the operation of what in this section appears as *Instinkt* and what in section 6 will become *Trieb*,

7. This has perhaps to do with the position and function of the "I" to which I have already alluded. In other words, every time Nietzsche lashes philosophers for abusing and misusing the I as a core of mistakes and prejudices, he does so in the first person. It is not earlier than when Nietzsche's "privileged" dialectic engraved itself in the discourse, that enabled us to take certain strategic steps towards examination of the unconscious function of the drive, the economy of narcissistic relation between the I and the specular other, and the ethics of desire with respect to the Other and desire's object,

8. This debt is commonly accepted on the basis of Freud's equally laconic and reluctant acknowledgement of Nietzsche's influence on him. Freud's relation to Nietzsche is nevertheless is complex and pervasive, and I shall not explore it here. To the remark in the note 29 of *Introduction* above we could mention another reference to Nietzsche that Freud makes in the letter to Fliess of 1st February 1900: "I have just acquired Nietzsche, in whom I hope to find words for much that remains mute in me, but have not opened him yet. Too lazy for the time being" (*The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess 1887 - 1904*, trans. and ed. Jeffrey M. Masson, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 398),

9. P. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, p. 11-13,

10. F. Nietzsche, BGE, s. 6,

11. *Ibid.*, s. 16, 17,
12. F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin Classics, 1984, p. 67,
13. BGE, s. 5,
14. Briefly speaking, *objectivity* is a an impossible referent of the subject's enunciation, whereas *objectality* refers to the subject's object -*object a* - the outside of language,
15. F. Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, trans. W. Kauffman and R. J. Hollingdale, Vintage Books, 1968, p. 229,
16. G. Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. H. Tomlinson, The Athlone Press, London, 1983, p. 125,
17. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

## PART II

### CHAPTER 6

1. The superego, as Mannoni remarked, is the seat of the death drive; its gnawing effects are all the more persecutory, the more the mimetic imaginary is put out of action or pacified. O. Mannoni, *Freud: The Theory of the Unconscious*, Pantheon Books 1971, p. 161,
2. S. Freud, *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917) in *On Metapsychology - The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 11, P.F.L. 1984, p. 252,
3. J. Lacan, *Ecrits*, A selection and trans. A. Sheridan, p. 81,
4. *Ibid.* p. 82,
5. J. Lacan, *Seminar III (1955-1956), The Psychoses*, Routledge 1993, Trans. R. Grigg, p. 218,
6. B. Fink, *The Lacanian Subject*, Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 70,
7. In a somewhat amusing passage in *The Freudian Thing*, Lacan muses about the subject's aspirations for knowledge of the objects which remain in the proximity to their nose, only to express the disappointment in such a limitation and extend their search beyond it. And yet, not sooner do the humans see this nose in the mirror than "they fall in love with it, and this is the first signification by which narcissism envelops the forms of desire" *Ecrits*, p.137
8. *Mourning and Melancholia*, p. 254,
9. *Ibid.*, p. 254,
10. As far as the writing according to Blanchot takes its existence from the Other, its marks, spacing, distance remain in the closest proximity to the body of the Other. An impossibility of appropriating, assimilating the Other is nevertheless attached to a certain imaginization of an impossibility of writing the "ideal" by virtue of which this writing has been spurred to practice a form of self-erasure. This impossibility is therefore from the start a melancholic re-marking on the loss which the "ideal" helps to maintain within the horizon of writing as neither mournable nor forgettable. What such writing, such *reiteration* (that stems from the ideal of etymological meaning)

has inevitably enabled to affirm is a place of the real as that "which does not change place". a jouissance on the grave of writing, on the crypt that is empty for it merely "conceals" the corpse of the subject and *therefore* a metaphoricity of its own creation. What is designated here by the term "ideal" should be simply called *jouissance*, that which can neither be written nor spoken. We must wait, however, before we develop this theme in the next chapter,

11. If one thinks here, among other examples, of Heidegger's meditation on anxiety in *What is Metaphysics*, then, it should be noted that Lacan undertook to alter its significance by declaring that "it is not without an object" (Lacan, *Seminar X, 1962-1963, session 7*, *Unpublished*,

12. *Mourning and Melancholia*, p. 257,

13. B. Fink, *The Lacanian Subject*, p. 75,

14. R. Samuels, *Between Philosophy and Psychoanalysis*, Routledge 1993, p. 35.

15. *Mourning and Melancholia*, p. 258,

16. *Ibid.*, p. 260,

17. *Ibid.*, p. 261,

18. When, for example, some unexpected fortune befalls the subject who, feeling relieved from his everyday problems, plunges into euphoria as if that was to crown his victory over the problems he has been wrestling with *Mourning and Melancholia*, p. 263,

19. Lacan speaks of the reversed message in articulating the locus of the Other as the place in which the I hears itself reply to the message received from the other, and chooses to hear it or not to hear it. J. Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 141,

20. The correspondence spans over nineteen years, but its most relevant fragments appear between 1911, the year of Abraham's publication of the *Notes on the Psycho-Analytical Investigation and Treatment of Manic-Depressive Insanity and Allied Conditions*, and 1924 when Freud's reply to Abraham's remarks on the melancholia paper still did not make the former change his mind about exclusion of the latter's concept of *incorporation*. Their disagreement, although throughout correspondence expressed in cordial and friendly form, concerned also the place of mania in melancholia. According to Abraham the time of loss is taken over by a sudden emergence of a heightened sexual jouissance and would account for a lapse into mania. (*Berlin-Grunewald, 13 March 1922*). For Freud, however, mania is not an indispensable ingredient of melancholia and, as he noted in the *Group Psychology* (1921), "we are without insight into the mechanism of the displacement of a melancholia by a mania" (Vol. 7, PFL, p. 164-5). To sum up, we should note that these are the two main axes of contention, although the main focus seems to rest on the concept of *incorporation*, which Freud scrupulously avoided, refusing perhaps for the relation with the object-loss to be terminated in the enclosure of the Abrahamian, not Freudian, oral stage whose importance Freud nevertheless acknowledges throughout. See: *A Psychoanalytic Dialogue - The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Karl Abraham 1907-1926*, Ed. H. C. Abraham and E. L. Freud, Trans. B. Marsh and H. C. Abraham, Hogarth Press 1965,

21. "As I hope to be able to make quite clear, the introjection of the love-object is an incorporation of it, in keeping with the regression of the libido to the cannibalistic level" (*A Short Study of the Development of the Libido, Viewed in the Light of Mental Disorders in Selected Papers on Psychoanalysis*, Maresfield Reprints, London 1979, p. 420).

22. *Mourning and Melancholia*, p. 259,

23. S. Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* Vol. 12, P.F.L 1985, p. 135.

24. In his earliest study on melancholia, approximately dated at 1895. Freud speaks of the "loss of libido" and examines forms of anaesthesia as a direct predisposition rather than a cause of melancholia. As a result of giving up the "somatic sexual excitation" the "psychical sexual group gets into a state of longing" and "in view of the low level [of tension] in the E. [end-organ] that state is easily transformed into melancholia" (*Standard Edition, Vol. I, Draft G - Melancholia*, The Hogarth Press, London 1966, p. 200-6),

25. O. Mannoni, *Freud: The Theory of the Unconscious*, p. 143,

26. That the metaphor is an intervention in the order of metonymy which, according to Lacan, precedes metaphorical constructions, shows that identification operates on the level of desire. In classical terms, the relation between the whole and the part is in question here and what governs the metonymical function allows for a substitution of the former for the latter. The metonymic function seems to operate from the position of disidentification whereby the lack-of-being [*manque-B-être*] is installed in the place of substitution of one signifier for another. Thus desire aims at the lack which it at the same time sustains (*Écrits*, p. 164),

27. J.-A. Miller, *Commentary on Lacan's "On Freud's 'Trieb' an the Psychoanalyst's Desire"* in *Reading Seminars I and II*, Ed. R. Feldstein, B. Fink, M. Jaanus, State University of New York Press, 1996, p. 422-4,

28. *Ibid.*, p. 423,

29. S. Freud, *The Unconscious* (1915) in *Metapsychological Papers*, Vol 11, P.F.L., 1984, p. 204,

30. *Ibid.*, p. 207,

31. In melancholia the "supplementary libido" is what Freud calls *frei Libido* which enables identification with the object overshadowing the me. Should incorporation take place prior to the release of the supplementary libido, identification with the object-loss would not come into effect, namely would not, phenomenologically at least, "translate" psychosis into neurosis. But does that mean that mania is a kind of "cure" of melancholia?

32. *Ibid.*, p. 209,

33. Freud extends his topographical discoveries to mention three types of aphasic disorders of speech; the second disorder, called "*the asymbolic aphasia*", consists in the disturbance of association between the thing-presentations and word-presentations, rather than concerns the relation between objects and object-presentations. Could this early use of the term *symbolic*, which Freud borrowed anyway, have become an inspiration for Lacan's employment of the term? The third aphasiac disorder is termed by Freud as *agnostic* to the extent that it concerns misrecognition of objects. S. Freud, *Aphasia* (1891), *ibid.*, p. 221-2,

34. J. Lacan, *Seminar VII (1959-1960) - The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Ed. J.-A. Miller, Trans. D. Potter, Routledge, 1992, p. 52-3,

35. *Mourning and Melancholia*, p. 265,

36. *Ibid.*, p. 266,

37. One need not take as extreme "example" as that of Joyce to realise that writing enjoys the letter, that writing never misses or lapses but, so to speak, hits the letter with the body spot on. See J. Lacan, *Seminaire XXIII (1975-1976) - Le Sinthome*, Unpublished,

38. It is doubtful, for example, if Derrida's critique of Lacan's *phallogocentrism* does justice to the problematic involved, to the question of the father, the place and the history of the patronym.



except for placing it in the ruins of *transcendentalism* to criticise it for falling short of "signs of life".

## CHAPTER 7

1. M. Torok and N. Abraham, *The Illness of Mourning and the Fantasy of the Exquisite Corpse in The Shell and the Kernel*, Vol I, Ed. and Trans. N. T. Rand, The University of Chicago Press, London 1994, p. 111,

2. S. Freud, *The Economic Problem of Masochism in The Metapsychological Papers*, Vol 11, P.F.L, 1984, p. 422-3,

3. M. Torok & N. Abraham, *Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection versus Incorporation in The Shell and the Kernel*, p. 126,

4. *Ibid.*, p. 127,

5. Torok writes: "Incorporation may operate by means of representations, affects or bodily states, or use two or three of these means simultaneously. But, whatever the instrument, incorporation is invariably distinct from introjection (a gradual process) because it is instantaneous and magical. The object of pleasure being absent, incorporation obeys the pleasure principle and functions by way of processes similar to hallucinatory fulfilments" (*Ibid.*, p. 113). Although we find here a confirmation of the fact that incorporation acts on the verge of a psychotic delirium, it is not at all clear why the mechanism of *introjection*, as throughout Torok & Abraham's work, is to serve as some "authentic" alternative. What is clear is that their critique of incorporation extends onto an elaboration of the introjection as Ferenczi's "extension to the external world of the original auterotic interests, by including its object into the ego" and is therefore solely concerned with the structure and economy of the me,

6. *Ibid.*, p. 114,

7. *Ibid.*, p. 121,

8. *Ibid.*, p. 128-9,

9. M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 212-3,

10. It is interesting to note, as M. Borch-Jacobsen points out, that *übertragung* translates Aristotle's *metaphora*, and which shows that the order of metaphorical identification is operative in transference neurosis. (*The Emotional Tie*, Stanford University Press, 1992, p. 68),

11. Torok & Abraham, *The Shell and the Kernel*, p. 129,

12. J. Derrida, *Foreword* in N. Abraham and M. Torok *The Wolf Man's Magic Word*, Trans. N. Rand, The University of Minnesota Press, 1986, p. xvii,

13. As B. Fink comments on Lacan's work "the term 'object (a)' is obviously a signifier which signifies the Other's desire insofar as it serves as cause of the subject's desire: but object (a), considered to play a role 'outside of theory', that is, as the real, does not signify anything: it *is* the Other's desire, it is desirousness as real, not signified. The phallus, on the other hand, is never anything but a signifier: in theory, just as in everyday language, it is the signifier of desire. Object (a) is thus the real, unspeakable cause of desire, while the phallus is 'the name of desire' and thus pronounceable". B. Fink, *The Lacanian Subject*, p. 102,

14. I am referring here to the theory of M. Klein who, having followed the footsteps of K. Abraham's doctrine of incorporation, brings, as Lacan remarked, to the place of the Thing the mother's body and no doubt her jouissance with it. Hence the famous "depressive position"

theoretically takes over from the incorporation of the lost object fixing it to this significant place of the mother (J. Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, p. 117),

15. J. Derrida, *Foreword in The Wolf Man's Magic Word* p. xiii,

16. *Ibid.*, p. xiv,

17. *Ibid.*, p. xiv,

18. *Ibid.*, p. xxi,

19. J. Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 319,

20. *Ibid.*, p. 288,

21. J. Derrida, *Foreword*, p. xvii,

22. In writing, it seems, there is always a room for secrecy and for the jouissance of the letter, that may well have a therapeutic effect without the problem of castration ever being raised. This is what Lacan said of Joyce in his attempt to "represent" by means of the Borromean topology the Joyce's psychotic aspirations to make himself a name to be studied for the next few centuries (J. Lacan, *Le Sinthome, Seminaire XXIII*, unpublished).

## CHAPTER 8

1. J. Lacan, *L'envers de la psychanalyse - Le Seminaire XVII*, Editions Du Seuil, 1991, untranslated, p. 38,

2. P. De Man, *Impersonality in the Criticism of Maurice Blanchot in Blindness and Insight*, Routledge, London 1996, p. 64,

3. De Man shows us how *not* to read Blanchot in the sense of enticing us to remain under the "spell" of Blanchot's statements. Instead of situating the place of ambiguity at the level of commentary on Blanchot's texts De Man tries to situate it on the level of the production of statements whose poetical obsession, more in the case of the latter than in the former, would thus have *nothing* to say when the question about desire of the other is posed and where the imaginary ambiguity lies,

4. In a remarkable note in the opening to his reading of Blanchot Krell writes: "I am not yet ready for a *thoughtful reading* of Blanchot: the backlog of Blanchotian texts, texts which I have not read, does not cease to amaze me - the more I read the more it grows". (D. Farrell Krell, *The Lunar Voices*, The University of Chicago, 1995, p. 117). When is one ready to read Blanchot? Is reading of the unread texts a necessary condition for an *intervention* that is already excessive and insufficient in so far as it can only intervene in a fragment, in what is only a fragment irrespective of the volume of work. Such at least is my point of departure here, to read Blanchot despite, and perhaps to some extent against, the amazement, that his reading arouses,

5. J. Lacan, *Television*, trans. J. Mehlman, W. W. Norton, 1990, p. 110,

6. Of the two translations available, I will mostly, although with occasional modifications, "rely" on A. Smock's version in *The Space of Literature*, but sometimes, as in this case, the reference will be to L. Davis' translation in the collection *The Gaze of Orpheus*, p. 87,

7. That is what Blanchot calls "black magic": a transformatory force which retains a unitary relation between the image and the thing, where continuity floods the succession of intervals and cements the torn fragments. In order to act upon the world, Blanchot says, the magician or shaman, places himself outside the world thus making his actions impossible. He speaks from eternity, but what he addresses is nothing more and nothing less than eternity. (Is it to this "quality" in the study

of psychology that Freud alluded in lecture XVII of his *Introductory Lectures* when he referred to Jung as "a psychoanalyst before he became a prophet"?),

8. A lost writing would designate a presence of an "archecryptic" absence that is sought on the trajectory of this presence as a lost object. To this extent the phallic signifier signifies nothing, for nothing signifies it. Such practice of writing will therefore become what Blanchot called a tale that, following self-resemblance, establishes the law of self-signification that would wish to be read, in the tale, *as such*. But even if it is possible to write in the night that signifies nothing, is it possible to write without love? Can reading ever claim that the Other does not exist (which already raises the question of the place of the subject) if this claim betrays the other of reading?

9. M. Blanchot - *The Space of Literature*, trans. A. Smock, University of Nebraska, 1982, p. 255,

10. *The Space of Literature*, p. 256,

11. *Ibid.*, p. 255,

12. *Ibid.*, p. 255,

13. *Ibid.*, p. 256,

14. *Ibid.*, p. 257,

15. *Ibid.*, p. 257,

16. *Ibid.*, p. 257,

17. *Ibid.*, p. 258,

18. *Ibid.*, p. 258,

19. R. M. Rilke - *Duino Elegies* in *The Selected Poetry*, trans. S. Mitchell, Picador Classics, 1987, p. 151,

20. J. Lacan - *Seminar II - 1954-55*, p. 98,

21. *Ibid.* p. 98,

22. J. Lacan - *Seminar II*, p. 254,

23. *Ibid.*, p. 255,

24. *The Space of Literature*, p. 260,

25. *Ibid.*, p. 260,

26. *Ibid.*, p. 259,

27. J. Lacan - *Seminar III - Psychoses*, 1955-56, p. 269,

28. Plato - *Republic*, trans. D. Lee, Penguin Books, 1987, p. 215-6,

29. We should also consider the fact that although in *L'Espace* the chapter on Orpheus appears before *The two versions*, it is in the former that the latter echoes in the mode of *retrospection* as if the imaginary versions, especially in the section on signification, tried to name the image of a woman. The *post-mortem* examination of the feminine *la dépouille*, the corpse or the lifeless carcass, bears some resemblance to, but is not necessarily a meaning of, the mythical figure who is only a shadow, a veil or a film in which is wrapped up that which says "I", without knowing what it is, woman as a symptom of man, as Lacan once remarked,

30. *The Space of Literature*, p. 226,

31. M. Blanchot - *The Narrative Voice* in *The Gaze of Orpheus*, trans. L. Davis, Station Hill, 1981, p. 135.

32. M. Blanchot - *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. S. Hanson, University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. 184.

33. *The Space of Literature*, p. 179,
34. *Ibid.*, p. 179,
35. *The Gaze of Orpheus*, p. 135,
36. *The Space of Literature*, p. 91. This is not the most adequate translation. But what can *disposer de la mort* read like here? To take advantage of her, to have her at one's disposal, to manage death? The sudden shift from *elle* to *soi* does not receive attention either,
37. *The Space of Literature*, p. 173,
38. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

## CHAPTER 9

1. P. Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel W. Smith. The University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 97,
2. J. Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 40,
3. This problem is in particular discussed in chapter 6 of Derrida's *Speech and Phenomena*, Northwestern University Press, 1973,
4. M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 315,
5. Heidegger certainly avoids throughout *Being and Time* to thematise and problematise the Other. Instead he only mentions the other in relation to that familiar, neighbourly being that is my resemblance, my imaginary partner no doubt, and which Lacan designated as "little other",
6. *Being and Time*, p. 314,
7. Perhaps the difference between Kant and Heidegger is that for the latter the voice can only be heard "after" Dasein has been found guilty and in opposition to the *vox populi*, which is the "vulgar" manifestation of universality that, in turn, draws Kant's sole attention,
8. J. A. Miller, *A Discussion of Lacan's "Kant avec Sade" in Lacan, Discourse, and Politics*, ed. B. Fink, p. 230,
9. J. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Seminar XI, trans. A. Sheridan, p. 188,
10. *Being and Time*, p. 329. Further down on the same page Heidegger states: "The basis need not acquire nullity of its own from that for which it is the basis [*seinem Begründeten*]" What an extraordinary attempt to fill in what in this statement is so patently missing! What a dubious excuse to justify what will practically fill in the remainder of Heidegger's analysis on the "basis" of guilt if one takes the above statement as the basis for the one that follows: "Being-guilty does not first result from indebtedness [*Verschuldung*] but, on the contrary, indebtedness becomes possible only 'on the basis' of a primordial Being-guilty" [ibid],
11. It should be noted in the margin, albeit not marginally, and what Miller's article alludes to, that this denial of confession about *jouissance* serves as a ground for Heidegger's antisemitic affiliations. The refusal to speak about what is unspeakable is therefore a way of speaking what is prohibited, the *jouissance* of the Other as real, which can only give a dubious support to nationalistic games of segregation,
12. *Being and Time*, p. 329,
13. J. A. Miller, *Sur le Schuldigsein*, untranslated, in *Quarto Nr 34*, Bruxelles, 1988, p. 96-99,

14. Signifier as a purely differential element that constitutes an “acoustic image” should also not be confused with voice,

15. G. Agamben, *Language and Death: The Place of Negativity*, trans. K. E. Pinkus with M. Hardt, University of Minnesota Press, 1991, p. 33-4,

16. Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. S. McKenna, The Catholic University of America Press, 1970, p. 292-3,

17. *Being and Time*, p. 322,

18. *Ibid.*, p. 343,

19. *Ibid.*, p. 316,

20. It is interesting to note that Heidegger places psychoanalysis on the side of empirical knowledge in the best philosophical tradition to his time. His pessimism can thus seem justified when he says, sharing paradoxically the constructual concerns the psychoanalysts like Freud never tried to conceal, that “in the end there is nothing at all to be found by observation - no matter how astute, even if it were to call upon psychoanalysis for help” (M. Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, trans. W. McNeill and N. Walker, Indiana University Press, 1995, p. 60),

21. *Being and Time*, p. 318,

22. *Ibid.*, p. 319,

23. S. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. J. Riviere, The Hogarth Press, 1979, p. 60,

24. J. Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Seminar VII, p. 219-221,

25. *Civilization and its Discontents*, p. 61,

26. S. Leclaire, *Psychoanalyzing: On the Order of the Unconscious and the Practice of the Letter*, trans. P. Kamuf, Stanford University Press, 1998, p. 115-6,

27. *Civilisation and its Discontents*, p. 64,

28. *Ibid.*, p. 65,

29. *Being and Time*, p. 328,

30. *Ibid.*, p. 337,

31. S. Leclaire, *A Child is Being Killed: On Primary Narcissism and the Death Drive*, trans. M.-C. Hays, Stanford University Press, 1998, p. 30,

32. *Being and Time*, p. 327,

33. *Ibid.*, p. 333,

34. In his article, Miller notes that despite Heidegger’s effort to situate *shuldig* outside the relation to fundamental guilt, Lacan’s chief concern was always to analyse “the ontic of *jouissance*” thus leaving “the ontology of *Da-sein*” behind. For it is precisely the debt of *jouissance* that can be found at the core of neurosis, which constitutes the analytic experience, and which Heidegger leaves untouched. His silence, however, it should nevertheless be said, is not without echo to catholic guilt,

35. *Being and Time*, p. 327,

36. *Ibid.*, p. 332,

37. *Ibid.*, p. 335,

38. *Sur le Schuldigsein*, *Quarto Nr 34*, untranslated, p. 98.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 99,

40. It could be said that this also concerns the relations Heidegger maintained outside his theoretical work, at home and outside it, but which is certainly crucial for the analytical reading. I am

referring to his life-long relationship with Hannah Arendt, a relationship that would allow us to read through the correspondence that is yet to be published, and interpret the “other Heidegger”.

41. J. Lacan, *On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge*. Seminar XX *Encore*. trans. B. Fink, W.W. Norton & Company, 1998, p. 31.

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