

*To someone,  
thanks to whom this is rather a sign . . .*

What does a signifier that grants power over the Queen confer on the one who seizes it? If it is worth stealing the letter, which Poe presents to us as quite a feat in itself, in order to dominate her with a threat, this means that the reins are being placed in its power. In the power of what in the end? Of Femininity, insofar as it is all-powerful [*toute-puissante*], but only to the extent that it is at the mercy of what is being called, and not by sheer coincidence here, the King.

This chain shows that the signifier is the sole master. The highest trump card [*atout-maître*]: card games have been constructed on the basis of this fact about discourse. Undoubtedly, in order to play one's trump card [*l'atout*], one needs to be leading [*qu'on ait la main*]. Yet to be leading is no guarantee of success [*cette main n'est pas maîtresse*]. There aren't thirty-six ways of playing a game, even if there isn't just one. It is the game that commands as soon as the cards have been dealt, according to the rule that the game is not determined by the momentum of the lead's power.

What Poe's story demonstrates, thanks to my efforts, is that the subjugating effect of the signifier, of the purloined letter in this case, applies above all to its holder after the theft,

and that what it carries with it, in its trajectory, is Femininity itself, which it would have taken in its shadow.

Would it be the letter that makes Woman a subject who is simultaneously all-powerful and serf, such that each hand in which Woman leaves the letter, takes with it what, in receiving it, she herself has made into a legacy [*lais*]? ‘Legacy’ means what Woman can bequeath because she has never had it: hence truth coming out of the well, but only ever from the waist up.

This is why the Minister ends up being castrated—castrated is the word for it—because he still believes he is in possession of the letter: this letter which Dupin has managed to locate, because it is in plain sight between the jambs of the high class fireplace.

Here, what first feminized him as in a dream is simply finalized. And I add (p. 52) that he has no chance of hearing the crowing with which this acting expert [*ce Lecoq*], in the little note [*poulet*] that he addresses to him [*qu’il lui destine*], would like to wake him up (“*un destin si funeste...*”). He will endure anything and everything from the Queen, as soon as she will challenge him.

For once the Queen has become cheerful again, and even malicious, she will not stand up to her power [*puissance*], insofar as she has disarmed the Minister without his knowledge—especially not with regard to the King, of whom it is known, owing to the existence of the letter, and it is even all that is known about it, that his power [*puissance*] is that of the Dead, which each turn of the cards is making thinner.

The Minister’s power is being strengthened in that it is directly proportional to the masochism that is spying on him.

By which our Dupin’s success is shown to be equal to the psychoanalytic one, whose act the psychoanalyst can only come to bear owing to an unexpected clumsiness of the other.

Normally, his message is the only effective fall-out of his treatment: much like Dupin's, it has to remain undisclosed, although with him the matter is closed.

Yet were I to explain these terms more and more, as one shall put them to the test in the text which occupies the same entry station here as it has elsewhere, the less they will be understood.

Less understood by the psychoanalysts, because they too are in sight of the purloined letter, even seeing it within themselves, but from that moment on, and much like Dupin, they believe to be its masters.

They are only masters insofar as they make use of my terms indiscriminately. As a result of which quite a few of them have made fools of themselves. It concerns the same ones who affirm to me that what the others are distrustful of is a rigour, which they feel they cannot live up to.

But it is not my rigour that inhibits the latter, for its traps only find an example in those who make me aware of it.

The fact that opinion rules [*reste Reine*], grateful to it as I am, would not mean anything but the value of this pocket book edition, *vademecum* as it used to be called, and nothing new, were I not to take advantage of it in order to situate what this opinion tells me about my *Écrits* through the grapevine.

I have to persuade myself that they do not constitute the ripple effect of a stone thrown into the water, only because the stone itself was already a wave, and even the return wave.

This is rendered tangible to me insofar as those that have been chosen here seem to me to be the wrecks that have fallen into the deep. Why would I be surprised by it, when these *Écrits* were not just collected as a memory of scrappings, but composed under this very heading?

Repeating in their probing fate, that of psychoanalysis as a skiff that was instantly swallowed up by this sea.

Strange dry dock in that it shows how this skiff only floats well when running aground.

For it is a historical fact: put a troublemaker on its thwart who is experienced in panting heavily, and psychoanalysis is defeated—to the great relief of the people on board. No progressism has ever done better, nor in a more reassuring fashion, what needs to be done straight away.

In short, one shall read my so-called Rome discourse in 1953, without it mattering anymore that I was strictly prevented, since the end in France of the pleasures of an Occupation whose nostalgia must continue to haunt it for twenty years through Sartre's pen, so just in its exquisiteness, strictly barred I said from a teaching duty, small as it may have been. Me having been notified of the opposition to it as coming from a Mr Piéron, from whom I moreover had not received any direct sign to myself, on account of my incomprehensibility.

One sees that I was incomprehensible in principle, since I had only had the opportunity to demonstrate it to the most banal of his adjacent territories, and that what I had written back then was in no way abstruse (so little that I would be ashamed of reprinting my dissertation, even when it does not stem from what the teaching ignorance of yore held for common sense in illustrating it with Bergson).

I would like to be given credit for what this delay of eight years, which was imposed upon me, forced me to push, throughout this report, by way of asinine statements [*d'âneries*], let's be exact: paulhanasinine statements [*paulhaneries*], which I can only hee-haw [*hihaner*] for the ears that hear and understand me. Even dear Paulhan never held it against me, he

who knew at what point 'Kant with Sade' would detonate in his bestiary<sup>1</sup> (this *Écrit* is absent here).

The housekeeping is only ever done properly by the one who could do better. The drudge is thus never up to the task, even when the task reduces whomever to do the drudge. What I call task is tidying up.

To state that the unconscious was first of all encountered in discourse, that it is always there that one finds it in psychoanalysis, may require its being articulated with pressure, if the preliminary is necessary: before it occurs for a second time that the discourse itself merits one's halting at the structures that are proper to it, from the moment one thinks that this effect does not seem to be all that obvious.

It is an idea that becomes more precise in highlighting these structures themselves, and it is by no means a matter of relying on the laws of linguistics when one begs them to tell us if they feel deranged by it.

One needs to become familiar with the handling of the schemes, adopted scientifically from an ethics (Stoic in this case), of the signifier and the λεκτόν. And one notices immediately that this λεκτόν is not at all easy to translate. One puts it on hold, and one plays for a while with the signified, more accessible and more cozy for those who meet themselves there, in the illusion that they think anything is worth more than a brass farthing.

Along the entire route, it is noticed, thankfully with delay, that it is better not to labour the point, that protests erupt. "The dream does not think . . .", writes a professor quite pertinently in all the proofs of it that he provides. The dream is rather a crumpled inscription. But when did I ever say anything that objects to it? Even when to the crumpledness, I myself,

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<sup>1</sup> The N.R.F, albeit with another n added to its acronym.

in my method of commentary that forces itself to stick to the documents, only tackled it at the level of the giraffe with which Little Hans qualifies it.

Apart from the fact that this author would not even know how to advance the facts with which he argues that what I articulate about the dream is established, that is to say that he requires a textual support, what I properly call the instance of the letter before all grammarology, where can he take the idea from that I said that the dream thinks? Question I ask without having re-read myself.

By contrast, he discovers that what I inscribe as effect of the signifier does not in any way correspond to the signified as grasped by linguistics, but indeed to the subject.

I applaud this discovery all the more, since at the time when these remarks appeared, I had been hammering for quite some time to all those who want to hear that the signifier (and this is how I distinguish it from the sign) is what represents a subject for another signifier.

I am saying 'to all those who want to hear', because this kind of articulation presupposes a discourse that has already had effects, precisely λεκτόν effects. Since it is through a practice of teaching, where it is being demonstrated that the insistence of what is being stated is not to be taken as secondary in the essence of discourse, that is taking shape, although I had emphasized it in this source from its first emergence, my term of: quilting point. Through which λεκτόν is being translated in my own way, without my being at all proud of it, since rather than a stoicologist, I am stoic from the start, at the point where it might be criticised.

Nonetheless, it is not about going so far as I could in what my appearance in a pocket book edition brings to me. This appearance is important to me because of an unspeakable, which will only be measured one day by a statistical report of a material of syntagms to which I have given expression.

I have provided an entire cultural market with better casings. Mea culpa.

There is no such thing as a meta-language. This affirmation is only possible because I have added one to the list of those that pervade the scientific fields. It will be justified if it produces the effect that will assure that the unconscious IS a discourse.

It will be that the psychoanalyst comes to be its λεκτόν, without therefore being demolished.

May the reader of the pocket book edition become caught up in the game that I celebrated all by myself, first of all in Vienna, and then in Paris, in honour of the *Freudian Thing* for Freud's centenary. If the reader is animated by the same pinched laughter with which my audience received it back then, he shall know that he is already part of my intimate circle, and that he may come to my School, to do the housekeeping there.

*. . . of something to read about this*

*14. XII. 69*