

Symbolic Ruptures: The Speech and Language of Trauma

by

Ioanna Ioannou

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Clinical Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2009

© 2009

Ioanna Ioannou
All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Clinical Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Lissa Weinstein, Ph.D.

Date

Chair of Examining Committee

Maureen O'Connor, Ph.D.

Date

Executive Officer

Jeffrey Rosen, Ph.D.

Elliot Jurist, Ph.D.

Diana Diamond, Ph.D.

Martin Gliserman, Ph.D.

Supervisory Committee

Abstract

Symbolic Ruptures: The Speech and Language of Trauma

By

Ioanna Ioannou

Advisor: Professor Lissa Weinstein

This dissertation project is a theoretical examination of ‘symbolic ruptures,’ the traumatic disruptions in human experience that resist being represented in ordinary modes of symbolization. Insofar as the representation of such disturbing experiences is primarily non-verbal, it has been often relegated to the realm of the ‘desymbolic.’ This project attempts to re-conceptualize the forms and symptoms in which such experiences are expressed as an unconscious language and seeks to reinstate them back into the realm of the symbolic, thus creating a new imperative for their understanding.

While mainstream psychoanalytic literature has regarded symbolization as a representational process, this project expands the use of the term to connote the range of experiences and processes that connect the subject to the symbolic structures of a culture. In this sense, ‘symbolic ruptures’ not only affect one’s capacity to represent extraordinary experiences in thought and in language, but they fundamentally disrupt the subject’s link to the world. It is argued, however, that the symptoms of these ruptures— the recurring nightmares, the flashbacks, the hallucinatory experiences, etc.—remain symbolic in that they constitute an address to an other that seeks to be heard. While these symptoms may conceal or silence the traumatic event, their repetitive nature expresses the structure of

the trauma. It is through the ruptures in the structure of the treatment and of the clinical setting, it is argued, that the structure of trauma may be accessed.

This theoretical framework, which is highly informed by French psychoanalysis and the work of Jacques Lacan, ultimately aims to expand the way we understand and work with experiences of trauma in the clinical setting. In undertaking this project, I also hope to challenge existing views on symbolization by deemphasizing the importance of verbal representation and recognizing the symbolic potential in the non-verbal language of symptoms.

*Στους γονείς και τ'αδέρφια μου—
Για όσα έχουν ειπωθεί
και για τ'ανείπωτα
που πάντα μας ενώνουν*

και

*Στον Μαρίνο—
Πώς αλλιώς;*

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iv
Introduction.....	2
I. A Note on Methodology.....	2
II. Through the Kaleidoscope.....	6
III. What we Mean When we Speak of Trauma.....	11
IV. Rethinking Symbolization and Trauma.....	13
Chapter 1: Symbols and Their Vicissitudes.....	18
I. Symbolization In-De-Terminable.....	18
II. Symbolism and its Contents.....	20
III. Symbolism Revisited.....	25
IV. The Process of Symbol Formation.....	28
V. The Symbolic Potential.....	33
VI. Towards Symbolization.....	36
VII. On Desymbolization.....	43
Chapter 2: Symbolic Ruptures and The Work of Misrecognition.....	47
I. A Psychology of Afterwardness.....	47
II. The Symbolic Order and Beyond.....	49
III. Symbolization as a Boundary-Process.....	58
IV. Symbolic Ruptures and the Witnessing Other.....	69
Chapter 3: The Speech and Language of Ruptures.....	75
I. Traumatic Awakenings.....	75
II. Reading Trauma.....	87

III. The Necessity to Speak.....	92
IV. The Dream-Work of Trauma.....	100
V. Accessing Trauma.....	105
Chapter 4: Remembering, Repeating and Acting-Out.....	114
I. On Becoming a Witness.....	114
II. The Process of Testimony.....	118
Awakening in Dreams.....	118
Reproaching the Other.....	124
Recognizing the Other.....	129
Acting Out as if by Chance.....	136
Unburying the Dead.....	140
III. Thoughts Terminable and Interminable.....	143
IV. Postscript.....	147
By Way of Conclusion: Psychoanalysis Inside and Out.....	150
I. The Ruptures Within.....	150
II. The Ruptures Without.....	153
Bibliography.....	158

If it were possible that a person should give a faithful history of his being from the earliest epochs of his recollection, a picture would be presented such as the world has never contemplated before. A mirror would be held up to all men in which they might behold their own recollections and, in dim perspective, their shadowy hopes and fears—all that they dare not, or that daring and desiring, they could not expose to the open eyes of day. But thought can with difficulty visit the intricate and winding chambers which it inhabits. It is like a river whose rapid and perpetual stream flows outwards;—like one in dread who speeds through the recesses of some haunted pile, and dares not look behind. The caverns of the mind are obscure, and shadowy; or pervaded with a luster, beautifully bright indeed, but shining not beyond their portals. If it were possible to be where we have been, vitally and indeed—if, at the moment of our presence there, we could define the results of our experience, —if the passage from sensation to reflection—from a state of passive perception to voluntary contemplation, were not so dizzying and so tumultuous, this attempt would be less difficult.

Percy Bysshe Shelley
“Difficulty of Analysing the Human Mind”

Introduction

I. A Note on Methodology: The Status of Theory in Psychoanalysis Or How Psychoanalytic Should Psychoanalysis Be?

This dissertation project is a theoretical conceptualization of ‘symbolic ruptures,’ of the traumatic disruptions in human experience that cannot find expression in ordinary modes of representation. Its ultimate aim is to render the modes through which trauma speaks more transparent, and to explore ways in which they may be accessed. It therefore seems appropriate to begin by considering first this project’s own language, the method by which I hope to gain access into the language of trauma. The theoretical approach of this project borrows from the language of literary theory, literature, philosophy and psychoanalysis. It speaks, for the most part, the language of the humanities. Such an approach seems to stand at the periphery of contemporary psychoanalytic theory, which emerges primarily out of clinical and empirical observations, as well as cognitive, developmental and attachment theory. While the insights gained through the clinical encounter are clearly indispensable, as André Green put it, “no clinical observation has the validity to settle a theoretical debate” (1997a, p.4). I would therefore like to introduce this project by providing a historical context for my methodology, for the theoretical ground from which I proceed to elucidate the language of trauma.

To the extent that trauma is relegated to the realm of the ‘desymbolic,’ of the ‘unrepresentable,’ any attempt at capturing its modes of representation is bound to be futile. But if we are to sustain any hope of *knowing* trauma, we must at least allow for the possibility of such knowing. I therefore prefer to concede that trauma speaks, but that it speaks in a language that is as foreign as it is unconscious. Insofar as psychoanalysis is

a discipline that aims to learn, as well as to teach, this language and the modes through which it makes itself known, I will follow in its path. And yet, as psychoanalyst Bent Rosenbaum noted in his own inquiry “The Unconscious: How does it speak to us today?”

In spite of more than 100 years of intense investigation, we do not know the realm of the Unconscious very well. When it appears in our mind, it is painful to listen to, it is hard to master reading it and hard to convey an understanding of it in desired ways to colleagues, researchers and laymen... By our theoretical training, we are not necessarily led to finding an appropriate and common language to describe what we are able to listen to. Our inability to grasp it may very well lie in the very nature of the unconscious. (2003, p.31)

Indeed, the nature of the unconscious, and of the traumatic inscriptions lying therein, evades consciousness, escapes cognition, resists *recognition*. Thus, as Freud was quick to realize, the possibility of accessing the language in which the unconscious makes itself known, must necessarily involve a certain degree of *imagining*, an inferential process that may have little to do with what’s immediately available as observation.

Freud’s metapsychology was intended as precisely such a process, as an imaginary “modelling device” (Modell, 1981, p.393), that could illuminate the dark regions of the mind. Through metapsychological theorizing, Freud transposed the familiar laws of the physical world to the unfamiliar realm of the intrapsychic, providing a view of the mind that resonated with a view of the world that prevailed in his time, a world that was starting to become more transparent through the laws of physics and thermodynamics. To the extent that metapsychological theory applied a systematic, scientific view of the world to the unconscious mind, it also offered to legitimize psychoanalysis as a science, and, more precisely, as a science of the unconscious. The validity of metapsychology as a theory, and especially as one capable of conferring on

psychoanalysis a scientific status, spawned a series of intellectual debates among psychoanalysts and philosophers alike. The “great metapsychology debate” (Wallerstein 1980, p.427) had sought to settle the status of psychoanalysis as a discipline, with vociferous proponents of its scientificity on the one hand, and of skeptics, critics and proponents of its hermeneutic, interpretive character on the other (e.g. Brenner, 1980; Gill, 1976, 1988; Grünbaum, 1984; Holt, 1981; Meissner, 1981; Modell, 1981; Ricoeur, 1977; Schafer, 1976; Wallerstein, 1980, 1986, 1988). The scientific validity of metapsychology, in all its economic, dynamic, topographical and structural aspects, was put to the test, a test from which it eventually emerged maimed. Freud might have suspected its fate, when in a letter to Fliess, as early as 1896, he referred to it, almost prophetically, as “my ideal and weebegone child” (Freud, 1896, p.216).

Following the growing unpopularity of metapsychology, psychoanalysis turned its gaze towards the promising scientific ventures of neuroscience, cognitive psychology and developmental theory, whose methodology seemed capable of providing a more scientific route of access to the unconscious. Indeed, psychoanalytic theory today strives to assert its scientific status primarily through systematic clinical observations, attachment research of parent-infant dyads (also regarded as the analyst-patient metaphor par excellence), psychotherapy outcome studies, and neurobiological findings of brain functions, an area of scientific inquiry that has begun to evolve into the new field of neuro-psychoanalysis (e.g. Kaplan-Solms & Solms, 2000; Modell, 2003; Solms, 2001, 2002; Panksepp, 2000). To the extent that neuro-psychoanalysis can shed light on the unconscious, or implicit, functions of the mind, it can offer ample potential for a new kind of metapsychology, as a “psychology that leads behind consciousness” (Freud,

1898, p.301), a psychology of the unconscious. But despite the growing body of research into the activities of the mind, the language of the unconscious, not simply as a set of implicit functions but as a dynamic structure, a radical topos, continues to be far more obscure than the workings of the physical world.

The shortcomings of metapsychology and its failure to grant psychoanalysis a much-desired scientific status notwithstanding, it constituted Freud's own attempt to *imagine* the unconscious mind. Even as he acknowledged its limitations, Freud clung to it till the very end. In *Analysis Terminable and Interminable* (1937), one of his last published works, he insists on making a turn to metapsychology as a way of resolving a theoretical impasse:

If we are asked by what methods and means this result is achieved, it is not easy to find an answer. We can only say: 'So muss denn doch die Hexe dran!' [We must call the Witch to our help after all!]*—the Witch Meta-psychology. Without metapsychological speculation and theorizing—I had almost said 'phantasying'—we shall not get another step forward. Unfortunately, here as elsewhere, what our Witch reveals is neither very clear nor very detailed. (p.225)*

Even though Freud consciously summons his new 'Witch' of a science here, I would argue that, unconsciously, he actually turns to the humanities. At the very moment when he cannot "get another step forward" he calls the poet to his rescue.¹ It seems to me that this *unconscious slip* reveals in fact an essential conundrum of psychoanalysis as a discipline: as much as it seeks to render itself scientific, its object of study requires the kind of imagining and "phantasying" afforded by the humanities.

The discomfort inherent in this statement is palpable: how can psychoanalysis survive in the era of empiricism, an era that is now brought to its peak by the reign of health insurance companies and the consequent prevalence of evidence-based treatments,

¹ Freud's "So muss denn doch die Hexe dran!" is a direct reference to Goethe's *Faust*, a work he quotes numerous times in many of his writings.

if it turns to the humanities every time it finds itself in the narrow straits of a theoretical impasse? Indeed, if psychoanalysis is to remain a mental health practice in today's day and age, it cannot afford to forfeit its claim to a scientific status and to clinical validity. And yet, it is in today's day and age, in the globalized age of mass media where trauma figures to an unprecedented scale in the forefront of our TV sets and of our consciousness, that psychoanalysis as a theory, and more specifically, as a theory of the unconscious, cannot neglect the insights of those disciplines that seek to capture that which is fundamentally and constitutively human. Freud is often quoted as having said that "the poets and philosophers before me discovered the unconscious. What I discovered was the scientific method by which the unconscious can be studied" (quoted in Trilling, 2008, p.34). But contemporary psychoanalysis seldom turns to the "poets and philosophers." Although it has come a long way in opening itself up to influences from disciplines as diverse as biology, neuroscience, and cognitive and developmental psychology, it has removed itself further and further away from those disciplines that have the human mind and its creations as an object of their investigation. Colonized by the anxiety of the scientific paradigm, it has dismissively underestimated what is perhaps its most powerful ally in the pursuit of deciphering the obscure language of the unconscious.

II. Through the Kaleidoscope

With this in mind, I wish to address the question that I posed at the very beginning, in the title of the previous section: namely, how psychoanalytic should psychoanalysis be? From its very inception, psychoanalysis was constituted as much by

the fields that comprise the humanities, as it was by clinical observations and metapsychology. Freud's vision of a "college of psycho-analysis" is quite telling:

...alongside of depth-psychology, which would always remain the principal subject, there would be an introduction to biology, as much as possible of the science of sexual life, and familiarity with the symptomatology of psychiatry. On the other hand, analytic instruction would include branches of knowledge which are remote from medicine and which the doctor does not come across in his practice: the history of civilization, mythology, the psychology of religion and the science of literature. (1926, p.246)

Freud's vision of psychoanalysis, in other words, was *inherently interdisciplinary*.

Interdisciplinarity² involves the coming together of multiple disciplines in order to address "complex questions" and "to solve problems that are beyond the scope of anyone discipline" (Klein, 1990, p.11). As a psychology of the unconscious, psychoanalysis has taken it upon itself to answer an ever-complex question, a question that reverberates through multiple disciplines including philosophy, literature, neuroscience, and biology: namely, how does the unconscious speak and, as Rosenbaum specified, how does it speak to us today? It seems to me that if psychoanalysis hopes to produce an answer to this question, it has to proceed on an interdisciplinary path with a renewed respect for the kind of imagining that is made possible by the humanities. In fact, I would argue that a turn to the humanities becomes an absolute imperative as soon as one attempts to question, theorize, and understand the language of trauma, those dimensions of human experience that border on the unknown/unknowable.

² I'm using the term 'interdisciplinarity' here rather loosely, to indicate the process by which multiple disciplines participate in a joint effort to produce a discourse around issues that exceed a single frame of reference. In this sense, interdisciplinarity encompasses the range of processes through which disparate disciplines address each other, be it intentionally or unintentionally. The different modes in which interdisciplinary discourse transpires have been identified in terms such as multi-disciplinary, cross-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary. Even though, I will refrain from engaging with these distinctions, I believe that they are indicative of a growing recognition that academic disciplines, like individuals, require a certain degree of inter-dependence in order to sustain themselves.

This project makes precisely such a turn. To the extent that it seeks to engage with those traumatic experiences that lie on the edge of consciousness, it constitutes, not a systematic, scientific investigation, but an act of *imagining*. It is an effort to grasp the elusiveness of traumatic experience and of the ruptures in the symbolic threads that connect people to the world and to each other. Put simply, it is an attempt to formulate a psychoanalytic theory of trauma that ultimately seeks to understand the way it speaks to us through its unconscious inscriptions. If, as literary theorist Cathy Caruth argues, “the phenomenon of trauma...brings us to the limits of our understanding” (1995, p. 4), then this project aims to tread precisely upon those limits, and imagine that which lies beyond them.

Even though traumatic experiences lend themselves to observation in the form of clinical phenomena (dissociation, psychosis, severe depression etc.), their phenomenology and mental workings continue to exceed the limits of our understanding; they are, by nature, elusive and impossible to capture in ordinary modes of representation. It is only through an interdisciplinary approach, it seems to me, that a psychoanalytic understanding of the nature of traumatic experience and its impact on subjectivity may begin to ensue. In her introduction to an interdisciplinary collection of essays on trauma, Caruth stresses this point:

The irreducible specificity of traumatic stories requires in its turn the varied responses—responses of knowing and of acting—of literature, film, psychiatry, neurobiology, sociology and political and social activism... It may be only through this variety that we can learn, in effect, not only to ease suffering but to open, in the individual and the community, new possibilities for change, a change that would acknowledge the unthinkable realities to which traumatic experience bears witness. (1995, p.ix)

Caruth's call for interdisciplinary responses to trauma is especially pertinent to the discipline of psychoanalysis, insofar as the latter's purpose is precisely to create "new possibilities for change."

In accord with Caruth's view then, I offer that traumatic experience must be viewed *kaleidoscopically* if it is to be psychoanalytically approached. I believe that the key to bringing the extraordinary and the unbearable within grasp lies at the intersection of multiple disciplines—a unique locale from where to gaze, as if through a kaleidoscope, at the "unthinkable realities to which traumatic experience bears witness." I would like to situate this project at a corner of this intersection, forming a fraction of the kaleidoscopic lens to trauma. I do not wish to suggest that such a kaleidoscopic view will render these "unthinkable realities" transparent. On the contrary, the superimposition of multiple and interdisciplinary lenses might in fact transform an already perplex picture into an even more dizzying image. But it is only by learning to dwell in such discomfiting, fragmented and infinitely complex spaces that we might hope to engage the experience of those among us for whom 'standing' in such spaces, as Bromberg (2001a) would have it, constitutes an absolute mode of being.

Living and thinking through a historical moment that many have called, with apocalyptic awe, 'the age of terror,' requires that we recognize and avow that which is utterly human in what we conveniently tend to relegate to the 'evil,' inhuman other. Heinz Kohut captured this well when, in reference to the atrocities of World War II, he recognized that "such events are not bestial, in the primary sense of the word, but that they are decidedly human" (1972, p.378). To familiarize ourselves with the otherness that lies at the core of humanness is to develop a willingness to face the discomfort of

dealing with experiences that are difficult to fathom, and even more difficult to integrate in our conceptions of subjectivity and sociality. In other words, if we do indeed live in an age of terror, we must force ourselves to step outside our comfort zones and approach the discourse of trauma anew, all the while keeping in mind that extraordinary experiences are far too common. As Judith Herman asserts in her seminal work *Trauma and Recovery* (1997),

Rape, battery, and other forms of sexual and domestic violence are so common a part of women's lives that they can hardly be described as outside the range of ordinary experience. And in view of the number of people killed in war over the past century, military trauma, too, must be considered a common part of human experience; only the fortunate find it unusual. (p.33)

In *The Analyst in the Inner City*, Neil Altman (2004) also reminds us of the extensive trauma that life in the inner city involves, a life that is led by millions of people who might not even dare consider their everyday, 'ordinary' living as traumatic. Indeed, as Herman suggests, "traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life" (1997, p.33). In *Black Skins, White Masks* (1967), a psychoanalytic exploration of the oppression experienced by blacks in a white world, Frantz Fanon wisely wrote, "every human problem must be considered from the standpoint of time...I belong irreducibly to my time" (p.13). In the grim spirit of my time then I feel compelled to engage the language of trauma, to question its modes of articulation and the ruptures through which it makes itself known.

This urgency to *know* trauma seems to have mobilized disparate disciplines which, left alone, would fall short in their ability to create a discourse that can sustain the multiple and complex dimensions of traumatic experience. It is as if the language of

trauma cannot be articulated, except through the emergence of a new language, which is in turn the result of multiple discourses that speak only with recourse to each other. “If psychoanalysis, psychiatry, sociology, and even literature are beginning to hear each other anew in the study of trauma,” writes Caruth, “it is because they are listening through the radical disruption and gaps of traumatic experience” (1995, p. 4).

III. What we Mean When we Speak of Trauma

As I prepare to engage with the language of trauma, it seems impossible to overlook that there is little agreement within and between disciplines about what we mean when we speak of trauma. Although it is outside the scope of this project to engage this taxonomical debate at length, it is worth noting that the latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), the official ‘canon’ of the psychiatric discipline, has revised its previous definition of trauma as an event “outside the range of usual human experience” (American Psychiatric Association, 1980, p.236) to one that involves an event which evokes a response of “intense fear, helplessness, or horror” (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p.424). The new definition seems to have shifted the emphasis from the situational *nature* of the traumatic event to the phenomenological *experience* of its symptomatology. This shift reflects precisely the difficulty of defining trauma with recourse to itself. What seems to be most salient, is not the event itself but the “radical disruption and gaps” it creates. Notably, the definition of trauma in the current fourth edition of the DSM appears under the diagnostic category of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which outlines a narrow set of criteria and symptoms that determine whether an experience may or may not be deemed as traumatic.

But given that the very nature of trauma is such that it often eludes consciousness and becomes disavowed, we must contend that the range of traumatic experience extends far beyond the diagnostic confines of PTSD.

In a recent attempt to expand the range of experiences that may be clinically accounted for in the DSM, trauma researcher Bessel van der Kolk (2005) and his colleagues at the Trauma Center of the Justice Resource Institute, proposed to the DSM-V task force (the publication of which is forthcoming in 2012) the inclusion of Developmental Trauma Disorder, a diagnosis which aims to capture experiences of complex childhood trauma and abuse that are often recklessly and dangerously triaged as Conduct Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder etc. Such experiences of chronic exposure to trauma (as opposed to a single traumatic event) that are not adequately captured by a PTSD diagnosis are also often reflected in certain personality disorders, diagnosed in adulthood. But such diagnostic categories hardly succeed in conveying the horrors, indeed the “unthinkable realities to which traumatic experience bears witness.” By nature, trauma simply refuses categorization and recognition, so that such neat diagnostic confines are bound to overshadow the intricacies of its phenomenology.

This project assumes a definition of trauma that can be traced back to Freud’s original formulation and which takes into account both the nature of the external event and the psychical response to it:

We describe as ‘traumatic’ any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield. It seems to me that the concept of trauma necessarily implies a connection of this kind with a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli. Such an event as an external trauma is bound to provoke a disturbance on a large scale in the functioning of the organism's energy and to set in motion every possible defensive measure. (Freud, 1920, p.29)

Although I do not wish to speak of trauma in such quantitative terms, I find Freud's description useful in its emphasis on the relation between the inside and the outside, the psyche and the external stimulation. What is 'traumatic' is neither that which is on the inside nor that which is on the outside; rather, it is the point of contact and rupture, the point of "breach" between inside and outside. In this project, I will consider trauma in these terms, as a rupture in the space that both connects and separates the subject from the world. In my theoretical exploration I will avoid an explicit distinction between single-event trauma and chronic or cumulative trauma, not so much because such a distinction is not warranted, but because it is one that deserves and requires a close examination that cannot be afforded in the limited context of this project. However, it seems worth stating that insofar as it awakens a fundamental anxiety of annihilation, trauma is always *retrospectively* chronic; that is, as Freud had recognized, trauma lies less in the experience itself and more in its *belated* (*nachträglichkeit*) recognition.³

IV. Rethinking Symbolization and Trauma

Insofar as it aims to illuminate the unconscious language through which trauma speaks, this project takes an interest, not in the existing literature on trauma per se, but in the literature that sought to understand the symbolic expressions of the unconscious. Thus, in the first chapter, I review the main psychoanalytic writings on symbolization, from Freud's original formulations to more contemporary views on the subject. In this chronological trajectory, I also speculate about the way in which historical traumas might

³ See Freud's *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1895) for his use of the term '*nachträglichkeit*,' usually translated as '*après coup*,' 'afterwardness' or, less accurately, 'deferred action.'

have contributed to the theoretical shifts in the concept of symbolization within the psychoanalytic field.

In the second chapter, I approach symbolization from a Lacanian perspective. I find Lacan's view of symbolization as the ubiquitous insertion of all subjects into the symbolic realms of language and culture, and his conceptualization of the unconscious as a linguistic structure, to be especially useful in the exploration of traumatic inscriptions, mainly because they eliminate the theoretical possibility for 'desymbolization.' In Lacan's theoretical model, the subject is first and foremost the subject of the unconscious, and the unconscious is always symbolic. Thus, as long as the unconscious is operative, and the unconscious is always already operative—"something always thinks," argues Lacan (2007, p.189)—there is no possibility for desymbolization. The concept of desymbolization has been used in psychoanalytic literature to connote a mere "absence of symbolization" (Freedman & Berzofsky, 1995, p. 365). In Lacan's theoretical system however, symbolization does not have its opposite, its negation as it were; the unconscious, and the trauma inscribed therein, speaks, and it speaks despite consciousness, through symptoms, parapraxes, and acting out. In this sense, I recast symbolization, not as a developmental achievement, but as a constitutional imperative. I believe that theorizing symbolization in terms that preclude a dialectical opposite allows for a much needed re-conceptualization of the complex mental and psychical processes that are often reduced to 'desymbolization.' At the very least, reinstating such phenomena back to the realm of the symbolic creates a new imperative for their understanding.

Drawing on Lacan's ideas, I approach symbolization as a *boundary process*, a process that both constructs and defines the double boundaries between the subject and his unconscious on the one hand, and the subject and the world, or his cultural context, on the other. I call the traumatic breaches at these boundaries 'symbolic ruptures' to connote that even though they appear as ruptures in the realm of the symbolic, they are themselves symbolic, they are, in other words, structured. I use the word 'structure' throughout this project in a manner similar to the one that Lacan alluded to when he commented on his obscure proposition that "the unconscious is structured as a language": "properly speaking," Lacan said, "this is a redundancy because "structured" and "as a language" for me mean exactly the same thing. Structured means my speech, my lexicon, etc., which is exactly the same as a language" (2007, p.188). In my use of the word 'structure,' I do not refer strictly to language per se, but to any symptom, any formation, which, by virtue of having a form—no matter how seemingly chaotic—is inherently symbolic. What this means when we speak of traumatic experiences, is that symbolization—and not its opposite—can be found in the repetitive throes of night terrors, somatic complaints, hallucinations and delusions.

In the third chapter of this project, I explore the structure and language of these ruptures through the unconscious language of dreams. I trace the language of trauma in a retroactive reading of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, through *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and I offer that, in its relentless repetitions, the language of trauma constitutes a strict expression of the condensation and displacement that defines the language of dreams. This psychoanalytic imagining of traumatic structures seeks to rethink the way we understand symptoms and acting out in the context of the treatment.

In its '*après coup*' movement of reading, this chapter also *performs* the belated way in which trauma comes to be witnessed.

In the fourth and final chapter, I offer an account of a clinical case through which I illustrate the theoretical formulations advanced in this project. This is the case of a young woman whom I saw in individual psychotherapy for a period of two years, and whose extensive experiences of trauma made their appearance over the course of the treatment in subtle and surprising ways. As I describe the course of this treatment, I identify the modes in which trauma spoke through the acts of my patient and the belated ways in which I recognized its speech. Through this case study, I also aim to show that symbolic ruptures can be approached through the symbolic ruptures in the frame of the treatment, which constitutes the structure around which the treatment unfolds. The discussion focuses on my patient's relationship both to me and to the frame of the treatment, with an emphasis on the ruptures of this structure through our mutual enactments and the patient's acting out. Far from (or in addition to) being an indication of unconscious resistance, or a defensive reaction, I conceptualize such breaches and gaps in the therapeutic process as *performative* of traumatic ruptures, and therefore as points of access to the language of trauma. My own role as a witness to the patient's trauma, and the patient's experience of being witnessed, are also considered as mutative factors in the treatment process.

This project concludes with a beginning, returning to some preliminary thoughts about the discipline of psychoanalysis by considering its relation to its own structures—the structures of the psychoanalytic institutions within, and the academic and mental health structures without—and contemplating the ruptures operative therein. These

thoughts are presented less as conclusive and definitive statements about the nature of the field and more as a way of experimenting with the theoretical ideas of this project, and of testing them so to speak, through psychoanalysis, by treating it as a ‘subject’ of the unconscious and of trauma that is called to negotiate the symbolic structures both of its own unconscious and of the socio-cultural context in which it is immersed.

In the end, this project may not constitute much more than a mere act of imagination. From a scientific standpoint whereby legitimacy is earned through the accumulation of evidence, imagining alone, imagining without knowing, might be an anathema. But while it is true that acts of imagination do not lead to health insurance reimbursement, or to the re-assuring validity afforded by scientific exploration, it is through such acts that we may construct a psychological beginning to those ‘missed’ experiences that cannot be known only by means of empirical observation or clinical inquiry. In

André Green’s apt words:

...we cannot do without a mythical origin, just as a small child must construct theories, even romances, about his birth and infancy. Undoubtedly, our role is not to imagine, but to explain and to transform. However, Freud had the courage to write, “Without metapsychological speculation and theorizing—I had almost said “phantasying”—we shall not get another step forward”... We cannot accept that our theories are fantasies. The best solution would be to accept that they are not the expression of scientific truth but an approximation to it, its analogue. Then there is no harm in constructing a myth of origins, provided we know that it can only be a myth. (1975, p. 18).

Chapter 1

Symbols and Their Vicissitudes

I. Symbolization In-De-Terminable

In engaging with the concept of symbolization in psychoanalysis, it seems important to state at the outset that it is a topic, which inevitably, and often inadvertently, evokes multiple frames of reference. As soon as one begins to examine the concept, one finds that what is at hand is in fact a knot which, if untied, would let loose the entire corpus of psychoanalytic theory, from the primary and secondary processes, to the drive and the object, and from the workings of the unconscious to the mechanisms of defense; symbolization, in other words, pervades the entire field of mental and emotional functioning. And if one attempts to investigate the term even further, one will come across such diverse disciplines as linguistics, philosophy, literature, art, neuroscience, biology etc. This interdisciplinary interest in symbolization speaks to its multifaceted and complex nature. As patently obvious as this may seem, it is a fact that psychoanalysts have often overlooked, creating in this way irreconcilable inconsistencies around the use of the term. What complicates matters even more is the fact that ‘symbolization’ is often conflated with ‘symbolism,’ where both terms are often treated as interchangeable, rendering a qualitative distinction between the two practically impossible.

It is not surprising then that most, if not all, contemporary psychoanalytic writings on the subject of symbolization include a disclaimer of sorts to indicate that the existing theoretical confusion around the concept of symbolization cannot be single-handedly

amended. Given the haphazard way in which the term has been used historically, it seems too late to set the record straight. In their seminal book *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, Laplanche and Pontalis also acquiesce to the obscurity of the term:

The notion of symbolism is nowadays so closely tied to psycho-analysis, the words ‘symbolic’, ‘symbolise’ and ‘symbolisation’ are used so often—and so variously—and the problems surrounding symbolic thought and the creation and utilisation of symbols fall within the scope of so many disciplines (psychology, linguistics, epistemology, history of religions, anthropology, etc.), that it is particularly hard in this case to mark off a specifically psycho-analytic use of these terms and to distinguish their various senses... (1973, p.442)

Similarly, in her paper on “The Development of Symbolization,” Edgumbe confesses to being equally perplexed:

I have not found it at all easy to present an overview of current thinking about symbolization, because there is such a vast literature in many different disciplines, and many different points of view... Psychoanalysts have pursued a number of ideas in Freud's work which may be roughly subsumed under the heading of ‘symbolism’, without always distinguishing clearly enough between the various processes and levels of explanation which are involved. (1984, p.104)

In a more recent paper, Freedman and Russell (2003) also affirm that “there are many difficulties in attempting to evolve a coherent approach to symbolization in clinical discourse. The most pervasive is the confusion of symbolization and symbolism” (p.42). This confusion appears to be specific, not to clinical discourse in general, but to clinical discourse within psychoanalysis, which, as will be subsequently discussed, is called to align its already existing literature on the contents of the unconscious, or unconscious symbolism, with a growing interest in representational processes. Freedman and Russell attempt to resolve this lexical inconsistency within the psychoanalytic discourse by offering to relegate symbolism to the domain of the primary process, and reserve symbolization for higher-order linguistic functions. However, given all the preceding and subsequent literature on the topic, such a neat distinction proves difficult to sustain.

With these semantic and conceptual ambiguities in mind then, and for the sake of clarity, I opt to make use of the term ‘symbolization’ throughout this discussion, to refer to a process, the complex nature of which has been defined in various terms by different thinkers. I will restrict the term symbolism to its exclusive psychoanalytic use, to indicate the substitution of an unconscious idea by a conscious symbol. Having said this, I recognize that many of the authors with whom I will be ‘conversing,’ use the term symbolization in reference to this unconscious substitution (and vice-versa). While discussing their ideas, I will try not to deviate from the language that they themselves chose, although I offer to make note of the potential for confusion whenever it arises. What follows is a brief overview of the concepts of symbolism and symbolization in psychoanalysis, from Freud to contemporary thought, and a historical contextualization of their trajectory. This discussion will in turn form the backdrop to my exploration of ‘symbolic ruptures’ in traumatic experience.

II. Symbolism and its Contents

As Harold Blum points out, Freud “revised the chapter on Symbolism more than any other section of ‘The Interpretation of Dreams,’” and he revised *The Interpretation of Dreams*, I would add, more than any other of his works (1978, p. 455). In his introduction to the latter, James Strachey, Freud’s editor and translator, also emphasizes Freud’s continuous preoccupation with the subject of symbolism: “By far the greater number of additions dealing with any single subject are those concerned with symbolism in dreams. Freud explains...that he arrived late at a full realization of the importance of this side of the subject” (1900, p.xii).

Indeed, Freud wrote extensively on the function of symbolism in dreams and in psychoneuroses, where an idea “has been repressed and replaced by a substitute” (Freud, 1900, p.461). Jones (1916) later used the term ‘true’ or ‘psychoanalytic’ symbolism to describe this unconscious substitution and to distinguish it from symbolism in its wider sense. This definition of symbolism was subsequently dismissed as too narrow (e.g. Milner, 1952; Rycroft, 1956)⁴ but it was instrumental in setting the stage for much of the psychoanalytic literature that followed.

At the risk of reifying Freud’s prolific work on symbolism, I would say that his observations and theorizing can be divided between those that deal with the *content*, or the *what*, of symbolism, which Freud addresses explicitly and are to be found in abundance throughout his work, and those concerning the *process*, or the *how*, of symbolization, which are less obvious and can be deduced from his metapsychological writings on the unconscious and the thing and word-presentations, as well as his work on the primary and secondary process. Regarding the content of symbolism, Freud’s views remain relatively consistent over time: symbols are treated as representatives of unconscious, repressed ideas that are met with the necessity for censorship in their original form and can therefore only find representation through symbolic substitutes.

⁴ Milner’s critique of the traditional, psychoanalytic use of symbolism is apt in capturing both the problematics of pathologizing symbolism, and the limitations it sets for interdisciplinary discourse. It should also be noted here that even though Milner uses the word ‘symbolization’ to describe this practice, she clearly refers to symbolism in Jones’ restrictive sense. In Milner’s own words:

To try to restrict the meaning of the word symbolization, as some writers tend to do, to the use of the symbol for purposes of distortion, may have the advantage of simplification, but it has other disadvantages. One of these is that it causes unnecessary confusion when one tries to communicate with workers of other disciplines, such as epistemology, aesthetics, and the philosophy of science; it interferes with what might be a valuable collaboration in the work of clarifying some of the obscure issues about the nature of thought. This isolation of psychoanalysis, by its terminology, from related fields, may not have been a disadvantage in the early days of the struggle to establish analytic concepts in their own right, but now such isolation can I think lead to an impoverishment of our own thinking. (1952, p. 194)

Such ideas tend to pertain to wishes and conflicts concerning the body and its parts, sexuality, primary objects, primitive anxieties around birth and death etc. Although most prevalent in dreams, such symbols, Freud argued, also appear in the form of neurotic symptoms, and are widely recognizable “in folklore, and in popular myths, legends, linguistic idioms, proverbial wisdom and current jokes” (1900, p.351). The ubiquity of certain symbols led Freud to conclude that “things that are symbolically connected to-day were probably united in prehistoric times by conceptual and linguistic identity. The symbolic relation seems to be a relic and a mark of former identity” (p.351). At its very basis then, the symbolic relation between the symbol and that which it represents involves a process of *identification*; a process, that is, of identifying aspects of sameness or, as Freud (1925) later realized, aspects of difference by means of negation, for which the symbol becomes a substitute.⁵

Freud’s work on symbolism came under focus through his dispute with Jung that led to the first major split in the fledgling psychoanalytic Society of Vienna. Jones’ 1916 classic paper on “The Theory of Symbolism” (1948) was a response to this conflict, protecting Freud’s views on the subject from Jung’s irreverent use of them as a justification for the collective unconscious. It has already been mentioned that in this paper, Jones differentiates between symbolism in its broadest sense, as the replacement of one idea by another, and psychoanalytic or true symbolism, as the substitution of an *unconscious* idea, due to an underlying conflict. Drawing on Freud’s description of

⁵ Although the “prehistoric” identification between symbol and symbolized speaks primarily to the content of symbolic forms as archaic (a fact which, to Freud’s dismay, led Jung to postulate the collective unconscious), it also reveals an important aspect of the symbolic process; namely, the *linkage* of the symbol to that which it represents. This act of linking, it seems to me, is coextensive with the act of *binding*, the organizing function that Freud attributes to the psychical apparatus. In fact, this seems precisely to be the point where the *content* of symbolism and the *process* of symbolization begin to converge in Freud’s thought. See Chapter 3 for a more extensive discussion on the function of binding and its relation to condensation and displacement, the principal forms of unconscious symbolism.

symbolism as an ‘archaic identity,’ Jones proceeds to argue that true symbolism is regressive to a primitive mode of functioning (Rayner, 1991). That is, to the extent that the purpose of all symbolism “is to overcome the inhibition that is hindering the free expression of a given feeling-idea,” then “it always constitutes a regression to a simpler mode of apprehension” (Jones, 1948, p.144). In Jones’ view, what distinguishes ‘true symbolism’ is the fact that the regression proceeds all the way “to the level of the unconscious,” as opposed to “remaining conscious or at most preconscious” (1948, p.144). The seeds of this distinction were already discernible in a 1911 letter from Ferenczi to Freud, where Ferenczi differentiates between two phases of symbolism, namely, “phanerosymbolism” and “cryptosymbolism,” which respectively correspond to symbolism “*before* and *after* repression”⁶ (1949, p.244, emphasis in original).

Jones and Ferenczi’s emphasis on symbolism as an unconscious, primitive process, further reinforced Freud’s original view of “the symbolic relation” as “a relic and a mark of former identity” (1900, p.351). This “identity” was also seen to operate on an affective level. As Ferenczi suggested to Freud in 1911, “two things which are only slightly similar to each other in their sensory presentation may be identified symbolically if they are invested by the same emotion” (1949, p.244). Jones describes a similar process when he juxtaposes true symbolism to sublimation, arguing that in the case of the former the quality of the affect which invests the symbol remains unaltered, while in the case of the latter, both the idea and the quality of the affect undergo modification.

According to Jones, if the idea on which the affect is attached becomes modified in its

⁶ The etymology of the terms *phanerosymbolism* and *cryptosymbolism* derive from the Greek words φανερό (*phanero*) and κρυπτό (*crypto*), the former referring to that which is obvious or visible, and the latter to that which is hidden or secret. It is in this sense that *phanerosymbolism*, or symbolism *before* repression, corresponds to symbolism in its broad sense, as Jones describes it, whereas *cryptosymbolism*, or symbolism *after* repression, corresponds to Jones’ ‘true symbolism.’

symbolic representation, then the idea and its symbol are no longer perceived as identical, but as related. The symbolic relation in the case of sublimation then appears to be not one of *identity*, but one of *association*. However, as the psychoanalytic process has taught us, it is by means of an *associative* process that one may hope to recover the primal *identity* of the symbol, a fact that renders Jones' qualitative distinction between 'true symbolism' and sublimation at least questionable. That is, it seems more likely, not that there are two distinct processes of symbolism, but that symbolic processes operate along a continuum (conscious-unconscious, primary process-secondary process, fantasy-reality, etc.) rather than on the basis of discrete, unconscious substitutions. Charles Rycroft (1956) raises a similar critique to Jones' argument: "it is surely more logical to say that symbolism is a general capacity which may be used in two different ways than to subdivide symbolism into two separate categories according to the two different uses to which it is put" (p.140). At best, as Marion Milner points out, a "difficulty arises here from lack of a sufficiently clear distinction between the two uses of the process which has been given the name of symbolization" (1952, p.182).

While Jones and Ferenczi saw the atavistic identifications operating in the process of symbol formation as further proof of its primitive, regressive nature, Klein discerned a potential for higher-order functions even in unconscious 'true symbolism,' arguing that "symbolism is the foundation of all sublimation and of every talent, since it is by way of symbolic equation that things, activities and interests become the subject of libidinal phantasies" (1930, p.25). Klein elaborates:

...side by side with the libidinal interest, it is the anxiety arising in the phase that I have described⁷ which sets going the mechanism of *identification*. Since the child

⁷ Klein here refers to the anxiety arising out of the infant's sadistic phantasies and desire to destroy the object (the first object being the infant's own body), which lead the infant to displace these impulses and

desires to destroy the organs (penis, vagina, breast) which stand for the objects, he conceives a dread of the latter. This anxiety contributes to make him *equate the organs in question with other things*; owing to this equation these in their turn become objects of anxiety, and so he is impelled constantly to make other and new equations, which form the basis of his interest in the new objects and of symbolism. Thus, not only does symbolism come to be the foundation of all phantasy and sublimation but, more than that, upon it is built up the subject's relation to the outside world and to reality in general. (p.25, emphasis added)

That is, far from being indicative of a regressive primitive mode of functioning, according to Klein, symbolic identifications create and facilitate a relationship between the inner and the outside world. The Kleinian conceptualization of the symbol as that which creates a link between 'inside' and 'outside' will become crucial in much of the post-war psychoanalytic literature, and it is also central to my understanding of symbolic ruptures and traumatic experience. In fact, as it is discussed in the following section, Klein's views emerge as the basis of a major shift in the trajectory of the psychoanalytic thinking on symbolism at the unique historical juncture created by the Second World War.

III. Symbolism Revisited: From Content to Process

Interestingly, the psychoanalytic focus shifts dramatically after World War II, from attempts at deciphering the unconscious meaning of symbols, to attempts at illuminating the processes that underlie the symbolic function. The titles appearing in the most prominent psychoanalytic journals of the time are quite revealing: with few exceptions, Klein being the most notable one, papers published between 1920 and 1950

look for other objects, a displacement which carries a *symbolic* value: "The sadism becomes a source of danger because it offers an occasion for the liberation of anxiety and also because the weapons employed to destroy the object are felt by the subject to be leveled at his own person also. The object of the attack becomes a source of danger because the subject fears similar, retaliatory attacks from it. Thus, the wholly undeveloped ego is faced with a task which at this stage is quite beyond it—the task of mastering the severest anxiety" (1930, p.25). Symbolic equation becomes the way by which this anxiety is mastered.

carry titles such as “The spider as a symbol” (Abraham, 1923), “Five as a symbol” (Fuxe, 1944), “The mantle symbol” (Jones, 1927), “A castration symbol” (Riviere, 1924), “High blood pressure as a phallic symbol” (Stevens, 1933), etc. From the 1950s onwards, noticeable contributions to the process of symbol formation and symbolization begin to appear, alongside but separately from those concerned with the meaning of unconscious symbolism. In 1952 Milner publishes “Aspects of Symbolism in Comprehension of the Not-Self,” and the following year Winnicott’s paper on “Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena—A study of the first not-me possession” appears, even though Winnicott presented a version of the paper to the British Psycho-Analytical Society as early as May 1951. Three years later, in 1956, Rycroft publishes his paper on “Symbolism and its Relation to the Primary and Secondary Process,” and in 1957 there follows the publication of Hanna Segal’s “Notes on Symbol Formation.” Bion’s seminal paper “Attacks on Linking” appears in 1959. Having fled Europe, Hartmann, Rapaport and others, are also addressing the subject from the other side of the Atlantic, by virtue of their work on psychic structures and theories of thinking. By the 1960s and 70s, there ensues what one might call a ‘hyper-theorization’ of the symbolic process; psychoanalysts begin to refer to this process as ‘symbolization’ with more consistency, mostly in an attempt to distinguish it from the pre-existing literature on unconscious symbolism and its contents.

I would speculate that this gradual but dramatic shift in psychoanalytic thinking, from symbolic content to symbolic process, was largely the result of a decisive encounter of psychoanalysis with massive, collective trauma. The large-scale exterminations and radical displacements brought about by the atrocities of WW II necessitated a paradigm

shift, the invention of a new language even, that could account for the psychological realities of the time and of their impact both on psychoanalysts as individuals and psychoanalysis as a discipline. The mimetic relation between symbol and symbolized of the kind ‘airplanes and zeppelins=penis’ (Freud, 1916) was too simplistic to sustain the fragmented and chaotic reverberations of the war. The profound ways in which WWII shaped psychoanalysis in Europe and led to the development of ego psychology in the United States have already been outlined (see Roudinesco, 1990).⁸ What is pertinent for our purposes, is the way psychoanalysis itself was implicated in trauma, forever transformed by it, permanently de-centered and dispersed, quite literally. Suffice it to say that some of the most prominent psychoanalysts of the time emigrated from Europe to North and South America, seeking refuge from the Nazi extermination machine and many perished before they had a chance to flee. It was only natural that the evolution of mainstream psychoanalytic thinking in the aftermath of this historical moment would move in the direction of coping, integration and healing with an emphasis on the synthetic functions of the ego and the mechanisms of defense.

Just as we might say that the witnessing of WWI led Freud to posit the death drive, we might also wonder whether the witnessing of WWII led to its defensive repudiation in much of the psychoanalytic thinking that followed, thereby marginalizing a

⁸ Regarding the development of ego psychology and its founders Roudinesco writes:

Viennese by origin, Hartmann, like Kris, belonged to that central European tribe of Jews that had been forced to flee pogroms and change languages, diplomas, and cultures numerous times...he spent some time in Paris before landing permanently in America... There, he joined up with Lowenstein, who had himself been exiled from Poland, Berlin, and Paris. David Rapaport, for his part, had traveled a similarly tumultuous route...

It would be false to reduce ego psychology to a mere ideology for adapting subjects to capitalist society. If the notion of adaptation is one of the ideals of American life, it also informs the dreams of a certain Diaspora intent on ending its wanderings. From that perspective, *there was a link between the theory of ego autonomy and the private history of each of its founders.* (1990, p.168, emphasis added).

theory that allowed for an inherent destructiveness in human nature. It was in this historical context that theories of symbolization began to emerge with a painstaking sense of urgency. This sense of urgency was further intensified when psychoanalysis began to make its way through the doors of mental institutions, where it was met with the perplexing phenomena of psychoses and ‘war-neuroses’ on an unprecedented scale.⁹ In other words, not only was psychoanalysis pervaded by this historical trauma, but it also appears that the history of psychoanalysis itself was being inscribed in trauma.

IV. The Process of Symbol Formation

In the aftermath of the war, Klein’s challenge to Jones’ established view of symbolism as essentially primitive, and her reformulation of it as “the foundation of all sublimation and of every talent,” became especially appealing, as it offered an optimistic lens through which psychoanalysis could make sense out of non-sense and find order in disorder. Searching for a medium that would allow the working-through of its own trauma, psychoanalysis found itself investigating the symbolic processes operative in play, art and creativity; at a historical moment that marked the collapse of symbolic structures, it became essential to pursue a theorization of *symbol formation*.

Hanna Segal’s paper “Notes on Symbol Formation” (1957) constitutes a major attempt to delineate the process by which symbols come to be. Like Klein, Segal assigns a crucial role to anxiety in the process of symbol formation. “Symbol formation,” she

⁹ In their book “History Beyond Trauma,” French psychoanalysts Françoise Davoine and Jean-Max Gaudillière describe how they “kept finding the same reference to war among the pioneers of the psychoanalysis of the psychoses” (2004, p.102). “Who would have imagined,” they ask, “that a psychoanalysis of madness had begun in the barracks of field hospitals?” (p.106). As they argue, it is the “imminence of destruction—destruction of the self and the world—that madness shares with war traumas” (p.106). The relation between war traumas and psychosis is in fact quite apt since they are both defined by a disturbance in the parameters of reality (i.e. time, space, sequence, causality, etc.), and therefore by a breach in the boundary between inside and outside.

writes, “is an activity of the ego attempting to deal with the anxieties stirred by its relation to the object” (p.392). In this sense, anxiety is not only understood as a necessary ‘signal’ for the adaptation of the individual to the environment, but it also becomes the impetus for symbol formation and creativity. Working within the tradition of British object relations, Segal approaches symbol formation as an object-relational process, whereby “disturbances in differentiation between ego and object lead to disturbances in differentiation between the symbol and the object symbolized and therefore to concrete thinking characteristic of psychoses” (p.392). This bidirectional relationship between symbol and object allows Segal to introduce an alternative distinction to the one that Jones had proposed between conscious symbolism and unconscious or true symbolism. Segal distinguishes instead between “symbol proper,” which “is felt to *represent* the object,” and “symbolic equation,” where “the symbol-substitute is felt to *be* the original object” (Segal, p.395, emphasis in original). In this sense, Segal aligns Jones’ original view of the identification between symbol and symbolized with Klein’s paranoid-schizoid position, during which “parts of the ego and internal objects are projected into an object and identified with it” and “differentiation between the self and the object is obscured.” (p.393). The symbol proper on the other hand, which involves a degree of differentiation from that which it represents, is seen to be characteristic of the depressive position, during which “the separation from the object, ambivalence, guilt, and loss can be experienced and tolerated”; in this phase “the symbol is used not to deny but to overcome loss” (p.395).

Although Segal’s work was influential in problematizing Jones’ distinction between symbolism and sublimation, by recognizing in all symbolism a ubiquitous

“activity of the ego attempting to deal with the anxieties stirred by its relation to the object,” she still maintained a hierarchical distinction in the way that this activity is carried out; that is, she differentiated between symbol proper where this activity becomes adaptive and symbolic equation where it remains concrete and pathological. The work of Milner attempted to eliminate this distinction altogether, divorcing symbolic identifications from their primitive, psychopathological functions, even more emphatically than Klein had done. Milner vehemently criticized the traditional psychoanalytic approach to symbolism that treated the symbol as a mere distortion, a view that carried obvious pathological connotations. Instead, she (1952) introduced “the role of illusion in symbol formation,” as a *necessary* aspect of all symbolism, by means of which “the person producing the fusion [of two dissimilar objects] believes that the secondary object *is* the primary one” (p.183, emphasis in original). That is, what Segal considered as characteristic of concrete symbolic equation, Milner recast into a normative process. For instance, Milner viewed the analytic transference as a prime example of such “creative illusion” (p.183), where the figure of the analyst is fused, infused and identified with other “dissimilar objects.” Milner uses the word “fusion” here in the same way that Freud, Jones and others had used the word identification, to indicate the perceived similarity between an unconscious idea or object and its symbolic substitute. It is by means of such fusion, or of “finding the familiar in the unfamiliar,” Milner argues, that the subject creates the outside world. In discussing the psychoanalytic treatment of a young boy, Milner elucidates this process: “in the setting of the analytic play-room, he had been able to find a bit of the external world that was malleable; he had found that it was safe to treat it as a bit of himself, and so he had let it serve as a bridge between inner

and outer” (p.193). Phantasy plays a crucial role in this process since “it is only in phantasy that two dissimilar objects are fused into one” (p. 183). Thus, although for Milner, as for Klein, symbolization “is the basis of those skills by which we relate ourselves to the world around us” (p.194), it is through phantasy, the site of illusion, that such linking becomes possible.

The space within which inner and outer realities meet, interact, and transform each other, is perhaps most easily recognizable in Winnicott’s concept of potential or transitional space,¹⁰ which is itself an elaboration of the role of illusion in its capacity to link inside with outside. As Winnicott writes,

The transitional objects and transitional phenomena belong to the realm of illusion which is at the basis of initiation of experience. This early stage in development is made possible by the mother's special capacity for making adaptation to the needs of her infant, thus allowing the infant the illusion that what the infant creates really exists.

This intermediate area of experience, unchallenged in respect of its belonging to inner or external (shared) reality, constitutes the greater part of the infant's experience and throughout life is retained in the intense experiencing that belongs to the arts and to religion and to imaginative living, and to creative scientific work.

A positive value of illusion can therefore be stated. (1953, p.97)

The positive value of illusion becomes possible, Winnicott argues, when the illusion is neither challenged nor imposed (as happens with delusions for instance). It is as though the tolerance of illusion is a special allowance made to the infant by the world, which like art, religion and creative endeavors, is tolerated and accepted.

What Winnicott is essentially describing here, is a process of symbolization, through which the infant generates meaning and establishes its relation to the world by

¹⁰ If Milner’s views have a flavor of Winnicott’s thinking, and vice-versa, it is because of a kinship that ran deep between them, as colleagues, friends and, for a brief time, as analyst and patient. In his biography of Winnicott, Rodman goes so far as to say that “Milner was Winnicott’s only intellectual and imaginative peer in the British Society” (2003, p.139).

means of the transitional object. However, given the contentious literature on psychoanalytic symbolism that preceded his work, Winnicott goes to great lengths to disengage from the discourse of his time and establish the significance of transitional objects beyond their symbolic value:

It is true that the piece of blanket (or whatever it is) is symbolical of some part-object, such as the breast. Nevertheless the point of it is not its symbolic value so much as its actuality. Its not being the breast (or the mother) although real is as important as the fact that it stands for the breast (or mother).

When symbolism is employed the infant is already clearly distinguishing between fantasy and fact, between inner objects and external objects, between primary creativity and perception. But the term transitional object, according to my suggestion, gives room for the process of becoming able to accept difference and similarity. (1953, p.91)

While psychoanalytic symbolism relies heavily on similarity, or identification, between an idea and its symbol, the transitional object opens up a space that can hold the tension between both similarity and difference.

In his 1967 paper on “The Location of Cultural Experience,” which he saw as an extension of his earlier views, Winnicott makes the distinction between symbolism and transitional phenomena even more definitive, suggesting that while in unconscious symbolism one may assume to know what is being symbolized (“one always *knows*,” he comments sarcastically), thinking about transitional phenomena requires “a state of not-knowing” (p.368). Even though Winnicott clearly avoids making use of the word symbolism altogether when describing transitional phenomena so as not to evoke a canonical frame of reference and engage the lexical debates of his time, it seems to me that, had he been able to contextualize his theory today, he would certainly take interest in the symbolizing activity that the creation of transitional objects entails and that potential space makes possible.

In his paper “On Potential Space” (1985), Thomas Ogden takes this Winnicottian concept precisely in this direction, exploring its implications for more contemporary psychoanalytic notions of the capacity to symbolize. Ogden even suggests that “one could say that potential space lies between the symbol and the symbolized” (p.137). Locating potential space at the boundary between the symbol and that which it symbolizes might be a theoretical leap, but it creates a fruitful ground for reconceptualizing symbolization, as I propose to do in the next chapter, in terms of a *boundary-process*. Consistent with Winnicott’s own work, Ogden also identifies “potential space” as the site of creativity: “That space between symbol and symbolized, mediated by an interpreting self, is the space in which creativity becomes possible and is the space in which we are alive as human beings, as opposed to being simply reflexively reactive beings. This is Winnicott's potential space” (p.133). This is also the space, I would add (and I will proceed to expound in the following chapter), in which the inside encounters the outside and the subject becomes linked to the world.

V. The Symbolic Potential

Perhaps the most important implication of shifting the psychoanalytic emphasis from symbolic content to symbolic process, is that of acknowledging the *symbolic potential*. The closed system of meanings inhabited by the ‘true’ psychoanalytic symbol is replaced by an open system of possibilities, thus allowing the symbol to acquire multiple and varied forms. This led psychoanalysts to recognize, as Kubie (1953) put it, that “every symbol is a multivalent tool” (p.68):

That is to say that simultaneously on conscious, preconscious, and/or unconscious levels every direct or indirect representation of any conceptual process will in all

circumstances, if in varying proportions, be literal, allegorical, and also “symbolic” in the dreamlike or psychoanalytic sense. Consequently, in actual daily use symbols are simultaneously charged with meaning in all three ways and on all three levels. *This makes of every symbol a chord with a potentiality of at least nine simultaneous overtones.* (p.68, emphasis added)

According to Kubie, the potentiality of the symbol lies in its ability to function simultaneously on multiple levels of representation. To carry on with Kubie’s metaphor, the overtones produced by the symbol-chord, sound the echoes of inside and outside all at once. Kubie explains:

every symbolic unit hangs like a hammock between two poles, one internal or bodily (the “I”) and one external (the “Non-I”); so that whenever we consciously think and speak of the outer world, we are wittingly or unwittingly thinking and speaking of the inner world: and similarly when we are consciously thinking and speaking of the inner world, whether we realize it or not, we are simultaneously thinking and speaking of the outer world. (p.74)

Kubie’s argument here might be far-fetched in its assumption that every mental event has its counterpart in inner and outside reality; but perceiving “the function of the symbolic process as a bridge between the inner and outer world” (p.71) carries much merit: it forces one to appreciate that “the differentiation of the “I” from the “Non-I” is always relative and never absolute” (p.71). The symbol as that which establishes a continuity between inside and outside, functions as a transitional object in Winnicott’s sense, whereby external reality both appropriates the internal world and becomes appropriated, by it, through a mutual reciprocity.

Charles Rycroft (1956), who argues that “once a symbol has been formed it may be used either by the primary or the secondary process” (p.144), understands the specific linking function of the symbol as possible only in the context of the secondary process. “If used by the secondary process,” Rycroft argues, “the symbol remains related to the outside world and symbol-formation leads to a widening of the individual’s interests”

(p.144). However, by allowing for the symbol to be employed by either the primary or the secondary process, which respectively produce different outcomes, Rycroft too recognizes the *potentiality* of the symbol, the indefinite possibilities of its transformation in ever-changing, unpredictable directions. In his own words, “symbolization is a general tendency or capacity of the mind, one which may be used by the primary or the secondary process, neurotically or realistically, for defence or self-expression, to maintain fixation or to promote growth” (p. 142). That is, for Rycroft, it is not the symbol per se that may be deemed as a primitive, unconscious, symbolic equation, or as a higher-order representation, a symbol proper; rather, it is the *process* through which the symbol materializes that determines its ultimate form and function.

By emphasizing the role of the primary and secondary processes, Rycroft attempts to integrate and reconcile a traditional notion of symbolism as a representation of mental contents, with a conceptualization of symbolization as a *process*. This theoretical transposition decisively moved the psychoanalytic literature on the subject away from the contents of the unconscious and towards the processes by which psychic structures become organized. Rycroft himself stresses this point in his introduction to his paper on “Symbolism and its Relationship to the Primary and Secondary Processes”: “I have also been profoundly influenced by Brierley’s conception of metapsychology as a process-theory and her stress on the need to relate psycho-analytical theory to the trend of modern thought which is ‘a movement away from analyzing into things and towards analyzing into processes’” (1956, p.137).

In tandem with “modern thought” (or what we might now call postmodern), psychoanalytic thinkers following Rycroft moved indeed “towards analyzing into

processes”; they began to shift their interest, in other words, away from the ‘what’ of unconscious material and towards the ‘how’ of unconscious processes (which has eventually led to a keen interest in the analytic process and the transfigurations of transference and counter-transference dynamics). For the most part, contemporary psychoanalytic theorists have completely discarded Jones’ original view of symbolism as primitive and regressive, and have focused on exploring symbolization as a psychological process, a mental capacity, a developmental achievement, or an inherently human endeavor, which forever remains susceptible to the disruptions of traumatic experience.

VI. Towards Symbolization

The shift towards a more systematic view of symbolization as a process coincided with the years of ‘the great metapsychology debate,’ which disputed to various degrees the theoretical utility of the economic, structural, dynamic, and topographical models of mental functioning. At this time, psychoanalysts began to move towards other theoretical paradigms and more experimental methods of investigation, drawing on clinical observations and empirical findings, and turning to fields like developmental psychology, cognitive psychology (especially the information-processing model), and linguistics (or ‘psycholinguistics’ as it has come to be known) to inform their thinking. Margaret Mahler’s studies of mother-infant interactions and Jean Piaget’s studies of cognitive development in children heavily influenced the emergent psychoanalytic theories on the development of symbolic processes; in addition, the work of Werner and Kaplan on symbol formation, Susanne Langer’s philosophical contributions, and the work of prominent linguists like Ferdinand de Saussure, Whorf, Sapir, and Chomsky, expanded

the psychoanalytic understanding of symbols and the use of language.¹¹ The attempt to integrate the fruitful work of related fields also led to a revisiting and revising of earlier psychoanalytic theories in light of new insights (e.g. Atkin, 1969; Bleich, 1976; Basch, 1977; Edgcombe, 1984). Most importantly, the integration of disciplines provided psychoanalysis with new theoretical tools through which to understand disturbances in symbolic functioning, from somatization disorders to schizophrenic thought (e.g. McDougall, 1974; Blatt et al, 1975). In recent years, there has also been a surge of interest in developmental and cognitive research studies that examine the emergence of a ‘theory of mind’ in children, and approach the capacity to form symbols and generate meaning as an ontogenetic process (e.g. Fonagy et. al., 2002; Fonagy & Target, 1996; Slade, 1999). This ontogenetic approach places the origins of symbolization and language acquisition roughly at the point of differentiation between mother and infant, reverberating in this way early psychoanalytic ideas on object loss as the impetus for symbolization.

The theoretical influence of other disciplines and the paradigm shifts that ensued led to significant revisions, or reinterpretations, of various metapsychological concepts, such as the primary and secondary process, the drive, cathexis etc., so as to render them more compatible with these new ways of thinking. Pinchas Noy’s (1973) work is rather intriguing, as it constitutes a noteworthy attempt to synthesize psychoanalytic theory with a cognitive, information-processing model of the mind to formulate a theory of symbolization as a mental process. Noy’s model takes into account both unconscious symbolism and higher-order symbolization, albeit with a disregard for such hierarchy.

¹¹ See Litowitz & Litowitz (1977) for a condensed, yet thorough, synopsis of the influence of linguistic theory on psychoanalysis.

He proposes to view symbolization as an “organizing process” of the mental apparatus that categorizes information into three modes: objective, conceptual and subjective. The objective and conceptual categories are reality-oriented and receive data from the outside world (Noy calls these the “horizontal modes”), while the subjective category (the “vertical mode”) is self-centered and receives data originating from the self “in its various states of present and past feeling and experience” (p. 129). This classification of the organizing processes, Noy admits, “is obviously an artificial one, because in practice the mental apparatus does not function according to three distinct sets of processes” (p.129). But it is a classification that allows him to incorporate unconscious symbolic processes into the same system that organizes and processes the outside world; it is a model in other words, that attempts to bridge the distinction between inside and outside.

Noy redefines the primary and secondary processes in terms of these symbolizing modes, perceiving the primary process to operate according to the subjective mode, serving self-centered functions, and the secondary process to operate according to the objective and conceptual modes, serving reality-oriented functions. The techniques of mental representation, argues Noy, are always based on the latter, for “no technique can ignore, bypass, or overcome the basic tendency of the perceptual apparatus to organize any material through its horizontal, reality-oriented modes” (p.154). However, information organized by the self-centered mode may still be represented and symbolized if the reality-oriented modes are used as “auxiliary means, even if they are out of context as to the contents” that the self-centered mode is dealing with (p.154). In suggesting that the functions of the primary process can always find representation by means of the secondary process, Noy assumes a synergy between the two, countering in this way the

long-held psychoanalytic view that maintained the two as separate, distinct processes. In fact, in an earlier paper, Noy (1969) proposed that the primary process continues to develop alongside the secondary one throughout the course of life “to enable the smooth *integrated* functions of the two systems” (p.176, emphasis added).

The attempt to integrate the functions of primary and secondary process is essential to a model that treats symbolization, not simply as a substitution of one idea by another, but as that which organizes and processes mental contents. This is why Blum (1978), like Noy, is led to assert that “there is no sharp demarcation between primary and secondary process” (p.460). Blum also takes interest in the developmental trajectory of the two processes: “I would presume the primary process derived symbolism, which ‘knows no grammar’ to precede the development of the secondary process, which is interdependent with language development” (p.459). Language development and unconscious symbolism, both partake of the symbolizing function but, in Blum’s view, they follow separate paths of development. In this sense, he maintains a distinction between the two while recognizing their inevitable interaction. Blum explains:

Starting out on different developmental paths, unconscious symbolism as a drive derivative, and language as a relatively autonomous function of the ego, the two uniquely human processes interweave, intersect and overlap in their influence and function while retaining a separate character throughout life. Except in regressive states when the rational symbolic process of language and its communicative function may be lost, or during controlled regression in the service of the ego, language remains a remarkable stable acquisition associated with abstract thought and conceptualization. This point of view maintains valuable distinctions between primary, secondary and different symbolic processes, while recognizing that normal psychic adult functioning involves a blending and interpretation of primary and secondary processes under the control of the ego. (1978, p.459)

Insofar as primary and secondary processes in “normal psychic adult functioning,” and in non-regressive states, are subsumed “under the control of the ego,” all symbolization

including “unconscious symbolism” can become an ego function. In this sense, Blum deviates from a strictly Freudian view of symbolism as a manifestation of the primary process, and aligns himself with Rycroft (1956) who argues that “the process of symbol formation presupposes some degree of ego development” (Blum, 1978, p.457).

Assigning the process of symbolization to the work of the ego carries multiple implications, not the least of which is a de-emphasis on the work of the drives and their role in symbol formation, which anticipates the gradual but determined severing of contemporary psychoanalysis from drive theory.

Loewald also provides a revised and modified view of the primary and secondary processes and the way they facilitate symbolization. His theory assigns a central role to the drives, for which he prefers the terms ‘instincts’ or ‘instinctual drives,’ and, building on Rapaport’s view who speaks of a “drive-organization” (Rapaport, 1950, p.163), Loewald proposes to understand drives as a source for “psychic organization” (Loewald, 1971, p.132). In this sense, Loewald divests the Freudian concept of ‘cathexis,’ or libidinal investment, from its economic overtones, and redefines it in structural terms “as a concept for organizing activity” (1978, p.195). He also reconceptualizes Freud’s view of hypercathexes as that which links thing-presentations to word-presentations and facilitates the transition from the primary to the secondary process, to suggest that this process of transformation is a mental, organizing act that *differentiates* between ‘thing’ and ‘word.’ In Loewald’s view (1978), the primary process is primary not only in that it predates the secondary process, but also in that it is “unitary, non-differentiating, non-discriminating between various elements or components of a global event or experience” (p.196). Drawing from developmental theory, he views the mother’s words to the infant,

to belong to the “global affair” that the infant is capable of perceiving in the early stages of life, without being able to acknowledge the separateness between thing and word. In this sense, the secondary process is not only discriminating between word and thing but “in this same act the original wholeness is kept alive by an articulating integration that makes a textured totality out of a global one” (p. 196). Through the secondary process, “what was homogeneous becomes a manifold whose elements are linked together” (p.196). Symbolization then, consists in the transformation from primary to secondary process, through a process of differentiating between the oneness of word and thing to which the infant is introduced from birth.

Influenced by the work of Loewald, Freedman (1985) further elaborates the concept of symbolization as transformation and organization of drive activity, proposing that symbolization follows a developmental progression: from drive discharge to symbolic equations, to the formation of symbols, and eventually to what he calls sublimated symbolization. This is a model that establishes continuity and a set of relations between the processes that Jones had seen as distinct in the form of unconscious symbolism on the one hand, and sublimation on the other. For Freedman, these become the two poles of symbolization, with symbolic equations and the formation of symbols progressively paving the way that leads from unconscious symbolism to sublimation.

Freedman suggests that the development, or “transformation,” from one mode of symbolic function to another is the result of a dialectical process that involves a thesis, its antithesis, and eventually a synthesis into a higher level of symbolization. As he explains,

...in any mental organization there is a predominant wish—the thesis; within the context of an object relationship, there inevitably arises a latent unconscious

unacceptable wish—the antithesis; and, the ensuing conflict, arising at the point when a wish is not gratified, contributes to the finding of a new object and a new symbol—the synthesis. This theme is illustrated in three key spheres in which transformational activity can be noted. The first sphere involves the shift from discharge to symbolic equation; the second, from symbolic equation to the formation of symbols; and the third, the shift from symbol to sublimated symbolization. At each stage, the phenomena can be observed as part of the associative process, and it is in the alteration of the associative process that dynamic shifts are discernible” (p. 319).

Incorporating early psychoanalytic views on the subject, Freedman’s model perceives symbolization to be the outcome of unconscious conflict between two competing wishes that is mediated, and mitigated, by an object relationship. Drawing from a Kleinian perspective where the anxiety of damaging a libidinal object leads the subject “to the finding of a new object and a new symbol,” Freedman argues that it is “within the context of an object relationship” that synthesis takes place. The analytic relationship serves to foster precisely such a synthetic function, where the analyst acts as “both an inducer of the disjunctive experience” that brings about the antithesis, “and the facilitator creating new pathways toward its resolution” (p.329). In fact, Freedman goes so far as to suggest that “it is the experience of a disjunction which is the origin of a psychic structure” (p.335). Freedman elucidates his concept of transformation from disjunction to structure, tracing his work back to Loewald’s contributions: “according to Loewald, the transition from primary to secondary process, from narcissism to object relatedness, from lower to higher structures, always involves disorganization and reorganization within the context of an object relationship...This line of thinking is precisely what I have tried to show at each stage of the transformation process” (p.336).

The function of disjunction as the origin of structure proves particularly useful to a theorization of trauma as it recognizes in ruptures the potential for repair. Insofar as

trauma may be re-experienced, or re-enacted, “within the context of an object relationship” that sustains and supports the interpersonal link, the disjunction may become the basis for restructuring a ruptured structure.

VII. On Desymbolization

Symbolization as a process of transformation encompasses a broad spectrum of psychic and mental functioning. The problem of having a definition of symbolism as narrow as that of Jones, has been replaced in this sense by the problem of having a concept as broad as symbolization. There is hardly a psychoanalytic thinker who has not directly or indirectly addressed the subject by means of a reference to the primary or secondary process, to the organization of psychic structures, to memory and language, to integration, organization and structuring. Such a broad conceptualization of the symbolizing process creates multiple forms and ways in which it might stumble, regress, deteriorate, or even collapse. These ‘failings’ may transpire in one or all of the spheres within which an individual operates, from the realm of the intrapsychic, to that of the intersubjective, the interpersonal, and the social. Psychoanalysis has long posited that it is in the analytic sphere that the vicissitudes of symbolization may be more closely observed, dissected, deconstructed and ultimately restored. Freedman and Russell (2003) also make this point, when they propose a four-stage model of “incremental symbolization,” through which the dimensions of a patient’s inner life may be discerned in the analytic discourse. They posit four symbolic forms that have their identifiable markers in language: namely, incipient symbolization, discursive symbolization, dynamic symbolization and desymbolization, all of which unfold along their own developmental

trajectory. I will focus my discussion here on desymbolization, as it signifies the symbolic form that finds a prominent manifestation in the inner life of the traumatized subject.

While Freedman and Berzofsky (1995) had defined desymbolization as the “absence of symbolization” (p.365), Freedman and Russell go a step further to describe desymbolization both structurally and topographically, as “a motivated act, a defensive organization, aimed at the throttling of the meaningful and the symbolic” (p. 75) or, alternatively, “as the collapse of psychic space” (p.74). They distinguish between three dimensions of desymbolization, each of which carries its own symbolic form: psychic equivalence, affect foreclosure, and disavowal. The first of these forms, psychic equivalence, is indicative of concreteness that leaves no space for “the linking (Bindung) or connecting of two spheres of the mind which is a function so essential to symbolization.” (p. 71). Affect foreclosure refers to the “unmentalized,” a process of “evacuation,” whereby tension is immediately discharged “into somatic or motor spheres of expression... The result can be psychic emptiness or a prevalence of primitive modes of defense” (p. 72). Finally, disavowal points to “the exclusion or even destruction of meaning as a motivated act...[it] is signified by registration and then repudiation” (p.72).

Freedman and Russell acknowledge the relation of desymbolization to such psychoanalytic ideas as Bion’s ‘attacks on linking’ (1959), and Green’s work of the ‘negative’ (1973). They also make an effort to elucidate the common ground between desymbolization and dissociation, stating that both concepts indicate a “breakdown of the capacity to link,” “a vertical split,” and the presence of trauma (p.76). Finally, they differentiate between desymbolization and concepts such as Bollas’ ‘the unthought

known' (1987) and Stern's 'unformulated experience' (1997) by positing that unlike the latter, "desymbolization implies both knowing and not wanting to know; that is, an active defense against knowing" (p. 84). At the same time, however, in defending against knowing, desymbolization implies an active process which betrays a nascent, organized structure. As Freedman and Russell suggest, "the very act of expelling signification implies an awareness, however peripheral, that there may yet be signification. In this attempt at destroying meaning, we recognize that awareness, albeit in the rudimentary form of a fragmented yet organized ego" (p. 76). The concept of 'symbolic ruptures' that I propose in this project, aims to highlight precisely this underlying organization, the hidden structure, the disguised operation of the symbolic in what might appear to be a mere destruction, or absence of meaning.

The following chapter elaborates on the concept of 'symbolic ruptures' and its relation to trauma, from a psychoanalytic perspective that is missing from the review of the literature that has been presented in this chapter, namely the work of Jacques Lacan. Lacan's notion of the symbolic markedly differs from all other psychoanalytic schools of thought in that it is conceptualized as a hypothetical realm in which we all, without exception, become situated, rather than a mental capacity, or a developmental achievement which we gradually acquire. Despite the significant controversy and criticism that surrounds Lacan's work, his approach to symbolization offers a valuable lens to trauma, as it precludes the possibility of desymbolization. In other words, Lacan's theory is based on the premise that the symbolic exists prior to the subject and that the subject is introduced to it regardless of the subsequent ways in which he might negotiate this insertion. This view stipulates that those experiences which bring us to the limits of

our understanding are not incomprehensible, but rather, that they continue to be decisively symbolic, thus creating a new imperative for their understanding.

Chapter 2

Symbolic Ruptures and The Work of Misrecognition

I. A Psychology of Afterwardness

In the first chapter, I provided an overview of the main psychoanalytic literature on symbolization, and its evolution over the course of the 20th century, drawing primarily on the writings of thinkers who worked from within the psychoanalytic traditions of Britain and North America. In this chapter, I will present a theory of symbolization following along the path that was paved by Lacan in France (but who argued that it was Freud's path all along).¹² I find that this path lends itself well to an investigation of the language of trauma, as the ambiguity (sometimes even lack of clarity) inherent in its exploratory, open-ended methodology creates a space that tolerates and invites a pursuit of the ineffable, of that which cannot find conscious articulation but which persists in the language of the unconscious.

When Freud first spoke of metapsychology, what he had in mind was not a dynamic, structural, topographical or economic theory, but rather a “psychology that leads behind consciousness” (1898, p.301), a psychology of the unconscious.

Interestingly, and quite inadvertently, Freud coined a term that anticipated the chief characteristic of traumatic experience: namely, the fact that its true recognition, its full impact, is always constituted belatedly for, etymologically, the Greek prefix ‘meta’

¹² Lacan's project was to rectify Freud from what he regarded as the mis-readings and distortions that his work suffered in its English translations and in the hands of his followers in Europe and North America. In an address to the Vienna Neuropsychiatric Clinic in 1955, which was later published as “The Freudian Thing or the Meaning of the Return to Freud in Psychoanalysis,” he declared: “[Freud] was disowned, not by the land in which, by virtue of his tradition, he was merely a temporary guest, but by the very field he left in our care and by those to whom custody of that field was entrusted—that is, the psychoanalytic movement itself, where things have come to such a pass that to call for a return to Freud is seen as a reversal” (2006, p.335).

(μετα-) of *metapsychology*, does not only denote a ‘beyond,’ or a ‘behind,’ but also an ‘after.’ Metapsychology then literally points to a psychology *after* consciousness, a psychology of knowing-after and, ultimately, a psychology of ‘afterwardness,’ of Freud’s ‘*Nachträglichkeit*,’ or of *après coup* knowledge, of ‘deferred action.’ Although metapsychology, as a multivalent theory that approached mental life primarily in dynamic and economic terms may have faded, psychoanalysis persists as a psychology of the unconscious and, more specifically, as a psychology of afterwardness insofar as the unconscious may only be known in retrospect.

This afterwardness is a hallmark of the ‘unsymbolized,’ the range of ‘deferred’ human experiences that may remain “behind consciousness,” but which afterward insist in making their presence known intrusively and disturbingly, demanding recognition. As Caruth tells us, this is “the central Freudian insight into trauma”: that “the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its *belatedness*, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time” (1995, p.9, emphasis added). In this sense, psychoanalysis as a psychology of afterwardness, of belatedness, marks off a symbolic border, a potential space between the conscious and the unconscious, the knowable and the unknown, in which we might locate, always already in retrospect, the as yet unsymbolized dimensions of trauma. Building on Lacan’s theorizing, I propose to conceptualize symbolization as a ‘boundary-process,’ a process which essentially straddles the boundaries between conscious and unconscious, inside and outside, subject and object. It is these boundaries, it seems to me, that become blurred in traumatic experience.

II. The Symbolic Order and Beyond

The work of Jacques Lacan introduces a radical reformulation to the concept of symbolization in psychoanalysis by approaching it, not as a developmental process of symbol formation and language acquisition, but as the ubiquitous insertion of the subject into the symbolic register. “Before a child can learn to articulate language,” writes Lacan, “we have to assume that signifiers, which are already of the symbolic order, have appeared” (1997a, p.149).¹³ According to this view, symbolization does not begin with language acquisition, but with an encounter with the symbolic network of signifiers that sustains culture, and which antedates the subject. In this sense, the subject always arrives *belatedly* to a world which already precedes him. What lies ‘beyond’ the symbolic, the ‘pre-symbolic,’ which Lacan identifies as the registers of the Real and the Imaginary, is seldom experienced, since “from the moment that the specific structure of this emergence [of language] is grasped, we find it absolutely impossible to speculate on what preceded it other than by symbols which were always applicable” (Lacan, 1988, p.5). Lacan is adamant on this point: “The symbolic order from the first takes on its universal character. It isn't constituted bit by bit” (1988, p.29). The “universal,” overarching character of the symbolic order is what constitutes the subject as such, a subject that for Lacan is first and foremost the subject of the unconscious. Thus, the symbolic order is as much the cultural

¹³ Lacan’s “signifier” is a term borrowed from the structural linguistics of Ferdinand De Saussure. Litowitz and Litowitz provide a brief description of the terms ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’ in De Saussure’s work, that are also employed by Lacan, albeit with a slight modification in meaning:

For De Saussure the linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound image. He retains the word 'sign' to designate the whole and replaces concept by 'signified' and sound image by 'signifier'. He differentiates the symbol from the sign in that the symbol is never wholly arbitrary, nor is it empty, as there is the rudiment of a natural bond between the signifier and the signified. The linguistic sign, on the other hand, is always arbitrary. In other words, the relationship between the signifier and signified (constituting the linguistic sign) is completely assigned by convention. These distinctions are the basis for the science of semiology which spring from De Saussure's work and has become important for some recent psychoanalysts (Rosen, Lacan, Edelson). (1977, p.423)

domain as it is the domain of the unconscious; most of human experience begins and ends with it. Insofar as the Lacanian unconscious is inscribed in the symbolic order, it is “structured in the most radical way like a language” (Lacan, 2001, p.259).

Lacan localizes the unconscious in the place of the big “Other”—as opposed to the small “other” (the ‘objet petit a’ as he calls it), an object of projections, identifications etc., that participates in the intersubjective field. The big Other is tantamount to the symbolic order, “that before which you make yourself recognized” (Lacan, 1997a, p.51). Lacan summarizes the relation of the subject to the big Other of the symbolic order through the schema L, a schema in the shape of the letter Z, where the subject ‘S’ is positioned on the upper left side and the Other ‘O’ on the lower right side. As he explains,

the condition of the subject S (neurosis or psychosis) is dependent on what is being unfolded in the Other O. What is being unfolded there is articulated like a discourse (the unconscious is the discourse of the Other), whose syntax Freud first sought to define for those bits that come to us in certain privileged moments, in dreams, in slips of the tongue or pen, in flashes of wit. (2001, p.214)

Everything that unfolds in the unconscious can only be revealed, or spoken, through the big Other of the symbolic order in those “bits,” or ‘accidents’ of enunciation, “before which you make yourself recognized.” Thus, far from being a chaotic id-entity, the Lacanian unconscious appears as a discourse and, more specifically, a discourse of an Other. Radical as this notion may be, it points to an unconscious that is constantly engaged in an act of interlocution that produces signification at the same time that it ‘slips.’

In Lacan’s theoretical system then, there seems to be little space for ‘desymbolization,’ or symbolic failures, precisely because such failures comprise the

discourse of the unconscious, which is spoken through linguistic accidents, parapraxes, symptoms, enactments, and dreams. While a subject may be said to ‘desymbolize,’ in Freedman’s sense of the term, or ‘attack’ the process of ‘linking,’ as Bion would have it, Lacan would argue that the very act of desymbolization partakes in the discourse of the unconscious and is therefore embedded in the order of the symbolic. I would therefore posit that what becomes most critical in such “attacks on linking” is not the meaninglessness that might ensue, but rather the presence of an addressee, an Other who receives the meaninglessness, and who articulates it as a discourse of the unconscious. The discourse of trauma and psychosis remains indecipherable only to the extent that the ‘Other’ fails to receive it, so that it is compelled to return, muffled, back to the same place.

For Lacan, that which “returns, and guarantees that it will always return, to the same place,” belongs to the realm of the Real (Lacan, 1997b, p.75). Interwoven with the Symbolic and the Imaginary, the Real constitutes the third register that circumscribes human experience; it is that which is expelled from the Symbolic and which “resists symbolisation absolutely” (Lacan, 1991, p.66). In the history of the subject, the real exists prior and beyond the orders of the symbolic and the imaginary; in this sense, it is pre-symbolic. However, the “universal character” of the symbolic ensures that the real is never experienced *absolutely*. In other words, the Real proper can only exist in theory; in actuality, it is always interdependent with the symbolic and the imaginary in a relation that, in his latest seminars, Lacan likened to the Borromean knot, a set of three rings “which is such that one of its links, when missing, sets all the others free” (Lacan, 1999, p.128). That is, the real lends support to the symbolic at the same time that it lies beyond

it; in Slavoj Žižek 's words, it is “the lack around which the symbolic order is structured” (1989, p.170). The lack in the real is therefore a lack of the symbolic, it renders the big Other incomplete, castrated; hence, Lacan’s notation of the big Other as barred.

Far from being a metaphysical construct, the real appears as a negativity of the mind akin to what André Green has discerned in “states of blankness”: “a ‘blank hole’ in the mind, which not only acts as an inner void but has a power of attracting all mental contents or thoughts” (Green, 1998, p.652). That which is juxtaposed to the symbolic is therefore not simply a hole, a lack, a mere emptiness, but a negative *space* wherein the symbolic is consumed; thus, this negativity holds something of the symbolic, it remains connected to it, as if from a thread. Alan Sheridan, Lacan’s translator, describes it similarly, “as that which is lacking in the symbolic order, the ineliminable residue of all articulation, the foreclosed element, which may be approached, but never grasped: *the umbilical cord of the symbolic*” (Sheridan, 1998, p.280, emphasis added). Interestingly, the real as a register that lies beyond grasp seems to enclose that aspect of human experience, which Freud first encountered in the analysis of dreams:

There is often a passage in even the most thoroughly interpreted dream which has to be left obscure; this is because we become aware during the work of interpretation that at that point there is a tangle of dream-thoughts which cannot be unravelled and which moreover adds nothing to our knowledge of the content of the dream. *This is the dream's navel, the spot where it reaches down into the unknown.* (Freud, 1900, p.525, emphasis added)

One cannot fail to notice the parallel metaphor in the language of Freud and Sheridan: The “dream’s navel,” the ‘un-interpretable’ core of the dream, reaches down as through an “umbilical cord,” so that the “point of contact with the unknown” (Freud, 1900, p.111), becomes at once the point of contact with the real, the “spot” where the symbolic, the dream, loses its decipherable meaning. It is not that the dream itself becomes

indecipherable, inherently meaningless, but that it reaches a point that exceeds the analyst's (as well as the patient's) limits of understanding; that is, the Other fails to receive it.

If we follow this metaphor further, we will discover perhaps that the umbilical cord leads back to the Mother; it “returns, and guarantees that it will always return, to the same place,” of the maternal womb. It is not a coincidence that Lacan is compelled to posit a *paternal signifier*, the “Name-of-the-Father,” as an embodiment of a Law that introduces the subject to the symbolic by severing the imaginary bond between mother and child.¹⁴ The law of the father, the foundation of all social structures, enforces the impossibility of returning to the maternal womb, the impossibility of returning to the real—that mental space that knows no signification. At the same time, insofar as the advent of the paternal signifier inserts the subject into the register of the symbolic, including the symbolic of the unconscious, it precludes the possibility of a consciousness that can be fully present to itself. The paternal signifier therefore introduces a split in the subject (reminiscent of the Saussurian split between the signifier and the signified), so that the subject of the unconscious is inevitably a barred subject. The Lacanian subject is a being that has little access to his own truth, to the bits and pieces of his experience that constitute his subjectivity, including the experience of the real.

However, while the domain of human experience that belongs to the “blank hole” of the real remains largely inaccessible, its gravitational pull is felt at the point where it cuts through the symbolic, “the point of contact” or, more emphatically, the point of

¹⁴ The symbolic father, for Lacan, is also an allusion to the murdered father of *Totem and Taboo* who, by means of dying, becomes the law. Lacan explains: “if this murder is the fruitful moment of debt through which the subject binds himself for life to the Law, the symbolic Father is, in so far as he signifies this Law, the dead Father” (2001, 221).

impact, which is also a point of rupture. This juncture constitutes the site of trauma and psychosis,¹⁵ the boundary that both separates and connects reality with the real. John Muller recognizes the importance of maintaining this boundary: “If we manage to live without going mad,” he asserts, “it is because we construct and maintain a boundary at the edge of the Real; this line, this lining of our daily lives, provides the essential, primal boundary of the human subject. Ordinarily, the images and words provided by our culture shield us from contact with the Real” (1996, p.142). A transgression of this boundary would mark the collapse of the structures—both mental and cultural—that provide a minimum of consistency for the subject, for ‘being-in-the-world,’ as Heidegger would have it. Such a collapse becomes discernible in states of war that introduce a radical and abrupt rupture in the guarantees of the symbolic, in the consistency of the Law. And yet, even those most chaotic of states are utterly structured: not only does war unfold on the basis of meticulously devised strategic movements carried out by armies who are themselves the epitome of structure, but its rules of engagement are also bound by Law (literally, the Geneva and Hague Conventions). As Elaine Scarry plainly puts it, “war too—as is quietly registered in the language of theaters of battle, international dialogues, scenarios, and stages—has within it a large element of the symbolic... the rules of war are equally arbitrary and again depend on convention, agreement, and participation” (1985, p.62). In fact, I would argue that the structure of war is supported by chaos, just like the symbolic is supported by the real; it is *because* of its chaos that war must maintain its structure at all costs. The proximity to the real causes the symbolic

¹⁵ If I’m using trauma and psychosis alongside each other is not only because they often co-occur, but also because “each time theory tries to dissociate madness and trauma, the social cost increases” (Davoine and Gaudillière, 2004, p.130). Both trauma and psychosis elude our attempts to receive and decipher them, just as they seek out a symbolic Other whom they can address.

element of war to strengthen, to rigidify so as not to collapse. We observe the same rigidity in the complex and, often, fixed structure of delusional systems, the insistence of hallucinatory voices, the persistence of night terrors and flashbacks. The boundary, the “shield” that we construct at “the edge of the Real,” becomes all the more inflexible and firm at the face of an annihilatory threat.

Interestingly, Freud located this ‘shielding function,’ the guarding of the subject, in the function of the ego, an ego that, at least in part, owes its formation to the very externality to which it strives to adapt and from which it seeks to protect the subject:

Under the influence of the real external world around us, one portion of the id has undergone a special development. From what was originally a cortical layer, equipped with the organs for receiving stimuli and with arrangements for acting as a protective shield against stimuli, a special organization has arisen which henceforward acts as an intermediary between the id and the external world. To this region of our mind we have given the name of *ego*. (Freud, 1938, p.145)

Lacan also assigns to the ego the role of an “intermediary” that mediates between the symbolic and the real, shielding their point of contact and structuring in its place the area of human experience that belongs to the Imaginary. It is important to clarify here that Lacan’s “ego isn’t the I”; “it is something else—a particular object within the experience of the subject. Literally, the ego is an object—an object which fills a certain function which we here call the imaginary function” (1988, p.44).

The Imaginary completes the Borromean knot that maps out the domain of the subject; it is the field of illusion, imagination and lure, the field, we might say, of desire. Its initial function consists in the formation of the ego through the ‘mirror stage,’ where the subject first recognizes himself as a body. According to Lacan, “the child, at an age when he is for a time, however short, outdone by the chimpanzee in instrumental intelligence, can nevertheless already recognize as such his own image in a mirror”

(2001, p.1). At this time, the child begins to acquaint himself with his own reflection, through the mirroring (m)other. He then identifies the unified whole of his specular image at the level of the body as the totality of his being, concealing the “primary unintegration” of “primitive emotional development” (Winnicott, 1945, p.142). That is, the first inkling of an ‘I’ arises out of a mis-perception: an illusory identification with a specular ‘whole’ image (of the (m)other who performs the act of mirroring), when in fact all that exists are non-contiguous sensations in a vastness of space and time. The mirror stage then “manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality” (Lacan, 2001, p.5). The child’s lack of bodily control and integration begins to be organized around a consistent ‘other’ who is contiguous in space and time (as in a mirror-image). However, insofar as the “totality” of the body, and later of the ‘I,’ results from an identification with an external image, the subject becomes, on an imaginary level, fundamentally ‘de-centered,’ and alienated from his own subjectivity. Lacan elaborates:

The entire dialectic [of the mirror stage]...is based on the relation between, on the one hand, a certain level of tendencies which are experienced—let us say, for the moment, at a certain point in life—as disconnected, discordant, in pieces—and there’s always something of that that remains—and on the other hand, a unity with which it is merged and paired. It is in this unity that the subject for the first time knows himself as a unity, but as an alienated, virtual unity. (1988, p.50)¹⁶

¹⁶ Even though Lacan himself did not approve of a developmental perspective, advocating instead for the “universal character” of the symbolic, it is quite remarkable that developmental researchers seem to have uncovered a subtle perceptual process in three-month-old infants that might actually place the mirror stage at an observable moment in development. In a landmark study that stimulated a large body of research (e.g. Fonagy et. al., 2002; Gergely, 2004; Gergely & Watson, 1996), Bahrick & Watson (1985) found that prior to 3 months of age, infants preferred looking at mirror-images of themselves, through live-time monitors, that were perfectly contingent with the infants’ actual image. However at four and five months of age infants switched their gazing preference to non-contingent images of themselves. That is, instead of looking at a monitor, which presented a live recorded image of the infants moving their legs that was perfectly contingent with their actual responses, five-month-old infants preferred to look at a previously recorded image of their legs that was similar but not the same as their actual live movements. The findings

Once again, the subject who emerges out of the mirror stage in his totality, essentially mis-recognizes fragmentation for unity; even though the subject is fundamentally alienated, an ‘other’ of himself, what he mis-perceives is a whole body.¹⁷ It is as though the Cartesian cogito “I think therefore I am” is replaced by “I misrecognize therefore I am.” The formation of the ego, essential to the construction of the ‘I’ is therefore contingent upon *méconnaissance* or *misrecognition*.¹⁸ And it is in the register of the Imaginary that misrecognition is produced, that one identifies with oneself as with an other, that one mistakes an other for oneself. This is precisely how Lacan read Arthur Rimbaud’s “*I is an other*” (Lacan, 1988, p.7).

Although the experience of the—now mis-recognized—subject may primarily transpire in the symbolic it is always already tied up in a tripartite knot. Thus, while the symbolic “takes hold in even the deepest recesses of the human organism” (Lacan, 2006, p.6), it continues to be structured in relation to and around the registers of the real and the imaginary. When the symbolic approaches the imaginary, the symbolic support of the subject (his defenses, his symptoms, everything he has constructed as a shield) become re-organized, or re-integrated, in a new configuration. When the symbolic approaches the lining of the real however, the subject’s symbolic support becomes radically

of this study seem to substantiate Lacan’s theory of the mirror-stage. The preference for a non-contingent self-image corresponds to the idea of an internalized, de-centered body-image, that nonetheless serves to better orient the infant towards its environment, since the mother’s own mirroring cannot possibly be perfectly contingent with her infant’s behavior.

¹⁷ The idea of mis-recognizing the multiples of a self for a concrete whole has also found its way more recently in relational psychoanalysis, through what Philip Bromberg (2001b) has called “self states,” a multiplicity of self-experiences that become concealed and even inaccessible so as to protect an integral ‘self’ and maintain the sense of cohesion necessary for everyday functioning.

¹⁸ The original French term *méconnaissance* is a more apt use of the term as it stands in opposition to *connaissance* or knowledge, evoking a play with words where *me-connaissance* or self-knowledge becomes equivalent to *méconnaissance*, literally ‘mis-knowledge.’ This, in turn, renders the knowledge of the ‘I’ as essentially a mis-knowledge, mis-understanding or mis-recognition.

disorganized; it disintegrates. This is ultimately the point of contact and of rupture between the subject and the realm of trauma and psychosis.

The closer one comes to the Real, the place of lack, the further away one moves from the big Other of the symbolic, and from the imaginary ‘other’ of the ego. What distinguishes the Real from the symbolic and the imaginary in other words, is the absence of an ‘other’ (symbolic or imaginary), an absence in the midst of which subjectivity risks effacement. Davoine and Gaudillière expand on this point: “the irruption of the Real makes all otherness impossible, whether it be the other who is similar to me...(in the register Lacan calls the Imaginary), or the Other invoked to guarantee alliance, promises, and good faith in the register of the Symbolic” (2004, p.15). The question then inevitably arises: “When the guarantees of speech have been destroyed, how to construct an Other to whom to speak?” (p.16).

III. Symbolization as a Boundary-Process

In order to address this question I wish to delve into a ‘theoretical imagining’ of symbolization, on the basis of which to offer a way of conceptualizing the collapse of Otherness that defines experiences of trauma and psychosis. I would suggest that what lies at the boundary between the symbolic and the Real, at the crevice from which the imaginary emerges, is the boundary-process of symbolization. I refer to symbolization here as the participation of the subject in the Symbolic, which is itself a function of subjectivity, a function that is, of being-as-subject. The very etymology of the word ‘symbolon’ (‘σύμβολον,’ from the prefix συν- and the verb βάλλω) connotes a ‘throwing together’ that brings to mind the Heideggerian thrownness of Being-in-the-world

(Heidegger, 1978), the Lacanian ‘insertion’ into the symbolic. For Lacan, the symbolic as the register of ‘everyday life,’ operates on two interlocking levels; it is at the same time the structure of the unconscious, and the “location of cultural experience” (Winnicott, 1967, p.368). Like Winnicott, “in using the word culture I am thinking of the inherited tradition. I am thinking of something that is in the common pool of humanity and into which individuals and groups of people may contribute, and a source from which we may all draw *if we have somewhere to put what we find*” (Winnicott, 1968, p.370, emphasis in original). From a Lacanian perspective, the “*somewhere*” is the locus of the big Other, the symbolic order which is in the “common pool of humanity,” and to which language—including the language of the unconscious—unmistakably belongs.

I would like to consider first, the way symbolization, as a boundary-process, operates on the level of cultural experience, between the subject and his exteriority. Winnicott located cultural experience “in the potential space between the individual and the environment, that which initially both joins and separates the baby and the mother when the mother's love, displayed as human reliability, does in fact give the baby a sense of trust, or of confidence in the environmental factor” (1967, p. 372). The potential space then appears as the point of contact, the boundary, between the subject and the environment, which one must learn to trust if one is to participate in it. Lacan speaks of this trust as a “pact” that links subjects through language: this “pact,” “the human action *par excellence*,” he writes, “is originally founded on the existence of the world of the symbol, namely on laws and contracts” (1991, p.230). The participation of the subject in the symbolic is contingent upon this pact, upon the guarantees of “alliance, promises, and good faith,” which are also the “guarantees of speech.” The subject’s insertion into the

symbolic essentially constitutes an agreement to uphold the pact, an act of “good faith” that the symbolic “laws and contracts” will not be violated. Perhaps, nowhere is this pact most crucial than in the battlefield, the place where the symbolic dangerously approaches the Real and where the “guarantees of speech” cannot be jeopardized for they are needed more urgently than ever. As Davoine and Gaudillière point out, “combat evokes in those who are fighting side by side a passion for taking care of the other physically and psychically, equivalent to the earliest and deepest family relationships...In such a context, the proximity of this bond is the condition of speech itself” (2004, p.154). Ultimately, as Winnicott notes—and war exemplifies this best—the pact is ‘sealed’ *in the name of trust*, in the “potential space *between* baby and mother, *between* child and family, *between* individual and society or the world” (1967, p.372, emphasis added). The space of ‘in-betweenness,’ is an opening that both joins and separates the subject from his exteriority, that delineates the point where the child ends and the family begins, where the individual ends and the society—the world—begins. At the same time, this boundary *in-between*, is also a boundary *within*: the child is embedded in the family as much as the individual is embedded in the society. This is also the paradox of the signifier: it is itself a boundary that lies *within* the symbolic, the unconscious, the subject, and *between* inside and outside, the subject and the world.

It is this link between the internal and the external world that André Green, one of Lacan’s own disgruntled students, sees in the function of representation, which, as he argues, is “the basic function of the psychic field”:

Freud assumed that the basic function of the psychic field was the *lowering of unpleasurable tension*. Hartmann’s ego psychology assumes that the basic function is *adaptation*, an assertion not contradictory to Freud’s, though implying a shift in emphasis. The British School considers that *growth* is this basic

function. I suggest that this basic function is *representation*. This should be understood in a very broad sense, as including representation of both the external and the internal world. It also includes a pluralistic mode of representation, not only through an ideational content but also through acts, affects, bodily states, language, ideas, and thoughts. (2005, p.74, emphasis in the original).

If the basic function of the psychic field is a “pluralistic mode of representation” it is because this is the mode of the symbolic order, the field into which the subject is ‘thrown’ and from which his unconscious emerges. In its inclusiveness, Green’s concept of “representation” appears to be not too far afield from the Lacanian symbolic with its “universal character”: it does not simply refer to mental contents, but rather to every possible, indeed “pluralistic,” mode through which the subject may receive and relay something of the world (through the mind, the body and its organs). In the process of representation (symbolization, or signification as Lacan might say), the subject takes upon itself an object (a thought, a word, an act, even the ego) that conjures up a bit of experience, both conscious and unconscious, and in so doing he symbolizes, he goes on being-as-subject. Green’s representation functions precisely as a boundary-process: it constitutes a link in the boundary between the “psychic field” and “both the external and the internal world,” and orchestrates the subject’s embeddedness in the symbolic.

The subject represents insofar as he seeks to maintain this embeddedness, to counteract the severing of his bond to an imaginary “totality.” The paternal signifier severs the child from the (m)other at the same time that it becomes the link between them, a phallic umbilical cord, without which the child would not have come into being as a subject of the unconscious, embedded in his social context. At this point, the child is also introduced to the impossibility of possessing the (m)other, and therefore encounters for the first time his own desire *of* and *for* the (m)other; that is, the (m)other constitutes

for the child both the object and cause of his desire. Of course, once the (m)other is theoretically deconstructed, what remains is the ‘other,’ the ‘objet petit a,’ the object caught up in the “lure of spatial identification,” the imaginary ego that carries the illusion of a “totality.” Ultimately, it is this phantasy of totality that constitutes the barred subject’s object of desire. As Lacan playfully told his students, “Have you ever encountered whole beings? Perhaps it’s an ideal. *I’ve* never seen any. *I’m* not whole. Neither are you. If we were whole, we would each be in our corners, whole, we wouldn’t be here, together, trying to get ourselves into shape, as they say” (1988, p.243).

Surprisingly, one of the most apt illustrations of the desire for totality and wholeness that propels symbolization, or the participation in the world of objects, can be found in Shel Silverstein’s children book “The Missing Piece” (1976) and its sequel, “The Missing Piece Meets the Big O” (1981). The first tells the story of a round pie-shaped object that is missing a triangular piece with which it would be a full circle, a “whole.” Throughout the story, the incomplete circle is looking for its missing piece, rolling and singing on its journey to find it: “Oh I’m lookin’ for my missin’ piece/ Over land and over seas/ So grease my knees and fleece my bees./ I’m lookin’ for my missin’ piece.” Along the way, it encounters several pieces that don’t fit: they are too small, too big, too sharp, too square, too fragile, too unwilling. In its quest however, the partial circle also encounters the world: snow, rain, mountains, jungles, worms, butterflies, flowers. Eventually, it finds a piece that fits just right, and whole as it becomes, it starts rolling faster and faster, no longer able to notice a beetle, speak to a worm, stop and smell a flower; and it can no longer sing: “I’ve frown my nizzin’ geez/ Uf vround my mitzin’ breez/ So kreeze ny meas/ An bleez ny dregs/ Uf frown....” It therefore solemnly

puts the piece down and starts rolling once again in the world, in search for its missing piece. This is “the paradox of *desire* at its purest,” writes Žižek in his introduction to *Enjoy Your Symptom!* “In order to sustain itself as desire, to articulate itself (in a song), a piece must be missing” (2001, p.viii). Without this lack, “we would each be in our corners.”

The sequel of “The Missing Piece” tells the story from the perspective of the piece itself, rather than that of the partial circle; that is, it is the story, not of the subject in search of the object of desire, but of the subject who is desiring to become himself an object of desire—of the desire of the other/Other. This is the subject who encounters the big O, the Lacanian big Other of the symbolic into which it is looking to become inserted. In this sense, we can read this story as the process of symbolization par excellence. The missing piece in this story is sitting alone and waiting to be found by someone. But the objects that come along have too many pieces, too many pieces missing, cannot roll, are too hungry, too scrutinizing etc. When it finds an object into which it fits perfectly the missing piece starts to grow and can no longer roll. And so it waits until a full circle, the big O, comes along that does not need the missing piece because it is whole. But the big O tells the missing piece that perhaps it is not someone else’s missing piece, perhaps it can roll by itself. Indeed the missing piece makes an effort to roll by itself but, triangular as it is, it moves slowly at first until its edges start to wear off and it gradually gets “into shape” quite literally; it becomes round, a small circle, a small ‘other,’ that rolls side by side with the big O. The missing piece, the subject, finds in the big O the trust it needs to believe in its own totality, a totality that though imaginary, creates the desire to roll, to

participate in the world of objects, to exist as subject in the intersubjective field of the symbolic.

Perhaps it is not a coincidence that such an apt illustration of symbolization (as it has been conceptualized in this chapter, i.e. as an insertion into the symbolic) is found in a children's book. The subject that carries the illusion of "wholeness," the post mirror-stage subject who has been found and who has learned that it can roll, has already met the big O, and has become inextricably linked with it. It is the child who teaches us, and who must also learn, to recognize that we must go-on-rolling incomplete, because this is the only way to 'roll' and *articulate* a song in the process—literally, to go-on-speaking. It is this moment of recognition, of learning to "roll" un-whole, that Freud witnesses in the Fort! Da! game of a child, now known to be his grandson, who by means of a string tied to a wooden reel, repetitively made the reel 'roll away' and disappear while exclaiming "a long drawn-out 'o-o-o-o,'" which Freud took to mean "fort" (German for 'gone'), and "hailed its reappearance with a joyful 'da'" (or German for 'there') (1920, p.15). Freud perceived the child to be staging the appearance and disappearance of the mother, the object-cause of the child's desire. Lacan saw in this game, the materialization of the symbolic pact, the participation of the child in the symbolic of his culture: "The child thus begins to become engaged in the system of the concrete discourse of those around him by reproducing more or less approximately in his *Fort!* and *Da!* the terms he receives from them" (Lacan, 2006, p.262). The 'received' signifier (the word, the vocalization) emerged in the space of absence, at the *boundary* between child and mother, the "me" and the "not-me" to use another Winnicottian term (1953), marking the *process* of symbolization as the young subject's insertion into the symbolic. It is in this

sense that symbolization appears as a boundary and as a process: it constitutes a process by which the child is separated (from the (m)other, from his own totality), and a boundary, literally a “string,” by means of which he remains both separated and connected, thereby creating a link between the external and the internal world.

In proposing to view symbolization as a boundary-process, I also wish to invoke, and thereby rethink, the boundary-process of the Freudian drive, that which, as Freud tells us, straddles the mental and the physical. At the same time, one must be mindful that the metapsychology of the drive is an area of psychoanalytic theorizing that has bred much confusion over the years, partly due to the inconsistencies in Freud’s writings, and partly due to the difficulty inherent in the very process of metapsychological theorizing. As Freud recognized,

The indefiniteness of all our discussions on what we describe as metapsychology is of course due to the fact that we know nothing of the nature of the excitatory process that takes place in the elements of the psychical systems, and that we do not feel justified in framing any hypothesis on the subject. We are consequently operating all the time with a large unknown factor, which we are obliged to carry over into every new formula. (1920, p.30)

Freud’s metapsychological conceptions are rooted in the 19th century scientific tradition of determinism, evolutionary biology and Newtonian physics, from which his drive theory was not immune. At the same time, he was well aware that, through metapsychology, he was constructing what Green has called a “myth of origins,” “not the expression of scientific truth but an approximation to it, its analogue” (Green, 1975, p.18). After all, Freud was the first to acknowledge that “the theory of the instincts is so to say our mythology. Instincts are mythical entities, magnificent in their indefiniteness” (1938, p.95). With this in mind, and in full appreciation for a psychoanalytic mythology,

I would like to consider the drive, this ‘frontier concept,’ alongside the boundary-process of symbolization.

If we had to identify a concept in Freud that has a “universal character,” much like the one of the Lacanian symbolic, we would certainly find it in the drive, that which exists invariably. In his seminal paper on “Instincts and Their Vicissitudes,” Freud writes: “from a *biological* point of view, an ‘instinct’¹⁹ appears to us as a concept on the frontier between the mental and the somatic, as the psychical representative of the stimuli originating from within the organism and reaching the mind, as a measure of the demand made upon the mind for work in consequence of its connection with the body” (Freud, 1915a, p.121). Interestingly, Freud sees in this ‘frontier concept’ the first level of representation on the plane of psychic activity, which led Green to go so far as to suggest that “a drive is an inchoate form of thought” (1975, p.9). Freud then proceeds to identify “certain terms which are used in reference to the concept of an instinct,” namely, its ‘pressure’, its ‘aim’, its ‘object’ and its ‘source’ (1915a, p.122). The latter of these remains unspecified, as Freud states that its study “lies outside the scope of psychology” (p.123). Perhaps pursuing the question of the source of the drive would be as futile as

¹⁹ It is well known that the English word “instinct” as a translation for the German word “*Trieb*” has been the subject of much controversy. In the editor’s note to “Instincts and Their Vicissitudes” in the Standard Edition of Freud’s complete works, James Strachey acknowledges that Freud occasionally uses the word “*Instinkt*” rather than “*Trieb*,” “though possibly in a rather different sense” (Strachey, 1957, p.111). In their seminal work *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (1973), Laplanche and Pontalis also try to shed some light on the difference between “*Trieb*” and “*instinkt*.” Whereas “*instinkt*” in Freud is used strictly in reference to the biological sense of the term as a “hereditary behavior pattern,” “*trieb*” has a different set of connotations that involve a “dynamic process consisting in a pressure (charge of energy, motricity factor) which directs the organism towards an aim” (p.214). “According to Freud,” they argue, “an instinct [Trieb] has its *source* in a bodily stimulus; its *aim* is to eliminate the state of tension obtaining at the instinctual source; and it is in the object, or thanks to it, that the instinct may achieve its aim” (p.214). Lacan tried to maintain Freud’s distinction between “*trieb*” and “*instinkt*” by making use of the term “drive” to refer to the former so as to set it apart from the strictly biological, predetermined behaviors carried out by instincts. I also opt to use the term “drive” in my discussion, even if relevant citations, including Freud’s Standard Edition, make use of the term “instinct” instead.

searching for the source of the signifier, which, as De Saussure emphasized, is purely arbitrary. The first of Freud's terms, the "pressure," seems to be directly derived from a hydraulic model of physics, quite popular in his time but perhaps no longer relevant. However, insofar as it stands for the 'demand for work made upon the mind,' we might recognize in "pressure" a certain *urgency* to represent, a "demand" for signification, easily discernible in the desperate ways in which what is foreclosed from the mind returns (as a dream, as a symptom, as an act).

The process of symbolization, as it has been conceptualized in this chapter, lends itself most aptly to a parallel comparison with the 'aim' and the 'object' of the drive. With regards to the aim, Freud writes definitively that it "is in every instance satisfaction" (p.122). However, given that a drive is a "continuously flowing source of stimulation," its full satisfaction is bound to be always temporary, if not impossible (Freud, 1905, p.168). We might say that the aim of symbolization, too, the motivation that propels it, lies in satisfaction, in the impossible satisfaction that is, of desire, in the constant pursuit of the object *petit a*, the pursuit of the 'other.' The nature of this desire, just like the nature of the associative chain (the 'signifying chain,' in Lacanian terms), is always metonymic; that is, it is always bound to slide from one object to the next. "Satisfaction" is therefore contingent upon an otherness that holds the promise of a 'totality' ('if only I can possess *this* or *that* I will be whole'). Put simply, the aim of symbolization *is* the 'object,' the remaining term that Freud uses in relation to the drive.

The object of the drive, Freud writes, is "the thing in regard to which or through which the instinct is able to achieve its aim" (1915, p.122). Laplanche and Pontalis emphasize the role of the object strongly when they indicate that "it is in the object, or

thanks to it, that the instinct may achieve its aim” (1973, p.214). Green brings together the aim and object of the drive under the guise of an “objectalising function,” the very function of the drive: “The aim of drive activity,” he argues, ascribes to an “objectalising function,” which transforms “drives into objects (to be preserved, loved, tortured, hurt, with all the entanglements possible” (2002, p.84). “What I mean by this [the objectalising function],” he explicates elsewhere, “is that psychic activity acquires the ability to transform not only objects, but also any activity or function of the mind, into an object. Any type of existence that is significant to the child can be transformed into an internal object” (2000, p.36). The “objectalising function,” not unlike Freud’s process of identification, raises the status of the object, from the impersonal interchangeability it carries for the Freudian drive, to a level of personal significance, so that the object is ‘objectalised,’ taken in, *because* it is desired. In this sense, the “objectalising function” seems to be as much the “aim of drive activity” as it is the aim of symbolization; namely, to transform “not only objects, but also any activity or function of the mind” into an “internal object” to “be preserved, loved, tortured, hurt, with all the entanglements possible.” The aim of the drive and of symbolization, in other words, coincide in the desire to participate fully in the register of the symbolic (the location of cultural experience and of the unconscious). Thus, the boundary-process of symbolization, just like the work of the drive, is instigated in the pursuit of satisfaction, the pursuit of the ‘other,’ the object of symbolization and of drive activity that functions as an object-cause of the subject’s desire, and through which the subject is constituted *as subject* (is *subjectalised* we might say) in the symbolic order.

IV. Symbolic Ruptures and the Witnessing Other

Implicit in this notion of otherness as constitutive of the subject is a dialectical process that receives and transcribes experience. Lacan's conceptualization of the subject as the subject of the unconscious, and of the unconscious as the discourse of the Other, assumes an interlocutor who receives and deciphers the discourse of the subject, especially when it is most obscure. Herein lies the work of the analyst: while in the eyes of the patient the analyst will inevitably become a transference object of desire ("to be preserved, loved, tortured, hurt, with all the entanglements possible"), ideally, the analyst's task is to overcome his own desire to be the patient's object of desire, and occupy instead the place of the big Other (as opposed to the small 'other,' the *objet petit a*, the mirror). Only as Other can the analyst receive and decipher the patient's discourse, so that the patient may transcend mis-recognition and *recognize* himself before his unconscious—an 'un-whole' subject with limitations, desires, and inconsistencies; as 'un-whole,' in fact, as his analyst.

Perhaps nowhere does this task become most crucial and most challenging than in the discourse of trauma and psychosis, the discourse of an "unconscious testimony" (Felman, 1995, p.24) that is structured around its very repudiation; the discourse, that is, of a *truth* which speaks because it remains unrecognized. With the insight of a psychoanalyst and the irreducible experience of a child Holocaust survivor, Dori Laub *testifies*:

Massive trauma precludes its registration; the observing and recording mechanisms of the human mind are temporarily knocked out, malfunction. The victim's narrative—the very process of bearing witness to massive trauma—does indeed begin with someone who testifies to an absence, to an event that has not yet come into existence, in spite of the overwhelming and compelling nature of the reality of its occurrence. (1992, p.57)

Understanding “massive trauma” as that which “precludes its registration,” immediately places otherness—or the absence thereof—at the center of experience, for registration requires reception. That is, trauma subsumes the entire range of experiences that have not been received by the Other, that have not been inscribed in the symbolic (cognitively, affectively, linguistically), but which subsist belatedly, as symptoms, seeking to be recognized for what they represent. These are experiences that have no direct correspondence with the guarantees of reality, with the structure of the ‘Law’ that promises predictability and consistency, and are therefore consumed in a radical alienation.

The alienation so characteristic of psychosis and states of traumatic dissociation consists in the inability to maintain a discourse with the Other, to speak, act, communicate in ways that are culturally sanctioned, translatable, audible. The link of symbolization that joins the individual to the world is marked by distortion and discontinuity. The traumatized, alienated subject succumbs to what Green has called the “disobjectalising function.” As opposed to the objectalising function by means of which otherness is constituted, the disobjectalising function is a “process by which an object loses its specific individuality, its uniqueness for us, and becomes any object, or no object at all... The disobjectalising function implies a (negative) decaathesis of objects external, internal or even transitional” (1997b, p.1083). It is as though desire for objectalisation has ceased for it no longer serves to sustain misrecognition; every time the traumatized subject encounters otherness, he experiences his own otherness. The subject is radically transformed by the experience of trauma, unable to reconcile the incomprehensibility of an event he has witnessed but not fully possessed; and yet he is fully possessed by it, by

the disquieting voices, the disturbing flashbacks, so that all traces of otherness begin to dissipate, dissociated along with the awareness of trauma. But even then, I would argue, the subject of trauma continues to testify unbeknowingly, by means of his symptoms, still in search of an addressee who can decipher his unwitting communication.

The *manifest experience* of trauma and psychosis (the “positive symptoms” of intrusive nightmares, hallucinations and delusions as well as the “negative symptoms” of dissociation, silence, blankness and catatonia) constitutes, I would suggest, a *latent testimony*, an account of the ‘unregistered’ event that produced them and that continues to propagate them.²⁰ Far from being a sheer evidence of desymbolization and a destruction of meaning, the inability to ‘symbolize’ the experiences of trauma and psychosis, to fully represent them in thought and therefore in language, is in itself a testimony of the occurrence of an event, of a symbolic rupture whose rules of engagement lie outside the ordinary “guarantees of speech.” Symbolic ruptures disturb the boundaries in which symbolization-as-insertion materializes at the site of the unconscious and of cultural experience. The traumatic event creates a crevice in the register of the symbolic, so that the Other who was there to receive the subject’s speech, his symbolic gestures, becomes fragmented. The means of communication that the symbolic ordinarily makes available

²⁰ The question can be raised as to whether traumatic formations differ across the continuum of psychopathology that extends from neurosis to psychosis. Although a close examination of this issue cannot be afforded in the context of this project, I would argue that all symptoms constitute, in varying degrees, traumatic formations, and that all psychopathology is formed at the boundary between inside and outside, where the point of contact between the two becomes a point of rupture. Of course, the nature of this contact, the extent to which it results in an intimate holding, in a violent breach, or in the myriad of experiences in between, is equally determined by the biology and psychology of the subject, and the sociology so to speak of the symbolic in which he is inserted. But I would argue that the greatest mitigating factor at this boundary, is the extent to which the earliest symbolic pact with the witnessing (M)other takes the form of an approving look, a gaze aversion, a persecutory eye, a distracted glance, etc. If the subject’s earliest experience is inscribed in trauma, if the symbolic pact was never sealed firmly, his subsequent contact with the outside is likely to be met with greater suspicion, and a need for a ciphered latent testimony in the form of symptoms.

to the subject prove inadequate when the Real irrupts. This is why “the subject tries desperately to invent an otherness in the place where he experiences its inextinguishable absence. If mouths cannot speak, stones, animals, and the heavens begin to howl” (Davoine and Gaudillière, 2004, p.158). Such is the paradoxical nature of symbolic ruptures—the howling heavens, the phantom limbs, the night terrors, the flashbacks, the voices: they are the markers of a breaking away from the symbolic, of an irruption in the boundary between inside and outside, of a breach in the lining between the symbolic and the Real, as much as they are an attempt to testify to the event of the rupture itself in the only way possible. As Davoine and Gaudillière rightly put it, “every interruption in the transmission that links people to one another is, paradoxically, searching for an inscription” (2004, p.12). But this inscription is not possible without a witnessing Other who can receive the rupture, the interruption, and recognize it as such, even if belatedly.

But if one is to receive the discourse of trauma and psychosis, to bear witness to its testimony, one has to recognize first that what one is in fact witnessing is “an experience that is not so much unspeakable as inaudible” (Davoine and Gaudillière, 2004, p.116). That is, one must learn to *be a witness*, to occupy the place of an Other who can be addressed in a language that may lack the syntactical guarantees of speech, but which guarantees that it is “searching for an inscription.” “The listener, therefore, has to be at the same time a witness to the trauma witness and a witness to himself...He needs to know that the trauma survivor who is bearing witness has no prior knowledge, no comprehension and no memory of what happened” (Laub, 1992, p.58). Shoshana Felman sees in psychoanalysis the potential witness to symbolic ruptures, to the yet undeciphered “unconscious testimonies”:

Freud makes a scientific statement of his discovery that there *is* in effect such a thing as an *unconscious testimony*, and that this unconscious, unintended, unintentional testimony has, as such, an incomparable heuristic and investigative value. Psychoanalysis, in this way, profoundly rethinks and radically renews the very concept of the testimony, by submitting, and by recognizing for the first time in the history of culture, that one does not have to *possess*, or *own* the truth, in order to effectively *bear witness* to it; that speech as such is unwittingly testimonial; and that the speaking subject constantly bears witness to a truth that nonetheless continues to escape him, a truth that is, essentially *not available* to its own speaker. (1995, p.24, emphasis in original)

Symbolic ruptures indeed constitute such unavailable truths, recognizable only in the tragedy of the symptoms that they engender. Speech is as “unwittingly testimonial” as a symptom, the unspoken dimension of transference that appears, as an afterwardness, in the form of an act or of a mute silence.

How does one begin to *recognize* symbolic ruptures, to make their truth available to the traumatized subject who is also the only true witness to a trauma he does not yet recognize, and against which he persists in his misrecognition even as “stones, animals, and the heavens begin to howl”? The traumatized subject might have no difficulty recounting the events of his trauma, the circumstances around it, even though such accounts are often fraught with distortions. But most often, what is missing, what demands to be recognized, is the experience itself in all its qualitative gradations, in all its affective dimensions, and in all the profound ways in which the subject became transformed because of it.

I referred earlier to the *manifest* and *latent* experience of trauma, so as to draw a distinction between the original event and its belated manifestation—its symptomatology, as it were. But the underlying reference to dream-work goes beyond rhetoric. I would like to argue that the “unconscious testimony” of trauma and psychosis shares the unconscious language of dreams: it speaks, in other words, through condensation as a

rigid binding, and through displacement as a perpetual repetition. The third chapter explores these traumatic modes of articulation, in which the symptoms of trauma and psychosis seek their symbolic inscription. Their recognition as symbolic, as representative of a truth that is “essentially *not available* to its own speaker” is contingent upon a willing Other, who might begin to hear in the silence of the words, and in the hauling of the voices, “an experience that is not so much unspeakable as inaudible,” not so much desymbolic as indeciphered.

Chapter 3

The Speech and Language of Ruptures

He that has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his finger-tips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore.

Sigmund Freud

I. Traumatic Awakenings

Traditionally, psychoanalysis often attempted to shun those dimensions of human experience that appear incomprehensible, on the basis of their being un-analyzable, and therefore un-interpretable. And yet, it is precisely those experiences that warrant the insights of psychoanalysis, not so much in the form of an *interpretation*, as in the form of a *recognition*²¹ “that one does not have to *possess*, or *own* the truth, in order to effectively *bear witness* to it” (Felman, 1995, p.24). Such a *psychoanalytic bearing* becomes all the more imperative once we accept that “the mythical prototype of the patient of our time is no longer Oedipus but Hamlet” (Green, 1977, p.60). Like Hamlet, the patient of our time is left to testify to a missed trauma that has not been fully (kn)owned, that returns as an unheralded image, a voice, a dream, and possesses him unexpectedly—for symbolic ruptures catch one, almost always, by surprise. The psychoanalyst must now bear witness to the inassimilable testimony of the traumatized patient, the one haunted by the ghost of a truth he has not yet grasped. Such testimony, the testimony of debilitating symptoms, is bound to be disjointed, fragmentary; but this fragmentation is in itself

²¹ I use the word recognition here as a direct opposite to mis-recognition (for an elaboration of misrecognition see the discussion on the Imaginary, in Section II of Chapter 2). Recognition in this sense constitutes, not a *méconnaissance*, but a *re-connaissance*, a re-knowing. I return to this notion of recognition subsequently in this chapter, where I connect it to the act of *awakening* and, again, when I juxtapose it to the act of interpretation, through what I call an *anagnosis*.

performative, a testimony to an experience registered in fragments. “As a relation to events, testimony seems to be composed of bits and pieces of a memory that has been overwhelmed by occurrences that have not settled into understanding or remembrance, acts that cannot be construed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition, events in excess of our frames of reference” (Felman, 1995, p.16). How can psychoanalysis bring such traumatic testimonies to bear on its own frame of reference then? How can it begin to approach those events whose sole frame of reference lies in the symptoms in which they are concealed and from which they are simultaneously revealed?

In this chapter, I offer that despite the chaotic manifestation of symptoms, traumatic inscriptions are latently organized. I maintain, in other words, that despite their proximity to the Real, the incomprehensible dimensions of human experience “that cannot be construed as knowledge nor assimilated into full cognition” may escape consciousness, but that their traces are indelibly inscribed in the unconscious, and that this inscription is fundamentally structured. More specifically, I argue that the structure of trauma shares in the grammar of dreams, and that behind the all too common truism of describing the traumatic disturbances of waking life as a ‘bad dream,’ or a ‘nightmare,’ there lurks a truth. In an attempt to elucidate the relationship between trauma and dreams, I re-read the founding text of psychoanalysis, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), through the lens of trauma. As I attempt to demonstrate, this reading creates a useful path through which to explore traumatic formations in a way that makes their structure more visible, and renders their speech more audible. This is a speech, I suggest, that does not seek so much to be interpreted, as to be heard and recognized, to be actively *received* and thereby *experienced* by a witnessing other.

Interestingly, it is at the intersection of dreaming and traumatic awakening that Freud is confronted with the limitations of interpretation. Freud introduces the last chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams* precisely at this intersection, with the account of a dream that is also an awakening: “A father had been watching beside his child’s sick bed for days and nights on end,” Freud recounts (1900, p.509). “After the child had died, he went into the next room to lie down,” leaving an old man to keep vigil by his son’s bed that was surrounded by tall candles (p.509). The father dreamt that “*his child was standing beside his bed, caught him by the arm and whispered to him reproachfully: ‘Father don’t you see I’m burning?’*” at which point he awoke to find that the watchman had fallen asleep and that the wrappings and the arm of his child’s body were indeed set ablaze by a fallen candle (p.509, emphasis in original). As Freud observes, this is a dream that “raises no problem of interpretation and the meaning of which is obvious, but which, as we see, nevertheless retains the essential characteristics that differentiate dreams so strikingly from waking life and consequently call for explanation” (p.510). Freud takes the dream of the burning child as a point of departure to explore “the structure of the apparatus of the mind” and “the play of forces operating in it” (p.511)—a point of departure from which he lays out, for the first time, the topography of the psychical apparatus, and through which he eventually arrives at what Strachey regarded as “probably the most momentous of the discoveries given to the world in *The Interpretation of Dreams*—the distinction between the two different modes of mental functioning, the Primary and Secondary Processes” (1953, p.xv). It is the enigma of the father’s awakening to his own dream, the question of “why the dreamer dreamt it at all instead of waking up” (p.533), that causes Freud to make a decisive “movement away

from analysing into things and towards analysing into processes” (Waddington, quoted in Brierley, 1944, p.97). It is at this point that Freud becomes less interested in contents, in the symbolism of particular dreams, and turns towards a closer analysis of underlying mental processes and structures.

Working within the paradigm of wish fulfillment, Freud concludes that the dream allowed the father to see his dead son awake once again, to prolong his life for yet another moment and, ultimately, to fulfill his own wish to sleep. But it is the one element that Freud does not question that seems to be the true enigma: namely, the fact that the dream “raises no problem of interpretation,” precisely because it is conflated with reality. The father’s dream is uncannily real or rather, *the father awakens to the reality of his dream*. In other words, the dream is enigmatic, not because it “retains,” but because it distorts the “essential characteristics that differentiate dreams so strikingly from waking life.” But this should not be surprising: the lack of differentiation between inside and outside, between dream and reality, is an essential characteristic of traumatic experience, of the father’s loss of his child, of the “burning” of their intersubjective bond—of the very process, in other words, of a symbolic rupture that sets to renegotiate the symbolic pact at the boundary between self and other, self and the world.

In her book “Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self” (2002), a philosophical reflection on violence and trauma, philosopher Susan Brison recounts her own experience of having been violently assaulted, raped, and left for dead, “lying face down in a muddy creek bed at the bottom of a dark ravine, struggling to stay alive” (p.2). Her description of the traumatic event, of her own traumatic awakening, reveals this disquieting distortion between dream and reality:

Although I had said I'd do whatever he wanted, as the sexual assault began I instinctively fought back, which so enraged my attacker that he strangled me until I lost consciousness. *When I awoke*, I was being dragged by my feet down into the ravine. *I had often, while dreaming, thought I was awake, but now I was awake and convinced I was having a nightmare. But it was no dream.* (p.2, emphasis added)

This traumatic awakening to a reality so foreign that it defies all that is knowable about the world induces a radical rupture in the symbolic pact with the big Other, in the guarantees of consistency and predictability on which subjectivity rests. As Brison recognizes, such trauma “not only shatters one’s fundamental assumptions about the world and one’s safety in it, but it also severs the sustaining connection between the self and the rest of humanity” (p.40). The severing of this connection, the event of the rupture, materializes as though in a dream (“I was awake and *convinced* I was having a nightmare”). What Brison’s account illuminates here is that which Freud unknowingly exposes through the father’s dream: that underneath the conviction, underneath the certainty of the dream, there looms an awakening to an existential doubt that undermines the sense-certainty with which we ordinarily recognize reality and, by extension, we (mis)recognize ourselves-as-subjects. “This doubt about the permanence of the body and the cosmos can affect the most articulate minds” (Davoine & Gaudillière, 2004, p.87). As Brison confesses, “for the first several months after my attack, I led a spectral existence, not quite sure whether I had died and the world went on without me, or whether I was alive but in a totally alien world” (p.9).

It is the collapse in the boundary between dream and reality, between life and death that Freud fails to recognize in his account of the father’s dream. In his own certainty of the dream’s interpretation (“the explanation of this moving dream is simple enough,” he writes), Freud can only recognize a wish—the father’s wish to see his son

alive (1900, p.509). However, as Lacan aptly pointed out, “it is not that, in the dream, he [the father] persuades himself that the son is still alive. But the terrible vision of the dead son taking the father by the arm designates a beyond that makes itself heard in the dream” (1998, p.59). We can almost imagine that upon his awakening, the father, like Brison, was “not quite sure whether [he] had died and the world went on without [him], or whether [he] was alive but in a totally alien world,” in a world “beyond.” Interestingly, the doubt bred by the conflation of dream with reality is also the doubt that first led Descartes to the certainty of consciousness: I doubt therefore I think, therefore I am. As he reflects in his *Meditations*:

When I perceive things as to which I know distinctly both the place from which they proceed, and that in which they are, and the time at which they appeared to me; and when, without any interruption, I can connect the perceptions which I have of them with the whole course of my life, *I am perfectly assured that these perceptions occur while I am waking and not during sleep.* (2004, p.61, emphasis added)

It is precisely this (mis)recognition of a clear distinction between sleep and waking reality, the very distinction that sustains the comforting cogito, that the traumatized subject has to renounce. In the midst of trauma, one’s perceptions are fundamentally questioned, for one knows nor “the place from which they proceed,” neither “the time at which they [appear].” At the collapse of this certainty, what is left is the harrowing doubt²² of Hamlet, “the patient of our time”:

²² This element of doubt appears repeatedly in tragedies, in which the misrecognition of subjectivity becomes exposed. When Oedipus’ certainty in his own reality crumbles, he is overwhelmed by an existential doubt, questioning even the veridicality and reliability of his senses: “Oh, Ohh— / the agony! I am agony— / where am I going? where on earth? / where does all this agony hurl me? / where’s my voice?— / winging, swept away on a dark tide— / My destiny, my dark power, what a leap you made!” (Sophocles, 1442-1448). Shakespeare’s *King Lear* also becomes disoriented and fundamentally de-centered as soon his conviction in his reality collapses: “Does any here know me? This is not Lear. / Does Lear walk thus? Speak thus? Where are his eyes? / Either his notion weakens, or his discernings are lethargied / Who is it that can tell me who I am?” (1.4.232-237).

To be, or not to be: that is the question:/ Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer/
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,/ Or to take arms against a sea of
troubles,/ And by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep—/ No more—and by a
sleep to say we end/ The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks/ That flesh is
heir to! 'Tis a consummation/ Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep—/ *To
sleep—perchance to dream.* (Shakespeare, 3.1.56-65, emphasis added).

To sleep—perchance to dream. And yet, it is in dreams that “the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune” return. “Why,” asks Primo Levi, “why is the pain of every day translated so constantly into our dreams, the ever-repeated scene of the unlistened-to-story?” (1993, p.60). It is because the “scene” itself is *missed*; its horror is such that it defies its own listening, its own witnessing, so that the witnessing can only happen as though in a dream.

This missed temporality constitutes the hallmark of trauma; trauma is the scene at which one always arrives, one always awakens, *belatedly*. At the time of its occurrence, the traumatic event cannot be fully constituted in consciousness; the threat of annihilation, the very fact of survival can only be recognized in retrospect. Put bluntly, one cannot recognize the full impact of near-annihilation when one is busy trying to survive. In Caruth’s words, “the impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its *belatedness*, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time” (1995, p.9, emphasis added). It is not a coincidence then that the father who dreams of his dead child awakens one moment too late. Unable to prevent the accident, the falling of the candle, he awakens to face his son’s death once again, and encounter a reality he has missed: “*Father, don’t you see I’m burning?*” For the scene of trauma is carried out with no true witnesses: even the man who is keeping vigil, the one supposed to see, the one ‘supposed to know,’ was asleep.

The belatedness of a missed temporality, of arriving too late at the “scene of action” (Freud, 1900, p.48), which is here both the scene of the accident and the “other scene” of the dream,²³ becomes for Lacan the very locality of trauma:

Is not the action, apparently so urgent, of preventing what is happening in the next room also perhaps felt as being in any case *too late now*, in relation to what is at issue, in the psychical reality manifested in the words spoken? Is not the dream essentially, one might say, an act of homage to the missed reality—the reality that can no longer produce itself except by repeating itself endlessly, in some never attained awakening? (1998, p.58, emphasis added)

Indeed, herein lies the significance of the father’s awakening: it guarantees a return to an “encounter forever missed” (Lacan, 1998, p.60), to a scene he did not see on time, and which “can no longer produce itself except by repeating itself endlessly.” As Winnicott put it, “the patient must go on looking for the past detail which is *not yet experienced*. This search takes the form of a looking for this detail in the future” (1974, p.105, emphasis in original). But the very missing of this reality nevertheless inscribed itself on the father’s “psychical reality,” with what Caruth has called the “irreducible specificity” of trauma (1995, p.ix). This is the specificity of the father’s dream “for no one,” writes

²³ Lacan’s own theory of the unconscious as a psychical *locality*, and more specifically as the locus of the big Other, is a liberal conceptualization of Freud’s suggestion that dreams unfold in an “other scene” (“eine andere Schauplatz” in the original German), a scene that is distinctively different from that of waking life. Freud derives this distinction from Fechner, but transposes it from the physiological realm to the “location of mental activity,” from which he proceeds to posit the existence of a “mental apparatus”:

In his [Fechner’s] opinion, ‘neither the mere lowering of conscious mental life below the main threshold’ nor the withdrawal of attention from the influences of the external world, are enough to explain the characteristics of dream-life as contrasted with waking life. He suspects, rather, that *the scene of action of dreams is different from that of waking ideational life*. ‘If the scene of action of psycho-physical activity were the same in sleeping and waking, dreams could, in my view, only be a prolongation at a lower degree of intensity of waking ideational life and, moreover, would necessarily be of the same material and form. But the facts are quite otherwise.’

It is not clear what Fechner had in mind in speaking of this change of location of mental activity; nor, so far as I know, has anyone else pursued the path indicated by his words. We may, I think, dismiss the possibility of giving the phrase an anatomical interpretation and supposing it to refer to physiological cerebral localization or even to the histological layers of the cerebral cortex. It may be, however, that the suggestion will eventually prove to be sagacious and fertile, if it can be applied to a *mental* apparatus built up of a number of agencies arranged in a series one behind the other. (1900, p.48)

Lacan, “no one can say what the death of a child is, except the father *qua* father, that is to say, no conscious being” (1998, p.59); or, given that it is the child who speaks in the dream, perhaps we could say that “no one can say what the death of a child is” except the child *qua* father. But of course, the child is not a “conscious being.” It is in fact because the child is *unconscious*, literally dead, *wordless*, that he can actually *say*, or rather *perform*, that the death of a child is a traumatic *burning* (“*I’m burning*”).

Ironically, Freud tells us that the father’s dream of his burning child “was able to show the child as once more alive. If the father had woken up first and then made the inference that led him to go into the next room, he would, as it were, have shortened his child’s life by that moment of time” (1900, p.510). But it is precisely the father’s *wish to see* his child for yet another moment, to prolong his life for the duration of the dream that *prevents him from seeing* the death, from witnessing the burning. Thus, what returns in the dream is not the child alive, but the “encounter forever missed” with the child’s death. The dream uncannily becomes in this sense a *repetition* of the reality that escapes the father; but insofar as the father fails to witness it, insofar as he misses it, he is always bound to arrive belatedly—and repeatedly—at the scene of his trauma. In her work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, Caruth elaborates on Lacan’s reading of the father’s traumatic awakening:

Waking up in order to see, the father discovers that he has once again *seen too late* to prevent the burning. The relation between the burning within and the burning without is thus neither a fiction (as in Freud’s interpretation) nor a direct representation, but a *repetition* that reveals, in its temporal contradiction, how the very bond of the father to the child—his responsiveness to the child’s words—is linked to the missing of the child’s death. To awaken is thus precisely to awaken to one’s repetition of a previous failure to see in time. The force of the trauma is not the death alone, that is, but the fact that, in his very attachment to the child, the father was unable to witness the child’s dying as it occurred. *Awakening*, in Lacan’s reading of the dream, *is itself the site of trauma*, the trauma of the

necessity and impossibility of responding to another's death. (1996, p.100, emphasis in original)

When it comes to trauma, forming a response to another's death is tantamount to forming a response to oneself, not only because "'I' is an Other," as Lacan theorized, but also because the trauma annihilates the subject that preceded it. As Wiesel writes in *Night*, his autobiographical memoir of his Holocaust experience, "I too had become *a completely different person*. The student of the Talmud, *the child that I was, had been consumed in the flames*" (1982, p.34, emphasis added). The pre-trauma subject is completely annihilated, *burned*. Brison testifies to a similar annihilation: "I am not the same person who set off, singing on that sunny Fourth of July in the French countryside. I left her in a rocky bed at the bottom of a ravine. I had to in order to survive" (2002, p.21). In trauma one is called to outlive oneself, to form a response to one's own death. The words that French writer and Holocaust survivor Charlotte Delbo attributes to a fellow deportee capture this aptly: "I died in Auschwitz, but no one knows it" (quoted in Brison, 2002, p.37).

Interestingly, the response of the dreaming father to his child's death is precisely the act of going to sleep (perhaps because, as Hamlet utters, "by a sleep to say we end/ The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks"). More precisely, the father responds to this traumatic death with a dream—the very dream of his son's burning, of his second death as it were. The voice of the son that addresses the father in the dream, is also the father's voice in addressing his son's death: the father speaks his trauma through his dream, a dream that marks the necessity and impossibility of sleeping at the same time that it produces the necessity and impossibility of awakening. That is, the function of the dream is not only to fulfill the father's wish to sleep as Freud speculates, nor is it merely

to produce the father's awakening as Lacan suggests; rather, the function of the dream is also *to repeat* the necessity and impossibility to *see* the son alive once again, to *witness* his death and, ultimately, to grasp the truth of the missed (tempo)reality, the truth of the burning. In this sense, the father's true *awakening*, his *recognition*, is the dream itself, the reproachful question of his son—"don't you see?" It is because of the dream that the father awakens to the recognition of his not having seen, to the recognition of his traumatic awakening.²⁴

In dreams, as in trauma, one inevitably misses the very reality to which one bears witness. What Felman writes of the "speaking subject," applies equally well to the 'dreaming subject' and, even more poignantly, to the 'traumatized subject': namely, that "the speaking subject constantly bears witness to a truth that nonetheless continues to escape him, a truth that is, essentially *not available* to its own speaker" (1995, p.24). After all, as Freud was quick to acknowledge, "what we remember of a dream," and what we remember of trauma I would add, "has been mutilated by the untrustworthiness of our memory, which seems quite especially incapable of retaining a dream [a trauma] and may well have lost the most important parts of its content" (1900, p.512). Memory is by nature fallible; but fallibility hardly amounts to mutilation. The memory of the dream,

²⁴ This 'traumatic awakening,' or recognition, must be understood again in opposition to the Lacanian misrecognition, or *méconnaissance*, that becomes constitutive of subjectivity, as a condition of being-as-subject (see Chapter 2, Section II for an elaboration of the concept of misrecognition and its function in subjectivity). Misrecognition operates here as a mis-knowledge, or rather, a *missed* knowledge. As soon as the father, or the traumatized subject, recognizes that which has been missed, or the very fact of having missed, or of not having seen, the shield of misrecognition that protects the subject from the knowledge of the Real is ruptured—this is the process of symbolic ruptures that I have described in the previous chapter. Thus, paradoxical as it may seem, trauma is constituted, not in the event itself, but in the recognition of the event, and in the fact that this recognition always arrives too late. It is this retroactively reconstructive movement that Freud's concept of '*nachträglichkeit*' aims to capture. Freud uses this term to understand traumatic formations as early as in the "Project for a Scientific Psychology," where he writes that "we invariably find that a memory is repressed which has only become a trauma by *deferred action*" (1895, p.356, emphasis in original).

like the memory of trauma is compromised, not only by the ordinary limitations of recollection, but also by the very process of a mutilated registration; that is, in trauma, as in dreams, it is not only a matter of recovering the event but of never having fully possessed it. In this sense, we could also substitute “dream” for “trauma” and rephrase Lacan’s query: “Is not [trauma] essentially, one might say, an act of homage to the missed reality—the reality that can no longer produce itself except by repeating itself endlessly, in some never attained awakening?” What both Felman and Lacan seem to point towards, is a certain impossibility of “bearing witness,” of awakening at the moment when one is asleep, at the very moment when one enters the “other scene” of the trauma. This impossibility in turn, begets a repetition, a dead son’s voice, a disturbing thought, a persistent flashback, a recurring nightmare, a return to a “never attained awakening,” since, as Caruth notes, “to awaken is ...precisely to awaken to one’s repetition of a previous failure to see in time.” What one sees, what one witnesses, is a “mutilated” scene. This mutilation of memory seems to be itself an act of violence perpetrated by a consciousness that wishes to go-on-sleeping, so as to go-on-being, so as to forestall a traumatic awakening, so as to survive. However, in the act of mutilation, the trauma, just like the dream, loses “the most important parts of its content,” thus rendering the reconstruction of the missed reality, of the dream in its totality, unattainable. This is why the act of interpreting into contents falls short; it is only by beginning to read into the structures, around which contents become organized, that we may begin to address symbolic ruptures, to bear witness to the missed reality of a “burning” and form a response to “another’s death.”

II. Reading Trauma

In his attempt to elucidate the theory of dreams through the dream of the burning child, Freud unwittingly engages a theory of trauma—a theory that itself awakens twenty years and a World War later, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). Although his much-quoted intention in the dream book was to show how “*the interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind*” (1900, p.608, emphasis in original), I would argue that, to the extent that his topography of the mind emerges out of his encounter with the limitations of interpretation,²⁵ *The Interpretation of Dreams* unconsciously interrogates the ‘un-interpretable,’ the traumatic as such.

Interestingly, just prior to revealing the royal road to the unconscious activities of the mind, Freud quotes Virgil’s *Aeneid*, “*Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo,*” which is translated as follows: “If I cannot bend the Higher Powers, I will move the Infernal Regions” (p.608). In fact, Freud uses this same line as an epigraph to the entire book, to which Strachey supplies an illuminating excerpt from a 1927 letter of Freud: “The wish rejected by the higher mental agencies (the repressed dream-wish) stirs up the mental underworld (the unconscious) *in order to get a hearing*” (Strachey, 1953, p.ix, emphasis added). While Jones understands Freud to be making here an “obvious

²⁵ Although Freud had already drafted a theoretical schematization of the mental apparatus in his *Project for A Scientific Psychology* (1895), five years before the publication of the *Interpretation of Dreams*, such a schematization does not appear in the latter until the seventh chapter, where he also introduces for the first time the work of the primary and secondary processes. Interestingly enough, Freud moves on to a theoretical exploration of the mental apparatus immediately following his discussion of the dream of ‘the burning child,’ after which he is forced to concede that dream interpretation may reveal something about unconscious contents but that it falls short in its ability to shed light on the processes and functions of the mind:

There is no possibility of explaining dreams as a psychical process, since to explain a thing means to trace it back to something already known, and there is at the present time no established psychological knowledge under which we could subsume what the psychological examination of dreams enables us to infer as a basis for their explanation. On the contrary, we shall be obliged to set up a number of fresh hypotheses which touch tentatively upon the structure of the apparatus of the mind and upon the play of forces operating in it. (1900, p.511)

reference to the fate of the repressed” (Jones, 1972, p.395), perhaps the epigraph that adorns the dream book may also have a not-so-obvious, yet quite explicit reference: namely, a reference to the “Infernal Regions,” the regions (of the mind and of the world) that are by nature traumatic, the regions that are always “burning.” Freud’s own explanation is quite telling: that which stirs up the unconscious, does so in order to be heard (“*Father, don’t you see I’m burning?*,” *Father, don’t you hear?*)—it demands recognition; in fact, it stirs up the unconscious because that is the only way it can be heard, that is the only way it can leave its mark, and make its inscription (isn’t this what Lacan calls the “beyond that makes itself heard in the dream”?). But in order to be heard, one needs an Other who may listen—this is where we may find in Freud the Lacanian Other of the unconscious and of the symbolic order which, in receiving the inscription, guarantees “a hearing.” What I’m suggesting here, and will proceed to explore further, is that the dream book may have more to teach us about trauma than Freud had anticipated, or intended for that matter.

This is not to say that in writing the book, Freud was not concerned with trauma—quite the contrary: Freud ventured on *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in the hope of shedding light on the phenomena of the psychoneuroses, the majority of which he regarded at that time as traumatic formations.²⁶ In fact, Freud concludes the dream book

²⁶ In his earlier works, prior to developing his drive theory, Freud regarded hysterical phenomena as traumatic formations, even making the distinction between what we would today call single-event trauma and cumulative trauma. Influenced by the teachings of Charcot and his collaboration with Breuer, Freud wrote in 1893:

‘There is a complete analogy between traumatic paralysis and common, non-traumatic hysteria.’ The only difference is that in the former a major trauma has been operative, whereas in the latter there is seldom a *single* major event to be signalized, but rather a *series* of affective impressions—a whole story of suffering. But there is nothing forced in equating such a story, which appears as the determining factor in hysterical patients, with the accident which occurs in traumatic hysteria. For no one doubts any longer to-day that even in the case of the major mechanical trauma in traumatic hysteria what produces the result is not the mechanical factor but the affect of fright, *the*

by emphasizing “the theoretical value of the study of dreams in the contributions it makes to psychological knowledge and in the preliminary light it throws on the problems of the psychoneuroses” (p. 619). His entire theory is built on the premise that the unconscious processes operative in dreams are identical to those operating in the psychoneuroses, so that any insights gained from one can be easily transferred to the other. “In view of the complete identity between the characteristic features of the dream-work and those of the psychical activity which issues in psychoneurotic symptoms” he explicitly states, “we feel justified in carrying over to dreams the conclusions we have been led to by hysteria” (1900, p.597). However, in examining the unconscious processes discernible in dreams and in the psychoneuroses, Freud was more interested in the act of *interpretation*, of explaining away both the dream and the symptom. What he was essentially looking for was a latent truth that could be revealed through the symbolic expressions of the dream-work and of symptom formation. But insofar as, in trauma, this truth is inherently inaccessible, insofar as it has been constituted in a missed reality, the act of interpretation is bound to fall short, as it does, in fact, in the last chapter of the book.

In arguing that *The Interpretation of Dreams* reveals something about the structure of trauma, and that trauma shares in the grammar of dreams, I do not wish to interpret trauma. Rather, I see in the structure of the dream-work a theoretical model

psychical trauma. The first thing that follows from all this, then, is that the pattern of traumatic hysteria, as it was laid down by Charcot for hysterical paralyses, applies quite generally to all hysterical phenomena, or at least to the great majority of them. In every case what we have to deal with is the operation of psychical traumas, which unambiguously determine the nature of the symptoms that arise. (1893, p. 30, emphasis in original)

Although Freud later abandons this idea, I still find it useful in considering symptoms as traumatic formations, as unconscious testimonies that betray an experience whose conscious registration would lift the specter of misrecognition, exposing the subject’s traumatic sense of primitive discontinuity. In this sense, it is assumed that the continuum of psychopathology (neurotic, borderline, or psychotic) always emerges at the point of contact and rupture between inside and outside as a response to that which cannot be otherwise assimilated, lest it destroys the subject of consciousness.

through which to construct, not an interpretation, but an *anagnosis*—a way of receiving and of witnessing trauma that transcends its content and aims instead to read through its structure, its inscription, its language. The Greek word *ανάγνωσις* (*anagnosis*), which literally translates into ‘reading,’ is a compound word comprised of the word *γνώσις*, or ‘knowledge,’ and the prefix *ανά*, which carries the meaning of both ‘again’ and ‘after.’ *Anagnosis*, or reading then, literally translates into ‘re-knowing,’ ‘knowing again’ and ‘knowing after.’ In this sense, it is also synonymous with the Lacanian reconnaissance, re-knowing, *recognition*, which resists and negates misrecognition. I wish to bind all these meanings together to suggest that a *psychoanalytic bearing* on trauma, on the continuum of human experiences (both neurotic and psychotic) that become foreclosed from conscious (re)cognition, should involve, not merely an interpreting, but also a *reading*—after all, isn’t psychoanalysis precisely an ‘after-knowledge,’ a *nachträglichkeit*, constituted through a knowing-again of that which was thought to be known, but which was essentially missed? Felman takes a similar position when she construes psychoanalysis and literature as “events of speech,” capable of producing a certain kind of *testimony* that goes beyond interpretation:

Their testimony, in both cases, will be understood as a mode of *truth’s realization* beyond what is available as statement, beyond what is available, that is, as a truth transparent to itself and entirely known, given, in advance, prior to the very process of its utterance. The testimony will therefore be understood, in other words, not as a mode of *statement of*, but rather as a mode of *access to*, that truth. (1995, p.24, emphasis in original)

Felman too moves away from interpretation as a *statement of* truth, and towards a mode of “*truth’s realization*” that requires *accessing* (accessing perhaps “the Infernal Regions”?). It is precisely such an access to a truth that is not possessed, but which is produced through its realization, that I hope to achieve through the act of reading in the

sense in which I have suggested—of re-reading, and hence of re-knowing that which refuses to offer itself as a transparent truth. Quite literally, I wish to re-read *The Interpretation of Dreams* through the insights that Freud attains in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. By bringing the former to bear on the latter in an afterward movement of retroactive meaning, of *nachträglichkeit* as it were, I hope to gain a theoretical access into the structure of symbolic ruptures, so as to lend a hearing and a reading to the language through which trauma speaks.

In the previous chapter, I proposed to understand trauma, not necessarily as an event, but as a dimension in human experience that transpires at the edge of the symbolic order, in close proximity to the lining of the Real. The location of trauma, I argued, is to be found both within and without what Winnicott calls “the location of cultural experience,” which seals the pact of trust and consistency between the subject and the world. At the location of trauma, the boundaries that at once connect and separate the subject from the world, interiority from exteriority, dream from reality, become fractured, so that the subject surrenders his trust in the guarantees of consistency that are ordinarily provided by the symbolic structures of his culture. I have called this process a ‘symbolic rupture,’ not only because it introduces a rupture in the order of the symbolic, but also because this rupture remains in itself symbolic, remains, in other words, fundamentally structured. The nature of this structure, I argue, is determined by the same processes that give rise to the condensation and displacement that Freud first observed in dreams. It is these processes that I will attempt to delineate by means of a retroactive return to the theory of dreams, examined through the lens of trauma that Freud introduces in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

III. The Necessity to Speak

Two decades after the appearance of *The Interpretation of Dreams* and the first published topography of the psychological apparatus (which was already discernible in the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* drafted in 1895), Freud delves deeper into the “unconscious activities of the mind” and presents the most radical perhaps of his metapsychological theories. It is in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) that Freud introduces for the first time the death drive, and ascribes to all instinctual impulses the “compulsion to repeat,” which he had previously described only as a form of remembering by way of acting-out—itself an unconscious resistance to the treatment (Freud, 1914). But its metapsychological significance notwithstanding, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* emerges as a meditation on trauma. Isn’t its “beyond,” in fact, the same “beyond” that, as Lacan tells us, “makes itself heard in the dream” of the burning child? Indeed, what compels Freud to search beyond the pleasure principle is precisely his encounter with trauma, with the “war neuroses,” which proliferated in the aftermath of the First World War. “The terrible war which has just ended,” he writes at the beginning of the book, “gave rise to a great number of illnesses of this kind, but it at least put an end to the temptation to attribute the cause of the disorder to organic lesions of the nervous system brought about by mechanical force” (1920, p.12). Instead, Freud identifies the cause of such clinical phenomena in “the factor of surprise, of fright,” of “the state a person gets into when he has run into danger without being prepared for it” (p.12).

As Freud was puzzled to discover, the patient would come out of this frightful state only to return to it in the “other scene” of the unconscious, in the scene of his dreams:

Now dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright. This astonishes people far too little. They think the fact that the traumatic experience is constantly forcing itself upon the patient even in his sleep is a proof of the strength of that experience: the patient is, as one might say, fixated to his trauma....

I am not aware, however, that patients suffering from traumatic neurosis are much occupied in their waking lives with memories of their accident. Perhaps they are more concerned with *not* thinking of it. Anyone who accepts it as something self-evident that their dreams should put them back at night into the situation that caused them to fall ill has misunderstood the nature of dreams. It would be more in harmony with their nature if they showed the patient pictures from his healthy past or of the cure for which he hopes. (1920, p.13, emphasis in original)

Such dreams, Freud observes, seem to counter the very function of dreaming, the purpose of wish-fulfillment. Freud revisits this puzzling exception to the wish-fulfilling nature of dreams a few years later, in his *New Introductory Lectures On Psycho-Analysis* (1933): “people who have experienced a shock, a severe psychological trauma—such as happened so often during the war and such as affords the basis for traumatic hysteria—are regularly taken back in their dreams into the traumatic situation” (p.28). “We should not, I think, be afraid to admit that here the function of the dream has failed” (p.29). Freud recognizes *belatedly*—as it often happens—that which he had stumbled upon more than two decades earlier, in the dream of the burning child; namely, that traumatic dreams may raise “no problem of interpretation, and the meaning of which is obvious,” but that they raise a fundamental problem to the theory of dreams. If Freud sees in traumatic dreams the failure to fulfill a wish, it is because what they fulfill is a necessity, *the absolute necessity of the unconscious to speak its trauma*.

Freud's accumulating observations of 'unpleasure' in the consulting room, along with the failure of wish-fulfillment in traumatic dreams and his interpretation of his grandson's repetitive game of Fort-Da,²⁷ eventually leads him to question the pleasure principle and search for what may lie beyond it:

If we take into account observations such as these, based upon behaviour in the transference and upon the life-histories of men and women, we shall find courage to assume that *there really does exist in the mind a compulsion to repeat which overrides the pleasure principle*. Now too we shall be inclined to relate to this compulsion the dreams which occur in traumatic neuroses and the impulse which leads children to play. (1920, p.22, emphasis added)

In its traumatic manifestations, however, the compulsion to repeat extends beyond the realm of dreams. As Freud acknowledges in his *New Introductory Lectures*, "there are people in whose lives the same reactions are perpetually being repeated uncorrected, to their own detriment, or others who seem to be pursued by a relentless fate, though closer investigation teaches us that they are unwittingly bringing this fate on themselves. In such cases we attribute a 'daemonic' character to the compulsion to repeat" (1933, p.106). The "'daemonic' character" of repetition, the relentlessness with which it proceeds, "not, indeed, in *opposition* to the pleasure principle, but independently of it and to some extent in disregard of it" (1920, p.35, emphasis in original), compels Freud to eventually assign it to very character of the instincts, which, in their aim "to restore an earlier state of things" (p.36), seek to effect "the task of mastering or binding excitations" (p.35). It is in response to trauma, "the breach in the shield against stimuli," the enigmatic, indeed dubious nature of symbolic ruptures, that Freud takes this metapsychological leap beyond the pleasure principle (p.31).

²⁷ See Section III of Chapter Two for an extensive discussion of the Fort-Da game as an initiation of the subject into the symbolic order.

We should be accustomed by now to the fact that theoretical transparency has never been a virtue of metapsychology; but *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* incurs more internal theoretical contradictions than most of Freud's prior or subsequent writings.²⁸ I do not find this to be coincidental; it seems to me to be inherent to the unprecedented depths that Freud reaches for the first time, the depths of a radical unconscious that is defined precisely by its "exemption from mutual contradiction," from external reality, from waking time (1915b, p.187). Freud gazes as it were, at this 'daemonic' structure, which no longer seeks to attain pleasure benignly by reducing tension, but rather repeats, persistently, the unrelenting suffering of "another fright."

²⁸ Delineating the internal theoretical contradictions encountered in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* deserves a study of its own. However, for our purposes, it should suffice to say that Freud first sees the compulsion to repeat as characteristic of the death instincts and then proceeds to render it into a universal characteristic of all instincts. Although this compulsion is initially said to lie beyond the pleasure principle, to "override" it, as Freud tells us, and to operate "to some extent in disregard of it," by the end of the book, its theoretical position remains unclear. In his concluding chapter, Freud surprisingly aligns the death instincts with the pleasure principle:

...the life instincts have so much more contact with our internal perception—emerging as breakers of the peace and constantly producing tensions whose release is felt as pleasure—while the death instincts seem to do their work unobtrusively. *The pleasure principle seems actually to serve the death instincts*. It is true that it keeps watch upon stimuli from without, which are regarded as dangers by both kinds of instincts; but it is more especially on guard against increases of stimulation from within, which would make the task of living more difficult. This in turn raises a host of other questions to which we can at present find no answer. (p.63, emphasis added)

However, nowhere does Freud address the implications that the alignment of the death instincts with the pleasure principle creates for the compulsion to repeat. Should we take this to mean that the compulsion to repeat is itself a function of the pleasure principle rather than a "beyond," or, more puzzling yet, that it is a "daemonic" force that operates "in disregard of" the instincts? And to complicate matters further, isn't this "daemonic force" an organizing one, in that it repeats so as to bind? And didn't Freud lead us to believe that binding is in fact the work of the ego, rather than the work of the instincts? Freud attempts to answer some of these questions in "An Outline of Psychoanalysis" (1938), where he renders binding into an attribute of Eros, or the life instincts, but this does not seem to be a satisfying resolution to the problem. For, if traumatic repetition is itself a return, a retroactive movement like the one that Freud ascribes to all instincts, the work of binding has to be also conflated with the work of the death drive. For an illuminating discussion of these theoretical inroads see Laplanche and Pontalis' *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (1973). In his last remarks in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud tries to let himself off the hook, by preemptively anticipating the need for theoretical clarity: "Only believers, who demand that science shall be a substitute for the catechism they have given up, will blame an investigator for developing or even transforming his views," he writes (p.64). Perhaps we should simply resign ourselves to the inevitable obscurity that arises whenever we attempt to construct a "myth of origins" (Green, 1975, p.18).

This fright insists on returning uninvited, not only in dreams, but also in waking lives, in what appears as “a relentless fate,” but which is in fact the daemonic work of an unconscious that speaks, that reveals unwittingly its indelible inscriptions. This is why the traumatized subject “wakes up in another fright,” wakes up in the reality of his dream, much like the father who awoke to his child’s burning, which was also his own traumatic burning: it is because trauma erupts in the symbolic as though in a dream. As Freud quickly realized, this rupture cannot be explained by means of the pleasure principle, the identifiable marker of the primary process that he consistently posits as the unconscious process par excellence:

The fulfilment of wishes is, as we know, brought about in a hallucinatory manner by dreams, and under the dominance of the pleasure principle this has become their function. But it is not in the service of that principle that the dreams of patients suffering from traumatic neuroses lead them back with such regularity to the situation in which the trauma occurred. We may assume, rather, that dreams are here helping to carry out another task, which must be accomplished before the dominance of the pleasure principle can even begin. These dreams are endeavouring to master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis. They thus afford us a view of a function of the mental apparatus which, though it does not contradict the pleasure principle, is nevertheless independent of it and seems to be more primitive than the purpose of gaining pleasure and avoiding unpleasure. (1920, p.32)

It seems to be “more primitive” indeed than the unconscious as Freud had conceived of it in his earlier writings (and I would go so far as to say that it is because he gazed at what lay beyond the pleasure principle that Freud eventually had to move beyond the unconscious, beyond this radical topos, and towards the more containing structure of the id). But what appears to lie beyond the pleasure principle, is not only the compulsion to repeat, but also an unconscious that is structured by this compulsion. In other words, what lies beyond the pleasure principle is the very process of structuring.

Repetition seems to arise precisely out of what we might call a ‘compulsion to structure.’ Freud identifies the dominance of the process of structuring in the function of binding: “We have found that one of the earliest and most important functions of the mental apparatus,” he writes, “is to bind the instinctual impulses which impinge on it, to replace the primary process prevailing in them by the secondary process and convert their freely mobile cathectic energy into a mainly quiescent (tonic) cathexis” (1920, p.62). In this sense, we could say that the compulsion to repeat appears to obey the ‘binding principle.’ Green too perceives in binding a necessary condition for the work of repetition: “without prior binding, there can be no possibility of repetition; just disorganization with fragmentation and parceling” (2002, p.84). But paradoxically, repetition seems to perform the work of binding as much as it serves to unbind, to unsettle, to re-traumatize; it serves the work of eros and thanatos alike: it is that which impels both the child’s creative game, and the patient’s disorganizing fright, it transfers the patient back to the scene of his trauma at the same time that it creates the guarantees of consistency and predictability that lend culture its symbolic support. In fact, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud sees in repetition the very foundation of order:

Order is a kind of compulsion to repeat which, when a regulation has been laid down once and for all, decides when, where and how a thing shall be done, so that in every similar circumstance one is spared hesitation and indecision. The benefits of order are incontestable. It enables men to use space and time to the best advantage, while conserving their psychical forces (1930, p.93).

And yet, isn’t repetition the absolute defiance of linear temporality, as we know it—as consciousness knows it? Isn’t it the ultimate manifestation of a timelessness only known to the unconscious?

Repetition is determined precisely by this paradox: in its timelessness, in its constant return, it begets time, binding, structure. It is in this sense that, in its own constant return, trauma is fundamentally structured. Only that which is ordered can follow an exacting sequence and repeat itself with the invariability of flashbacks, of unremitting voices, of recurring nightmares. Recalling the scene of her rape, her first ‘sexual encounter,’ a patient of mine once described: “I could see the blood flowing down my thighs and all I could think about was getting home *on time*. All I could think about was time.” In that moment, she turned to order, she held onto the structure of time, the structure of a curfew, “a regulation,” so as not to fall into the fragmentation of her bleeding, her wound, her burning. We can observe the same clinging to structure in Brison’s own reconstruction of how the scene of her rape unfolded:

I recall first experiencing my assault as an incomprehensible random event, surely a nightmare (a reversal of the epistemological crisis provoked by Descartes’ question “What if I’m dreaming?” Instead, I asked myself in desperation, “What if I’m awake?”). When the sexual nature of the assault became apparent, I experienced it as a rape (Oh, so *that’s* what this is”) and tried to recall all I’d heard about what one is supposed to do in such a situation. When, after I “woke up,” subsequent to being strangled into unconsciousness, and I realized that I was being treated as a corpse (my assailant was dragging me by my feet to a creek bed at the bottom of a steep ravine), I redescribed the event as a “murder-in-progress.” (2002, p.31)

Brison’s account is remarkably linear, sequential, structured, as though she is a spectator, a witness to herself. The very process of her telling performs the structure of which she speaks, her turn to language, the methodical categorization of words, of the *signifier*, so as to begin to tell the difference between dreaming and awakening, and to witness the reality of her assault, first as a “rape,” and then as a “murder-in-progress.” But in her very attempt to witness, to comprehend the nature of what she was in fact witnessing, she couldn’t but miss the event itself and fully experience its impact at the level of affect, of

the senses, of comprehension. In trying to recall what she had “heard about what one is supposed to do in such a situation,” she fell back to the organizing mode of categorization. Of course, there is no manual for getting raped, for being murdered, but the very act of looking for one speaks to the absolute necessity of structure, a frame of reference with which to compress, reduce, and bind the incomprehensible to the familiar. However, while structure might have been what allowed Brison to live through her assault, it is also what became paralyzing in its aftermath: the repetition of flashbacks, the constant return of nightmares that placed her back to the scene of her trauma, were incapacitating. In its attempt to structure the inassimilable, the unconscious took over, tightening its grip, so as to bind together the pieces of an experience comprised of fragments: this is why in trauma repetition becomes relentless, proceeding with remarkable exactitude and precision; the slightest deviation, the smallest digression threatens to obliterate order, that which, as Freud tells us, “enables men to use space and time to the best advantage, while conserving their psychical forces.” In all its excess, the repetition of symptoms is—for lack of a better word—‘economical.’

The degree to which repetition proceeds automatically or creatively, appears to be a function of witnessing, of the extent to which there is an other to receive this ciphered message, and to offer an auxiliary source of binding as it were, to act as an external source of structure, through which the subject may re-establishing a link with an Other, and re-assert his position within the symbolic order. Once it receives a hearing, the language of repetition does not need to remain loyal to its testimony as a reproduction, but can afford a deviation and a transformation into an adaptive reconstruction.

IV. The Dream-Work of Trauma

I suggest that if we look at dream-work carefully, we will see the unconscious speaking the same structured language, albeit a little less compulsively, a little less pressured. The dream-work, Freud argues, operates according to the primary process, in which cathexis is “freely mobile” rather than “quiescent.” From a structural perspective, “primary processes are not characterized by absence of meaning but by mobility of meaning. In this view, *both secondary and primary processes are symbolic, are structured by the same linguistic principles and are concerned with meanings*” (Litowitz & Litowitz, 1977, p.432, emphasis added). In the unconscious, in which the primary process operates, these meanings slide unobtrusively and can only find conscious representation in a modified form. The dream-work, a primary process function, is precisely what carries out this process of modification, by means of condensation and displacement. These primary processes are “present in the mental apparatus from the first,” while the secondary process, the foundation of consciousness, makes a “belated appearance” (1900, p.603). Consciousness arrives by nature too late; it always emerges afterwards, constituting itself retroactively. But condensation and displacement are there “from the first.” How are they related then to the compulsion to repeat, which is even more ‘primary’ than the pleasure principle, and to binding—itsself “one of the earliest and most important functions of the mental apparatus,” and therefore also present “from the first”?

I would argue that while displacement and condensation may serve the primary process, they are in fact direct derivatives of the compulsion to repeat and the work of binding respectively, that they are themselves modifications as it were, of these truly

foundational processes beyond the primary process; if so, then we will discover retroactively the ‘compulsion to repeat,’ not only “beyond the pleasure principle,” but also in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Indeed, it is the compulsion to repeat and therefore the work of binding, it seems, which operate in displacement and condensation, and which form the language of dreams, an unconscious language from which trauma emerges, not as fragmentation, but as a cohesive structure.

The dream, Freud argues, is a transformed communication of unconscious thoughts that become modified according to a particular ‘grammar’: “In the process of transforming the latent thoughts into the manifest content of a dream we have found two factors at work: dream-condensation and dream-displacement” (1900, p.310). Additional determinants such as antithetical associations, or representability into visual images, Freud tells us, exercise an influence “on the choice of material which is to find access to the dream” (p.310). But the modes of access, the manner in which unconscious material becomes modified and finds its way into the dream, always appears to boil down to compression and displacement.

In reading trauma through the structure of the dream, traumatic symptoms would also appear as such transformations, from a latent truth, into a manifest expression. But the truth of trauma is always already a missed truth, it is a truth that has escaped consciousness, not unlike large portions of dreams themselves which disappear upon awakening. In this sense, it is a truth that cannot be *stated* simply through interpretation because it was never truly possessed: instead, it is a truth that will continue to repeat itself until its unconscious inscription is *accessed*. I approach condensation and displacement precisely as the grammar of an unconscious that is structured like a language, a grammar

that must be accessed, to the extent possible, so as to produce a testimonial reading of trauma.

But how does the unconscious grammar of the dream-work reveal the language of trauma? Freud describes displacement as “the replacing of some one particular idea by another in some way closely associated with it,” and condensation as “a process of compression” where “instead of *two* elements, a single common element intermediate between them [finds] its way into the dream” (1900, p.339). For Freud, these are “the two governing factors to whose activity we may in essence ascribe the form assumed by dreams” (p.308). But these processes do not seem to be primary in themselves; rather, they emerge as a response to the secondary process for, as Freud tells us, they serve to transform the latent dream-thoughts into the manifest content of the dream so as to “evade the censorship” of consciousness (p.507). In other words, although condensation and displacement serve to modify the inscriptions of the unconscious, they do so *on behalf of consciousness*. In this sense, condensation and displacement appear to be modifications of even more foundational and primary processes: what lies beyond them, it seems to me, is the work of binding and repetition, respectively. Isn’t condensation—the “process of compression”—precisely a form of *binding*, in which the ‘many’ are bound together into ‘a few,’ acquiring a level of organization and structure? “The binding of the energy that streams into the mental apparatus,” writes Freud, “consists in its change from a freely flowing into a quiescent state” (1920, p.31). As condensation, the work of binding becomes, not a change in energy, but a transformation of freely flowing, unorganized images, sensations and affects, into an organized structure. In a similar vein, what appears to operate in the mobility of cathexis that characterizes

displacement is a modified form of repetition, that moves from one idea, or object, to another.

I would argue that what distinguishes displacement from pure repetition is the presence of anxiety, which is itself a response to consciousness; after all, when left to itself, the unconscious defies, not only time, but also the conflicts and contradictions that give rise to anxiety. Melanie Klein makes Freud's link between displacement—or the making of “new equations,” in her terms—and the presence of anxiety more explicit, implying that the former might not be possible in the absence of the latter:

Since the child desires to destroy the organs (penis, vagina, breast) which stand for the objects, he conceives a dread of the latter. This anxiety contributes to make him *equate the organs in question with other things*; owing to this equation these in their turn become objects of anxiety, and so *he is impelled constantly to make other and new equations*, which form the basis of his interest in the new objects and of symbolism. Thus, not only does symbolism come to be the foundation of all phantasy and sublimation but, more than that, upon it is built up the subject's relation to the outside world and to reality in general. (1930, p.25, emphasis added)

Klein is describing here the process by which objects and ideas acquire a certain psychological significance, not unlike the process of displacement. As Freud notes, displacement is a sort of “psychical emphasis,” a *punctuation* in the language of the unconscious: “ideas which originally had only a *weak* charge of intensity take over the charge from ideas which were originally *more intensely* cathected and at last attain enough strength to enable them to force an entry into consciousness” (1900, p.177, emphasis in original). This shift of psychical emphasis is propelled by anxiety—be it the anxiety of destroying the object, as Klein would argue, or the anxiety that “an entry into consciousness” of unacceptable ideas would provoke. Pure, automatic repetition emerges precisely out of an experience that forces itself upon the subject in the “lack of any

preparedness for anxiety” (Freud, 1920, p.31). But in cases where some traces of anxiety find their way into the traumatic experience (in fact, it is possible that they always do, albeit in varying degrees), the traumatized subject manages to maintain some psychical integrity, and is therefore able to repeat in a modified, displaced manner.

Recall the patient who, at the moment of her rape, focused her consciousness on violating her curfew at the same time that she was being violated. Wasn't the very consciousness of her trauma condensed and displaced onto that detail, a detail which in fact held the secret to her survival? And wasn't Brison's preoccupation with the categorization of her experience her own attempt to condense and displace the horror of her reality? I also wish to summon here a traumatic memory of mine: when I was twelve years old, my eight-month old niece died of a heart defect. The wake took place in our living room, according to the traditional rituals (which are themselves collective and symbolic attempts to structure trauma). I recall looking at the body behind the glass of the tiny casket, and noticing a dark bruise on the forehead. My entire experience of that event became condensed in the image of that bruise. As far as my consciousness was concerned, I wasn't so much disturbed by the loss itself, by the unfathomable experience of a parent outliving his child, by the unimaginable pain of everyone around me, let alone mine, as much as I was disturbed by that bruise, the one detail which made sense and thereby conferred some order on the incomprehensible. “You see,” Slavoj Žižek would say, “this detail is a knot which condenses all you had to forget so that you can swim in your everyday certainty, it enframes the very frame which confers meaning on your life, it structures the horizon within which things make sense to you; if we unknot it you will lose the ground from under your feet!” (2001, p.15). This process of condensation and

displacement, the finding of the detail, would not have been possible without the presence of anxiety.

But at its utmost extreme, trauma is defined precisely by the absence of any preparedness for anxiety: “There is something about anxiety that protects its subject against fright and so against fright-neuroses,” Freud noted (1920, p.13). It is due to the lack of anxiety that, in trauma, displacement is reduced to its elemental form, a pure automatic repetition. Perhaps, repetition serves to induce “preparedness for anxiety” so as to enable a subsequent shift of the psychological emphasis onto new ideas, or new objects. At the same time however, repetition forecloses newness until the old—that which has already happened—is recognized. When the unconscious speaks *in spite of consciousness*, when it overrides, not only the pleasure principle, but also the reality principle, when it demands to be recognized in-itself and for-itself, without the modifications of displacement and condensation, it appears as pure automaton, a repetition compelled by order. The structure of trauma, then, is organized around these two processes: displacement is reduced to its primal form of a most conservative repetition that cannot afford to deviate but can only replicate, and condensation becomes a binding so tight that it does not allow for a departure from the original scene: this is why trauma is *bound to repeat* itself.

V. Accessing Trauma

The language of trauma is not only the language of the unconscious but also the language of the drive, of that which repeats so as to bind, but also that which seeks to reach its aim at all costs. Insofar as trauma is a missed encounter, a forced experience

that occurs despite consciousness, its aim, I would argue, is to speak, and to produce a testimony for that which defies witnessing. Its repetition serves to bind the fragments of sensations and memories, to organize the experience of fright in a paradoxical manner, by inducing anxiety so that one may feel prepared for the fright to come, which, as Winnicott wisely asserts (1974), is the fright for that which has already happened. Through repetition, the anxiety of annihilation gives way to the anxiety of preparedness, of survival, of mastery. After a series of revisions to his theory of anxiety, Freud eventually resolved: “I can see no objection to there being a twofold origin of anxiety—one as a direct consequence of the traumatic moment and the other as a signal threatening a repetition of such a moment” (1933, p.94). Anxiety might be a signal threatening a repetition of a lost traumatic event but repetition is at the same time a means of binding the anxiety. In fact, I would argue that it is the anxiety “as a signal threatening a repetition” which actually creates and induces repetition, which brings about the nightmares, the flashbacks, the symptoms which serve to bind the anxiety surrounding the traumatic event.

Freud identified the origins of anxiety in trauma and in the fear of its repetition; but, insofar as the first trauma consists in the separation of the infant from the mother (which led Rank to posit a ‘birth trauma’), Freud concedes that anxiety ultimately originates in loss or, more accurately, in absence, in “the infant's anxiety if it finds its mother absent” (Freud, 1933, p.87). He stresses this point:

You will realize how real a situation of danger is indicated by this anxiety. If a mother is absent or has withdrawn her love from her child, it is no longer sure of the satisfaction of its needs and is perhaps exposed to the most distressing feelings of tension. Do not reject the idea that these determinants of anxiety may at bottom repeat the situation of the original anxiety at birth, which, to be sure, also represented a separation from the mother. (p.87)

Anxiety represents a separation from the mother, which is also the anxiety, the fear of losing one's sense of being connected to the world, of losing the link to the symbolic, a link that is first established as a bond between self and (m)other. This is why the presence of the other becomes instrumental in the binding of traumatic anxiety.

Just as the satisfaction of the drive requires an object-cathexis, the anxiety of the trauma requires an other in order to be bound, and to help reconstitute the ruptured link to the symbolic. Brison arrives at this insight too, but she does so belatedly, a decade after her trauma: "It may be that the retroactive attempt to master the trauma through involuntary repetition is carried out, intrapsychically, until a listener emerges who is stable and reliable enough to bear witness to it. Perhaps there is a psychological imperative, analogous to the legal imperative, to keep telling one's story until it is heard" (2002, p.109). The "stable and reliable listener" appears to be reminiscent of a stable and reliable mother, the object who binds the original anxiety, and who links the infant to the world. The witnessing other then, appears to be constituted through the same process that the baby creates its objects: namely, by means of an associative link to the (m)other that evokes a sense of reliability and stability, a certain kind of quiescence to which the freely mobile anxiety of trauma may attach itself and in so doing, begin to dissolve.

Becoming a witness to the trauma and suffering of another person is at once necessary and impossible. What Elaine Scarry writes of physical pain is equally applicable to psychic pain, for the latter too is inscribed on the body:

So, for the person in pain, so incontestably and unnegotiably present is it that "having pain" may come to be thought of as the most vibrant example of what it is to "have certainty," while for the other person it is so elusive that "hearing about pain" may exist as the primary model of what it is to "have doubt." Thus

pain comes unsharably into our midst as at once that which cannot be denied and that which cannot be confirmed (1985, p.4).

To be confronted with pain then is to be placed right back into the Cartesian dilemma, to stand once more in front of the mirror in which we first misrecognized our subjectivity, to negotiate the paradox that ‘I is an Other’ and that ‘I cannot be an Other’ all at once, to recognize that no matter how hard we try, we cannot quite grasp the “irreducible specificity of traumatic stories” (Caruth, 1995, ix). This is why in its repetition, trauma has to remain faithful to the event: it is a singular experience that cannot be communicated except through its own irreducible specificity. It is the impossibility of witnessing the trauma in all its distinctiveness that leads the unconscious to speak it so forcefully, so relentlessly, so firmly, so rigidly. As Brison confesses, “I was initially reluctant to tell people...that I had been raped. Using the word “rape” would have conventionalized what happened to me, *denying the particularity of what I have experienced* and invoking in others whatever rape scenario they had already constructed” (2002, p.90, emphasis added). To go a step further, I would say that using the word “rape” would have denied the *particularity* of the experience even for herself, it would have produced a traumatic incommensurability between the word, the signifier, and the irreducible experience that it is called to summon, for in language and, even more profoundly, in the language of trauma, the signifier always fails to measure up to its signified. At the same time, it is this same word that Brison invoked in her mind at the very moment of her rape, in an attempt to categorize her experience, to structure it so as to bear witness to it; but the word did not suffice. If one cannot assimilate one’s own experience to one’s own words—the words given by one’s culture and through which the subject becomes linked to the world—how might an ‘other’ bear witness to it? This is

what's at stake for the traumatized subject: to speak or not to speak, and then, "to be or not to be?" "Each time someone failed to respond," Brison writes, "I felt as though I were alone again in the ravine, dying, screaming. And still no one could hear me. Or worse, they heard me, but refused to help" (2002, p.16). How can one bear witness then? Or, more specifically, how can psychoanalysis bear witness, how can it access the truth so as to bring about its realization, its testimony?

The task of witnessing lies in altering the structure of trauma, a structure that is built firmly, a monument, the only commemoration to an event that no consciousness is capable of fully witnessing. I would therefore argue that, insofar as trauma introduces a rupture into the symbolic, psychoanalysis may access it only through the crevices it creates in the subject's link to the world. In its eruption, the symbolic rupture leaves behind the traces of its own undoing. What this means when we speak of the analytic setting, is that trauma may be accessed through the ruptures of the psychoanalytic encounter, the 'coincidences,' the 'accidents,' the unforeseen and unforeseeable moments in which the repetition of trauma slips, as though by chance, permeating through its rigidity and opening a window for deviation and newness.

The encounter of psychoanalysis with the previously 'unanalyzable' spectrum of human experience, the one extending beyond 'neurosis' and into a borderline or psychotic realm, has caused it to modify its technique of analytic practice. Contemporary psychoanalysis has begun to shift its emphasis away from neutrality and interpretation to an active engagement with "the something more than interpretation" (Stern et. al., 1998), the "implicit relational knowing" (Lyons-Ruth et. al., 1998) that emerges between patient and analyst, or "the enacted dimension" of transference and counter-transference (Katz,

1998), all of which appear to be, at heart, dimensions of repetition. The hope in addressing these, often non-verbal, dimensions of experience is to invite the old structures into a new one and in so doing give rise to “emergent new possibilities for more coherent and adaptive forms of interaction” (Lyons-Ruth et al., 1998, p.282), to bring about, as Loewald would say, “a re-creation of something old as against a duplication of it” (1971, p.60). I would argue that the structural repetitions that ensue in “the matrix (or background experiential state) within which the transference-countertransference is being generated” (Ogden, 1991, p.593), are in fact engendered by the ‘binding’ structure of the analytic frame, the guarantees of consistency and predictability granted by the frequency of sessions, the fixed time, the standard duration, etc. The firmness of this structure is a precondition of repetition, and repetition is in turn an absolute precondition of rupture. After all, only that which is utterly organized and structured can be ruptured; deviation is only possible in the context of that which is steady, predictable and consistent—all and every difference is predicated on sameness.

I would like to suggest that in order for psychoanalysis to bear witness to trauma, to produce a testimony that may access its structure, it must be willing to be surprised, even to be ruptured. Symbolic ruptures erupt at the intertwined boundaries between the subject and the other/Other. In the clinical context, this boundary emerges as the space that both separates and connects patient and analyst, the subject and the other. Symbolic ruptures at this boundary manifest themselves in the *content* of the treatment, which should not be understood simply in terms of the patient’s material but also in terms of the treatment *process* as it unfolds through the transference and counter-transference matrix. Symbolic ruptures at the boundary between the subject and the big Other, which is the

boundary between the subject and the symbolic order (the unconscious, language, and culture) manifest themselves as interruptions in the symbolic *structure* of the treatment frame, which consists of the ‘symbolic pact’ between patient and analyst, the contractual agreement that determines the parameters within which the treatment unfolds, but which forms, in fact, an integral aspect of the treatment itself; in this sense, it is that which lies both within and without the treatment. Psychoanalysis has always been especially mindful of such disruptions, usually treating them as a form of resistance. But I would suggest that, beyond the unconscious resistance, more often than not, such disruptions perform and act out the disruptions in the patient’s link to the world.

At the boundary between patient and analyst, subject and other, I consider symbolic ruptures to appear in the form of encounters that unwittingly elicit a sense of what Freud has called “the uncanny” (1919): “the uncanny [*unheimlich*],” Freud explains, “is something which is secretly familiar [*heimlich-heimisch*], which has undergone repression and then returned from it” (p.245). What returns in symbolic ruptures, is not only that which has undergone repression, as Freud suggests, but also that which has foregone witnessing. Trauma returns uncannily, through ordinary encounters which might be insignificant and unremarkable in and of themselves, but which, in their timing and repetition, bring to the fore a sense of dreadful familiarity. As Žižek notes, “overhearing a passing remark by a friend, witnessing a small unpleasant scene, and so forth, can awaken long-forgotten memories and shatter our daily life—as Lacan put it, the unconscious trauma repeats itself *by means of* some small, contingent bit of reality”” (Žižek , 2001, p.11). “The crucial role of contingent encounters in triggering a traumatic crackup of our psychic balance” (p.11) rests precisely on the unexpected familiarity that

these encounters elicit, a familiarity that seems to suggest a repetition of the unwitnessed. As Freud ascertains, “it is only this factor of involuntary repetition which surrounds what would otherwise be innocent enough with an uncanny atmosphere, and forces upon us the idea of something fateful and inescapable when otherwise we should have spoken only of ‘*chance*’” (Freud, 1919.1955, p.237, emphasis added); or, put more simply, “whatever reminds us of this inner ‘compulsion to repeat’ is perceived as uncanny” (p.238). It is by making use of these uncanny, ‘chance,’ contingent bits of reality in the psychoanalytic encounter, I propose, that otherwise trivial experiences, articulations, and gestures, may provide access to the language of trauma.

At the boundary between the patient and the symbolic structures of the treatment, or between the patient and the analyst insofar as the latter occupies the fantasied space of the big Other, psychoanalysis can access trauma through the ruptures of the psychoanalytic frame. The patients’ ‘acting out’ against the psychoanalytic frame, against the overarching structure of the treatment, have largely been regarded as resistances to the treatment, defensive maneuvers to avoid encountering traumatic truths, or, at best, unconscious communications to be enacted, interpreted and worked through. I would like to consider acting out against the symbolic frame of the treatment from another angle, as an attempt at *deviation* from a fixed structure, a deviation which, in defying repetition, may hold the possibility for newness even as it may threaten to rupture the psychoanalytic process itself. What I’m suggesting here is not a radical revision of psychoanalytic theory and technique, but rather a transposition in perspectives, a ‘displacement,’ a shift of emphasis as it were, from the patient’s relationship to the analyst, to the patient’s relationship to the psychoanalytic structure, where the analyst

plays an integral—but not the only— part. The underlying assumption here is that the way in which each patient treats the total situation of the treatment structure is bound to be determined by the structure of his own unconscious, and the traumatic inscriptions lying therein.

The following chapter will consider these ideas at length, through their clinical applications. The implications of what I'm suggesting will become more transparent, as I will discuss the—ultimately ruptured—treatment of Elli, a patient whose trauma spoke incessantly through the psychoanalytic ruptures, both on the level of content and on the level of structure, and yet it remained largely inaudible to my untrained ears. Of course, I eventually arrived to it in the only way possible—too late.

Chapter 4

Remembering, Repeating, and Acting-Out

I. On Becoming a Witness: “You Have to Listen!”

At the peak of a manic episode and in the grip of psychosis, a patient incessantly paced around the psychiatric ward in a state of panic, stopping in front of me and screaming with an incredible sense of urgency and fury: “*You have to listen!!! You’re not listening! You have to listen!!!*” While his distress felt extremely poignant, I was also quite exasperated with him and on the verge of screaming back: “*I am listening! I just don’t know what I’m supposed to hear!*” Instead, I stood still, partly in fear and partly in compassion, trying to listen. In truth, I was also waiting for an escape route. His voice was so loud that it had become inaudible, a kind of background noise to which I had begun to grow accustomed (“*Oh, there he goes again!*,” the staff would mutter). It wasn’t until several weeks later, when both his mania and his psychosis began to wane, that I was able to *hear* his call, and to recognize the process of listening—of listening, that is, to that which is impossible to hear, to that which annihilates its own witnessing. It was precisely my *inability to listen* that I was called to hear, for it spoke both to the annihilation of the witness within himself—the unreliability of his own senses—and to the annihilation of the witness without—the lack of an Other ‘before which to make himself recognized.’ His cry was like the proverbial sound of the tree that falls in the forest: despite the piercing cries, in the absence of a witness he made no sound. “*You have to listen. If you don’t, I won’t know I’m here.*”

In the experience of near annihilation, 'to be' becomes 'to be witnessed.' Without a witnessing other, there is no knowledge of being and of having survived. Witnessing, in this sense, is not simply listening to words. The imperative to listen ("*You have to listen!*") is at the same time the imperative to experience one's own listening, to witness, that is, the very process of witnessing. "The listener, therefore, has to be at the same time a witness to the trauma witness and a witness to himself," instructs Dori Laub (1992, p.58). Reflecting on his experience of gathering testimonies for the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Laub discusses the process and struggle of witnessing: "What ultimately matters in all processes of witnessing, spasmodic and continuous, conscious and unconscious, is not simply the information, the establishment of the facts, but the experience itself of *living through* testimony, of giving testimony" (1995, p.70, emphasis in original). To live through testimony however, one has to testify in the presence of a witness, a willing listener who must also be able to listen to the very process of listening. A witness then is not simply a recipient, an addressee, but an active participant implicated in the testimony, also *living through* it, and experiencing it from without as much as from within. "The testimony to the trauma," Laub writes, "includes its hearer, who is, so to speak, the blank screen on which the event comes to be inscribed for the first time... By extension, the listener to trauma comes to be a participant and a co-owner of the traumatic event: through his very listening, he comes to partially experience trauma in himself" (1992, p.57). The boundary between testifying and witnessing then becomes blurred, sometimes even imperceptible (it is perhaps this boundary that concepts like 'counter-transference,' 'projective identification' and 'enactment' attempt to delineate). To a large extent, the testimony becomes inscribed,

not only in language, but also in the *experience* of the witness, and in the *performance* of the testimony, which often remains as inarticulate as the trauma itself.

Insofar as trauma is located at the boundary between inside and outside, between the subject and the world, its mode of access, its witnessing, requires straddling boundaries. And yet, in its singularity, the experience of trauma appears impenetrable from the outside. In this sense, its witnessing is bound by a paradox: it is the witnessing of that which can only be known from the inside and whose irreducible specificity makes it impossible to access, but which demands to be witnessed nonetheless. Shoshana Felman captures this aptly in her psychoanalytic reading of Claude Lanzmann's documentary "Shoa," a nine-hour long testimonial to the Holocaust:

To testify *from inside Otherness* is thus to be prepared, perhaps, to bear witness from within a "ra-ra-ra," to be prepared to testify not merely in a foreign language but *from inside the very language of the Other*: to speak from within the Other's tongue insofar precisely as the *tongue of the Other* is by definition the very tongue *we* do not speak, the tongue that, by its very nature and position, one by definition *does not understand*. To testify from inside Otherness is thus to bear witness from inside the living pathos of a tongue which nonetheless is bound to be heard as mere noise...

It is therefore in reality impossible to testify from inside otherness, or from inside the keeping of a secret, from inside amnesia or from inside deception and the delusion of coercive self-deception, in much the same way as it is impossible to testify, precisely, from inside death. It is impossible to testify from the inside because *the inside has no voice*.... As the locus of a silence and as the vanishing point of the voice, the inside is *untransmittable*... From without the inside is *ungraspable*. (Felman, 1992, p.230-232, emphasis in original).

How does one testify to this otherness then? How does one grasp the ungraspable, and receive the untransmittable? Felman seems to suggest that this paradoxical task can only be met with a paradoxical act; namely, by being "neither simply inside nor simply outside, but paradoxically, *both inside and outside*... —to set them both in motion and in dialogue with one another" (p.232).

In this chapter, I will make an effort to access symbolic ruptures by straddling the boundary between inside and outside and initiating a dialogue between them, with one foot on the inside of the clinical encounter and the other on the outside of theory. My aim is to ground the theoretical framework of this project in the clinical setting and to demonstrate the clinical relevance of the ideas that have been advanced, so as to render the ways in which trauma reveals itself more transparent. To this end, I will attempt to give my own testimony of the “spasmodic and continuous, conscious and unconscious” process of witnessing a two-year-long, weekly psychotherapy with Elli,²⁹ a patient whose trauma was precisely the trauma of witnessing the annihilation of her own witnesses. Even though this is a patient whose manifest symptoms were silent, and therefore psychiatrically ‘negligible,’ her internal world was circumscribed in trauma. Through this testimony and my reflections on the course of the treatment, I will address the subtle ways in which trauma may be accessed and explore the—perhaps inevitably—*belated* ways in which one may begin to bear witness to traumatic experience.

Testifying to symbolic ruptures, to borrow Felman’s words once again, is “to speak from within the Other’s tongue insofar precisely as the *tongue of the Other* is by definition the very tongue *we* do not speak, the tongue that, by its very nature and position, one by definition *does not understand*.” My testimony to Elli’s tongue is indeed a testimony to a tongue which I did not understand from within and which, for a long time, I simply “heard as mere noise.” Perhaps, testifying belatedly, in an act of *nachträglichkeit*, several years since the termination of her treatment, may allow for the noise to become a graspable language, a transmittable voice. It is this belatedness, it

²⁹ All clinical material has been highly disguised to protect confidentiality.

seems to me—the only way of arriving at the site of trauma—that allows me to stand both inside and outside, inside my memory of her tongue and outside the time-space of my encounter with it, setting them both “in motion and in dialogue with one another.”

II. The Process of Testimony

All I can do is tell the truth. No, that isn't so—I have missed it. There is no truth that, in passing through awareness, does not lie.

But one runs after it all the same.

Jacques Lacan

Awakening in Dreams

“I am not aware,” Freud wrote in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, “that patients suffering from traumatic neurosis are much occupied in their waking lives with memories of their accident. Perhaps they are more concerned with *not* thinking of it (1920, p.13). Indeed, Elli's traumatic awakenings only returned in her dreams. The anxiety and mild depression of her waking life were far from debilitating, but the deadness they concealed exceeded the diagnostic categories of a psychiatric manual. It was a deadness buried in the corpses she had seen and those she had unknowingly inherited. But once exhumed, just before the end of the treatment, it was an unmistakable deadness, one that I had recognized *après coup*, in my sleepiness and boredom during sessions in which the repetitions of her words and the circular movement of her acts always led back to the same place: rejection, loss, fear of annihilation, and more deadness. At the beginning however, the trauma only reverberated in her dreams:

I dreamed of my mother last night. She was wearing a white gown and she was flying over a river. I tried to reach for her but she vanished. She always disappears when I try to touch her in my dreams.

Elli related this dream during our very first encounter, mentioning in passing that variations of it had been arriving in her sleep with unfailing regularity ever since her mother's death, when she was ten years old. It was too early in the treatment to explore its symbolism, its content, and read through its inaugural presence.

The dream clearly spoke of something neither one of us could recognize at the time but, like her mother, it vanished from the treatment for months to come. It was as though the dream had 'accidentally' slipped through the cracks of consciousness briefly, as a bearer of a truth whose realization could not yet be reached. At the time, I could only read through it the signs of mourning, an unresolved longing for the mothering one, a wish, perhaps, of re-finding a stable and reliable (m)other in me. In retrospect, its appearance revealed an ever-present disappearance, a warning that Elli would vanish whenever I would try to 'reach for her' and, most importantly, an *awakening* of traumatic anxiety, the anxiety of vanishing and of annihilation.

Elli must have been as surprised by the appearance of the dream on the eve of the treatment, by the 'coincidence' of having dreamt it the night before our first session, by the impulse to share it with me, as I was by its disappearance, by her strong resistance in allowing the river of her associations to flow through it. "*It doesn't make me think of anything,*" she casually said when I inquired. Even the river, the white gown, everything in the dream that I regarded to be symbolic of something, were met with blankness. But it was precisely this blankness, I would belatedly understand, which was in fact symbolic, a signifier of an emptiness and deadness which could not yet be accessed. That the treatment began with a dream, with a confessional sleep, might have been more significant than the dream itself. The act of dreaming functioned as an enactment

through which Elli revealed Hamlet's despair: "by a sleep to say we end/ The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks/ That flesh is heir to! 'Tis a consummation/ Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep—/ To sleep—perchance to dream" (Shakespeare, 3.1.56-65). But, as Freud speculated, in her conscious waking life Elli was "more concerned with *not* thinking of" her "thousand natural shocks."

In her waking life, she was a young woman from Peru, a college student of architecture, and an undocumented immigrant. It was the inability to stop thinking about the latter that led her to seek treatment. She was hoping to "get some advice" so as to better manage the anxiety and occasional bouts of depression she experienced in the midst of her unsuccessful attempts at obtaining immigration documents. She had been undocumented since the age of eleven, when the death of her mother had caused her to leave her country and come to America to live with her father. Her undocumented status, as it would turn out, was as over-determined as the symbols of her dreams. Her trauma spoke through it as if through a dream, condensing and concealing her "thousand shocks." It became a contingent piece of reality on which her traumatic anxieties could be appropriately and quite adaptively displaced and thereby bound.

In anticipation of her departure from Peru, I would gradually learn, she was instructed to forego any evidence of memory, any possessions, anything that could serve as a transitional object, lest the authorities suspect that she did not intent to return. She dyed her dark hair blond to conceal her identity and, pretending to be the daughter of a family friend who would accompany her, she left her country, her life, her being-in-the-world, breaking the symbolic pact through which she had begun to constitute her subjectivity. And so she arrived, literally misrecognized and displaced, as an 'other.'

The possibility of testimony was already closing down, for her otherness was being inscribed precisely “inside amnesia,” “inside deception,” “the delusion of coercive self-deception”; it was being inscribed, that is, “inside death,” the death of everything knowable and familiar. “In the network of intersubjective relations,” Žižek writes, “every one of us is identified with, pinned down to, a certain fantasy place in the other’s symbolic structure” (2001, p.5). Without the symbolic structure of a familiar other, Elli’s consciousness was catching up to the truth behind the “fantasy,” a truth that imaginary identifications are meant to conceal, a truth that ordinarily escapes consciousness but on whose veracity Lacan always insisted; namely, that “*I is an other*” (Lacan, 1988, p.7).

Upon her arrival, Elli was as foreign to herself as she was to her father, who had immigrated to this country when she was still a young child. He, too, was undocumented despite several failed marriages and relationships through which he had hoped to attain legal status. When I first met Elli, he was once again newly re-married, caught up in his own cycle of repetitions, repetitions that spoke the language of a trauma whose inscription would remain indeciphered. He was only concerned with survival. “*God might choke you but He won’t kill you,*” he would often tell Elli, who would in turn repeat it to me, as though to convince me that ‘being’ was equivalent to ‘surviving.’ Elli was indeed being choked, not so much by God as by the Other—the prohibitions of the law and the prohibitions of her unconscious: she was being choked by the “keeping of a secret,” the inevitable “deception,” the “coercive self-deception.” “*I’m in a cage,*” she uttered once in exasperation, from behind the bars of a world in which she was not allowed to enter. I did not yet know that those bars were as necessary as they were detested: they were the supporting poles, in fact, of the very structure through which her

trauma could compulsively re-enact itself, the structure of exclusion, invisibility and isolation, the same structure that suspends the link between the subject and the world. In her “cage,” Elli condensed herself to a self-representation of the ‘caged one,’ the one who is ‘locked up,’ unable to fly free over a river like the mother of her dream. But in this cage, she was also contained, bound and, as it would eventually become apparent, bound to repeat.

Elli’s words would also echo behind the walls of the locked psychiatric ward where I would find myself as an intern, two years following the termination of her treatment, clutching tightly onto a set of keys, keys to the outside of the world, the outside of madness, keys to the outside of the “cage.” The structure of the ward itself, its locked doors, its ‘unbreakable’ windows, uncannily resembled the structure of trauma, the structure of a cage in which the mind is held hostage unbeknownst to itself, and where, paradoxically, the drive is set free. After all, one can break free only if one is confined. And yet, a certain degree of confinement, of binding, is always necessary, or else one would be left objectless, a purely *freely* mobile cathexis, in search of a binding cage. I often thought of Elli behind those doors, and I wondered if the consciousness of her freedom became possible through the consciousness of her confinement. “*Let me out! Let me out!*” I would hear patients scream in exasperation, the same exasperation that Elli had expressed, only more accentuated, more pronounced, as though the ‘choking’ would almost certainly lead to death. But Elli had managed to hold onto a faith of survival against all odds, by obsessively focusing on the details of her daily life, details through which her trauma spoke. Her waking life was structured around a myriad details, which, like the dream-work, created a condensed and displaced testimony of those experiences

to which she could not yet afford a conscious access. To recall Žižek's words, such details form "a knot which condenses all you had to forget so that you can swim in your everyday certainty, it enframes the very frame which confers meaning on your life, it structures the horizon within which things make sense to you; if we unknot it you will lose the ground from under your feet!" (2001, p.15). Elli had spent years tying up the knot, binding in it the traumatic anxieties of her childhood, and constructing a ground under her feet; that was the secret to her survival.

The survival experience," writes Laub, "is a very condensed version of most of what life is all about: it contains a great many existential questions, that we manage to avoid in our daily living, often through preoccupation with trivia" (1992, p.72). It was indeed through such preoccupations that Elli had managed to go-on-being. She had plenty to keep herself occupied with, an abundance of trivia through which her trauma became displaced, condensed, and rigidly bound: her lack of legal documents and the tedious processes involved in obtaining them allowed her to become immersed in the trivia of everyday life, 'swimming' in her everyday certainty and structuring a horizon, no matter how grim, within which things made sense to her. Through elaborate deception, she had managed to obtain a driver's license (her only identification document), and get into college. At the same time, however, in negotiating the practical difficulties of being undocumented, she also began to recognize *belatedly* that she did not legally exist, that her life was built on sand, that, in short, she was invisible and had to remain so in order to go-on-being in the symbolic order of this culture. This invisibility, I would later discover, carried for her a sense of uncanny familiarity, the very familiarity of the *unhomely*: the one without a mother, without a motherland, without a home, neither

here nor there, without a carved space in the symbolic order designated only for her, without “a certain fantasy place in the other’s symbolic structure” to be pinned down to, without an identifiable place from which to position herself in relation to the big Other, “that before which you make yourself recognized” (Lacan, 1997, p.51).

Reproaching the Other

Upon arriving in this country, Elli was literally excluded from the symbolic order of the new culture: she did not speak a word of English, literally, the “tongue of the Other,” “by definition the very tongue *we* do not speak, the tongue that, by its very nature and position, one by definition *does not understand*” (Felman, 1992, p.231). “*I was entirely mute,*” she told me. It was not until the very end of the treatment that she recalled yet another foreclosed language, the indigenous Andean language of the Aymara people, her people, in which fragments of her childhood memories had been inscribed. Lacking the linguistic means of addressing the Other, of making herself recognized in words, Elli resorted to the tongue of acting out, a tongue which both carries and protects the “keeping of a secret”:

Acting out is an attempt to break through a symbolic deadlock (an impossibility of symbolization, of putting into words) by means of an act, even though this act still functions as the bearer of some ciphered message. Through this act we attempt (in a “crazy” way, true) to honor a certain debt, to wipe out a certain guilt, to embody a certain reproach to the Other, etc. (Žižek , 1991, p.139)

Indeed, Elli attempted to reproach the Other aggressively through constant provocations.

The place of the big Other was occupied, for her, by any symbolic structure, any institution which lent this culture (in which she and, ‘coincidentally,’ I were designated as others) its symbolic support: large capitalist corporations, the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), the Department of Homeland Security, etc. As an adolescent, she used

to shoplift with a friend, and was arrested once for stealing from a major department store. Department stores, she explained to me, were part of a larger system that exploited cheap labor and took advantage of workers in her motherland and elsewhere. In her mind, by stealing she was claiming what was rightfully hers, compensating for the exploitation suffered by her countrymen. As it turned out, her ‘invisible’ act of stealing was in fact *seen* and, to her conscious relief, she was released with a warning, just a few hours after her arrest. In recounting the story, she was clearly triumphant, as though her acting out had managed to “break through a symbolic deadlock,” and successfully bear “some ciphered message,” a provocation to the Other that demanded a response. The Other’s response, her arrest, constituted proof of her being, indisputable evidence of recognition: “*I have been seen, therefore I am.*” Elli also took secret pride in her ability to deceive the DMV and obtain a driver’s license, emerging victorious once again from a battle with the Other. Her acts unmistakably embodied “a certain reproach to the Other,” the institutionalized Other of the law, of the social system, of the symbolic in which she had been forcefully inserted but from which she still remained an ‘outsider.’

Elli’s inability to make herself recognized in relation to the Other was also reenacted within the structure of her family, where the set of symbolic relations were orchestrated, not by the law of her father who was himself quite powerless, but by the authority of her multiple stepmothers, an authority that was granted to them by default, due to the sheer status of their citizenship. During the first several months of the treatment, Elli would spend many of the sessions talking about her conflict with her most recent stepmother, having no insight into her constant attempts to provoke and “reproach” her by failing to clean after herself and especially after her dog, whom she

had neglected to toilet-train. Her dog would, in turn, unfailingly soil the house. The obvious, even if passive, aggression of her acting out clearly pointed to a refusal to allow the space of her dead mother to be occupied by an other, for, as André Green wisely ascertained, “the dead mother refuses to die a second death” (1983, p.158). “As long as there is no candidate to the succession, she can well let her child survive, certain to be the only one to possess this inaccessible love” (p.156). But Elli’s acting out served yet another purpose, allowing her trauma to speak through it, condensed and displaced: the dog’s unruly behavior could hardly go unnoticed, and Elli could make herself recognized through it, as the one whose place in the symbolic was always an excess, a leftover, as the one for whom there was no right place, as the one who was inserted into a space in which she did not quite belong. Not surprisingly, Elli’s own assigned space in the house, her ‘bedroom,’ was in fact the living room couch. When she eventually acquired her own room, it was *outside* the rest of the house and equipped with a kitchenette, which limited her whereabouts in the area where the rest of the family met. Her immersion into the symbolic (of the language, of the family, of the culture) came in the form of intrusion whereby she was both intruding and intruded upon, both the victim and the perpetrator. In relation to the Other, she was always situated both too close and too far, both inside and outside, with no tongue in which to set them both in motion and in dialogue with one another.

When she wasn’t talking about her stepmothers, Elli would use the sessions to describe in excruciating detail the daily encounters with her boyfriends, who changed every few months, as soon as they refused to marry her “for the papers.” It was not until months later that she would eventually admit to me, and to herself, that this refusal alone

rendered them dispensable, just like her father's wives: relating, loving, being-with, was secondary to surviving. In the meantime, she had little insight into the ways in which her own impositions drove her suitors away. And so she would re-enact the same cycle over and over again, a cycle of deception and self-deception that always returned to the same place: first the excitement, the possibility of marriage, the way out of the cage, then the demand, the inevitable rejection, the hurt, the anger. In the end, she was always the victim, betrayed and abandoned.

The loss of her boyfriends was always melancholic. As Freud determined, in melancholia one "knows whom he has lost but not what he has lost in him" (1917, p.245). In losing her boyfriends, Elli was also losing the opportunity for a green card and with it, the possibility to finally render herself 'visible,' to make herself recognized. More importantly however, each enacted loss was an unconscious testimony to the deadness inside; hence her need to blind herself during moments of intimacy with her boyfriends, denying them recognition: "*I simply lie there and close my eyes,*" she eventually told me in a session prior to the end of the treatment—"lying there like a corpse," I remember thinking. The thought had come to me as a *surprise* but, fraught with denial, it was only fleeting, as though I too had closed my eyes and ears to the uncanny that reverberated through it. In retrospect, I recognize Freud's indication of the "involuntary repetition which surrounds what would otherwise be innocent enough with an uncanny atmosphere, and forces upon us the idea of something fateful and inescapable when otherwise we should have spoken only of 'chance'" (Freud, 1919, p.237). What was "fateful and inescapable" was precisely the deadness, repeated through my own association and again, involuntarily, *accidentally*, through my denial of the thought, my

inadvertent letting go of it; in short, it was palpably present in the counter-transference which I had discounted, without realizing it, as though murdering my own testimony, *performing* in this way another death. Even in the act of lovemaking, Elli was acting out a trauma of absence, detachment and death. In this sleep-like state, dissociated from her conscious waking life, her trauma, I would later realize, was repeating itself. I belatedly recognized how she had been as detached and removed from her boyfriends, from her own body, as I was from mine every time her deadness entered the room through the empty details of her encounters, deadening my own ability to *listen*, to really *see*. At the end of those sessions, I always felt numb, as though I had awoken from a bad dream. Once again, it was my own *experience* of listening, my inability to stay awake, that I was called to witness, but it was too early to know what I was seeing. In letting go of my own thought, a thought through which Elli's own unconscious could have found a hearing, I also let go of her link to me as an 'other' and, more specifically, as a witnessing other. At the same time, it was precisely through this rupture in the link the connected me to her that her trauma revealed its inscription, a condensed and concise inscription in the image of a corpse.

On some occasions, Elli would also speak about her work, bringing to sessions a big portfolio with her architecture projects, and laying out on the floor her meticulous designs of 'homes.' Her act of drawing was perhaps her most explicit attempt to "testify from the inside because *the inside has no voice*." "*I was never good with words*," she once said, "*but I can do things with my hands*." Indeed, in one session, she told me about a creative school project for which she had to create a box, using the outside to represent what others see of her, and the inside to show what she holds back. Elli decorated the

outside with several drawings on each side: one side showed her face half-blurred, another showed the shape of her country, yet another showed a Peruvian landscape. On the inside she painted a green wall, with only a drawing of a receding figure on one side that was visible from the waist down; it was the figure of her mother, she explained. I would be reminded of this box several months later, when in a moment of silence, Elli would anxiously break it to say: “*It’s weird. You know, when I’m in here it’s like I’m in a box and the world is out there.*” Sitting with me in a windowless room, a room which indeed looked like a box, a room whose *outside* walls were, literally, painted green, she felt ‘boxed in,’ trapped in ‘the cage,’ once more paralyzed and, perhaps, behind the structure of the green wall, ambivalently contained. She might have also felt closer to her mother, closer to death even, as though in a casket. But the green wall, the green card, the world, was “out there” and her link to it was rendered invisible. There was no window, no opening on the inside to connect it to the outside. “As the locus of a silence and as the vanishing point of the voice, the inside is *untransmittable*... From without the inside is *ungraspable*” (Felman, 1992, p.232, emphasis in original).

Recognizing the Other

For a long time, our sessions always proceeded along the same circular path, from her repeated disappointments with her boyfriends, to the fights with her stepmothers, both current and past, and, more rarely, a nostalgic memory, a trembling lip holding back a tear, and then a sure return to the disappointment with her new boyfriend, and another fight with her stepmother. The content of the sessions, in other words, was always concerned with the outside, an outside that, in its repetitive spin, was utterly and profoundly deadening. Throughout this time, Elli showed little curiosity in me, in my

noticeable accent, the ring on my finger, the bits and pieces of my ‘outside’ reality that inevitably entered the ‘box’ of our consulting room. My attempts at ‘transference interpretations’ were always cut short and her resistance to see me, to *recognize* me, seemed impenetrable. And yet, she attended our sessions faithfully, always arriving *on time*, and in the few times that she had to cancel she never did so *belatedly*. Her relationship to the structure of the treatment was as solid and robust as the structure of her trauma, the structure of that which we had not yet accessed, but which had served to organize her being-in-the-world precisely around a loyalty to structure: consciously, she was devoted to her architecture projects, to a perseverative preoccupation with the immigration laws, to a constant rumination about the back and forth with her boyfriends and stepmothers; unconsciously, she was dutifully committed to the binding consistency and predictability of repetition—the repetition of her dreams, of her perseverative thoughts, of the predictable behaviors that would surely bring about the departure of her boyfriends, that would enrage her stepmother; in short, the repetition of that which had already happened, and through which her trauma resounded.

Without any *outside* structures to hold onto, without any symbolic structures before which she could make herself recognized, the structure of the treatment was too valuable for her to rupture—her transference was precisely this: a ‘transference onto structure,’ a structure that held the possibility of binding through an Other that could open up the possibility of deviation and newness. Even though it was not directed towards my person, her transference was like a net, cast out onto the “total situation” of the treatment (Klein, 1952). Elli followed the structure of the treatment closely, allowing little space for deviation. Thus, the first rupture to the structure was instigated by me,

when I ‘failed’ to uphold our symbolic pact, interrupting the treatment for a period of six weeks and introducing to it the undeniable presence of the outside: I was about to return to my own homeland, my own (M)Other, both literally and figuratively, indulging in the very act which the law of the Other had forbidden her. Looking back, I can detect that it was this first rupture in the structure of the treatment that allowed for the first crack, the first hole, the first opening into the structure of her trauma. Despite my attempt to explore her reactions to our upcoming break, Elli simply said: “*you told me about it and I know to expect it, so it’s ok.*” At the time, I understood her response as a defensive maneuver to avoid the possibility of yet another rejection, yet another abandonment. In addition to its defensive flavor however, her response also revealed a truth, for my departure, too, was structured. She did not know its purpose but she knew to expect it, as she knew to expect my return, with no *surprise*; she would not have to encounter it belatedly. At the same time, our pending separation had managed to produce another response, the conscious knowledge of which she was denied, but which persisted as an unconscious inscription. Just prior to my departure, the unconscious inscription of her trauma emerged through a second dream:

In my dream, I went to my country to meet my relatives and as I strolled in my old neighborhood I noticed that the streets were empty. I finally saw someone I knew who told me that there was nobody there; all my relatives had traveled to America to find me. I had just missed them.

Even in her dream, Elli had arrived at the site of her trauma, the lost motherland, the lost mother, the lost childhood, the lost time, *too late*. Once again, her link to the world was amiss, misplaced. When she finally arrived at the right place, back to her old neighborhood, she did so at the wrong time. But the dream itself was right on time, uncannily anticipating my own departure, its timeliness revealing perhaps the faint traces

of a reparation in the symbolic link between her and the world, through an unconscious attunement to me-as-other. Elli moved away from it as soon as she shared it and I did not pursue her. I still wonder whether this was a moment that could have granted us further access into the trauma that repeated itself through the dream: the trauma of a complete misattunement with the world, which re-enacted the invisibility of her being-as-subject, the invisibility of her link to the world.

At that time, I approached the dream with the same conviction as to its meaning that Freud had expressed regarding the dream of the burning child in *The Interpretation of Dreams*—“the explanation of this moving dream is simple enough,” he wrote (1900, p.509). But it is this seeming ‘simplicity,’ this ‘obviousness,’ that revealed Elli’s trauma. Trauma distorts the boundaries between inside and outside, dream and reality. Elli’s dream was “simple enough” precisely because the dream-work of condensation and displacement remained too faithful to the reality of her trauma. It was not surprising then that, upon awakening, Elli experienced her dream as “*too real*,” explaining that the neighborhood of her dream was an exact replica of her neighborhood as she had retained it in her memory. Just as the father’s dream of his son’s burning was conflated with reality, Elli’s dream was conflated with her memory, dissolving the boundary between her waking ideational life, her conscious memory, and her dream. Her dream was essentially a missed encounter, not unlike the father’s missed encounter with the burning of his child. Like the father, Elli too arrived at the scene of her trauma one moment too late (“*I had just missed them*”). And just as the father’s dream served to repeat the necessity and impossibility to see his son alive once again, to witness his death and, ultimately, to grasp the reality of his trauma, Elli’s dream too enacted the necessity and

impossibility to see her relatives once again, to witness their absence, and to grasp the desolate deadness that repeated itself through her loss (“*the streets were empty...there was nobody there*”).

Perhaps due to my inexperience, my collusion with her defenses, the over-identification with her nostalgia, my fear of what lurked underneath, I allowed the dream to recede in silence. Or perhaps that was as far as she could have gone in the moment. As Laub would advise, “he or she [the listener] must *listen to and hear the silence*, speaking mutely both in silence and in speech, both from behind and from within the speech. He or she must recognize, acknowledge and address that silence, even if this simply means respect—and knowing how to wait” (1992, p.58). If one waits long enough, the repetition of trauma, the same repetition that gave rise to her dream, returns: indeed, we would stumble upon the fear of invisibility, the fright of annihilation once again, a few months later, through the crevice of another rupture. But even before we got there, the impact of the first rupture continued to be felt.

In our first session upon my return, Elli turned to me and addressed me in the hallway, *outside* the room: “*How was it?*” Her question caught me by *surprise*: never before had she expressed any interest or curiosity in my whereabouts, she did not even know what that “it” was. I spontaneously and unpredictably responded: “*Warm.*” Her question arrived right at a time and place when I could neither explore the fantasy behind it, nor ignore her address: I was put in a narrow spot, a ‘cage.’ What was I responding to, standing in the hallway, in that space that was neither inside nor outside, or rather, that was both inside and outside? My response, like her question (‘how was what?’), was “*resonant* (ambiguous, symbolically suggestive)” (Felman, 1987, p.120, emphasis in

original); within it, a series of accessible and inaccessible significations became condensed. It was resonant and suggestive perhaps of the warmth that she might have hoped to find in the empty streets of her dream, of the warmth that I had found in my motherland. In its assertiveness, it was also suggestive of my ability to find warmth even as she herself was immersed in a cold deadness. It was, in an almost aggressive way, a refusal to join her in her deadness, a deadness which I experienced but had not quite consciously located.

At the same time, insofar as my reply constituted a response to a question that was for the first time addressed to me-as-subject, it was also a response to her *recognition* of me, a response that offered a mode of access into her desire for recognition. In this sense, it was a response of the kind that Felman would argue “addresses not so much what the patient says (or means), but his call. Being fundamentally a reply to the subject’s question, to the force of his address, the interpretive gift is not constative (cognitive) but performative” (Felman, 1987, p.119). If Elli’s question was *performative* of a call for a response, for *recognition*, then my responding to it was an answer to her call. Through this moment of mutual recognition and, most likely, through others to which I have no conscious recourse, the symbolic pact between her-as-subject and me-as-other began to solidify. It was a pact which signified that I would receive her address, literally, *inside* and *outside*, in the initial telegraphic speech of a tongue that could set the two in motion and in dialogue with one another.

A couple of weeks following this session, Elli and I both got sick, so that when I greeted her with a tissue in hand, she smiled and showed me the tissue in hers. She had begun to *warm up* in our interactions, showing more spontaneity and humor, an emerging

aliveness that made me more conscious of the fact that, up until then, I had often felt bored with her. It was a belated awareness, and one to which I had been quite resistant: she was one of my first patients and, excited as I was to begin clinical work, I was all too eager to find our sessions interesting and meaningful. In truth, I had been trying too hard; looking back to my supervision sessions I see myself in a manic defense of sorts, producing volumes of highly intellectualized, yet rather empty, material. What I did not recognize was that this boring deadness was itself performative of Elli's own traumatic fears of annihilation from which I sought to protect myself through a hyperactive processing of the material.

Even though on the day of our mutual and coincidental sickness Elli appeared more alive, I felt especially drowsy and sleepy. I was *dead* tired, worn down by a persistent cold I had been fighting for a few days, and trying hard to keep my eyes and ears open. My drowsiness could be easily explained away and I did not make much of it at the time. Sick as she was, over the course of this session Elli began to recall a childhood illness:

My mom told me that when I was little I got really sick once and almost died. I do remember a time when she took me to a shaman. I was sick and he did all kinds of spiritual things and I was wearing a dress and I was lying on a wooden table and he put newspapers under my dress. And it was like I had a big belly of newspapers. I was maybe six.

The experience of our simultaneous sickness triggered for Elli an associative chain in the trace of her deadness. Interestingly however, her memory arrived on the very day when I was unable to truly *listen*, at a moment in the treatment when I was too sick to engage with it, to explore it, to fully access it. I was receding into sleep precisely at a moment when Elli's trauma began to awaken. It was as though I was both awake and asleep,

feeling the boundary between sleeping and waking gradually dissolve. This time, Elli's trauma was displaced, repeating itself through a witnessing other, not as a rigid duplication but as a performance, an enactment through which it could attain a more tolerable binding. I was too 'absent' to realize that my own sleepiness, the deadness of my consciousness was precisely an unconscious performance, a way of bearing witness to Elli's testimony, the condensed testimony of a "thousand shocks," of a deadness which we had barely begun to discern. My consciousness had not yet arrived at that to which my body was already bearing witness.

Acting Out as if by Chance

It was a series of coincidental occurrences that opened up a space through which Elli's trauma, and the deadness buried underneath, could be eventually accessed. In the months that followed, Elli began to bring more 'outside' encounters within the frame of the treatment. Most of these appeared to occur 'as if by chance,' as though they were mere coincidences. "What is repeated," Lacan warns, "is always something that occurs...as if by chance" (1998, p.54). In reality, occurrences such as these, occurrences through which the unconscious repeats its inscriptions, transpire constantly but they do not always find a point of entry into the treatment. It is through the cracks created by ruptures that such events may start to make their appearance.

One of these events occurred at a time when a series of demonstrations in support of legalizing illegal immigrants, began to take place around the country. Elli seized this opportunity to render herself visible and, quite literally, *audible*, and to do so by means of a symbolic act. Most importantly, it was an organized effort, partaking of a larger social structure, in which Elli could finally insert herself along with thousands of others and

form an address to the Other. She spoke about these demonstrations in sessions with excitement, with more aliveness and affective intensity than I had ever seen from her, and with a newfound sense of hope for her future. The possibility of visiting her country appeared to her, for the first time, as imminent, within reach. She began to attend these demonstrations with loyalty and devotion—the same loyalty and devotion with which she had attended her sessions—traveling from New York to Washington, D.C., and having to cancel sessions as a result. Given the timing of her cancellations, at a point when the treatment appeared to be moving, I naturally thought of them as manifestations of resistance, of an anxiety to move further, deeper. In addressing the Law, her acting out was also addressing ‘the law’ of the treatment by means of transgressing and defying it. Elli was inducing a breach in the frame, a breach which was not only determined by her unconscious resistance but which was itself performative, symbolic in its own right. It was as though Elli’s trauma had been bound in the structure of the treatment, the frame, and it was now seeking to be received and witnessed through its ruptures.

While Elli’s acting out was transpiring *outside* the treatment it also spoke directly to the *inside*: it was her way of fulfilling “the contradictory and yet compellingly intransigent necessity of being outside and inside at the same time” (Felman, 1992, p.249), of setting both of them in motion and in dialogue with one another, *in her own tongue*. Elli’s transference was beginning to ‘come out of the box’ and turn itself into the link that connected the inside with the outside for, as Freud reminds us, transference is not reserved for the person of the analyst, not even for the “total situation.” It grows and subsumes the entirety of the patient’s life.

We perceive that the transference is itself only a piece of repetition, and that the repetition is a transference of the forgotten past not only on to the doctor but also

on to all the other aspects of the current situation. We must be prepared to find, therefore, that the patient yields to the compulsion to repeat, which now replaces the impulsion to remember, not only in his personal attitude to his doctor but also in every other activity and relationship which may occupy his life at the time—if, for instance, he falls in love or undertakes a task or starts an enterprise during the treatment. (1914, p.151)

By attending these demonstrations, Elli induced a symbolic rupture to the frame which, aside from my own absence, had hitherto been quite consistent, predictable, and structured. Having finally recognized me as an Other, she was able to allow her trauma to repeat itself before me in a displaced form, to repeat so as to remember, or perhaps to repeat so as *not* to remember. In short, she had started to act out and that was, as Freud would say, her way of remembering:

We may say that the patient does not remember anything of what he has forgotten and repressed, but acts it out. He reproduces it not as a memory but as an action; he repeats it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it... As long as the patient is in the treatment he cannot escape from this compulsion to repeat; and in the end we understand that this is his way of remembering. (1914, p.150)

It was not clear to me at the time what “ciphered message” Elli’s actions concealed and condensed, but by that point I had a sense that something was being repeated through them. As Lacan rightly emphasized, “repetition first appears in a form that is not clear, that is not self-evident, like a reproduction, or a making present, *in act*... an act, a true act, always has an element of structure, by the fact of concerning a real that is not self-evidently caught up in it” (1998, p. 50, emphasis in original). Indeed, the “real” in Elli’s act had not been self-evident. But the chain of ‘chance’ events that unfolded became a mode of access to the *realization* of her truth.

Coincidentally, around the time that the demonstrations were taking place, Elli was given a traditional Peruvian instrument by a friend and began teaching herself how to play it. She came to a session with a recording of a folk song she liked, the sound of

which reminded her of a bird flying over a river; she wanted me to listen to it. As I listened, I found myself in a state akin to what Bion would call a “reverie,”³⁰ recalling her first dream, and visualizing her mother dressed in a white gown flying over a river. Again, the boundary between dreaming and waking was dissolving, but this time, the experience of deadness had not seized my body rigidly, putting me to sleep, but rather took the form of a daydream. The structure of her trauma was no longer fixed, compulsively enacting itself as a reproduction of deadness, but had begun to acquire a degree of flexibility and deviation, binding itself in new forms. The deadness appeared in a daydream, as though in a transitional space between dream and reality. Indeed, as Elli’s dead mother entered my daydream it also began to enter Elli’s waking life. In yet another stroke of ‘chance,’ Elli had met a group of Peruvian peers, and began to closely associate with them. They brought her in an unexpected contact with the symbolic of her forgotten culture, the link to which she had been forced to sever several years before. As she encountered the music, the dances, the flavors of her country, she also began to encounter her forgotten memories. It was these concrete bits of reality that unlocked the door of her trauma.

It is not the big generalizations but the concrete particulars which translate into a vision and thus help both to dispel the blinding impact of the event and to transgress the silence to which the splitting of eyewitnessing reduced the witness. It is only through the trivia, by small steps—and not by huge strides or big leaps—that the barrier of silence can be in effect displaced, and somewhat lifted. (Felman, 1992, p.219)

³⁰ Bion explains his use of “reverie”: “The term reverie may be applied to almost any content. I wish to reserve it only for such content as is suffused with love or hate. Using it in this restricted sense reverie is that state of mind which is open to the *reception* of any “objects” from the loved object and is therefore capable of *reception* of the infant's projective identifications whether they are felt by the infant to be good or bad” (1962, p.36, emphasis added). I use the term here to refer to the state of mind in which I was able to receive and unwittingly witness something that Elli’s own conscious mind had foreclosed. Of course, I had not quite recognized that what I had “received” was in fact inscribed in Elli’s unconscious, until it finally made its appearance in her consciousness.

Unburying the Dead

I had often suspected that Elli's need to be *recognized* or, more accurately, her need to be *misrecognized*, extended beyond the immediate implications of her immigration status but, up to that point, I did not have a context in which to place her desire. These 'chance' events, however, were altering the structure of our sessions—and of her trauma—rupturing her repetitive narratives, the perseverative reports of her conflicts with her stepmother, her disappointments with her boyfriends, her frustrations over her immigration status. They were rupturing the deadness of a structure that had served to *bind* the traumatic awakenings, which had thus far managed to find their way rigidly, through dreams and compulsive enactments. For the first time, after almost two years into the treatment, Elli began to encounter her trauma in the memories of her waking life. As we entered the inside through the cracks of the outside, through the narrow openings that the contingent bits of reality had carved out, I began to see the genealogy of her trauma, as if through a peephole, and to read its inscription through her watery eyes. I saw the eyes of a child looking back, in search of the Other's gaze, the Other's mirroring eye, the eye through which the 'I' comes into being. "*It is joy to be hidden,*" wrote Winnicott, "*but disaster not to be found*" (1963, p.186, emphasis in original). Elli had never been found. The mirror through which she had first misrecognized her subjectivity had been blurry (hence the half-blurred self-portrait she had drawn on the outside of her box, and the mother-figure without a face, that she had drawn on the inside from the waist-down). The eyes of her mother had been tormented and depressed, reflecting the deadness of a corpse long before she had died. And I began to recognize that Elli had never been seen, that she had never been *witnessed*, that her

undocumented status was itself a repetition of a traumatic invisibility around which her subjectivity came to be structured: ever since she was born, the eyes of all the witnesses were turned towards ‘other scenes,’ other traumas, literally, other *wounds*. But not having been truly witnessed, not having been consciously accessed, they could not be told. Until she could *see* me, until she could recognize me-as-subject, as a potential witness, she could not produce a testimony.

It was by unconsciously creating and allowing outside ‘coincidences’ and ‘chance events’ into the transference-frame of the treatment, by allowing the outside to rupture the inside that her trauma began to unfold. The mother who was peacefully flying in Elli’s dreams, had begun to emerge as a tormented figure; she had suffered a slow, painful death, without having ever received any treatment for the uterine bleedings that Elli repeatedly witnessed, for reasons that were unknown to her, but which carried the distinctive flavor of untold traumas. At this time, Elli also recalled her own first bleeding, her first experience of menstruation. She did not know to expect it and she received it with the terror of a death sentence. Her father had laughed at her innocence, but every month, she secretly feared she would die. I thought of her as a sick six-year old child, lying on a shaman’s table, her belly ‘pregnant’ with inanimate newspapers. How traumatic this memory must have appeared in retrospect, *nachträglichkeit*: uterine bleeding, menstruation, pregnancy, lovemaking, sickness must have all served as condensed and displaced transformations of a traumatic inscription that was finally becoming legible: death—pure annihilation.

For the first time, Elli recounted in detail her faded memory of her mother’s death: she was walking home from school and, as she passed by the neighborhood church

she saw two men carrying something wrapped up in a blanket. When she arrived home, she realized that she had in fact arrived *too late*, and that the men with the blanket were carrying in it her mother's corpse. The memories that Elli began to access *belatedly* were all structured around the fright of inexplicable wounds: her mother's constant uterine bleeding, an unhealed wound on her grandfather's knee which slowly killed him, countless family stories of violent and random deaths—her aunt who was struck by a lightning, her grandmother who fell off a bridge never to be seen again, her uncle who died unexpectedly of an undiagnosed disease, a miscarried sibling that never came into being. One by one, everyone was dying, emptying the streets of her old neighborhood that returned in her dream. In an ironic stroke of chance—the ultimate coincidence—Elli was born on “the Day of the Dead,” or “the day of the skulls.” In accord with tradition (the cultural symbolic), she had spent birthday after birthday in a cemetery, paying tribute to the dead, an ominous and uncanny foreboding. Her life had been inscribed in the shadow of death, enclosed in a box, a cage, her own casket. Her lack of legal documents, which was in itself traumatic, had reawakened the trauma, providing yet another affirmation that she did not exist in the eyes of the Other, that she was, in other words, dead.

The trauma that had returned in her waking life reproduced itself once again in a dream, a dream whose inscription had finally become transparent, not as a traumatic conflation with reality but as a realization of her truth:

My house in Peru was built on a hill. But in my dream I was standing on the hill and the house was on the plateau. I saw water coming, there was a flood, as if a river had swarmed the plateau. The house was half-covered in water and I saw my father being carried away by the current. I wasn't worried about him; I knew he would make it. But then, under the rubble, I saw a limb. It was my mother and her body was decaying. The cemetery where she's buried was near the house and

I wondered in the dream how the body had come out of the grave. I was disturbed.

“One has to know one’s buried truth in order to be able to live one’s life” (Laub, 1995, p.63).

III. Thoughts Terminable and Interminable

I only saw Elli for a few more sessions following the unburying of her dead. As we prepared to part for a month in the summer, she expressed a wish to end the treatment—she was no longer depressed and felt better capable of handling her anxiety. Given that we had so little time left to make a definitive decision, I asked that we postpone it and revisit her wish after the break. Once again, she responded with an act, canceling the last two sessions prior to the break to attend more demonstrations with her Peruvian friends. That was the last I had seen her.

Elli’s treatment might have ended prematurely, as its frame had been irreparably ruptured, but it also seems to me that she no longer needed its structure. Inserting herself into a new symbolic, into the symbolic of her Peruvian circle, she found an Other before whom she could make herself recognized, an Other who could begin to alter her traumatic inscriptions through “a re-creation of something old as against a duplication of it” (Loewald, 1971, p.60): through the old flavors of Peruvian dishes, the sounds of folk songs, the phonemes perhaps of forgotten words, her tongue and the tongue of the Other had finally begun to converge.

The symbolic rupture of the treatment itself, the ultimate rupture of the frame, was at the same time the symbolic breaking of the box, the breaking of the cage, of the symbolic deadlock in her relation with the Other. “Nothing can be grasped, destroyed, or

burnt,” writes Lacan, “except in a symbolic way, as one says, *in effigie, in absentia*” (Lacan, 1998, p.50). Elli’s final exit from the structure of the treatment, her own *absentia*, was in this sense utterly symbolic, symbolic of her testimony, which could only proceed by means of a rupture. What Felman writes of Lanzmann’s “Shoa,” also speaks to the way Elli (consciously or not) produced a testimony to her trauma:

The film testifies not merely by collecting and by gathering fragments of witnessing, but by actively exploding any possibly enclosure—any conceptual frame—that might claim to *contain* the fragments and to fit them into one coherent whole... The film puts in motion its surprising testimony by performing the historical and contradictory double task of the breaking of the silence and of the simultaneous shattering of any given discourse, of the breaking—or the bursting open—of all frames. (1992, p.224)

Elli had made an effort to speak her trauma, to access its memories, to provide a testimony to its inscription. But the trauma itself could only testify through “the breaking— the bursting open—of all frames,” the ultimate disruption of the treatment. This might sound counter-intuitive, as the process of treatment is often viewed as the construction of a life narrative. Bromberg writes, and most of us would agree, that “the goal of any form of treatment,” is to produce a “self-narrative” enriched by the integration of “new affective (as yet unprocessed) experience” (2003, p.566). And yet, this narrative need not be cohesive, organized and continuous. The testimony of trauma resists its enclosure in any narrative structure that might pretend to contain all the pieces, and to assimilate them into a linear configuration when none exists, to integrate them into an organized whole when the truth hides in the fragments.

To testify, then, is not simply to produce a narrative of the trauma, but to produce its pieces, to *act it out*, and in so doing to *access* it. I would like to invoke Felman’s

words once again to suggest that, in the context of the therapy process, acting out can in fact constitute an “event of speech”:

a mode of *truth's realization* beyond what is available as statement, beyond what is available, that is, as a truth transparent to itself and entirely known, given, in advance, prior to the very process of its utterance. The testimony will therefore be understood, in other words, not as a mode of *statement of*, but rather as a mode of *access to*, that truth. (Felman, 1995, p.24, emphasis in original)

Elli's acting out served indeed as a point of access to her truth, beyond and prior to its utterance. Like Felman's “interpretive gift,” the true act “is not constative (cognitive) but performative” (Felman, 1987, p.119). In the presence of a witnessing other, the act seizes to be a mere automaton, and becomes testimonial—both a testament and a memorial to the trauma. This is why Elli's abrupt departure from the treatment was as much part of her testimony as the memories she had described. Her trauma did not only speak through words but through the repetition of an act that culminated into an irreversible rupture. Even this element of irreversibility was itself a testimony to the irreversibility of the deaths she had witnessed, the bodies she had unburied and which she could only commemorate with another death; namely, the death of the treatment.

Elli's final act, her departure, might have closed down the treatment, but it might have also opened up new pathways to her unconscious, new modes through which to realize her truth. In their disruption, ruptures create a space for deviation and newness, and for “reconstruction out of the elements of destruction” (Loewald, 1970, p.60). They betray an ability to move away from the tight binding of firm structures, allowing repetition to take on new forms, and expand into new configurations. It is perhaps this potentiality in the structure of ruptures that Lacan attempted to exploit through his notorious and rather misguided practice of sessions with variable duration. In theory, the

unexpected interruption of the session functions like a punctuation mark in the language of the unconscious and induces a rupture from which its inscriptions may leap through, along several channels. As Diana Rabinovich explains, “cutting the session short emphasizes the simultaneity of several lines in the signifiers of the analysand’s free association” (2003, p.210). But without the presence of structure, a rupture cannot be experienced as deviation. Lacan’s technique failed to account for his own insight, namely that “repetition demands the new” (Lacan, 1998, p.61), or alternatively, that ‘the new demands repetition.’

In Elli’s treatment, it was the repetition in the structure that gave the ultimate rupture its symbolic potential and the possibility for newness lying therein. Elli chose to interrupt the treatment precisely at a moment when her repetitions encountered “the new,” namely a new social symbolic from which to situate herself in relation to the Other, and from which to go-on-testifying. “Whether or not the cut [had been] timely can only be known afterwards, *après coup*” (Rabinovich, 2003, p.210). Testifying to the treatment *afterwards*, several years since its termination, it seems to me that its final rupture could only be “timely,” timely insofar as it was initiated by Elli at a time when her trauma was able to make its inscription through it, to *perform* its testimony before a witnessing other who could recognize the performance as such—a recognition whose own timeliness could only be belated. It is this act of recognition, this act of witnessing, it seems to me, which enabled Elli to produce a testimony, and which allowed her trauma to perform itself; for trauma demands an Other who is willing to *listen* and to *see*, even if that means witnessing the bursting of all frames.

Ruptures in the symbolic order, in the boundary that both separates and connects the inside and the outside, the subject and the world, insist on being witnessed. As Davoine & Gaudillière assert, “every interruption in the transmission that links people to one another is, paradoxically, searching for the pathways of an inscription” (2004, p.12). Through the structure of the treatment, through me as an integral part of that structure, through my act of witnessing, through my act of testifying in these very words, the interruptions in the transmission that linked Elli to the world have found a pathway for their inscription. I, too, have hereto found a pathway to inscribe the interruption in the transmission that linked me to her. I would like to think that she has found a way to do the same through the social link from which she had miraculously managed to stay connected to the world.

IV. Postscript

This chapter was intended as a testimony, my own testimony, to Elli’s treatment and to the traumatic inscriptions that made their appearance over its course. In retrospect, I wish to make note of a rather stark omission: as a testimony, this chapter reveals little about the process of bearing witness, the actual experience of testimony. Insofar as I positioned myself in the place of the Other, I avoided exploring the experience of me-as-subject, and more specifically, of me as a witnessing subject. This omission is hardly an oversight; it is in fact symptomatic of the difficulty inherent in the very act of bearing witness. That is, as a subject of testimony, and as its author, I unwittingly performed in the process of writing the very struggle that I sought to convey.

In writing about the act of witnessing, Dori Laub warns against “the hazards of listening”: “For the listener who enters the contract of the testimony, a journey fraught with dangers lies ahead... Trauma—and its impact on the hearer—leaves, indeed, no hiding place intact” (1992, p.72). As Laub explains, the process of testimony gives rise to “a great many existential questions” (p.72):

The listener can no longer ignore the question of facing death; of facing time and its passage; of the meaning and purpose of living; of the limits of one’s omnipotence; of losing the ones that are close to us; the great question of our ultimate aloneness; our otherness from any other; our responsibility to and for our destiny; the question of loving and its limits; of parents and children; and so on. (p.72).

In the experience of bearing witness, all the unanswerable questions that form the essence of existence become animated with a great deal of animosity so that, ‘to witness’ becomes, quite literally, ‘to bear.’

There is quite a lot to be said about my own bearing—my counter-transference during the treatment and my experience of writing this chapter. Instead of directly engaging with these, however, I wish to recount an experience that I had shortly after I completed this chapter. I offer this as an “interpretive gift” of sorts, that “is not constative (cognitive) but performative” (Felman, 1987, p.119). That is, it acts out the very experience of witnessing and, in so doing, it provides a mode of access to the way in which its impact leaves “no hiding place intact” because, as an active process, witnessing is also a living-through.

While I was riding the train on my way to a therapy session, I suddenly realized that I had *missed* my stop. I was already one stop *too late*. I managed to arrive to my session on time, and recounted the incident to my analyst, feeling quite puzzled that I had no recollection of what had transpired during the time between the two stops, the missed

and the actual. But out of a missed stop, a symbolic rupture in my order of things, there came the memory of a dream I had a couple of nights before:

I was in my home country and the sun was scorching. I saw a baby and it looked as though it had been lying in the sun for quite some time. I was terrified that it had burned in the sun and I could not tell whether it was dead or alive. To my relief, I felt its chest moving, but death was palpable. I woke up in distress.

My chain of associations led to my experience of working on this project and of writing this chapter, then moved on to other losses, other deaths, then to the historical trauma of a war just a few years before I was born, and to volumes of silenced testimonies, which I had unwittingly witnessed. My brother was born right in the midst of a military coup on a scorching day in July. It would be an accurate interpretation to say that he was the baby of my dream, as it would be accurate to see in this baby the multiple, condensed meanings that were bound through it. But on another level, through the dream, the “great many existential questions” that had been forced out of hiding in the process of testifying, were searching for their own witness—because witnessing, too, demands to be witnessed.

By Way of Conclusion: *Psychoanalysis Inside and Out*

In the introductory section of this project I briefly discussed the need to approach trauma kaleidoscopically, urging for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary efforts to engage with those experiences that bring us to the limits of our understanding, and situating this project in the context of such efforts. By way of conclusion, I wish to bring the project to a full circle, and consider the contributions and limitations of psychoanalysis in its symbolic encounters with trauma. In other words, I wish to consider briefly the symbolization and ruptures of psychoanalysis itself by interrogating its relationship to both the structures within, the institutional structures of its own unconscious so to speak, and the structures without, the structures of the culture in which it is immersed. These thoughts are presented as preliminary reflections for further exploration and future inquiries into the symbolic ruptures of psychoanalysis. It is also a way of experimenting with the theoretical ideas of this project by treating psychoanalysis itself as a ‘subject’ of the unconscious and of trauma that is called to negotiate the symbolic structures of its socio-cultural context. Finally, I provide these reflections from the standpoint of time, as Fanon (1967) would have it—a time in which the proliferation of trauma has been rendered more visible (and perhaps, because of that, more commonplace and therefore ‘invisible’) than ever.

I. The Ruptures Within

Since its inception, psychoanalysis has repeatedly witnessed the demise and resurgence of its institutions. The ruptures within, the splits and grievances that continue to form and transform psychoanalytic institutions, appear to be inevitable; indeed, the

field seems to be in a perpetual state of crisis, and yet continuously manages to preserve and re-invent itself. From the early ‘dissidence’ of Adler, Jung, Rank, Stekel and others, to the later Freud-Klein controversies, and from the disagreements between the British, French and American psychoanalytic traditions, to the innumerable conflicts and disputes within each new school of thought, psychoanalysis has never been a unitary discipline. The ‘great metapsychology debate’ of the 1980s, the as-yet-unresolved epistemological status of the field, the recurring question of whether psychoanalysis constitutes an empirical science or a hermeneutic practice, have led many to contemplate whether there is in fact “one psychoanalysis or many” (Wallerstein, 1988, p.12) and to declare the field in a state of “fragmentation” (Rangell, 1988, p.333). Even today, over a century since the invention of the ‘talking cure,’ the multiplicity of psychoanalytic perspectives has become no more integrated, an observation that has led George Frank (2000) to warn that “psychoanalysts should be concerned that so little common ground of theoretical understanding and clinical practice exists in our discipline” (p.177).

In part, what seems to be at stake when considering this reflexive and ever-changing relationship of psychoanalysis to its structures, the structures of the Other within, appears to be that which is at stake in the relationship of the subject to the Other of the unconscious: to the extent that the Other is that ‘before which you make yourself recognized,’ the relationship of psychoanalysis to its own constituents is also one through which the field strives to define itself, and recognize in its multiple tongues, the language of the unconscious. But as a subject of the unconscious, psychoanalysis is not exempt from misrecognition, the lure of identification with what we might call its (m)others (even as we have grown accustomed to speak of the psychoanalytic ‘fathers’); that is, it

remains susceptible to the overarching inescapability of transference. In this sense, the ruptures within and between the various psychoanalytic institutions might in fact reflect moments of transient recognition in the history of the field, the manner in which the spell of the transference dissolves, only to be transferred once again onto new (m)others, propagating in this manner the inevitable process of misrecognition. In other words, the seeming ‘fragmentation’ of the field appears to be symptomatic, or rather, *performative*, of the process that psychoanalysis readily recognizes in its patients: namely, the transferenceal identifications through which we misrecognize ourselves as subjects. When these identifications become ruptured, the set of symbolic relations that constitute psychoanalysis at any given point must be renegotiated. But it is in such moments of rupture that the potential for re-invention, newness, and creativity resides.

Insofar as misrecognition arises out of an illusory identification with a ‘whole other’ that seeks to conceal a sense of internal fragmentation, it serves to protect the subject from an inherent discontinuity. Given the history of psychoanalysis and the sense of fragmentation it has endured, it is not surprising that it is constituted by such strong and fervent identifications. As it has been argued in the first chapter of this project, psychoanalysis has always been inscribed in trauma, both historical, collective, and individual—in fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that most of psychoanalytic theory has been produced in response to the witnessing of trauma. We could speculate, then, that the ruptures within psychoanalysis also constitute, at least in part, a structural performance of this witnessing. That is, it is as though the constant dissolution and formation of psychoanalytic institutions performs an acting out of sorts, a repetition that reveals, not only the history of the field, but also the individual histories of patients, the

intolerable ruptures to which psychoanalysts, bound by the confidentiality and solipsism of the psychoanalytic encounter, single-handedly bear. Perhaps, it is because it is constantly called to bear witness to the dread of annihilation that psychoanalysis itself resides on the brink of extinction; or, alternatively, psychoanalysis always faces the threat of annihilation, because it is immersed in the traumatic inscriptions of the unconscious. In this sense, I would suggest that, as a discipline of the unconscious, of the ‘infernal regions,’ as Freud mused, psychoanalysis is always playing with fire and it is therefore bound to be burned. As a discipline of witnessing however, it is also bound to witness its own burnings, and in so doing, paradoxically beget its survival.

II. The Ruptures Without

As a discipline that operates in the context of history and culture, psychoanalysis also receives and exerts influences from without. It is constantly called to interact and engage with the symbolic structures of the socio-cultural and historical context in which it participates. These structures ‘without,’ like the structures within, differ across geographical and cultural borders, so that psychoanalytic institutions must negotiate and adjust their position accordingly. To a large extent, as an academic discipline that is also a clinical practice, psychoanalysis is formed and shaped by the symbolic structures of academic institutions on the one hand, and by the mental health system on the other. With regards to academic institutions, psychoanalysis has exceedingly succeeded in forming a symbolic pact with the humanities and it is making active efforts to engage with the sciences. And even though there is an undeniable gap between the psychoanalysis of the literary theorist and that of the neuroscientist, it is a gap that has the

potential of producing interdisciplinary perspectives, thus creating a fruitful ground for further development and growth.

The relationship of psychoanalysis to the structure of the mental health system, on the other hand, seems to be much more contentious. As the mental health paradigm has shifted from long-term hospitalizations and intensive psychoanalysis, to the de-institutionalization movement of the 1960s and the fast-paced psychiatric model of short-term hospital stays and long-term pharmacotherapy, clinical psychoanalysis has found itself in the margin. As a mental health professional, the psychoanalyst is inserted into the symbolic order of a mental health system whose environment is fundamentally hostile to the most basic of psychoanalytic principles. In this arena, psychoanalysis is met with an unwelcoming Other so that it becomes quite tempting to cling to the past and ‘suffer from reminiscences’ in the privacy of the consulting room; for, how can psychoanalysis walk into a psychiatric world that has little appreciation and much contempt for the ambiguity of the unconscious? Truth be told, psychoanalysis does not lend itself well to the psychiatric model. And yet, it is a model with which it must contend if it is to lend itself to those who most urgently need its insights. I would therefore like to suggest that while psychoanalysis may argue against the structure of psychiatry from without, it can only contend with it *from within*.

The traumatized patient of our time is rarely lying on the psychoanalytic couch; typically, he is lying on the bed of an acute inpatient ward, before being quickly discharged to the chair of a community clinic, or the streets of a city that guarantee his return through the revolving doors of psychiatric emergency rooms. The modernized mental health system is structured around this repetitive movement, which itself becomes

iatrogenic, both perpetuating and structuring the trauma. In this context, the act of *psychoanalytic anagnosis*, the act of reading and accessing trauma so as to *know it again*, seems to lie in direct opposition to the act of *psychiatric diagnosis*, the quick assessment and survey of symptoms that constitutes the standard mental health practice. Indeed, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association—the official tool of psychiatric diagnosis in the United States and in most parts of the world that participate in the modern structures of psychiatry—reduces trauma to its symptomatology, as though the symptoms constitute its *raison d'être* rather than its manifestation. One of the greatest challenges faced by clinical psychoanalysis today is to find ways of entering through this psychiatric structure—an admittedly difficult task.

While psychoanalysis works to render the inaudible language of trauma more perceptible, psychiatry, with its array of medications, seeks to render its symptoms mute. As necessary as pharmacotherapy proves to be in the alleviation of symptoms, accessing trauma also requires listening to its language, familiarizing oneself with its patterns, its signifiers, and attempting to enter it through them. But the symbolic order of the mental health system, its rules of engagement, exclude psychoanalysis, which in turn becomes unavailable to the psychiatric patient—the traumatized subject *par excellence*. In more than one ways, the symbolic order of modernized cultures (the healthcare system, the limitations of insurance coverage, the agenda of pharmaceutical companies, the erosion of more immediate family and community structures, etc.), limits the prospects and contexts in which psychoanalysis can encounter trauma.

By way of conclusion, I would argue that, as an intensive long-term process, with costly, almost daily, clinical encounters, psychoanalysis may not easily lend itself to the

demands of the modern healthcare system, but that any clinical encounter may be approached with a psychoanalytic sensibility, with respect for that which lies in wait, with an ear for the obscure, ambiguous, and sometimes silent language of the unknown, with a *will to witness*. During a clinical consultation on the inpatient ward where I worked as an intern, I expressed how incapacitated I felt in my ability to *listen* from inside the noise of the innumerable protocols and administrative constraints of the hospital setting. Mark Finn, a psychoanalyst and clinical consultant responded: “One cannot survive the hospital setting by being an administrator. The only way to survive is by being a psychoanalyst” (May 20, 2009, personal communication). His response seemed counter-intuitive, irreconcilable, paradoxical. How can one be a ‘psychoanalyst,’ how can one maintain “the analyst’s act of freedom” (Symington, 1983) from inside the foreign tongue of an Other who speaks the language of imprisonment (*locked unit, medication non-compliance, involuntary commitment, mandated treatment, medication over objection, seclusion, restraint*)? And yet, isn’t this precisely the imprisoning language of trauma? Isn’t trauma precisely that which is ‘involuntary,’ which mandates itself over desperate ‘objection,’ which ‘secludes’ and ‘restrains’? Has not trauma found its counterpart inside the structure of psychiatry, where it can remain closed-in, incessantly repeated? But this is precisely why one must enter this rigid structure as a psychoanalyst: so as to make space for ruptures, and open the possibility for deviation and newness. For, to be a psychoanalyst when the trauma closes-in is not only to bear witness but also to *dare witness*: to stare at the truth, to name the unnamable, to speak that which resists its own articulation, to burst open all frames. It is to be a witness,

willing to lend a hearing and produce a testimony to the fires that go-on-burning in those infernal regions.

The plenitude of history is only possible in the space, both empty and peopled at the same time, of all the words without language that appear to anyone who lends an ear, as a dull sound from beneath history, the obstinate murmur of a language talking *to itself*—without any speaking subject and without an interlocutor, wrapped up in itself, with a lump in its throat, collapsing before it ever reaches any formulation and returning without a fuss to the silence that it never shook off. The charred root of meaning.

Michel Foucault
“History of Madness”

Bibliography

- Abraham, K. (1923). The spider as a dream symbol. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 4, 313-317.
- American Psychiatric Association. (1980). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- . (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Altman, N. (2004). *The analyst in the inner city: Race, class, and culture through a psychoanalytic lens*. NJ: The Analytic Press.
- Atkin, S. (1969). Psychoanalytic considerations of language and thought—a comparative study. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 38, 549-582.
- Bahrack, L. E., & Watson, J. S. (1985). Detection of intermodal proprioceptive—visual contingency as a potential basis of self-perception in infancy. *Developmental Psychology*, 21(6), 963-973.
- Basch, M. F. (1977). Developmental psychology and explanatory theory in psychoanalysis. *Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 5, 229-263.
- Bion, W. R. (1959). Attacks on linking. *Melanie Klein Today: Developments in Theory and Practice*, 1, 87–101.
- . (1962). *Learning from experience*. London: Tavistock.
- Blatt, S. J., Wild, C. M., & Ritzler, B. A. (1975). Disturbances of object representations in schizophrenia. *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Science*, 4(1), 235-288.
- Bleich, D. (1976). New considerations of the infantile acquisition of language and symbolic thought. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 63(1), 49-71.
- Blum, H. P. (1978). Symbolic processes and symbol formation. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 59, 455-471.
- Bollas, C. (1987). *The shadow of the object: Psychoanalysis of the unthought known*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Brenner, C. (1980). Metapsychology and psychoanalytic theory. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 49, 189-214.

- Brierley, M. (1944). Notes on metapsychology as process theory. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 25, 97-106.
- Brison, S. J. (2002). *Aftermath: Violence and the remaking of a self*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Bromberg, P. M. (2001a). *Standing in the spaces: Essays on clinical process, trauma, and dissociation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press.
- . (2001b). The gorilla did it: Some thoughts on dissociation, the real, and the really real. *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 11(3), 385-404.
- . (2003). Something wicked this way comes: Trauma, dissociation, and conflict: The space where psychoanalysis, cognitive science, and neuroscience overlap. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 20(3), 558-574.
- Caruth, C. (1995). Introduction. In *Trauma: Explorations in memory* (C. Caruth, Ed.). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- . (1996). *Unclaimed experience: trauma, narrative, and history*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Davoine, F., & Gaudillière, J.-M. (2004). *History beyond trauma: Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one cannot stay silent*. New York: Other Press.
- Descartes, R. (2004). *Meditations of first philosophy*. Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing.
- Edgumbe, R. (1984). The development of symbolization. *Bulletin of the Anna Freud Centre*, 7(2), 105-126.
- Fanon, F. (1967). *Black skin, white masks: The experiences of a black man in a white world* (C. L. Markmann, Trans.). New York: Grove Press.
- Felman, S. (1987). *Jacques Lacan and the adventure of insight: Psychoanalysis in contemporary culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- . (1992). *Testimony: Crises of witnessing in literature, psychoanalysis, and history* (pp.1-56 & 93-283). New York: Routledge.
- . (1995). Education and crisis, or the vicissitudes of teaching. In C. Caruth (Ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in memory* (pp. 13-60). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Ferenczi, S. (1949). Ten letters to Freud. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 30, 243-250.

- Fonagy, P., Target, M. (1996). Playing with reality: I. Theory of mind and the normal development of psychic reality. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 77, 217-233.
- Fonagy, P., Target, M., Gergely, G., & Jurist, E. (2002). *Affect regulation, mentalization, and the development of the self*. New York: Other Press.
- Foucault, M. (2006). *History of madness* (J. Khalfa & J. Murphy, Trans.). New York: Routledge.
- Foxe, A. N. (1944). Five as a symbol. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 31(4), 453-456.
- Frank, G. (2000). The status of psychoanalytic theory today: There is an elephant there. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 17(1), 174-179.
- Freedman, N. (1985). The concept of transformation in psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 2(4), 317-339.
- Freedman, N., & Berzofsky, M. (1995). Shape of the communicated transference in difficult and not-so-difficult patients: Symbolized and desymbolized transference. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 12(3), 363-374.
- Freedman, N., & Russell, J. (2003). Symbolization of the analytic discourse. *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought*, 26(1), 39-87.
- Freud, S. (1893). On the psychical mechanism of hysterical phenomena: A lecture (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume III (1893-1899): Early psycho-analytic publications*. London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1895). Project for a scientific psychology (1950 [1895]) (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume I (1886-1899): Pre-psycho-analytic publications and unpublished drafts* (pp. 281-391). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1896). Letter from Freud to Fliess, December 17, 1896 (J. M. Masson, Ed.) In *The complete letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, (pp. v-492). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- . (1898). Extracts from the Fliess Papers (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume I (1886-1899): Pre-psycho-analytic publications and unpublished drafts*, (pp. 1-411). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.

- . (1900). The interpretation of dreams (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume IV (1900): The interpretation of dreams (First Part)* (pp. ix-627). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1905). Three essays on the theory of sexuality (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume VII (1901-1905): A case of hysteria, three essays on sexuality and other works*, (pp. 123-246). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1905). Fragment of an analysis of a case of hysteria (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume VII (1901-1905): A case of hysteria, three essays on sexuality and other works*, (pp. 1-122). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1914). Remembering, repeating and working-through (Further recommendations on the technique of psycho-analysis II) (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XII (1911-1913): The case of Schreber, papers on technique and other works* (pp. 145-156). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1915a). Instincts and their vicissitudes (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914-1916): On the history of the psycho-analytic movement, papers on metapsychology and other works* (pp. 109-140). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1915b). The unconscious (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914-1916): On the history of the psycho-analytic movement, papers on metapsychology and other works* (pp. 159-215). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1916). Introductory lectures on psycho-analysis (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XV (1915-1916): Introductory lectures on psycho-analysis (Parts I and II)* (pp. 1-240). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1917). Mourning and melancholia (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914-1916): On the history of the psycho-analytic movement, papers on metapsychology and other works* (pp. 237-258). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1919). The uncanny (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII (1917-1919): An infantile neurosis and other works* (pp. 217-256). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1920). Beyond the pleasure principle (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of*

the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVIII (1920-1922): Beyond the pleasure principle, group psychology and other works (pp. 1-64). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.

- . (1924). Neurosis and psychosis (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIX (1923-1925): The ego and the id and other works* (pp. 147-154). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1924). The loss of reality in neurosis and psychosis (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIX (1923-1925): The ego and the id and other works* (pp. 181-188). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1925). Negation (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIX (1923-1925): The ego and the id and other works* (pp. 233-240). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1926). The question of lay analysis (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XX (1925-1926): An autobiographical study, inhibitions, symptoms and anxiety, the question of lay analysis and other works* (pp. 177-258). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1930). Civilization and its discontents (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XXI (1927-1931): The future of an illusion, civilization and its discontents, and other works* (pp. 57-146). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1933). New introductory lectures on psycho-analysis (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XXII (1932-1936): New introductory lectures on psycho-analysis and other works* (pp. 1-182). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1937). Analysis terminable and interminable (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XXIII (1937-1939): Moses and monotheism, an outline of psycho-analysis and other works* (pp. 209-254). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1938). An outline of psycho-analysis (J. Strachey, Trans.). In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, An outline of psycho-analysis and other works* (pp. 139-208). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- Gergely, G. (2004). The role of contingency detection in early affect-regulative interactions and in the development of different types of infant attachment. *Social Development, 13*(3), 468-478.
- Gergely, G., & Watson, J. S. (1996). The social biofeedback theory of parental affect-

mirroring: The development of emotional self-awareness and self-control in infancy. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 77, 1181-1212.

Gill, M. M. (1976). Metapsychology is not psychology. In Gill, M. M., & Holzman, P. S. (Eds), *Psychology versus metapsychology: Psychoanalytic essays in memory of George S. Klein* (pp. 71-105). New York: International Universities Press.

Green, A. (1975). The analyst, symbolization and absence in the analytic setting (On changes in analytic practice and analytic experience)—In memory of D. W. Winnicott. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 56, 1-22.

---. (1977). The borderline concept. In *On private madness*. London: Karnac Books.

---. (1983). The dead mother. In *On private madness*. London: Karnac Books.

---. (1997a). Introduction. In *On private madness*. London: Karnac Books.

---. (1997b). The intuition of the negative in playing and reality. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 78, 1071-1084.

---. (1998). The primordial mind and the work of the negative. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 79, 649-665.

---. (1999). *The work of the negative*. London & New York: Free Association Books.

---. (2000). *André Green at the squiggle foundation* (J. Abram, ed.). London: Karnac Books.

---. (2002). *Time in psychoanalysis: Some contradictory aspects* (A. Weller, Trans.). London & New York: Free Association Books.

---. (2005). *Key ideas for a contemporary psychoanalysis* (A. Weller, Trans.). London & New York: Routledge.

Grünbaum, A. (1984). *The foundations of psychoanalysis: A philosophical critique*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Heidegger, M. (1978). *Being and time* (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Herman, J. (1997). *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York: Basic Books.

Holt, R. R. (1981). The death and transfiguration of metapsychology. *International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, 8, 129-143.

- Jones, E. (1927). The mantle Symbol. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 8, 63-65.
- . (1948). The theory of symbolism. In *Papers on psycho-analysis* (pp. 87-144). London: Baillire Tindall & Cox.
- . (1972). *Sigmund Freud: Life and work. Vol. 1, The young Freud, 1856-1900*. London: Hogarth Press.
- Kaplan-Solms, K., & Solms, M. (2000). *Clinical studies in neuro-psychoanalysis: Introduction to a depth neuropsychology*. London: Karnac Books.
- Katz, G. A. (1998). Where the action is: The enacted dimension of analytic process. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 46(4), 1129.
- Klein, J. T. (1990). *Interdisciplinarity: History, theory, and practice*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Klein, M. (1930). The importance of symbol-formation in the development of the ego. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 11, 24-39.
- . (1952). The origins of transference. In *The writings of Melanie Klein* (Vol. 3, pp. 48-56). London: Hogarth Press.
- Kohut, H. (1972). Thoughts on narcissism and narcissistic rage. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 27, 360-400.
- Kubie, L. S. (1953). The distortion of symbolic processes in neurosis and psychosis. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 1(1), 59-86.
- Lacan, J. (1981). *The language of the self: The function of language in psychoanalysis* (A. Wilden, Trans.). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- . (1988). *The ego in Freud's theory and in the technique of psychoanalysis, 1954-1955* (S. Tomaselli, Trans.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- . (1991). *Freud's papers on technique, 1953-54* (J. Forrester, Trans.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- . (1997a). *The psychoses* (R. Grigg, Trans.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- . (1997b). *The ethics of psychoanalysis, 1959-1960* (D. Porter, Trans.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- . (1998). *The four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

- . (1999). *On feminine sexuality, the limits of love and knowledge* (B. Fink, Trans.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- . (2001). *Ecrits: A selection* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). London: Routledge.
- . (2006). *Ecrits: The first complete edition in english* (B. Fink, Trans.). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- . (2007). Of structure as an inmixing of an otherness prerequisite to any subject whatever. In *The structuralist controversy: The languages of criticism and the sciences of man* (R. Macksey & E. Donato, Eds.). Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Laplanche, J., & Pontalis, J. B. (1973). *The language of psychoanalysis* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). London: The Hogarth Press.
- Laub, D. (1992). *Testimony: Crises of witnessing in literature, psychoanalysis, and history* (pp.57-92). New York: Routledge.
- . (1995). Truth and testimony: The process and the struggle. In C. Caruth (Ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in memory* (pp. 61-75). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Levi, P. (1989). *The drowned and the saved* (R. Rosenthal, Trans.). New York: Vintage International.
- . (1993). *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi assault on humanity* (S. Woolf, Trans.). New York: Collier Books
- Litowitz, B. E., & Litowitz, N. S. (1977). The influence of linguistic theory on psychoanalysis: A critical, historical survey. *The International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, 4, 419-448.
- Loewald, H. W. (1971). On motivation and instinct theory. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 26, 91-128.
- . (1971). Some considerations on repetition and repetition compulsion. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 52, 59-66.
- . (1978). Primary process, secondary process, and language. In *The essential Loewald: Collected papers and monographs* (pp. 178–206). Hagerstown, Md.: University Pub. Group.
- Lyons-Ruth, K., Bruschiweiler-Stern, N., Harrison, A. M., Morgan, A. C., Nahum, J. P., Sander, L., et. al.(1998). Implicit relational knowing: Its role in development and psychoanalytic treatment. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 19(3), 282-289.

- McDougall, J. (1974). The psychosoma and the psychoanalytic process. *International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, 1, 437-459.
- Meissner, W. W. (1981). Metapsychology—Who needs it? *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 29, 921-938.
- Milner, M. (1952). Aspects of symbolism in comprehension of the not-self. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 33(2), 181-195.
- Modell, A. H. (1981). Does metapsychology still exist? *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 62, 391-402.
- . (2003). *Imagination and the meaningful brain*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Muller, J. P. (1996). *Beyond the psychoanalytic dyad: Developmental semiotics in Freud, Peirce, and Lacan*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Noy, P. (1969). A revision of the psychoanalytic theory of the primary process. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 50(2), 155-78.
- . (1973). Symbolism and mental representation. *The Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 1, 125-158.
- Ogden, T. H. (1985). On potential space. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 66(22), 129-141.
- . (1991). Analysing the matrix of transference. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 72, 593-605.
- Panksepp, J. (1998). *Affective neuroscience: The foundations of human and animal emotions*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rabinovich, D. (2003). What is a Lacanian clinic? In J. M. Rabaté (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Lacan* (pp. 208-220). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rangell, L. (1988). The future of psychoanalysis: The scientific crossroads. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 57, 313-340.
- Rapaport, D. (1950). On the psycho-analytic theory of thinking. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 31, 161-170.
- Rayner, E. (1991). *The independent mind in British psychoanalysis*. London: Free Association Books.

- Ricoeur, P. (1977). The question of proof in Freud's psychoanalytic writings. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 25, 835-871.
- Riviere, J. (1924). A castration symbol. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 5, 85-85.
- Rodman, F. R. (2003). *Winnicott: Life and work*. Cambridge MA: Da Capo Press.
- Rosenbaum, B. (2003). The unconscious: How does it speak to us today? *Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, 26(1), 31-40.
- Roudinesco, E. (1990). *Jacques Lacan & Co.: A history of psychoanalysis in France, 1925-1985*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rycroft, C. (1956). Symbolism and its relationship to the primary and secondary processes. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 37, 137-146.
- Scarry, E. (1985). *The body in pain: The making and unmaking of the world*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schafer, R. (1976). *A new language for psychoanalysis*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Segal, H. (1957). Notes on symbol formation. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 38, 391-397.
- Shakespeare, W. (1987). *The tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* New York: Penguin Books.
- . (1987). *The tragedy of King Lear*. New York: Signet Classic.
- Shelley, P. B. (1852). Speculations on metaphysics (M.W. Shelley, Ed.) In *Essays, letters from abroad, translations and fragments, Vol. I*, (pp. 195-205). London: Edward Moxon.
- Sheridan, A. (1998). Translator's note. In *The four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Silverstein, S. (1976). *The missing piece*. New York: Harper & Row.
- . (1981). *The missing piece meets the big O*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Slade, A. (1999). Representation, symbolization, and affect regulation in the concomitant treatment of a mother and child. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 19, 797-830.
- Solms, M. (2001). Preliminaries for an integration of psychoanalysis and neuroscience. In

- J. Winer (Ed.), *The Annual of Psychoanalysis* (Vol. 28, pp. 179-200). New York: Routledge.
- Solms, M., & Turnbull, O. (2002). *The brain and the inner world: An introduction to the neuroscience of subjective experience*. New York: Other Press.
- Sophocles. Oedipus the King (R. Fagles, Trans.). In *The three Theban plays*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Stern, D. B. (1997). *Unformulated experience: From dissociation to imagination in psychoanalysis*. Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press.
- Stern, D. N., Sander, L. W., Nahum, J. P., Harrison, A. M., Lyons-Ruth, K., Morgan, A. C., Et. al. (1998). Non-interpretive mechanisms in psychoanalytic therapy: The 'something more' than interpretation. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 79, 903-921.
- Stevens, G. C. (1933). High blood pressure as a phallic symbol. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 20(4), 401-411.
- Strachey, J. (1953). Editor's introduction to "the interpretation of dreams." In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume IV (1900): The interpretation of dreams (First Part)* (pp. ix-627). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- . (1957). Editor's note to "instincts and their vicissitudes." In *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914-1916): On the history of the psycho-analytic movement, papers on metapsychology and other works* (pp. 109-140). London, UK: The Hogarth Press.
- Symington, N. (1983). The analyst's act of freedom as agent of therapeutic change. *International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, 10, 283-291.
- Trilling, L. (2008). *The liberal imagination: Essays on literature and society*. New York: New York Review Books.
- van der Kolk, Bessel A. (2005). Developmental trauma disorder: Toward a rational diagnosis for children with complex trauma histories. *Psychiatric Annals*, 35 (5), 401-408.
- Waddington, C. H. (1944). Life from a new angle. In J. R. M. Brumwell (Ed.), *This changing world* (pp. 48). London: G. Routledge & Sons Ltd.
- Wallerstein, R. S. (1980). Psychoanalysis and academic psychiatry—Bridges. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 35, 419-448.

- . (1986). Psychoanalysis as a science: A response to the new challenges. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 55, 414-451.
- . (1988). One psychoanalysis or many? *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 69, 5-21.
- Wiesel, E. (1982). *Night*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1945). Primitive emotional development. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 26, 137-143.
- . (1953). Transitional objects and transitional phenomena—A study of the first not-me possession. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 34, 89-97.
- . (1963). Communicating and not communicating leading to a study of certain opposites. In *The maturational processes and the facilitating environment; Studies in the theory of emotional development* (pp179-192). London: Hogarth Press.
- . (1967). The location of cultural experience. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 48, 368-372
- . (1971). *Playing and reality*. London: Tavistock.
- . (1974). Fear of breakdown. *International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, 1, 103-107.
- Žižek, S. (1989). *The sublime object of ideology*. London & New York: Verso.
- . (1991). *Looking awry: An introduction to Jacques Lacan through popular culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- . (2001). *Enjoy your symptom!: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and out* (Rev. Ed.). London & New York: Routledge.