Towards an archeology of transference; transposition, transference, metaphor

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Foucault is certainly the philosopher who, in contemporary philosophy, has best articulated that a practice is thought, and this is why he is of interest to psychoanalysis, which is a practice. He is so, not by articulating theoria, praxis and poïesis within a complex thought about causality, but by describing positivities which no longer require that we make the distinction between theory and praxis an organising concept. This is why The Archaeology of Knowledge, which takes note of this distancing after it has been put to work in some examples of the preceding works, is a great book.

My hypothesis is thus that the thought of Foucault concerning those statements [énoncés] that form a discursive practice by the system of their exterior and regimented relationships, provides the instruments to conceive of the relationship between the spaces that an analytic cure puts in correlation. That the practices that put into play language and signs are dispositifs “like any other”, comprising an implementation that would remain indiscernible if we considered them just as systems of signs and signifiers, is something towards what a psychoanalyst could not be indifferent. To speak theoretically first, this passage through Foucault incites me to say that psychoanalysis is quite close to what the latter calls a discursive practice. This is not the same as talking about a matter of language [parole] that would concern a speakbeing [parlêtre] for, if we approach only the fact of language [parole] through the signifying structure of desire, we are then condemned to oppose language to act, to the point of asking ourselves in what an interpretation can “act” [“faire acte”]. And the reading of Foucault suggests equally that it is not enough to juxtapose, to the signifying chain of desire, an attention to speech acts or performatives in order to resolve this duality, since the power of language, in the cure, [tient] pertains firstly to the analysing situation that confers the listening, the interpretation and the “desire of the analyst” their efficacy. The “desire of the analyst” is not a pure absence, a non-desire that, his alone, would produce in the analysand the demand. For the analyst owes her capacity to transpose the desires of the analysand to the fact that the relative

void of desire, in the analyst, is produced in a situation that itself is not empty for it has knowable conditions. In particular, the cure increases the importance of the saying and not saying in sexual life. It is the relativeness of this void with respect to the conditions in place that constitutes what analysis can offer. The “practicable 2” (Jacques Nassif) of a cure, or the dispositif (Foucault), or yet the analysing situation 3 (Jean-Luc Donnet) are not empty. When we define sexual desire as lack-of-being, we forget to mention that this abstention of sexual realisation on the part of the analyst is a component of the field that is in place, and that it derives from such field its efficacy. It is not the abstention alone that creates the conditions of the cure, even if linked, on the side of the analysand, to the fundamental rule of the “to say everything without criticism”. It is on the basis of the situation that this component elements acquire their value.

The transposition of desires in the cure does not give access to their essence

It is thus convenient to not separate in principle word (parole), letter and act, for if we do it, their punctual relationship becomes mysterious. We are then condemned, also, to oppose the circuit of the drive, that is to say its spatiality and its functioning, to the structure of desire, which is posed, whether we want it or not, as abstract, ideal and without spatiality. And only a metaphor in the language of theory allows the passage from the register of the signifiers of desire to that of the body of the drives [corps pulsionel]. In these conditions, we cannot think what we “make” of it in an analysis. To paraphrase Foucault in the beginning of The Archeology of Knowledge, it is not that the analysis of desire in terms of structure is impossible, neither is it the case that the idea of formalising the inadequacy at work in love relationships by conceiving it as a “sexual non-relationship” would lack theoretical interest, it is just that all this leaves analysis as practice unthought. Practice is then relegated to empiricism and theory cannot but avoid the phenomenon of transference.

It is time to return to that which is suggested by the German term: übertragung. Übertragen, is to “carry on top” or over. It is said, well before Freud, of a piece of clothing that we wear over another. The majority of German terms has concrete and often spatial sense while also pointing to abstract notions: the Encyclopedic

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3 According of the title of the work of Jean-Luc Donnet, *La Situation analysante*, Paris, PUF, 2005
Dictionary Sachs-Villate, in its 1905 edition (the fourteenth), indicates also “to bring elsewhere” and to transport, to transpose, to delegate (one’s authority), to transmit in the sense of the cession of a good, to transcribe in the domain of the written. It is also a term used in surgery: to transplant, and it is sometimes used as the equivalent of übersetzen, to translate. In French we hear less in “transfert” the Latin term ierein that also means to carry. Transference, is the act of bringing on top, beyond, elsewhere. Freud first employed the term⁴ in The Interpretation of Dreams to designate the processes of the dream-work: the operations that allow the passage from the latent content, reconstituted from the patient’s associations, to the manifest content of the dream, that is to say, the dream as told. Übertragung includes: displacement (Entstellung), condensation (Verschiebung), overdetermination (Überdeterminierung), the replacement of negation by a juxtaposition, etc. It is on a second instance that Übertragung comes to designate the transposition of desires in the cure onto the person of the analyst. From the beginning, thus, transference is at once a repetition, therefore an act, and a procedure of language. Yet we generally misrecognise, as much in the Lacanian as in the Freudian or English tradition, that transference is the set of processes from the dream-work before and at the same time as the reliving of infantile desires through the person of the analyst. For example, the entry on “transference” in Laplanche and Pontalis’ Vocabulary of Psychoanalysis, from 1967, only mentions in second place that the term, in Freud’s work, refers first to the processes of the dream-work and only later to that relationship [report, sic?] that intervenes as a resistance to a subjective change.

Transference is “the repetition of infantile prototypes lived with a marked sense of presentness [actualité]”⁵. The authors add that it is the case of a “displacement of values, rights, entities rather than a material displacement of objects (for example: funds transference, property transference, etc... )”⁶. Such a choice, then, pushes analysis towards the kingdom of representations or signifiers, and, soon, we no longer hear what there is of active in the processes of the dream-work, nor do we hear the

⁵ Jean Laplanche and Jean Baptiste Pontalis, Vocabulaire de la psychanalyse, Paris, PUF 1967, p. 492
⁶ Ibidem. While the authors hold that it consists in the same thing as the displacement of the representations in the dream, they say to want to correct an error attributed to... we do not know to whom if it is not themselves: “but it would be a mistake to see here a different mechanism from that invoked to give an account of that which Freud found in the cure.” p. 493.
natural community between these processes and the transposition of sexual life and
death and life anxieties; transposition that constitutes the space of the cure. We forbid
ourselves from the outset any access to a materiality specific to language of the type
that Foucault defines as discursive relationships, those that “determine the bundle of
relationships [rapports] that a discourse must form to be able to speak of such or such
objects, to be able to treat them, name them, analyse them, class them, explain them,
etc.”

To evaluate, in a cure, the spaces of dispersion of desires

*The Archeology of Knowledge* gives, like a box of tools, many concepts that are very
useful for conceiving of transference: *space of dispersion, non-deductive system*
according to which a discourse is organised, *determination of distances subject to change*
within the components of a discourse without having the individuality of the statement [énoncé] dissolved. It is the idea of treating discourse itself as a practice that
seems pertinent to me for describing that which a psychoanalysis does.

An analysis is, to begin with, a transference, that is to say, the putting in place of
a regimented relationship between several places whose rules of functioning, without
being identical, are linked by stable relationships for a period of time. It, analysis,
certainly has a privileged relationship to transference as translation, deciphering,
interpretation but in such a way that the linguistic character of its operations always
consists in a *transport* implying a materiality, and not only an unveiling or a
supposition of knowledge in a subject. It is about understanding how language, while
producing a suspension of sexual realisation in the cure, keeps, nevertheless, being
something active. Freud approached this paradox by speaking of the *Drang* of the
drive as a constant push, the drive being a requirement for work in the sense of
thermodynamics, that is to say, an invitation to transform, not heat into movement like
in physics, but untenable experiences into symptoms or creations. More than a
century later, it would be convenient to profit, epistemologically, from other
approaches. Perhaps this is what the late Lacan, that of the Borromean knots and the
variable tying of the three dimensions that he defined as those necessary for a subject
to “hold”: the symbolic, the real, the imaginary, was looking for. Perhaps his re-
evaluation of the function of the “semblant” had an analogous role to the

7 AK, p. 63.
individualisation of “discourse” in Foucault. Yet Lacan said that to manipulate the knots was to reach the thing itself, without the distance maintained between the step that approaches the subject and the preliminary composition that allows or does not allow the subject to hold. The analyst-theorist that plays with the forming dimensions of the sexed subject would magically also be a practician, for the knot would be, not a model, but the very essence of the composition of which a subject is made. However, the transposition in which transference consists forbids this affirmation, from the moment that we recognise the contingency of the step taken in the transformation of a mode of existence that has become untenable. By contingency, we understand here the risk that the analysand takes by engaging in this transposition and the act of the analyst that “disposes” (lays out, arrays) the conditions of the cure. The transposition of the “discourse” that is a subject does not aim to coincide with the essence of her problems; what matters, on the contrary, is that through this very transposition, the interstices that separate the various places where the distress [mal-être] and well-being of the subject are plaid out, could become the instrument of the transformation. Such is undoubtedly the sense of the fundamental rule: it is because the sexual desires change of regime when they pass through the conditions of the cure, that a fertile distance between the analyst and the analysand on the one hand, and between the cure and the existence of the subject on the other, finds the law of their distribution. The materials that have constructed the symptoms can, under this condition, enter into other configurations, less costly in pain or untenable pleasures.

[...]

If we hold on to the idea that the analyst occupies the place of a “subject supposed to know”, we do not understand how this latter can fall from the ideal position where the analysand places her or him. We do not understand how the analysand recuperates and transforms, in some way, his or her drive setting [mise pulsionnelle]. The analyst is rather a crossroad between the places that give a certain configuration to the sexual life of the analysand in its various modalities: repetitions, sublimations, meetings [rencontres]. It is not through the mastering of all components that the analyst works, but through the deciphering of the immanent rules that are established between them, and through the discerning of her/his place in the non-deductive system of relationships between the places.

As in the case of a discursive formation in Foucault, made of a system of statements [énoncés] linking institutions, knowledges [savoirs] and material conditions, the set of places forms the “associated domain” of this statement [énoncé]
that is the deployment of a subjectivity in the conditions of the cure. We could advance, besides, that the subject is nothing but the set of these components. That it is herself the *non-deductive system of rules* that are put into place thanks to the way in which the symptoms (and the data that have constructed sexuality) transpose themselves in the cure.

The not-knowing of the analyst, and not only his/her supposed knowledge, as the condition of the cure

Let us take another example\(^8\): A woman, almost forty years old, came to see me because she did not manage to truly separate from a man, much younger than her, with whom she had had a relationship for seven years. From the moment that she begun to speak of having children, he had left. She had really loved their trips to often dangerous countries, and the lifestyle of eternal youth in which she had spent those years. She admired him greatly for his intellect and his temperament of a traveller, being herself astonished, but only in the beginning of the analysis, that this relationship would have been almost chaste over the years. It was a woman that had the air of a young girl at once fragile and combative. She always carried a backpack, and went out from my office with the decided look of a small soldier, courageous but in pain. Her face, not at all indifferent, reminded one of those of Raphael's virgins. Her current speech [discours] turned around that of which her boyfriend had deprived her —a friend had just told her: “He took away your best years!” , which had had the effect of a revelation. In the cure, this brought up the feeling of having been despoiled [spolié] too soon —“I am a despoiled of life”— despoiled [spolié] of the paradise of childhood by the divorce of her parents and by the bad mood of her very depressed father. During her adolescence, she was very ashamed of him, to the point of changing sidewalks when she saw him come. She then stopped seeing him for fifteen years. “Despoiled” also by the lack of love from her mother, who was, she said, a little selfish girl who had let her manage alone too early. She had left at 17 to try her luck without any help in Paris. That she had had to manage alone seemed to her a blow of fate that she came to make recognised by an analyst. The psychiatric expression that came to my mind when thinking about her —and which surely had the role of blocking my ability to listen— was “sensitive paranoia”. “It is always to me that these things happen”, said she about any nuisance, even minor. She lived in a magical and

\(^8\) T.N The previous example was omitted from this excerpt.
superstitious world, fearing the next inconvenience that never failed to happen. That which was striking of her way of coming to the sessions, was the use, in the beginning unconscious, she made of a certain naiveté: with a very youthful allure—at the same time like a young boy and a young frail girl, not yet a woman—she took the analyst for a witness of the latest inconvenience that had again been inflicted on her, giving the other the task of pronouncing a verdict on that which had hit her. This naiveté seemed irrevocable. The point was to corner the one who listened into a place where the latter could not but authenticate her misfortune and courage, for she fought, with all her fixated youth, against the feeling that once and for all she had been “depoiled of life”. Her mother, for a birthday, had given her a kitchen apron while she was herself buying a flat of more than a hundred square meters. “She does not need so much space”, she said to me, looking for approval. Her colleagues made her work conditions unpleasant by changing her schedule, and she did not protest because it was more important to find in that the confirmation of her being chosen by misfortune.

After the dreams of shame that brought her back to the ruin of her father, then to the departure of her mother, she made contact with the former, timidly, and little before an illness that would carry him away. Even if he was now ill, she found in him a man who was more loving than deposed, which contrasted with the position of deposed man that had been assigned to him by the family. She had really wanted to suppress his presence through mere thought. She was astonished by having needed this black-out. But, most of all, she measured how much this constant effort to cancel the very existence of her father had made her live in a world where she constantly passed from the position of the one chosen by her father before the “fall” of the latter to that of the eternal hurt. How was this modification possible? She could stand and then share the humour with which I listened to her complaints.

The space of analysis was that where the superstitious complaint, which had been necessary for her for so long, could resonate in such a way that she heard it as a little song. I spoke to her quite soon about the naiveté that must have also constituted her charm in certain situations: she gave the other the obligation to recognise her misfortune as an election. She listened to my words, gave her opinion, seemed happy to liberate herself from the constraint of being chosen by misfortune. But life’s events sent her back to her habitual tone. The death of her father —and the fact, still, of having exited the radical, “courageous”, ostracism where she had maintained him for so long— allowed her to dream that the boyfriend —who had left her three years ago — had truly left. By dreaming of her boyfriend during the burial of her father,
curiously, she discovered the pleasure of analysis: that in the cross-reference of these two figures that marked her life, something else than misfortune could be the case. She was sensitive to the slight irony, never mean and which had undoubtedly won over the refusal to listen to her, with which I imitated the tone of her accounts. The very monotony of her way of addressing the unknown other rendered possible the fact that I could produce this shift. She could speak of the fact that her “despoliation” was the other side of the feeling of being chosen that she did not want to leave behind and which had sheltered the “eternal youth” in which she had lived with her previous boyfriend. In fact she was not sure of truly wanting to become a woman, she had not wished a child during all those years.

The possibility that her life would come together [s’arrange] depended, in this cure, on the slight displacement made possible by the humour with which I listened to her complaints. Little by little her tone changed, she begun to speak with a remarkable clarity instead of complaining and making herself the one chosen by a fate that always hurt her. However, the occasions were never lacking to perpetuate her misery: she had met a man with whom she felt well but... it was too late for children: “it always falls on me”, said she without realising that in fact her hormonal system now was less favourable to a pregnancy than in the past. Moreover, it is undoubtedly with respect of this last complaint that the possibility of playing with that which she always perceived as blows of fate affirmed itself clearly. For this conviction of a new injustice expressed itself during the sessions through a strong aggressiveness against pregnant women, often younger than her, that she saw in the street. Her naiveté, that is to say the way she had of using the other as a witness of what befell her by describing herself as outside of what happened to her, as if she had come straight from the paradise of childish innocence, her naiveté thus, could appear to her as being “off the mark”. Meanwhile, this champion of eternal youth begun to say that, until the recent meeting of a new boyfriend, sexuality had not been too important for her. There also, in general, she felt “hurt” as soon as a colleague tried to charm her, she refused while making me a witness of that it was truly unpleasant, that she was not made for that. But she recognised in her aggressive reactions against the compliments of certain men, the same spite than vis-à-vis the pregnant women met in the street and who scoffed at her. In this cure, therefore, the transposition played less on the different relationship in life and in analysis, between the saying and sexual satisfaction, than on the place of this violent recusal of everything that came from the world. She had constructed a protected universe through a perpetual denial of her hatred, she said “of her meanness” [“de sa méchanceté”]. I did not contradict that she
would have bad luck, but I amused myself by continuing the accounts that she begun and by making her notice the pleasure that she took in being “mean”. Not that I would disapprove of her meanness, simply, she was always there to be met by her stories, I could finish the description of her new misfortunes and she could recognise herself in them as from the other side of eternal child without determinate sex. However, she withstood this transposition well. When she got married, she laughed at what had blurred the party for her: her sister had put together a photo album where there were a series of old pictures where she made the clown. The attack, this time, came from that idealised character, that sister that was much more feminine than her and that she appreciated so much, how could she… But in recounting her “having been hurt” in a story that negated the gravity of her complaint, she could tell herself that, undoubtedly, her sister could not stand that she, the little one, had become the queen of the party.

Transference as dispersion of objects or active measure of the distance that could separate them concerned, in this cure, the destinies of hatred: to do as if her father didn’t exist had not served for establishing a useful distance from him; this black-out fixated her in the position of “despoiled of life”. And the hatred of the maternal had put in place this “eternal youth” that she had fantasied in the life with her former boyfriend and which had acted as a screen. Her dreams, except that one that she dreamt as she buried her father, were most of the time dreams of nostalgia of her childhood houses, before the fall. They would not change in tonality except in the period when she resorted to the means of MAP “medically assisted procreation”. The lack of success in these attempts failed to once again lock her in the conviction that the blows of fate never missed her. This conviction of a mandatory misfortune alternated with the one that surely, for her, it would work out, that she would have a favourable treatment, that the age of her hormonal body would not be an obstacle, and that all those other women who surrounded her and became pregnant would not scoff at her for long. This period ended with dreams of bodily devastation that would put an end to these attempts. We will remark that here again, the circulation of language in the space of the cure was in a precise relationship to other places. This reality appealed to an exterior space, real in the sense of the reality of the MAP. This reality awakened the traumatic real of her desire: she had lost, in the exclusion that had hit a part of the components of her story, the period of her fertility. The fact of resorting to the MAP in reality put to test, in analysis, this exclusion in which she refused to recognise herself. That which she attempted in reality had for a function to force the reality of her desire, one could
say. And still, it was thanks to the failure of the MAP and to the nightmares that punctuated for her, in the cure, this failure, that she could begin to recognise that which was to her unbearable of herself. She had never gotten along well with her female body and, to have to recognise this in that which she experienced as an organised devastation could have turned out badly: it could have turned into a hatred of that medical body that inflicted on her such a useless torment. But rather than such an outcome, this test, punctuated by dreams of a devastated inside of the body and of communication between the mouth, the vagina and blackish fluids, was the occasion of a differentiation between the places: the MAP failed, she could not be pregnant. Yet at the same time, her relationship with the man she had met constructed another space —third space in relationship with the analysis and the MAP—, so that the conviction of her vocation of misfortune was thwarted and as if forgotten. Between that which made her suffer, and that which she discovered of herself that did not fit into her schema, a new distance was beginning to appear, a distance that the humour of my interventions had initiated. But this humour, she had been able to make her own. Transference in this cure, was the transposition through humour of programmed misfortune, cultivated in hatred. In retrospect [après coup], she could say with what enjoyment she pronounced the little phrase: “I’ve been hurt” in circumstances that were sometimes serious, sometimes insignificant.

Since a cure is about transforming and repairing the spaces of differentiation, we could remark, still —fourth space— that the street was a very important place for this young woman: that in which, since childhood, the shame that she felt towards a deposed father and the hatred of pregnant women was deployed. It is this that she was able to hear, little by little, by using my humour. Well beyond jokes, humour is the reorganisation of spaces where symptoms are formed, and the cure is the putting in place of a system of relations between the scenes of the so called real life, dreams, fantasies and the new status that discourse acquires by resonating in a different manner when addressing an other that is unknown. In the relationship between different places, what matters is not that certain scenes would be real, others imagined, but that they are connected through a formula to be found. That which we call transference is the instrument of this bringing into focus. In psychoanalysis, we often oppose word [parole] to silence. But there are thousands of ways of using word, silence and their coexistence: in the present case study. The conviction of being chosen by fate and misfortune had been, until then, silent. She only showed to others her courage. The mere fact of telling her being elected to the stranger that I was constituted already a risk, for the unreality of the world that she protected through her
naiveté would thus be in danger. But she could take this risk, and in a different, for less defensive, mode compared to her habitual courage of little soldier. My neutrality, amused at hearing what each time “hurt her”, accentuated the transposition that she herself invited. It was this change of Stimmung that became tangible for her when she dreamt of a superposition between her boyfriend and her father “in favour” of the death of the latter. Herself astonished of being able to play off these two figures and feel freer at the very moment of a death, she was ready to be amused also of the manner in which I imitated that which was told as a complaint and which unclenched her conviction of being chosen. Said otherwise, transference is not only the offering that the analyst makes through her atypical way of listening, but is also the risk, in the beginning silent, that the analysand takes by engaging in this disorientation of him or herself.

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**The insignificant, reality, the plays of sense and non-sense**

We are dealing here, in a sense, with a traditional question in psychoanalysis, yet whose reach is rarely made explicit: sheltered by a tradition, be a tradition of knowledge, certain things can remain for a long time well known and yet unthought. The point is to conceive together, and under the concept of the contingent, that which in general is described in a distinct fashion: the function of non-sense in lapses and faulty acts (parapraxes) [actes manqués], the rhetorical inventions of the dream, the day’s residues, the unpredictable loans that an analysand makes to the space of the cure, to the person of the analyst or that “little bit of reality” of certain facts.

That which is known is the role of the day’s residues in the formation of a dream, for example. And this according to Freud. That which is known, and better known after Lacan, is also the role played by the insignificant, the “little bit of reality” according to Lacan’s expression, of certain facts, in the view of the unacceptable strangeness of desire, and which this “alien-ness” [étrangèreté] nevertheless needs in order to appear. Let us first look at some examples of this role of contingent factors before asking ourselves if the signifying games by their non-sense itself have the same function as the day’s residues. Or again, if they can be approached to the factors that are apparently not related to the analysis and that therefore contribute, by this very exteriority, to establish its power, thanks to the conditions of the cure.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud already underlined the importance of the
quotidian details of the previous day in the day that preceded the dream, and among which the dream chooses elements in order to transpose them onto another scene. The entrepreneur of the dream, he says, is always infantile sexuality, that is to say the hopes of excessive, transgressive pleasures which were inhibited, lay fallow, and whose imperfect realisation in adulthood reactivates the traces, to make of them scenarios of pleasure, unpleasure, anxiety. Yet these traces would not be reactivated, there would not be invention of a dream, if these desires would not find, thanks to their very insignificance, a way of threading themselves in the thoughts of the dreamer. Reality is here complicit with the day’s residues. From the beginning of this work, I characterised the contingency at work in sexual life by that which I named successively: disproportion, dis-symmetry, disparity (with Lacan). The insignificance of the day’s residues is a new figure of contingency. There isn’t but a thin nexus [rapport] between a heard phrase and that which it recalls “in the unconscious”, as one says. And it is precisely this thin and poor-in-sense nexus which, by thwarting the resistances, allows the dream to fabricate, by the effects of rebus or puns, the linking with the until then inactive thoughts. Let us take the example of Miss Murri: she looks for a job, as it were. This fact belongs to her reality and despite the fact that it is difficult for her to get out of bed in the mornings, she knows her way around in that domain. But what audacity of her dream, from the second visit to an analyst, to link her job search to the recurring temptation of destruction that characterises her, and makes her fear being “mad like her mother”? Yet, it is precisely the fact that these domains are so distant that allows them to be approached, to surprise her reserve towards herself and to suspend her depression in benefit of the pleasure taken in contradicting herself: I can perhaps manage alone/ I go to the interviews. From the point of view of the role of the analyst in the fertility of the sense bifurcations that give its importance to the non-sense opened by these bifurcations, it is remarkable that while I say “recruitment interviews [entretiens]?”, for the space of an instant, I do not hear the double sense of “coming to the interviews”. This “not hearing” that lasts a fraction of a second is the moment when the dream of the analysand makes use of the contingency of the knowledge of the analyst in order to be able to take shape. For this very short moment of deafness is not to be “corrected”. The transferential stake is half-spoken thanks to the bifurcation of sense that diverts. If I “correct” my listening by saying: “your dream of interview contradicts your explicit hesitation to engage in analysis”, it is a miss, the moment of non-sense opened by the dream becomes fixed and thus useless. This diversion of sense in the analyst is indispensable for that the

9 T.N. This refers to a case study omitted from this excerpt.
transposition of the jerky [saccadé] conflict that inhabits Miss Murri could take place. Should one call this deviation of sense “ab-sence” and put it in direct connection with that which Lacan wanted to formalise in the “sexual non-relation”? I do not know. One would have to compare this non-sense to that which Lacan calls thus, and to that which Deleuze calls non-sense in the *Logic of Sense*. For the moment, it suffices to remark that this bifurcation of sense is a form of contingency that comes close to other incidences of the contingent: the choice of colour blue of a table in my waiting room had served Laurence D. To fabricate the dream of the blue child, “blue like the blue of your table”. “You are like the rest of my entourage, you want to prevent me from living”. And in the process of this cure, to be able to accuse the analyst of this, was to no longer be pray to a figure of anxiety in a nightmare that made her want to jump out of a window. It was certainly the case of a transposition. There is also something of a disproportion—it is the first term that I employed—between the materials that the dream-work uses, and its stake: to transform a mortal menace into a reproach that she could confront, everything being linked, according to a formula that characterised this cure, to the regained love for colours in favour of a love passion. The disproportion consists thus in the disproportion between the intensity of her passion, the little bit of importance of the colour noticed in the analyst’s space, and the capacity of the dream to confront the destructive violence of her [its?] own desire inhabited by mortal figures. These examples show well the proximity (from the point of view of the mobilisation of unconscious contents), between the day’s residues and the transferential elements, these details “of no importance” and drawn [prélevés] from the reality of the situation. The inventiveness of the dream charges the elements “of no importance” with a decisive function for the subject. From the blue of the table, which does not have any meaning [sense] but is part o the analyst’s reality, to the blue child of the dream that condenses the death anxiety and allows its being placed at the expense of the analyst, the opening up of a sense in the non-sense of the material “colour” profits at once from that which is not in the order of sense, but rather of the materials and objects of the drive, —the Lacanian object a— or the signifying games where the moment of sense is internal to the resources of language. *Non-sense* here means two things: loan from reality to transpose the domain of the drive onto the cure, and a language game that supposes points of bifurcation. Lacan named *real*, preferring *ab-sence* to *non-sense*, this short circuit between the little-bit-of-reality and the in-assimilable that repeats itself, for the first time, in the transposition authorised by the cure.

An important question can now be posed: in these short circuits between the
insignificant and the grave, that is to say, in fact, between the contingent and the necessary of that which repeats itself in transference, must one say that the contingent is the “almost nothing” that makes the inexorable of the necessary until then ignored, appear? Or rather must one say that contingency (at work in the choices of trasferential details) serves to modify that which presents itself with the necessity of destiny (“you want to prevent me from living, like they have always wanted to do”)? The question poses itself as much in Lacan as in Freud: when the latter speaks of fate neuroses, that is, of those fates in which the same person buries in turn several spouses in the circumstances that have “absolutely nothing to do” with an intention on the part of the latter, he advances the hypothesis that it is precisely the independence of these facts of death from any death wish which, by this repetition in reality, signals an unconscious wish. Lacan on his part, when he comments the dream that Freud speaks about called “dream of the burning child” affirms something of the same order: the candle that has fallen on the death bed of the child, while an old man watching over his body has fallen asleep, recalls that little bit of reality, deprived of any sense, that nevertheless allows the father of the child that has just died, allows him to dream, in favour of the “lively light” [vive lumière] that he perceives as a day’s residue while sleeping, that his child comes to him, takes his arm and tells him reproachfully: “Father, don’t you see I’m burning?” For Lacan, this “little bit of sense” of reality creates an opening [appel d’air] for that which is most insupportable in the relationship of the father to his child: their encounter is for ever missed. The contingency of the candle fallen on the bed recalls the necessity of that this relationship has woven itself silently as a failure. And we know that for Lacan the insignificant in reality returns in the first place to the constitutive horror of every subject to recognise the structure of his/her desire, which is connected with the Super Ego and the death drive: Actaeon following Diana and lacerated by his hounds. The contingency of reality thwarts the subject’s resistances, but to take him back to horror. Only beauty veils this horror in an inventive fashion. As in *Death in Venice*, the novel by Thomas Mann.

We should note, however, that when the fate neuroses and the horror linked to the recognition of the unconscious are cited by Lacan and by Freud, it is within transference. Correlatively, the necessary becomes an absolute that reality’s contingency does not transform, but towards which, rather, it takes back. The moment of non-sense is no longer this inventive diversion that opened up a space for the deployment of that which remains undecided in the crossroads of sense and non-}

sense. In this other version of repetition, the non-sense related to the “little bit of reality” or that of the automatism of facts in comparison to any intention trace, on the contrary, the shortest path towards the necessary. When Lacan says “the real is the impossible” he points to the fact that the truth of the relationship tying father and child can not be signified but for an instant, between perception and consciousness as “between skin and flesh”. The impossible is that the father, as a subject, supports that which signifies itself in the nightmare as the truth never formulated of the being-alive of the child, and thus now in-transformable. Forever missed encounter, says Lacan, the fact of the child’s death making the unsupportable of this nevermore.\textsuperscript{11} By waking up from the nightmare the father deals with reality —the candle fallen on the bed— and this serves him to cancel out the lively light of truth, formulated for an instant thanks to a double non-sense: the infra-sense of the real candle fallen on the bed, and the moment of non-sense in the metaphor that creates the lively light [vive lumière] of the dream.

Yet the employment of the term \textit{impossible} in an absolute sense, implies a silencing of the resources of transference. This goes, besides, equally well for the fate neuroses according to Freud, as for the relationship between the real and reality in Lacan. On the contrary, in the dream of the blue child that I evoked, the loan of the blue colour from the reality of the analyst, does not simply take us back absolutely to the real of the death drive. Sure, the objects cathected by this analysand —the colour and odour in another dream— are like the materials closest to his death anxiety. Yet, at the same time, they are as taken by the dream to signify another possible way. They bring as much a new route of desire as its absolute rout in the name of its truth. The matters —which concern at once the sexual life of Lawrence and its transposition in the transferential space— change the interlacement [intrication] of the death drives and sexuality. This is what made me say that this young woman bet the transformation of her existence on a dream of colour and odour, apparently ridiculous, and yet decisive. In the conditions of analysis, certain dreams are true acts and the elements of reality do not serve exclusively to signify the horror of the real but to inaugurate the pathways until then left in an impasse. The horror of the real is never far in these moments of trespassing [franchissement], it neighbours the reorganisation of the drives, but the little-bit-of-sense of reality serves as much to render possible the reopening of a route within the impasse, as to make of the impasse the absolute truth, that is to say detached from the links of transference. \textit{Reality is contingent like the two forms of non-sense:} that which springs forth in the games of rhetoric by making use of

\textsuperscript{11}T.N In English in the original.
the non-knowledge and the knowledge of the analyst, and that which traces new spaces for the materials and the montages of sexual desire, by making use of the transferential space.