

# ME—PSYCHOANALYSIS: An Introduction to the Translation of “The Shell and the Kernel” by Nicolas Abraham

JACQUES DERRIDA

I am introducing here—me—(into) a translation.<sup>1</sup>

That says clearly enough to what lengths I will be taken by these double voice-tracks [voies]: to the point of effacing myself on the threshold in order to facilitate your reading. I’m writing in “my” language but in your idiom I have to *introduce*. Or otherwise, and again in “my” language, to *present* someone. Someone who in numerous and altogether singular ways is not there and yet is close and present enough not to require an introduction.

One presents someone to someone or to several, and as regards what in French are called *hôtes*, which in the language being translated are both hosts who receive and guests introduced, elementary politeness demands that one ought not to thrust oneself forward. And it is being forward to the point of becoming indispensable as soon as you begin to compound the difficulties of translation (from the first there has been at least one such difficulty here at every step) and start hampering the interpreter of the interpreter, the one who in his own language is supposed in turn to introduce the introducer. One has the air of someone indefinitely prolonging dilatory maneuvers, distracting attention, focusing it on oneself, commanding it by insisting: this is what is mine here, belongs to me, the introducer, to my style, to my way of doing, saying, writing, interpreting things my way, and believe me, it’s worth the detour, if I may say so, that’s a promise, etc.

Unless by assuming the indiscretion so as to draw attention to the maneuver, I no longer effectively withdraw behind the cover of the mother tongue (so called presumably because, in the end, everything seems to come back to it, no matter what you say about it, and to come back to her).

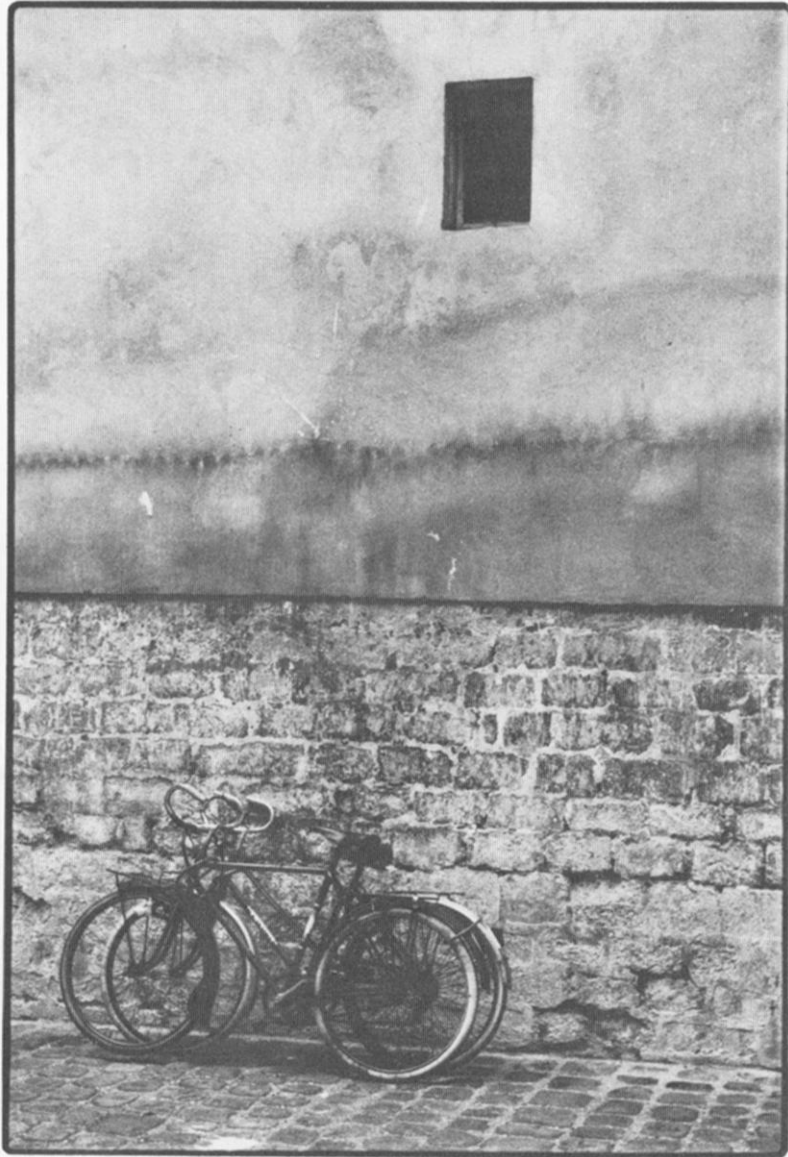
But isn’t that what concerns us here? Where, here? Between *the shell and the kernel*.

For I have already named, inducing you to think in advance, what you will shortly hear Nicolas Abraham discuss:<sup>2</sup> presence, being-there (*fort/da*)<sup>3</sup> or not,<sup>4</sup> the

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<sup>1</sup> Editor’s note. This text is entitled, in French, “Moi—La Psychanalyse”; the first sentence reads, “J’introduis ici—moi—à une traduction.”

<sup>2</sup> Editor’s note. In this issue, Diacritics is publishing one of Nicolas Abraham’s most important essays. Since the publication in 1976 of *Le Verbier de l’Homme aux Loups* (written in collaboration with Maria Torok), readers have begun to appreciate, notably in France, Germany, and the United States, the scope and originality of research that had long been overshadowed by the output of the psychoanalytic institution. A psychoanalyst of Hungarian origin, Nicolas Abraham



presumed presence to self in self-presentation, all the modes of introduction or of hospitality given in me, by me to what is foreign, introjection or incorporation, all the so-called "dilatatory" procedures (the "means, as it were conventional, that are implicitly offered by the whole cultural context to facilitate—except in the case of fixation—detachment from the mothering mother while still signifying a dilatatory attachment"); and you will shortly hear Nicolas Abraham speak about all that, and at the same time about translation. For he is simultaneously speaking about translation (and not just when he actually uses the word), about translation from one language into another (with foreign words), and even from one language into itself (with the "same" words suddenly changing their sense, overflowing with sense or exceeding it altogether, and nevertheless impassive, imperturbable, identical to themselves, allowing you still to read in the new code of this anasemic translation what belonged to the other word, the same one, before psychoanalysis, that other language, makes use of the same words but imposes on them a "radical semantic change"). Speaking simultaneously of translation in every sense as well as beyond or beneath sense, translating simultaneously the old concept of translation into the language of psychoanalysis, Nicolas Abraham will also tell you about the mother tongue and also about what has been said about the mother, the child, the phallus, about that whole "pseudology" that subordinates any discourse on Oedipus, on castration, and law and desire, etc., to a "childhood theory").

But if Abraham seems to be speaking about these extremely old matters, it is not only in order to propose a new "exegesis," to decipher or deconstitute their meaning so as then to lead, along new *anasemic* and *antisemantic* paths, to a process anterior to meaning and preceding presence. It is also to introduce you to the code that will permit you to translate the language of psychoanalysis, its new language that radically alters words, the same, ordinary language words that it goes on using and yet translates into a whole other language: so that between the translated text and the translating text nothing apparently will have changed and yet between them there will only be relations of homonymy. But as we will see, a homonymy incomparable to any other. Involved then are the concepts of sense, of language [*langue*] and translation. And speaking to you about psychoanalytic language, about the necessity of translating it otherwise, Abraham provides the rule for reading "The Shell and the Kernel": you will not understand much if you do not read this text as it teaches itself to be read, taking into account its "scandalous antisemantics," that of "concepts de-signified by virtue of their psychoanalytic context." This text then must be deciphered with the help of the code it proposes and which belongs to its own writing.

So here I am now, supposed to introduce—me—(into) a translation, perhaps the first in English of a major essay by Nicolas Abraham. I ought therefore to efface myself on the threshold and, in order to facilitate your reading, to limit the obstacles to translation resulting from my writing or from the idiom of my linguistic habitus. So I will. But what is to be done with what inheres in language [*la langue*] itself?

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*lived in France where he initially received training in philosophy, linguistics and poetics. He died in 1975 just after finishing, with Maria Torok, Le Verbier . . . Since then, his works and those that he was preparing in collaboration with Maria Torok have begun to be published under the general title Anasémies in the collection La Philosophie en effet [Aubier-Flammarion]. To date, two volumes have appeared, the aforementioned Cryptonymie: Le Verbier de l'Homme aux Loups, and, in 1978, Anasémies II: L'Ecorce et le noyau. The essay translated here supplies its title to the latter volume. It offers a privileged mode of access to Abraham's work in that it puts forward a theory of anasemia. A double issue of Etudes Freudiennes [Paris: Donoël, 1978], nos. 13-14, was recently devoted to Abraham and includes a full bibliography.*

Jacques Derrida, who wrote the preface to *Le Verbier*, entitled "Fors" [translated by Barbara Johnson in the *Georgia Review* (Spring 1977)], has agreed to present Abraham's essay here.

<sup>3</sup> The "game of fort-da, which has fed so much speculation," is illuminated by the process of introjection in a remarkable unpublished manuscript of 1963, "The 'crime' of introjection," now available in *L'Ecorce et le noyau*. This note is perhaps the place to add that introjection is a sort of introduction in itself, to the self, to (a) Me. What homonyms!

<sup>4</sup> Editor's note. The French reads "l'être-là (fort/da) ou pas," a formula in which Dasein is made to resonate with the double-sense of pas, both "not" and "step(s)."

Me, for example.

As always with a language, it is the marriage of a limitation with an opportunity.

In French, *moi*—unlike the German *ich* or the English *I*—fits the subject who says *je* like a glove (“*moi, je dis, traduis, introduis, conduis, etc.*”), just as it fits the subject that takes itself, or lets itself or causes itself to be taken, as an object (“*prends-moi, par exemple comme je suis*” or “*traduis-moi, conduis-moi, introduis-moi, etc.*”). A glove through which I can even touch *myself*, or my fingers, as *if* I were present to myself in the contact. But *je-me* can be declined differently in French. For example, “*je me souviens, je me moque, je me fais plaisir, je me fais (un) présent, je me fais du reste un cadeau*” [“I remember, I make fun, I have fun, I give myself (a) present, I give myself a gift besides,” where *me* is an indirect rather than direct object].

The appearance of this as *if* is not simply one phenomenon among others. “Between the ‘I’ and the ‘me,’” the chapter thus entitled situates a hiatus, one which, separating “I” and “me,” escapes phenomenological reflexivity, the authority of presence to self and everything it governs. This hiatus of non-presence to self conditions the sense which phenomenology takes as its theme but is itself neither sense nor presence. “Psychoanalysis stakes out its domain precisely on this *unthought* ground of phenomenology” [*ce sol d’impensé de la phénoménologie*]. If I quote this sentence, it is not only to mark an essential stage in the text’s trajectory, the moment when one has to ask “how to include within any discourse that very thing which in essence, by dint of being the precondition of discourse, escapes it.” And immediately following: “if non-presence—the kernel and ultimate ground of all discourse, is made to speak, can it—must it—make itself heard in and through presence to self? Such is the form in which the paradoxical situation inherent to the psychoanalytic problematic appears.” Indeed the question touches on translation, on the transposition into discourse of its own condition. This is already very difficult to think since any discourse thus translating its own condition will itself still be conditioned and to that extent in the end, as in the beginning, will miss its mark. But this translation will be even stranger: it will have to translate into discourse what “in essence escapes it,” that is, non-discourse or, in other words, the untranslatable. And the unrepresentable. That unrepresentable which must be translated into presence by a discourse that in no way betrays this structure is named by Abraham the “kernel.” Why? Let that question rest for a while.

If I have quoted this sentence, it is also to recall that the “hiatus” also necessarily reproduces an interval, the moment of a new departure in the trajectory of Nicolas Abraham himself. Himself, that is in his relation to self, to the *je-me* of his own research: first, as far as that was possible, an original approach allying typically psychoanalytic questions with phenomenological ones within a field into which neither phenomenologists nor psychoanalysts were accustomed to venture. All the essays before 1968, the date of “The Shell and the Kernel,” preserve the still very productive trace of that approach. I am thinking in particular of “Phenomenological Reflections on the Structural and Genetic Implications of Psychoanalysis” (1959), and of “The Symbol or What Lies Beyond the Phenomenon” (1961). All these texts are now collected in the volume which bears the title *The Shell and the Kernel (L’Ecorce et le noyau* [Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1978]). They surround or envelop the essay of 1968 (you could call it a homonym) and would allow a teleologically oriented perspective to see in these first essays the direction of all the transformations to come. And that would not be unjustified. But around 1968 the necessity of a *break* [*une brisure*], the space both of the play and the articulation of terms, marked a new relation between psychoanalysis and phenomenology, a new “logic” and a new “structure” of this relation. They will affect both the idea of a structural system and the canons of “logic” in general. One explicit indication comes at the end of the 1968 essay, when it has just been demonstrated that the “key concepts of psychoanalysis” “do not yield to the norms of formal logic: they relate to no object or collection of objects, nor in any strict sense do they have extension nor inclusiveness [*compréhension*].”

In 1968, then, a new departure, a new program of research; but the earlier

traversals were indispensable. From now on, no reading can elide these premises.

Despite the fecundity, despite the rigor of phenomenological questioning, a rupture occurs and it is a sharp break, a strange reversal rather, the conversion of a "conversion" which upsets everything. A note from the chapter "Between the 'I' and the 'Me'" situates the "misconception" of Husserl "concerning the 'Unconscious'." The type of misconception is essential and allows us to read the hiatus that interests us here. Husserl understood the Unconscious from the standpoint of *experience*, *sense*, *presence*, as "the forgetting of experiences that once were conscious." But to think the Unconscious it will be necessary to remove it from all that it makes possible, from the whole phenomenological axiomatics of sense and presence.

The frontier, a very singular one indeed in that it separates two absolutely heterogeneous territories, now passes between two types of "semantic conversion." The one that operates within sense in order to make it appear and preserve it is bracketed in the discursive translation by the inverted commas of phenomenology: the same word, the ordinary language one, once surrounded by inverted commas, designates the intentional meaning made manifest by the phenomenological reduction and all the procedures which accompany it. The other conversion, the one performed by psychoanalysis, is absolutely heterogeneous to the preceding one. It presupposes it in a certain sense, since one cannot understand it in principle without having gone to the limit, and in the most consequential fashion, of the phenomenological project (from this point of view as well the path taken by Nicolas Abraham appears to me to obey an exemplary necessity). But inversely it gives access to what conditions the phenomenality of sense, proceeding from an a-semantic instance. The origin of sense is here not an originary sense but pre-originary, if one can say that. If one can say that and in order to say it, psychoanalytic discourse, still using the same words (those belonging to ordinary language and those, bracketed by inverted commas, belonging to phenomenology) quotes them once more in order to say something else, something else than sense. It is this second conversion that is signaled by the capital letters with which the French translators have rightly endowed the metapsychological notions and it is once more a fact of translation that serves Abraham as a revealing indicator. Already we can recognize the singularity of what is here being called translation: it can operate within the *same* language, in the linguistic sense of *identity*. Within the same linguistic system, English for example, the same word, "pleasure" for example, can be translated into itself and without really changing its meaning can pass into another language, the same one, in which the alteration however will be total, either because in phenomenological language and between inverted commas the "same" word functions differently than in the "natural" language but reveals its noetico-noematic sense, or because in psychoanalytic language this suspension itself is suspended and the same word happens to be translated into a code in which it no longer has any sense, in which, by making possible for example what one feels or understands as pleasure. Pleasure itself no longer signifies "what one feels" (Freud, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, speaks of a pleasure experienced as pain and one has to draw the rigorous consequences that follow from an affirmation so scandalously untenable in terms of classical logic, philosophy, common sense, as well as phenomenology). To pass from the word pleasure in ordinary language to "pleasure" in phenomenological discourse, then to Pleasure in psychoanalytic theory, is to proceed to translate in the strangest way. It is indeed a translation process since one is passing from one language to another and since it is a certain identity (or semantic non-alteration) which effectuates this traversal, letting itself be *transposed* or *transported*. But that is the only "analogy" with what is currently or phenomenologically called "translation." And the whole difficulty lies in this "analogy," a word that has itself to be subjected to an anasemic translation. Indeed, the "translation" in question does not really go from one natural language to another: it is after all the same word (pleasure) that one recognizes in all three cases. To say that we are dealing with a "homonym" would not be false but the effect of this "homonym" is not that of designating different meanings with the same form. The meanings here are not different, neither are they identical, that is analogous mean-

ings, and if the three words written differently (pleasure, "pleasure," Pleasure) are not homonyms, even less are they synonyms. The last one exceeds the order of sense, of presence and of signification and "this psychoanalytic de-signification precedes the very possibility of meanings in collision." A precedence which must also be understood, again I would say translated, in the anasemic relation, that one which goes back to the source and goes past it, to the pre-originary and pre-semantic source. Anasemic translation does not deal in exchanges between significations, signifiers and signifieds, but between the realm of signification and that which, making it possible, must still be translated into the language of that which it makes possible, must still be repeated, reinvested, reinterpreted there. It is this necessity that is signaled by the capital letters in the French translation of the metapsychology.

What then is anasemia? and is the "figure," which seems most "appropriate" to translate its necessity, a "figure," and what legitimates its "appropriateness"?

I ought to stop now, let the translator work and let you read.

Just another word, though.

I am introducing here—me—(into) a translation and therefore, with this single difficulty—saying *me* in all languages—am already introducing psychoanalysis in person.

How do you present psychoanalysis in person? For that it would have to be capable of introducing itself. Has it ever done so? Has it ever said "me"? "Me, psychoanalysis?" Saying "me" and saying "the ego" [*le moi*] are not of course the same thing. And one can be "me" without saying so, without saying it in all languages and according to all codes. And isn't "me" always a sort of homonym? Doubtless something we identify as Psychoanalysis has said "the ego." It has identified it, defined, situated, and decentered it. But the movement which assigns something a place under a certain topic does not itself necessarily, or in any case simply, escape the jurisdiction of that topic. At the moment it introduces itself as the reflexive, critical, authoritative, designated subject of a "movement," a "cause," a "theoretical" discourse, a "practice," a multinational "institution more or less happily doing business with itself," Psychoanalysis cannot for all that be released *a priori* from the structural laws and notably from the topic whose hypothesis it has formulated. Why not speak, for example, of an "Ego" of psychoanalysis? And why not perceive in it the workings of metapsychological laws? The *reapplication* [*repli*] of that structure must be acknowledged even if at first it seems formed according to a simple analogy: just as psychoanalysis aims to teach us that, besides the Id and the Super-ego, there is an Ego, in the same way psychoanalysis as the psychic structure of a collective identity is composed of instances that can be called Id, Super-ego, and Ego. Far from leading us to drift into a vague analogism, the figure of this relation will tell us more about the terms of their analogical relation than any simple inspection of their content. The I of Psychoanalysis is perhaps not a bad introduction to the Ego of which psychoanalysis speaks: what must an Ego be if something like psychoanalysis can say "Me"?

To reapply to any corpus the law with which it constitutes its object, to analyze the consequences and the conditions of this singular operation, that I would say is the inaugural gesture of Nicolas Abraham in this domain. Inaugural because it *opens* the essay whose translation I am supposed, as they say in English, to introduce: it introduces it. Inaugural also by virtue of the problematic it puts in place.

Taking as its apparent pretext the original French version of *The Language of Psychoanalysis* by J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis [New York: Norton, 1973], but in reality doing something other and more than that, Abraham in fact poses the question of the "right" and the "authority" of such a "corpus juris" to claim to have the "force of law" in regard to the "status [*le statut*] of the psychoanalytic 'thing.'" And Abraham adds this essential specification: "concerning the psychoanalytic 'thing,' both in its relations to the exterior world and in its relation to itself." This *double* relation is essential in that it authorizes the "comparison" and the "image" which are then going to play an organizing role. It is the *shell-kernel* figure which, being at the origin of every symbolic and figurative act, is not merely one tropic or topical

mechanism among many. But at first it is advanced simply as an “image” or a “comparison”:

*Here then is a construction which, for all of psychoanalysis, is called upon to fulfill the functions of that agency [instance] on which Freud conferred the prestigious designation, Ego. Now, in referring in this comparison to the Freudian theory itself, we want to evoke that image of the Ego fighting on two fronts: turned toward the outside, moderating appeals and assaults, turned toward the inside, channelling excessive and incongruous impulses. Freud conceived of this agency as a protective layer, an ectoderm, a cerebral cortex, a shell. This cortical role of twofold protection, directed inward and outward, can be readily recognized in the Vocabulary; it is a role that understandably does not go unaccompanied by a certain camouflage of the very thing to be secured. Yet the shell itself is marked by what it shelters; that which it encloses is disclosed within it. And even if the kernel of psychoanalysis is not to appear in the pages of the Vocabulary, its secret and elusive action is nonetheless attested to at every step by its unbending resistance to encyclopedic systematization.*

The kernel of psychoanalysis: what it has itself designated, in Freud’s words, as the “kernel of being,” the Unconscious, and as well its “own” kernel, its “own” Unconscious. I italicize “own” [“*propre*”] and leave it between inverted commas: nothing here belongs properly to anything, neither in the sense of the property of ownership (at least a part of the kernel is irreducible to any Ego) nor in the sense of a figure’s propriety, in the sense of its literal sense [*sens propre*] (the “figure” of “the shell and the kernel,” as soon as it is taken anasemically, functions like no other figure; it figures among the list of those “new figures, absent from the treatises on rhetoric”).

This strange figureless figure, the shell-and-the-kernel, has just taken place, taken its place, claimed its title: it is double and doubly *analogical*. 1. The “comparison”: between the *corpus juris*, the discourse, the theoretical apparatus, the law of the concept, etc., in short between the rationalized *Dictionary* on the one hand and the Ego of psychoanalysis on the other. 2. The “image”: the Ego—of which psychoanalysis speaks—appears to fight on two fronts assuring a double internal and external protection; it resembles a *shell*. At least a third title must be added, one hidden like a kernel under the shell of the last image (and already this strange figure opens onto its “own” abyss, since it behaves in relation to itself like a shell sheltering, protecting, encrypting something like its own kernel, which is another figure of the shell and the kernel which itself . . . , etc.): the “cerebral cortex” or ectoderm evoked by Freud was already an “image” borrowed from the register of the “natural,” picked like a fruit.

But it is not only because of this characteristic *mise en abyme* that the “shell-and-the kernel” very quickly exceeds every limitation and measures itself against every possible risk, covers the *totality of the field* one might say, if this last figure did not imply a theory of surface and totality which, as we will see, loses all pertinence here.

What then is the relation, we might ask, between this “shell-kernel” structure and the “conversion” to which Abraham summons it? How does it introduce that “radical semantic change,” that “scandalous anti-semantics” which is supposed to have marked the coming of psychoanalytic language? Is not the “shell-and-the-kernel” merely one tropic, topical figure among many, a quite particular mechanism that it would be misleading to generalize with a view to lending it vast powers. Could we not perform the same operation starting with another tropic, topical structure? These questions and other similar ones are legitimate up to a point. To what point?

There is a point or a moment when the image, the comparison, the analogy cease. The “shell-and-the-kernel” resembles and no longer resembles its “natural” origin; the resemblance which refers to fruit and to the laws of natural or “objective”

space comes to be interrupted. In the case of a fruit, the kernel can in turn become an accessible surface. In the "figure," this version never occurs. At a certain point, at a certain moment, a dissymmetry intervenes between the two spaces of this structure, between the surface of the shell and the depth of the kernel, which, at bottom, no longer belong to the same element, to the same space, and become incommensurable within the very relation they never cease to maintain. The kernel, by virtue of its structure, can never become a surface. "This other kernel" is not the fruit one which can appear to me, to me holding it in my hand, exhibiting it after having shelled it, etc. I, to whom a kernel can appear, and so that a kernel may appear to me, must remain the shell of a kernel forever inaccessible. This dissymmetry prescribes a change not only of a semantic order, but rather I would say it is of a textual order, on the grounds that it prescribes as well and at the same time in turn another law for the interpretation of the "figure" (the shell and the kernel) which called it into being.

Let us specify the sense (without sense anymore) of this dissymmetry. The kernel is not a surface hidden from view which, after having passed through the shell, could become visible. It is inaccessible, and it follows that what *marks* it with absolute non-presence passes beyond the limitation of sense, beyond the limit of what has always tied the possibility of sense to presentability. The inaccessibility of an unrepresentable kernel (escaping the laws of presence itself), untouchable and unsignifiable, not susceptible to being signified except symbolically and anasemically, that is itself the unrepresentable premise of this peculiar theory of translation. It will be, it already has been necessary to translate the unrepresentable into the discourse of presence, the unsignifiable into the order of signification. A mutation has eventuated in this change of order and the absolute heterogeneity of these two spaces (the translated and the translating) leaves the mark of a transmutation on the body of the translation. In general, it is assumed that translation proceeds from meaning to meaning through the medium of another language or another code. Occupied here at the a-semantic origin of meaning, as at the unrepresentable source of presence, the anasemic translation must twist its tongue to speak the non-linguistic conditions of language. And it does it sometimes in the strangest ways, within the "same" language, the same lexical corpus (for example, pleasure, "pleasure," Pleasure). The pleasure Nicolas Abraham took throughout his life, in translating (especially poets: Babits, G. M. Hopkins, Shakespeare,<sup>5</sup> etc.) and in meditating on translation, can be better understood and shared if we transport ourselves, translate ourselves toward what he says about anasemia and symbol, and if we read him by turning back on his text his own protocols for reading. At the same time, and by way of an exemplary example, the "figure" *shell-kernel* ought to be read according to the new anasemic and symbolic rule to which however it has introduced us. The law that it has given us to read must be *converted* and turned back on it. And doing this we will not accede to anything that is present, beyond the shell and the figure. Beyond the shell, (there is) "non-presence, the kernel and ultimate reason of all discourse," "the untouched nucleus [*l'intouché nucléique*] of non-presence." The very "messages" that the text conveys must be reinterpreted with new (anasemic and symbolic) "concepts" of sending, emitting, mission, or missive. The Freudian symbol of the "messenger" or "representative" must in turn be submitted to the same reinterpretation ("we have seen how [. . .] Freud's anasemic procedure, thanks to the Somato-Psychic, creates the symbol of the messenger and further on we will understand how it serves to reveal the symbolic character of the message itself. By way of its semantic structure, the concept of the messenger is a symbol insofar as it makes allusion to the unknowable by means of an unknown, while only the relation of terms is given. In the last

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<sup>5</sup> See for example "The Phantom of Hamlet or Act VI, preceded by the Intermission of 'truth,'" in *L'Ecorce et le noyau*. This volume bears an epigraph from G. M. Hopkins, translated by Abraham. Volume III of *Anasémies* will be entitled *The Case of Jonah, a translation and psycho-analytic commentary of the Book of Jonah by Mihaly Babits*; and volume V, *Poems Mimed*, will include translations of Hungarian, German and English poets.



analysis, all authentic psychoanalytic concepts may be reduced to these two structures (which happen to be complementary): symbol and anasemia.) The very value of authenticity ("authentic concepts") will not, it seems to me, emerge from this transmutation with its ordinary meaning intact.

To translate otherwise the concept of translation, to translate it into itself outside itself. Absolute heterogeneity, signaled by the "outside itself" which extends beyond or on this side of sense, must still be translated, anasemically, into the "in itself." "Translation" preserves a symbolic and anasemic relation to translation, to what one calls "translation." And if I insist on that it is not only to invite you to notice what is being said and done here and now, namely that one is reading the translation of a text which is itself engaged in translating another text. But also this last text, the first one, the one signed by Nicolas Abraham is already caught up in the same thematic. A themeless thematic since the nuclear theme is never a theme, in other words an object present to an attentive consciousness, posited there for inspection. The "theme" of translation however gives every sign of being present, and in its own name, in any case in its homonym, in "The Shell and the Kernel." Regularly, whenever it is a question of the "vocation of metapsychology" ("it has to be *translated*" [my italics]), the phenomena of Consciousness (auto-or-hetero-perception, representation or affect, act, reasoning or value judgement) reveal, in the language of a rigorous symbolics, the concrete, underlying relations which in each particular case conjugate the two anasemic poles: Kernel and Envelope. Among these relations there exist typical or universal formations. We will focus here on one of them in as much as it constitutes the axis both of the analytic cure and of the theoretical and technical elaborations which derive from it. Whenever precisely it is a question of the *mythic* or *poetic* function, in every case one must learn to distrust a certain naïveté of translation and translate otherwise: "the philistine claims to *translate* [my italics] and to paraphrase the literary symbol and thereby he abolishes it irremediably." And further on: "this way of seeing imposes itself even more strongly when the myth is taken as exemplary of a metapsychological situation. It would be naive of anyone to take it literally and to *transpose* [my italics] it purely and simply into the domain of the Unconscious. And doubtless myths do correspond to numerous and various 'stories' which are 'recounted' at the confines of the Kernel.")

A certain "trans-" assures the passage to or from the Kernel, through *translation*, tropic *transformations* according to "new figures, absent from the treatises on rhetoric," all anasemic *transfers*. In its relation to the unrepresentable and non-appearing Kernel, it belongs to that *transphenomenality* whose concept had been posited ever since "The Symbol or What Lies Beyond the Phenomenon" (a 1961 unpublished essay collected in the volume of *Anasémie II* under the title *L'Écorce et le noyau*.) One ought then to turn back to the opening of the work.

In 1968 the anasemic interpretation certainly bore primarily on Freudian and post-Freudian problematics: metapsychology, Freud's "pansexualism" which was "the anasemic (pansexualism) of the Kernel," that "nucleic Sex" which was supposed to have "no relation with the difference between sexes" and about which Freud is supposed to have said, "again anasemically, that it is in essence viril" (that it seems to me is one of the most enigmatic and provocative passages in the essay), certain elaborations coming after Freud whose "implications," and "dependant relations" are situated by Abraham ("pseudology of the child," "childhood theory," "immobilism" and "moralism," etc.)—so many paths carved out for an historical and institutional decipherment of the psychoanalytic field. And also, consequently, forms of reception or rejection, assimilation, avoidance, rejection or incorporation that he can reserve for such investigations.

For this anasemic interpretation bears also, one might say, on itself. It translates itself and asks to be read according to the protocols that it constitutes or performs on itself. What is said here in 1968, about anasemia, the symbol, the "duplicity of the trace," prescribes retrospectively and by anticipation a certain type of reading of the shell and the kernel of "The Shell and the Kernel," etc. All the texts prior to and after 1968 are in a way enveloped there, between the shell and the kernel. It is in that long

term reading project that I wanted here initially to engage. Naturally, it is not only a question of reading, but in the most workaday sense of the term, of translating.

How have I then introduced—me—(into) a translation? Perhaps I was expected to gratify at least two expectations. First that I “situate” the 1968 essay within the work of Nicolas Abraham. It happens that chronologically it occupies an intermediate place between the first investigations of 1961 and the more famous theorisations (incorporation and introjection, cryptophoria, the “phantom” effect, etc.) that are now accessible in *Anasémies I (Le Verbier de l’Homme aux Loups, 1976)* and chapters II to VI of *Anasémies II (L’Ecorce et le noyau, 1978)*. But a chronological introduction is always insufficient, and the work begun with Maria Torok goes on. The forthcoming publications of Maria Torok will give us even more reason to believe in the astonishing fecundity of that work. So I have not been able to “situate” it: how do you situate what is too near and hasn’t stopped occurring, here, elsewhere, there, yesterday, today, tomorrow? Perhaps you were expecting me to say how this new translation ought to be translated. To do that I could only add another one in order to tell you in sum: it’s your turn to translate and you have to read everything, translate everything; it’s only just begun.

One last word before I withdraw from this very threshold. Quoting Freud, Abraham speaks here of a “foreign, internal territory.” And one knows that the crypt, whose new concept he proposed with Maria Torok, has its locus *in the Ego*. It is lodged, like a “false unconscious,” like the prosthesis of an “artificial unconscious,” in the interior of a divided self, and like every shell it faces on two fronts. And since we have spoken here, as if it were finally a difficulty of translation, about the homonymy between “Egos” [*des “Moi”*] and the singular expression “the Ego [*le Moi*] of psychoanalysis,” the question will have already begun to be asked: and what if there were a crypt or phantom within the Ego of psychoanalysis? And if I say that question has already begun to be posed, by itself, like a tooting stone [*en pierre d’attente*], it is not in order to presume to know what *stone* means.

Nor in order to decide with what intonation you will say, in the false infinity so variously declined of I—me: ME—psychoanalysis—you know.

—translated by Richard Klein