

FROM APRÈS-COUP TO PASSÉ ANACHRONIQUE

Pierre Fédida

Jean Laplanche proposes, if not to develop, at the least to bring together the aspects of his thinking bearing on what may be termed *temporalisation* in psychoanalysis. 'Temporalisation designates the mode through which the human-existent organises itself according to time in attempting, at every new turn, to seize itself in a new perspective' (Laplanche 1989: 33). Given that it is understood that *temporalisation* is an *activity* inherent to the analytic process, here it becomes the object of a distinct examination of all that can be thought at the level of *time*, *temporality* and *historicity*. In the conclusion to his article, Jean Laplanche clearly distinguishes his project from possibilities currently available: 'The aim of our theory is to rejuvenate the philosophical reflexion on time' (ibid.: 32). 'From the start, psychoanalysis has privileged the movement which, from the present, turns towards the past. It remains for us to interpret this sequence: present > past > future, in the light of a translative-dettranslative theory of human existence, and to reattach this movement, generative of diachrony itself, to the synchronic motor that is the originary situation [*situation originaire*] of seduction' (ibid.: 32).

Drawing support notably from Novalis' statement, '*Trieb zur Übersetzung*', Laplanche emphasises that the drive of translation 'arises, surges not from the translator but from this untranslated [*intraduit*], or from that imperfectly translated which unceasingly demands a (better) translation'. And he follows: 'To recapitulate at this point, the movement of temporalisation : present > past > future is a movement of detranslation-retranslation. It presupposes a prior already-translated, but also a primordial to-translate [*à-traduire*] which we name the unconscious' (ibid.: 30).

Every aspect of the article by Jean Laplanche—and especially the following propositions—sustains, in my view, a certain number of questions:

1. The analyst's project to 'rejuvenate the philosophical reflexion on time', seems, at first, audacious, but becomes comprehensible in its own terms if the task is that of the anthropological foundation and clarification of psychoanalytic thought—in the manner already demanded by Ludwig Binswanger for whom the questions of temporality and

temporalisation are central to the Freudian work, although Freud did not arrive at 're-awakening' them. The general problematic thus opened by temporalisation is indeed the problematic of phenomenological anthropology from Kant to Husserl through Hegel. In other words, any psychoanalytic project to 'rejuvenate an *anthropological* reflexion' 'on time' and, singularly, through the thinking of the movement of temporalisation cannot, in my opinion, ignore the results of the Husserlian project—even if this be only an evaluation of the state of the debate between phenomenology and psychoanalysis.¹

2. Another clarification follows from the previous point. This follows the example of the recent works of Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers (*Entre le temps et l'éternité*, 1988) as well as their contributions gathered under the title *Temps et devenir. A partir de l'oeuvre d'Ilya Prigogine* after the colloquium at Cerisy in 1983. The study of irreversible phenomena, of fluctuations, of points of bifurcation, of dissipative structures, etc., cannot remain foreign to metapsychological speculation when it is a question of temporality and temporalisation. (My own reflexions on these problems will be published.)

3. The thesis, of which the formulation is sketched here by Jean Laplanche, rests on an 'analogy' (the word would repay attention) between 'analytic action' and the 'process or (the) manner of proceeding of translation'. Although such a formulation does not raise any major objections if it is presented as a *metaphorical* comparison (following the example of Socrates, one solicits occupations whose activities permit, according to a negative progression, a definition of the *métier* of psychoanalyst: is he a doctor, a weaver, an archeologist, a seducer, a translator? etc.), it cannot go through when it engages an analogy. It is clear that the question of translation was engaged very early on by Freud (cf. the famous letter no.52 to Fließ²) in order to understand the functioning of memory (or of remembrance [*ressouvenir*]), the status of memory traces and the organisation of the hysterical symptom. But the Freudian question of translation cannot be rendered separate from the question of inscription and reinscription—no more than it can be rendered separate from the question of *writing* (of which the specificity is here inherent to analytic *listening* and to the technical paradigm of the dream for this listening). I think, therefore, that the Freudian question of translation is grounded in a network of connected theoretical presuppositions relative to memory and language and which entails some very fundamental consequences with respect to the mytho-phylogenetic hypothesis, languages [*les langues*] and the impossible fundamental language [*langue*], the symbolic (and not symbolism), culture, etc.

4. Finally, on reading Jean Laplanche in this article—and in not resisting to confer on the *debate* a friendly polemical cast—one cannot but pose the question: what differentiates his position from that of a Lévi-Strauss in the manner in which the latter has thought (notably in *L'Anthropologie*

structurale) the interpretation of myth (and by myth) in terms of translation and re-translation? Certain statements by Jean Laplanche justify this problematic rapprochement (ibid.: 30, 33). Indeed, might one not say that the interpretation of a myth by itself—the fact that every tradition of the myth (every ‘version’) partially lifts the repression inherent to the tradition of the myth and its transmission whilst constituting a reorganisation which is itself submitted to repression—is effected on the axis present > past? Certainly the method of Lévi-Strauss is in no way comparable to psychoanalysis: it is even antagonistic towards it. But what Jean Laplanche describes as a ‘process of temporalisation’, and which supposes a ‘primal *to-translate*’, an ‘at the foundation’ [*au fondement*]*—the unconscious—*is it so far from the process of *historisation* proper to the translations of myth and which presupposes an unorganised primordial ensemble?

These questions are only significant in opening or sustaining a debate. As practices of theorisation are intricated in this debate, let me say that my personal interrogation bears on the autogenesis of this theory of temporalisation and translation in the work of Jean Laplanche.

The considerations which I have just briefly presented evidently cannot be removed or abstracted from certain of my personal positions which guide my current research and which I can briefly resume here as follows:

—In my article ‘*Passé anachronique et présent réminiscent*’, I tried to modify a condition of approach to time in psychoanalysis.³ The attention that I brought to bear on the *sites of language* in analysis, and to the *epos* of the situation, lead me to reflect on the *anachronique* and, therefore, about a past which would not be the horizon of anteriority of a present. The *in the present* of the dream, of the transfer, defines a function of interpretation more local than temporal.⁴ In these conditions the axis present > past, on my account, only makes sense if the categories of representation which belong to the discourse of the manifest are previously degrammaticalised and rendered asyntactic (or paratactic).

—It is, it appears to me, the *analytic listening* (and not solely the listening of the analyst) which, in being a condition of resonance and semantic insurrection of words, receives the *waves* of temporality present in the word within the cure. I would see that temporalisation concerns an activity of an inter-transferential, and of course, counter-transferential process.⁵ Perhaps paradoxically, I am more interested in the *historisation* of the lifting of repression than in temporalisation.

—As to the ‘future’, it does not seem to me that it should be thought psychoanalytically as such—since it is a formation from synthesis in the same way as symptomatic ideas: it concerns, under its teleological dimension, the *speech of interpretation* of which the function of interpreting present <> past is, in my eyes, indissociable from operations of displacement and therefore of the *production of possibilities*.

—Finally, the interest which I brought to *construction in analysis* would allow me to advance the following proposition: *temporality-construction-historisation*.⁶ Very schematically, I may say: temporalities draw upon [*relève*] an atemporal *in the present* (places [*les lieux*]); construction solicits from language a *passé anachronique*; historisation is the theoretical process—of self-theorisation of the symptom.⁷

I delight in the initiative taken by Jean Laplanche to encourage such a debate and I very much hope that it will continue.

Notes

¹TN. Cf. Pierre Fédida, '*Temps et négation: La création dans la cure psychanalytique*,' *Psychanalyse à l'université*, vol.2, no.7, 1977, especially, pp.437-448.

²TN. In French, cf. 'Lettre no. 52, 6-12-96', in Sigmund Freud, *La Naissance de la psychanalyse*. Paris: PUF, 1956, pp.153-160; in English, cf. *The Origins of Psychoanalysis: Letters to Wilhelm Fliess*. London: Imago Publishing Company, 1954; and, the most recent edition of the letters, *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*. Trans. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985, pp.207-215.

³*L'Écrit du temps*, no.10, 1985, pp.23-45.

⁴Cf. Pierre Fédida, '*Théorie des lieux*,' *Psychanalyse à l'université*, vol. 14, nos. 53 and 54, 1989; subsequently published in modified form in *Le Site de l'Étranger*. Paris: PUF, 1995.

⁵Cf. Pierre Fédida, *L'Absence*: Paris: Gallimard, 1978.

⁶TN. Cf., Fédida's article, '*Le Discours à double entente*,' *Le Concept et la violence*. Paris: 10/18, 1977, pp.185-196.

⁷Cf. *L'Absence*, op. cit.

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f r a g m e n t e

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What is going on between Freud and the poets, or the poets and Freud? *Psychoanalysis and Poetics* reflects on how poetry and poetics have been with psychoanalysis since its inception, becoming part of the language through which Freud discovers the unconscious and its various lives in the mind. Offering a range of perspectives on the significance of poetry for differing psychoanalytic accounts of language and literary form, the collection also explores how contemporary poetries draw on psychoanalytic concepts for an account of the reading and writing of poems.

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