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Intimate Revolt

THE POWERS AND LIMITS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

Volume 2

Julia Kristeva
Translated by Jeanine Herman

where he wrote: "I have always dwelt only in the ground floor and basement of the building. . . . In that you are the conservative, I am the *revolutionary*. Had I only another life of work before me I should dare to offer even those highly born people a home in my *lowly dwelling*."[30] Would the person who gains access to the archaic and to the impossible temporalizing that is the timeless be both benevolent and "revolutionary"?

Lacan, alert to the scandal of the timeless intrinsic to the analytical experience, was mistaken in wanting to ritualize it as a technique of scansion (short sessions). The bad timing of the timeless is an effect of interpretation and silence. Perhaps in the end it is a question of our own capacity, as analysts and analysands, to be personally sensitive to the various configurations of the *Zeitlos* and let it be known how much our identity—conscious, unconscious, biological—is a function of the timeless, this major modality of the unconscious. It is a question of our own capacity to show ourselves threatened by repetition, stagnation, or hallucinatory acceleration and by the infiniteness of the dissolution of ties.

But it is untenable to live as a function at the crossing of slow, linear time and the timeless; it is even more untenable to find a formulation of it. Most are content to have psychotherapy, in all humility. Perhaps, after all, humility (the lowly dwelling: this is the metaphor Freud chose for the archaic and the timeless) is the only way left for us to be neither dead nor alive but serene, indulgent, and "revolutionary," as Freud writes to Binswanger, in the ironic and very Proustian sense of a revolt that has nothing else to seek or find but lost time.

A possible translation of *Zeitlos* might in fact be "lost time." A time that is lost like time, by reconciling us with the experience of our own loss. Repetition, stagnation, grace, infinity. Language, which is on the side of the conscious, always offers us bound, temporal terms. Perhaps the experience of writing and its crossed signals of sensations and drives are necessary in order to name this unbound time (*Zeitlos*) that Freud made the pivot of psychoanalysis and perhaps a new species of humanity, with some chance of attaining the truth.

To those who fear that this detour through the Freudian timeless has distanced us from re-volt, I will point out that, without this unfathomable temporality and the psychical modulation that it implies, there is no reason—thus no possibility—to carry out the upheaval of the intimate that is re-volt in the sense of continual rebirth or interrogation. Similarly perhaps this way we will be better able to measure the depths that mobilize revolt (with or without psychoanalytic experience) and the psychical and existential risks that it entails.

Chapter 4

THE INTIMATE: FROM SENSE TO THE SENSIBLE (LOGICS, JOUISSANCE, STYLE)

This plunge we have taken into the paradoxes of psychoanalytic temporality will reveal to you (more clearly, I think, in this volume than the last) what I have emphasized in my understanding of revolt: namely, the intimate.

"Intimacy," or "privacy," is a word we often use, an everyday word that occurs in literature and is encountered in psychoanalysis.

I will linger on this topic for a while, for it is indeed the intimate that calls us in the political, social, or personal re-volt that I am asking you to examine.[1] The intimate is where we end up when we question apparent meanings and values.

What is the intimate?

To begin with, we can say that this index of subjectivity to which we all refer so often is not a notion psychoanalysis takes into account. I do not think the intimate corresponds to an instinctual inside that would be the opposite of an outside of external excitation or the abstraction of consciousness. The necessarily internal representations of drives and sensations, as well as the "thinking ego" thinking of itself, seem to me initially to occupy this scene perfectly well, which, all in all, is rather broad. The word comes from the Latin *intimus*, the superlative of *interior*, thus "the most interior." So, although it includes the unconscious, the intimate does not have to be reduced to it and may go well beyond it.

I have not yet taken measure of the Freudian revolution, although I have continued to develop both its theoretical and clinical conse-

quences. Therefore, in the first part of this chapter, I would like to emphasize the radicality of psychoanalysis, particularly in regard to the intimate that constitutes the theme of my reflection here. To this end, I will begin with a brief and schematic reminder of the philosophical tradition.

Once More, on the Soul (Organic, Animal, General)

First of all, we can posit that the intimate is what is most profound and most singular in the human experience. We can then say that the intimate is similar to the life of the mind, that is, the activity of the thinking ego—such as the ego was defined by Kant after Descartes and, far more negatively or dialectically, by Hegel—in opposition to social or political action. We know moreover that this same philosophical tradition envisages another intimacy that is generally held to be closer, it seems, to the word "intimate" in its fullest sense. It was this interiority that the Greeks called "soul" (*psukhē*), defined by its proximity with the organic body as well as by preverbal sensations.

If we look for a moment at this interiority, we will see that this is what psychoanalysis will scandalously rehabilitate.

Since Plato and even more clearly in Aristotle, "there is, apparently, no action or being acted upon without the body; as in anger, desire, confidence and sensation in general."[2] In fact, "the intellect (*we*) is *another* sort of soul, perhaps separate from the body," although understanding (*noein*) would seem especially proper to the soul, for it cannot be exercised without imagination (*phantasia*), and this cannot occur independently of the body. A division is nevertheless established between two souls, one sensitive, the other intelligent, a division from which all metaphysics will draw benefits and encounter obstacles while bequeathing to us a few tenacious principles that are still ours.

Thus the life of the mind is reputed to be active; that of the soul, passive. The soul encroaches on the internal body as on the external world, and thereby it is fluid, formless, chaotic. "No fixed and abiding self can present itself in this flux of inner appearances," writes Kant, regretting that sensations and their redoubtable succession prevent access to a durable form, so that even the term "appearances," supposedly identifiable, does not suit the constant instability of the soul: "For where, when and how has there ever been a vision of the inside? The 'psychism' is opaque to itself."[3]

Not only does the soul seem "a more or less chaotic welter of happenings which we do not enact but suffer (*pathein*) and which in cases of great intensity may overwhelm us as pain and pleasure does,"[4] but it also seems to have "the same life-sustaining and preserving functions as our inner organs" (p. 35), which gives it a certain animality. The soul, a reflection of the organs that cause appearances without appearing themselves—and along with it, the intimate—always conceals some of the troubling divinity attributed to the organs for "if the divine is what causes appearances and does not appear itself, then man's inner organs could turn out to be his true divinities" (p. 42). Since individual character is established through discourse and not through physiology, internal states—which I am trying to explore here using the term "the intimate"—such as we all feel them before expressing them in speech, are, like physiological expressions, of a grievous generality. This at least is what Aristotle maintains: unlike writing or speech, which are not the same for all men, "the affections of the soul [of which these primarily are symbols] are the same for all."[5]

Arendt thinks much the same thing. In spite of her masterly work on the rehabilitation of life and the senses, she considers any science of the psyche to be general and thus without interest, following idealist philosophy and the conception of the soul as separate from the intellect; psychoanalysis, particularly, is only interested in the profound psychical foundation of individual appearances. Now, this profound psychical aspect, according to Arendt, can only be a general, nonindividualized interiority because it is organic and deprived of the specifying clarity of the intellect: "Psychology, depth psychology or psychoanalysis, discovers no more than the ever-changing moods, the ups and downs of our psychic life, and its results and discoveries are neither particularly appealing nor very meaningful in themselves."[6]

Let's leave aside the argument (specious for the contemporary reader) that the organic is general and has nothing specific about it: it is a modern commonplace (which our philosophers were unaware of—but didn't intimate introspection know it already?) that our organs possess very individualized maps. There remains the argument according to which psychoanalysis bypasses what is interesting, what is singularly intimate, operating with vulgar categories like those of the natural sciences. This is to ignore that psychoanalysis works precisely with discourse insofar as it is—and I constantly return to this—the singular representative of drives and sensorialized perceptions.

No psychoanalyst would recognize himself in these remarks; they

are, however, common among the most demanding thinkers, claiming and obtaining their legitimacy in the history of philosophy and epistemology. The radicality of the Freudian break is underscored all the more, although this break was prepared by the very tradition from which it distances itself. This is why, without losing sight of the intimate of the soul insofar as it is passion and sensoriality, I will remind you of three positions that, each very differently, prepared the Freudian turning point.

Images, LOQUELA, *Jouissance (Augustine, Loyola, Sade)*

St. Augustine introduced a third register between sense perception and the intellect, that of images: sense perception is endogenous and exogenous, he says in sum, using the example that "the vision, which was without when the sense was formed by a sensible body, is succeeded by *a similar vision within*." This internal vision (an essential element of our "intimate") is warehoused in the memory and becomes "vision in thought" only when recollection seizes it: "What remains in the memory [the vision—Au.] is one thing, and . . . something else arises when we remember."[7]

An "internal vision," then, finds a place between perception and the deliberate recollection of the judging, discursive mind. This register of interiority, which certainly must be called imaginary, very interestingly describes for all Christianity the intimacy that we are investigating today. Neither perception nor thought, it is image, or imaginary. Between the sensory world and the universe of desensorialized, judging thought, increasingly likened to a separation from reality and identified to an extraneousness, if not a death, the domain of images (of the imaginary) represents this intimacy that will assure the life of the mind, strictly speaking, by despiritualizing it in turn, sensorializing it, corporalizing it.

While going through the long history of this tormented intimacy together, I would like to stop briefly at St. Ignatius of Loyola. It has not been sufficiently underscored—except by Roland Barthes, but a Barthes very marked by semiological structuralism—how much the founder of the Jesuit order was a "creator of language," simply because of his logical surveillance of the states most rebellious to reason. Read his *Spiritual Exercises* and especially his *Spiritual Diary*, and you will see that Loyola constructs the space of psychical life (of intimacy) by making meditation on each of the five senses an exercise. And he carries out this exercise in a concrete, everyday, banal or paroxysmal way. A truly obsessive ritual accompanies the revitalization of the senses—sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch—induced by the reading of the sacred text or by daily experience, so that the sensible, insofar as it is put into language, is immediately constructed as space-time or as thought. All this was to the great delight of Roland Barthes, who hailed Loyola as a "logo-technician" and the founder of a "psychotherapy designed to awaken, to make resonate, through the production of a fantasmatic language, the dullness of this body which has nothing to say."[8] Loyola was aware of this himself when he stated that the goal of his *Exercises* was to make "one's sensual nature obedient to reason."[9] This submission of sensuality to reason is more commonly called "mastering oneself," while remaining attentive to *the unfolding of thought*. If this exercise forces the "inferior parts to submit to the superior parts," however, this coalescence of the sensorial and the spiritual—which is exercised (quite literally, here) in verbal formulations—is already unknowingly at work in the exercitant and calls for the exercise itself. In fact, a continuous copresence between the sensible and the intelligible—a true continuity, beyond division—characterizes the soul of the exercitant. We see this even more clearly in the journal. As you know, this journal contains in a staggering list of tears, whose appearance, absence, abundance, or continuation Ignatius delights in recording, as well as the famous *loquela*: the infraverbal but nevertheless discursive sign of the affects of the soul.

St. Ignatius of Loyola's *loquela*, an intimate word if there ever was one, is a speechless voice, at the borders of affect and hallucination, that initiates representation (the images of Augustine) and, later, the signs of language. With this mysterious *loquela* (which will not surprise the analyst attuned to *Grundsprache* and the semiotic tonality of poetic language), we encounter the register of a prerepresentation, an embodied speech, that nevertheless is already appropriated by a subject in the process of coming about. Loyola describes "taking excessive pleasure in the tone of the *loquela*, that is in the mere sound, without paying attention to the meaning of words," that the tears relay in order to peruse once again the affected soul, depriving it of even this zero degree of speech that is "the wonderful internal *loquela*" (p. 108). Keep in mind this intimacy of Loyola's, made of *loquela* and tears, subjacent to the thought of prayer and which seems to indicate the ultimate register of what he calls the "unfolding of thought" targeted by the spiritual exercise, closest to the unthinkable pathos of the soul.

I will say a bit more about this in chapter 7 when I discuss Barthes, the first of the moderns, who thought it worthwhile to raise this revolt that constructs language.

Christian mysticism unknowingly allowed the possibility of a dramatic formulation of intimacy in spite of the efforts of rationalist spirituality to dismantle the symbolism of the body and condemn it. I will leave aside Descartes's "pineal gland" for now, the intimate depths through which passions and judgments transit, which prefigures the Freudian unconscious. Kant himself, distinguishing between intuition destined to the sensory, on the one hand, and the spirit (*Geist*) as "immaterial intuition," on the other, describes the soul as a duality: "It is, therefore, indeed always the same subject that is both a member of the visible and the invisible world, but not the same person . . . , [there is] a certain double personality which belongs to the soul even in this life."[10]

The landscape was nevertheless prepared in our philosophical tradition for a series of representations that would take into account not a "passive" and "fluid" or "formless" soul, as antiquity had it, but a differentiated intimacy, always already informed by thought and, because of this information, in possession of its own logic, distinct from that of judgment, asking only to be specified. A logic of the intimate whose "images" we have with Augustine, "affects" and "infra-speech" with Loyola, "duality" with Kant.

Missing from this logic was its dynamic. It was Sade who would bring it to the fore, illustrating how the intimacy of the passionate and sensitive soul, because it found itself in the grip of judging Reason and its desensorializing and unifying power, was an intimacy condemned to take pleasure from this constraint. In other words, the exquisite sensation/thought, affect/reason cohabitation produced not only another logic ("another scene," Freud would say), proper to the psyche. Above all, it produced a jouissance, the pleasure of sensory meaning or of the sensory in meaning and, beyond that, pain (since it seems the cycle of pain is longer and can be produced by stimulation where pleasure stops, with no other limitation but the subject's swooning). Lacan was the first to reveal Sade's contribution to Kant by so paradoxically subtilizing the intimate through reasonable and moral law but always, along with law, in jouissance. Yet in this cohabitation of law, reason, and affected sensation, Lacan saw only a simple figure of dissociation between the subject of the uttered (of the Law) and the subject of the utterance (of desire).[11] Whereas I maintain, as you know, that the entire

panoply from the organic to the symbolic, via tears, images, *loquela*, and duality, is implicated in this intimacy. Intimacy that from now on, unsurpassably, seems a sadomasochistic intimacy. By that I mean a sadomasochistic unconscious. And is the unconscious anything but sadomasochistic?

As you can see, from Aristotle to Sade, via Loyola and Kant, the foundation for Freud's work was well laid. Still, he had to build the entire edifice. I wanted to remind you of these precursors, however, not only to make you appreciate Freudianism as dependent on a tradition that it does not fail to overturn but also to warn you against certain doctrines that are tempted to universalize or organicize the intimate. And against other doctrines still that would like, on the contrary, to spiritualize it. For the liveliest aspect of the intimate—its advent within the history of metaphysics and, additionally, in Freud—resides precisely in the heterogeneity of the two sensorial/symbolic, affect/thought registers. I use the word "lively" in reference to the seminal work by André Green entitled *Le discours vivant*.[12] If psychoanalysis is not a generality, as Hannah Arendt feared, but indeed an experience of the intimate, it is insofar as we appeal to psychical life as both discourse *and* affect, indissolubly.

Psychical Life as Jouissance

I am not telling you that the unconscious is what is most intimate in the soul. What I am telling you is that, in taking into account the two Freudian topics, the psychical apparatus according to Freud not only reintegrates the notion of the soul, until then excluded, into the thinking ego thinking of itself thinking but also wholly reformulates this notion by including in it the permanence of judging thought in the speaking being, in the form of another scene (another logic) that is found to be a jouissance.

You will recall that, starting with the *Project* (1895), Freud is interested in sensations, and although he places them on the side of Consciousness in the Perceptual/Consciousness system, the passage of the energetic charge between the perceptual organs and the neuronal tissue where they leave memory-traces constitutes a network of representations: these representations are dependent on language, which will name and communicate them, but they are different from it. The unconscious of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1901) is in effect "under

the domination" of the conscious—which also means under the domination of its linguistic formulation—and without really being "structured like a language," it has its own grammar and rhetoric. The organizing role of conscious thought vis-à-vis the logic of the unconscious is dominant, although the instinctual heterogeneity of this other logic and its primary processes becomes increasingly more pronounced, in Freud, with the second topic.

If you now recall the attitude of philosophy regarding the intimate, the history of which I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, we could say that Freud introduced language (reserved for the mind) into the soul, so that with the intervention of the Freudian unconscious, drives and sensations became not reducible to language but tributaries of language, accessible to and through language. Far from being equivalent to language, unconscious drives are nevertheless psychosomatic and intraverbal—I would say transverbal—beings that the analyst may think of by listening to language in a certain way and particularly by deciphering there the other logic of the primary processes or of other processes that Freud's successors continue to refine.

Moreover, bear in mind that, by emphasizing the destiny of drives, *Papers on Metapsychology* (1915) does nothing other than articulate these drives—according to active/passive, ego/world, and pleasure/displeasure axes—in sadism and masochism: that is, not only in terms of logic but also of jouissance.

In sum, the intimacy that Freudian theory proposes is a recasting of the soul/mind dichotomy, a recasting that encroaches on the somatic. And this, in particular, through the drive, whose linguistic and infralinguistic ideational representatives are certainly all the analyst hears but which indicate to him the drive's psychosomatic being. Psychoanalysis introduces the body and soul into understanding or, if you prefer, listening. Listening metamorphosed into psychoanalytical understanding thus restores another, more intimate vision of the life of the mind. You can measure this exorbitant, monstrous intimacy better yet if you add that ontogenesis opens to phylogenesis and that, by this means, it is not only the biological but being itself that is heard in the intimate.

We know now that a revolution in the intimate occurred in the first Christian centuries, when will was introduced, notably by St. Augustine, as a major characteristic of inner life. Although proper to the mind, will encroaches on the soul through images and reveals a new force of subjectivity, between contingency and freedom. But the Freudian revolution marks a second and new decisive stage in the conception of the intimate. Through the two Freudian topics, the body and soul become integral parts of the intimate, which from then on appears in two ways: on the one hand, as a multiplicity of systems of translinguistic representations and, on the other, as jouissance. I would say, then, that psychoanalysis restored to men and women the heterogeneous continuity between body-soul-mind, and the experience of this heterogeneous continuity now appears to us as the essence of the intimate.

We have not yet considered the consequences of this intimacy—this heterogeneous continuity—either in terms of the various clinical aspects it allows one to approach or (even less) in relation to the destiny of the freedom that follows from it.

I will simply add that the intimate obtains a depth far beyond that of the thinking ego thinking of itself. Yet if psychoanalysis has gained in depth, hasn't it lost by remaining general in nature, to use the reproach of philosophers and artists? The danger does exist, if we are content to make psychoanalysis simply or solely a science of the psychical apparatus.

Science and Experience: Countertransference

It is here that the theme of the intimate which we are considering raises a particularly crucial question: what type of science is psychoanalysis if the intimate life that it addresses and refashions is not only an intimacy of general and generalizable depths (from the mind to the soul and body) but also an intimacy of the singular?

My response will be twofold: in order to preserve psychical life as intimacy, we have no other means than countertransference, on the one hand, and a distinct listening, on the other, similar to a poetics that gives what we might call a style to the discourse in treatment.

If style is the subtle manifestation of the intimate, how does it work in interpretation?

Countertransference is the economy that actualizes the heterogeneity of the psychical apparatus as life: neither mind nor organicity but the heterogeneity of this "unfolding of thought," of which Loyola spoke and which, for Freudians, includes excitability as well as its possible or impossible cognitive congruence, via affect and endogenous and exogenous sensoriality. As I have said: this heterogeneous logic of the intimate is an experience of sadomasochistic jouissance. To interpret it in countertransference means in reality to install—and exhaust—sado-

masochism at the very heart of treatment. From then on, it is not only a matter of science but of experience. Logic and jouissance: this is the price of access to the singular intimate.

The countertransference of the analyst differs from transference in that the analyst listens to himself. I mean that he knows how to name his excesses of affect and sensibility within the confines of what cannot be represented, while at the same time confronting the sadomasochism that is the condition for what cannot be represented—the bedrock of the intimate—to accede to symbolization. Freud thought that the analyst succeeded where the paranoiac failed. He was right, for indeed the analyst succeeds in thinking the other, which the paranoiac can only do in a projection that is not yet thought. But one must go even further regarding the intimate. I would say that the analyst must succeed where the autistic fails: in naming/thinking the unrepresentable sensations of the soul (the series of psychical representations of the unrepresentable, passing through hallucination, the primary processes, etc.). To this end, we should remain attentive to our inner states in transference with our analysands and to the successes that certain great writers have achieved by naming these limits.

For, as you know, to be alive for the speaking subject means to be singularly alive. Even the most homogeneous groups survive only by contriving the singularity of certain of their members, who live their human lives only in the specificity of their bodies, needs, and desires. Moreover, psychoanalysis is based on the notion that to have a psychical life or an intimacy means to have a singular psychical life, which is precisely what is restored or made possible in treatment.

The Taste for the Singular Life (Style)

To conclude, I offer two passages from Proust as an example of what I am advancing. I could have chosen the famous passages that place taste in language: the taste of the madeleine, the orangeade, the ice cream, or the scent, close to taste, of the hawthorns or lilacs. As you may recall, Kant chose taste—the most intimate, private, individualized of the senses—as a metaphor for judgment, insofar as the latter was an activity of the mind susceptible to consensus and yet the most singular.[13] Far from being Kantian, Proust nevertheless went straight to this most hidden sense to show that it is less judgment than style (a "vision," he wrote) that is capable of revealing and communicating the secret intimacy of taste, offered as the prototype of the other senses in *Remembrance of Things Past*.

Taste becoming vision through style: here is a parable of the intimate for you to contemplate.

Instead I chose two other passages that link style to the unnamable and to the pain of the intimate—we might say to autism and sadomasochism. These passages show how, when the memory tries to repeat the most intimate inner states in discourse—a paradoxical dream, a paroxysmal jouissance—thought is confronted with the autistic void and sadomasochistic pain and seeks to modify language in order to include in it this singularity. For the analytical experience to preserve the intimate as singularity, psychoanalysis must be capable of this same creativity of thought—and language—which appears to be a simple stylistic feat but which in reality is the intimate itself as singular psychical life.

Plato's Cave Hides a Sensorial Cave

I will leave aside the debate on whether sensation is thought. This is a heated debate in current philosophy, particularly among cognitivists, but in fact it goes back to the origins of philosophy. A primordial debate if there ever was, for we find its trace (or rather its scar) in Plato's *Republic*, when the Greek philosopher evokes the cave. What is more intimate than the cave, its prisoners, and the shadows projected on the wall? These shadows are the symbol of sensible experience, which means that, from that moment on, they are intelligible realities. The cave of Platonic shadows retains from sensation only a rudimentary stage of representation: subjected to the reign of illusion, trapped by deception, sensation for Plato is necessarily false, for it is always subordinate and flawed in relation to the intelligible.

As you can see, it is difficult, if not impossible, to think of sensation directly. This difficulty prompts me to take a detour through therapeutic practice before returning to my reading of Proust.

The modern psychiatric, neurological, and psychoanalytical clinic is directly confronted with the enigmatic affliction of autism, which bars a subject's access to language while an often complex sensorial life remains subjacent to this silence, as the works of Frances Tustin, among others, have demonstrated.[14]

The drama of autism leads us beyond philosophical trial and error to posit the hypothesis of what we might call another cave. Because it is not

subjected to language, it is even more profoundly and untranslatably a sensorial cave without symbols—without shadows, in Plato's sense. Within these confines, a sensorial experience (*Erlebnis*)—not informed by cognitive experience (*Erfahrung*) and often definitively resistant to it—can nevertheless find thing-presentations in which it manages to form itself. This sensorial experience, borne by thing-presentations, is an essential part of the psychical experience of every speaking subject, and word-presentations do not necessarily convey it. If it is true that we all have a sensorial cave, some of us live it as a psychical catastrophe: autistics are at the extreme limits of this drama. Others take jouissance from it: thus hysterics complain of the gap between feeling and saying. Finally, others try to include it in normative discourse by producing the coalescence of sensations and linguistic signs that is called style.

Is to offer a hypothesis of the omnipresence of the sensorial cave and its fairly clear irreducibility to language to subscribe to the thesis of a universal autism—which would be endogenous according to Frances Tustin—before the "depressive position" postulated by Melanie Klein at the edge of psychical life? That is not exactly what I am doing. From a perspective that is more economical than evolutionary or a matter of stages, I will situate the sensorial cave as a constituent part of the psychical apparatus insofar as it is heterogeneity. The psychical apparatus is a stratified *signifiance*, and you know that linguistic and cognitivist imperialisms have a tendency to obscure this in order to restrict it to the sole dimension of a language traced onto an idea.

"The Second Dwelling" (Proust's Dream)

"I have always said—and have proved by experience—that the most powerful soporific is sleep itself," the narrator asserts in *Cities of the Plain*.[15] Moving from conscious wakefulness to "a sleep that does not dwell under the tutelage of foresight, in the company, albeit latent, of reflexion" (2:1014), he arrives at profound slumber. When he finds a language for this opaque, nonverbal, sensory experience that is deep sleep, as he did for the sensations of perverse pleasure, Proust succeeds where the autistic fails.[16]

"Perhaps every night we accept the risk of experiencing, while we are asleep, sufferings which we regard as null and void because they will be felt in the course of a sleep which we suppose to be unconscious" (2:1013). "Suppose," here, seems closer to "believe" than to "assume," and this

sleep that we believe to be unconscious strangely resembles Plato's cave of shadows. Yet it is heavier and more inaccessible, an ill-defined, dark unit. Proust's sleep, at first illuminated and thus prevented by the fire (also present in Plato's *Republic*), occurs only when the light of the fire (the fire of all intelligibility?) has faded. Without light, only the intensity of sensation bathes and perturbs the sleeper. More than an "other scene," this sleep constitutes a closed and sceneless space, an "other dwelling." Proust writes: "I entered the realm of sleep, which is like a second dwelling into which we move for that one purpose" (2:1013).

In this closed and isolated space, a locked apartment in which we relinquish and immerse ourselves, there are universes of sound, sounds without people: "It has noises of its own and we are sometimes violently awakened by the sound of bells, perfectly heard by our ears, although nobody has rung" (2:1013). Hallucination with neither object nor person, nothing but the sensation in our ears. Although at times the sleeper thinks he sees servants or visitors passing, Proust insists, "the room is empty, . . . nobody has called." Note the excessive, extraordinary permanence of this echoing solitude. Who lives in the empty apartment? Here Proust takes a Freudian turn: the subject of the dream is ambivalent, ambiguous, and reversible: "The race that inhabits it, like that of our first human ancestors, is androgynous. A man in it appears a moment later in the form of a woman. Things in it show a tendency to turn into men, men into friends and enemies" (2:1013). For the sleeper, time elapses differently.

Timeless and without plan, Proust's "second dwelling" is ruled only by the logic of the moment and the simultaneity of opposites. In this apartment of sleep, "we descend into depths in which memory can no longer keep up with it, and on the brink of which the mind has been obliged to retrace its steps" (2:1013). We are touching, I think, on the ultimate point of time recaptured, with no memory-traces and where no memory dares tread. I ask you: where can psychoanalysts read as precise a description of psychic regression and the autistic "black hole"?

A bit later, Proust returns to the description of this paradoxical state that is deep sleep. We can easily decipher the classic experience of the sensorial cave that we situated prior to that of Platonic illusions: "We awake in a dawn, not knowing who we are, being nobody, . . . the brain emptied of that past which was life until then. . . . Then, from the black storm through which we seem to have passed (but we do not even say *we*), we emerge prostrate, without a thought, a *we* that is void of content" (2:1014).

Notice the strangeness (and, I would say, indifference) of this personal pronoun. It is a "we" without content; it is also described as a thing traumatized by some unknown pleasure or pain. With neither traces nor memory, without psychic unity, it is neither ego, nor self, nor subject. It is nothing but an "azure" or an "unknown," transformed, remade, and even invented by the narrative of the dream: "What hammer-blow has the person or thing that is lying there received to make it unconscious of everything, stupefied until the moment when memory, flooding back, restores to it consciousness or personality?" (2:1014). This absence of self within the sensorial cave is even more clearly imagined later in the text: "Moreover, when sleep bore him so far away from the world inhabited by memory and thought, through an ether in which he was alone, more than alone, without even the companionship of self-perception, he was outside the range of time and its measurements" (2:1015).

No replica of the self, no double, no alter ego. Without the degree zero of otherness, "I" does not exist, and it is timeless: "Perhaps indeed more than another time: another life" (2:1015).

Yet this empty solitude is not void of sensation and emotion, which Proust takes delight in pointing out and keenly calls "pleasures." But these pleasures are incommensurable, incompatible with erotic pleasures, for the pleasures of sleep involve another "budget": "We do not include the pleasures we enjoy in sleep in the inventory of the pleasures we have experienced in the course of our existence. . . . We have had pleasure in another life which is not ours. If we enter up in a budget the pains and pleasures of dreams (which generally vanish soon enough after our waking), it is not in the current account of our everyday life" (2:1015).

Given the dichotomy between deep sleep-pleasure and ambiguous dream-desire, one might wonder whether the first "dwelling" of deep sleep, the sensorial cave, constitutes a defense against incestuous and deadly desires, a regression in order to flee the confrontation with Eros and his homosexual extensions (note that a valet replaces the grandmother when the dreamer leaves the "second dwelling" to return to a more banal dream in the "first dwelling"), or, on the contrary, whether in this remote room of inexpressible sensation, in this camera obscura, one found, not a defense against the libido but the archaic traces of its nondifferentiation, its fusion with the container of this not-yet other that the autistic person, in his own way, probably experiences as well.

We are faced with two distinct theoretical options. Nothing would allow us to favor one over the other, were it not for Proust's emphasis on

lost time and language. Lost time must be retrieved at all costs through writing. Why this aesthetic, metaphysical, and apparently therapeutic urgency? No doubt because there was another time, another experience where time-thought-language did not take place. If so, to recapture time would not simply mean to reconcile ourselves with past excitations that we have repressed (a desire, an object, a sign). If it were only that, we would be within the classic Freudian problematic of repression. Something else entirely is at stake here, a radical experience: to regain time would not merely be to unearth it or reveal it but quite simply to bring it about, to extract feeling from its dark apartment, to wrest it from the inexpressible, to give a sign, sense, and object to what had none. To recapture memory would be to create it by creating new words and thoughts. That is why I say that by confronting an age-old sensation and inscribing it in memory, Proust succeeds where the autistic fails.

What if we reread these provocative pages from this perspective? For the Proustian narrative will in turn seize this enclosure of incommunicable pleasure and deep sleep and become a narrative of the (inevitably sadomasochistic) intrigues inherent in eroticism: from jealousy to physical cruelty. The narrative genius of *Cities of the Plain* presents this with a rare clarity of composition and style.

I recommend you read some biographies of Proust—several of them relate Proust's perverse experiences, notably his frequenting of the male bordello run by his young friend Le Cuziat.[17] There, through a hole in a wall, the writer observes scenes of flagellation. To Céleste Albaret, his governess, indignant at these extravagances, Proust confirms: "But I can only write things as they *are*, and to do that I have *to see* them."[18] This insistence on the gaze, the permanence of the visible in perception, did not hide the fact that this was a sadomasochistic act:

> My dear Céleste, what I have witnessed this evening is unimaginable. Le Cuziat told me there was a man who goes there to be whipped, and I saw the whole thing from another room, through a little window in the wall. It is incredible. I didn't believe it when he told me—I wanted to see for myself. Well, I saw it. It is a big industrialist who comes down from the north of France specially for that. Imagine—there he is in a room, fastened to a wall with chains and padlocks, while some wretch, picked up heaven knows where, who gets paid for it, whips him till the blood spurts out all over everything. And it is only then that the unfortunate creature experiences the heights of pleasure. (pp. 196–97)

Biographers have pointed out the perverse pleasures that Proust himself sought: that he was aroused by young butchers, who gave him a sensation of carnage; that he liked to push hat pins into rats until they squealed and bled; that he allowed the family furniture and photographs of his mother to be profaned at the brothel. That is to say, the voyeurism of the flagellation scene is deeply rooted in his sadomasochism, and the inexpressible sensory experience of a painful jouissance emerges as indispensable, necessary, and vital.

Recall the writer's famous asthma. That especially violent, deadly symptom lacerated his lungs and heart and chained him to his bed and his mother. It made him engage in a battle of the flesh that cannot simply be described as erotic, for it was eminently thanatotic. It bears the unconscious, auditory, and spasmodic memory of the primal scene, made somatic, certainly, but it is also, as we tend to forget, a paroxysmal, solitary sensation. More archaically, the asthma may have been the memory of an impossible individuation, a sensorial cave where mother and child, stubbornly in love, lay coiled.

I will say first of all that the narrator could only emerge from this maternal osmosis at the price of the violent, sensory wresting away that is asthmatic self-flagellation. It was only after the death of his mother that Proust managed to establish a temporary distance from his own body. How? Through the blasphemous unveiling of his homosexuality, through recourse to voyeurism, this time taking pleasure in the flagellation of another, and finally through the putting into words and the putting into narrative of this intimacy. Poetry and theory (*Jean Santeuil* and *Against Sainte-Beuve*) were transformed into a novel. Endless therapy, for him as well, always against a background of asthma and flagellation.

Writing, Therapy, Beauty

Beyond this kinship between the sensory violence of the mother-child link, the asthmatic symptom, voyeurism, and sadomasochism, it should be noted that the strictly Proustian effect resides in the passage from what is felt to what is formulated. Céleste Albaret provides a precise account of this for us. Consider the moment, unique in the history of literature, in which Céleste reconstructs the alchemy of the intimate transition from what is felt to what is written.

Proust gives a factual account of the flagellation scene and comments on it to Céleste in a tone of the greatest detachment. Thanks to the presence of a third party, that is, through the intermediary of the transference onto the serene and calming, undesirable but satisfying governess-mother, the writer detaches himself from the felt and enters another universe, the "vocation" of which he has felt since childhood and which his writings prior to *Remembrance of Things Past* have continuously explored. A not necessarily cold universe but one made up of representations: it is a universe of spectacle. Words become more than signs: conventions, fetishes crystallize a dramatic sensibility that is finally captured here, arranged, appeased.

"The strange thing is that every time he came back from rue de l'Arcade he would talk to me about the visit just as if he'd come back from an evening at Count de Beaumont's or Countess Greffulhe's. What interested him is the spectacle he'd seen, nothing else" (p. 196).

Céleste is stunningly perspicacious; this is not simply the prudish repression of a governess blinding herself to her employer's pleasure but the observation of its "tablean," configuration, and representation.

I would submit that writing, this therapy of the sensorial cave, often needs a perverse object as a pseudo-object in order to traverse its autistic enclosure (which deep sleep evokes) and attain the contagious autoeroticism that is the construction of a sensorial fiction. Thus Proust begins by describing the perverse scene; he immediately seizes the signifiers that surge forth, repeats them, reifies them, manipulates them, flagellates them, and then catches his breath: "Anyway, we talked about the horrible flagellation scene for hours that night. I still horror-struck and he going over it as if not to forget anything, and no doubt thinking aloud, as usual, of what he was going to write" (p. 198).

Note that Céleste is "horror-struck," while Proust breathes, depicts, represents, shapes, survives. The writer repeats his words and arranges them, harassing Céleste, using her, forgetting her, sacrificing her, thus freeing himself from the pleasure that chained him to the bordello and the governess. He counts on the good woman's participation/indignation in order to refashion the scene from a distance, as a quasi comedy, to laugh at it, to detach himself finally from its sensation, and only then to forge the companion that was missing in his dream. This alter ego, which stabilizes our identity insofar as it is destined to others, is the narrator: the double of the one who inhabits deep sleep, the double of the one who frequents the brothel. The double of Proust or the author: the narrator is a passion that can be expressed.

Simultaneously depicted in this sublimatory reshaping is a pseudo-other: the character. The character takes on the excesses of the sensitive author, exhibits them, and dissimulates them. No doubt the character is a real other (we recognize, for example, features of the decadent Montesquiou or those of an anonymous, thrill-seeking industrialist) but also an essential part of the author himself. This character, who sums up an indecent facet of the sensitive man mastered by the stylist, is in this case the baron de Charlus, whom we find in *Time Regained* in the famous flagellation scene.[19]

Is the path to incarnation necessarily that of torture? The narrator suggests that passion, though necessary, is not enough: "How unfortunate it is that M. de Charlus is not a novelist or poet! Not merely so that he could describe what he sees, but because *the position in which a Charlus finds himself with regard to desire* by causing scandals to spring up round him compels him to take life seriously, to load pleasure with a weight of emotion. *He cannot get stuck in an ironical and superficial view of things* because a current of pain is perpetually reawakened within him" (3:860; emphasis mine). As a man in pain, "this consenting Prometheus had had himself nailed by Force to the rock of Pure Matter" (3:868). But there is no guarantee that Charlus will accede to "embodied time," for he "was no more than a dilettante, who never thought of writing and had no gift for it" (3:816). Besides martyrdom, do embodied time and transubstantiation require an end point, "an ironical and superficial view of things"? The narrator says: "A slap in the face or a box on the ear helps to educate not only children but poets" (3:860). That may be, but only if one stands still, mocks it, and writes about it. From this perspective, the experience of sadomasochism would be a sort of reading: "Reading is on the threshold of the spiritual life; it can introduce us to it: it does not constitute it. . . . [For] a lazy mind . . . books play a role . . . analogous to that of psychotherapists for certain cases of neurasthenia."[20] While it prefigures sensory time, reading does not constitute it. The sensoriality of time is that of writing.

Between Word-Signs and Word-Fetishes: Interpretation

The dynamics of writing as just examined in Proust are not unlike that of analytical listening and interpretation.

Because it is required, the analyst's identification with the analysand—

identification with the analysand's biography, memory and even transgenerational memory and imagined sensation—mobilizes the analyst's entire psychical apparatus. While this countertransference is thus an imaginary process, it is nevertheless real, a transubstantiation. Whether primary, secondary, projective, or of any other variety, it is desirable for the analyst to understand this identification with the analysand in all its paroxysmal intensity. It seems insufficiently emphasized in classical psychoanalytical theory, preoccupied as it has always been with the neurotic, while depression, psychosis, and of course autism solicit it with new force.

To attain this paroxysmal intensity of identification, which is unquestionably necessary in certain treatments, the psychoanalyst must remember Merleau-Ponty's reflections on the implications of one's own body in relation to the external world as well as the bodies of others. The philosopher describes this implication as reversible and chiasmic, for touch is always tangible, sight is visible, matter is the body, and the same is other. Merleau-Ponty's objective is to combat the metaphysical dichotomies in the domains of philosophy as well as psychology. Both naive and scientific experience find that an *x* perceives a *y* from which it is thought to be already separated. Now, the evidence of this separation is precisely what is questioned by the phenomenological process of the French philosopher who pursued and radicalized Husserl.

Going a bit further, it seems legitimate to me to transpose this interpenetration and reversibility of the perceiver and the perceived, of the feeler and the felt, not only onto psychoanalysis but also onto the reading of literary texts. Merleau-Ponty uses the very loaded term "flesh": becoming-flesh is an analytical process that it is important to restore without valuing it exclusively. What does it mean to "become flesh" (*chair* and not merely *chert*) and not to rely on it?

The act of naming implies abandoning the pleasure and pain of carnal identification, of carnal texture, in order to dissociate thing-presentations and word-presentations. Interpretation fixes word-presentations in their arbitrary autonomy as signs distinct from perceptions-sensations. It even turns them into fetishes, leads the patient to play with these words-signs-fetishes, and gives them back to him, like a mother to her child, as playthings, first of all. From his flesh, which we have shared with our own, we make word-presentations. But in placing, repeating, and punctuating these words, we give them the consistency of reified symbols; we bring them closer to thing-presentations, like writers who repeat, love, and arrange their texts (think of Proust and Céleste). Thus, starting with sensorial fixations, analysis works out sensorial games and then words—

but word-pleasures, word-things, word-fetishes. To describe this naming in which the therapist engages, we could say that it is the art of producing transitional objects, starting with the flesh of signs.

Therapists who have treated autistic patients have underscored the aesthetic pleasure these patients found in using their first words, more charged with sensation than with ideas.[21] Beauty, then, is necessary to psychical development and the blossoming of ideas, but it cannot exist unless the analyst who carries out this process is capable of creating a similar beauty and jouissance, for his/her own sake as well as the other's. If I have presented these Proustian pleasures, it is not simply to share my (obviously suspect) interest in the excitation that subtends the art of someone we continue to call "little Marcel" well after his death and in spite of his celebrity. Starting with him, it would be important to reflect on the sadomasochistic element of aesthetic performance that is hidden in analytical interpretation in general and more particularly in the face of psychosis or autism. Finally, and more generally, I would like to convey the sadomasochistic element hidden in what we call, not without relish, our intimate life.

For beyond the autistic symptom of the cave, this intimacy—which the work of art and the text as experience, as well as the patient's discourse, restore to us—is a border region of our psyche where psychoanalytical interpretation itself is acquired, without being reduced to it. If I call on psychoanalysis to contribute to the interpretation of the literary experience, I do the reverse just as much: I call on literature to refine analytical interpretation. This, at least, is my own experience, and I seek to convey it to you.

This will prepare us for the texts of the three great rebels I began to discuss in volume 1—Aragon, Sartre, Barthes—who revived the privileged place of the imaginary, from the intimate to the political, in order to make their revolt heard. We will find them again, as promised, starting with Roland Barthes and *Mythologies*, where I left off at the end of *Sense and Non-Sense*. But before this, I invite you to reflect on a component of imaginary intimacy—fantasy—and its reification in cinema.

Chapter 5

FANTASY AND CINEMA

At this point in my inquiry—the intimate as representation of the subject on the way to constitution and revolt—I am confronted with the imaginary. Consider this for a moment: suppose the imaginary offered the most immediate, most subtle, but also most dangerous access to the intimate. We cannot avoid the sense Lacan gives it: "That the imaginary is supported by the reflection of the same to the same is certain. . . . We have always imagined that being should contain a sort of plenitude of its own. Being is a body."[1]

But let me be clear. The imaginary, neither real nor symbolic, appears in all its logic—and risk—when introduced through fantasy (we all have fantasies, whether seductive or terrifying; this is inevitable). It also appears through cinema: we are a society of the image, it has been said often enough.

Organisms of Mixed Race (Didier, the Collage Man)

What is fantasy? The Greek root—*fae, faos, fos*—expresses the notion of light and thus the fact of coming to light, shining, appearing, presenting, presenting oneself, representing oneself.

When he uses the word *Phantasie*, Freud understands it as the intimate creation of representations, not the faculty of imagining in the philosophical sense of the word. German has another term for this: