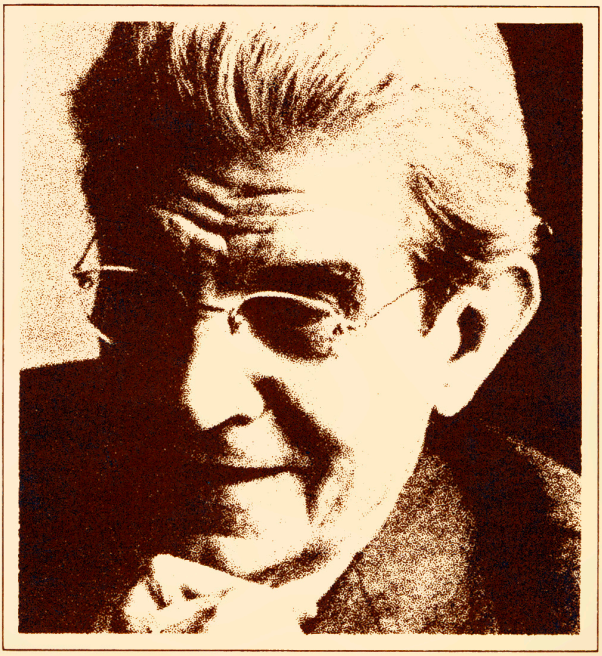
ERRATUM OF

The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis



Jacques Lacan

author of *Écrits*

ERRATUM OF

THE FOUR FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

JACQUES LACAN

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THE FOUR FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

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CONTENTS

Preface to the English-Language Edition *page* vii
Editor's Note xi

THE UNCONSCIOUS AND REPETITION

4 Of the Network of Signifiers 42

OF THE GAZE AS *Object Petit a*

8 The Line and Light 91

TO CONCLUDE

Index 283

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE EDITION

When the space of a lapsus no longer carries any meaning (or interpretation), then only is one sure that one is in the unconscious. *One knows.*

But one has only to be aware of the fact to find oneself outside it. There is no friendship there, in that space that supports this unconscious.

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

But one runs after it all the same. …

EDITOR'S NOTE

Our intention here was to be as unobtrusive as possible . . .

P. V. P.

Try to read this chapter five, line by line, in some language other than French. Those who do not know German should read it in the English translation. You will find this translation — I say this in passing — quite entertaining. You will see, for example, that the translation of *instinct* for *Trieb*, and *instinctual* for *triebhaft* has so many drawbacks for the translator that, although it is maintained throughout quite uniformly — thus basing the whole edition on a complete misunderstanding, since *Trieb* and *instinct* have nothing in common — the discord becomes so impossible at one point that the implications of a sentence cannot be carried through by translating *Triebhaft* by *instinctual*. A footnote becomes necessary — *At the beginning of the next paragraph the word Trieb . . . is much more revealing of urgency than the word instinctual. Trieb* gives you a kick in the arse, my friends — quite different from so-called *instinct*. That's how psycho-analytic teaching is passed on!

No doubt, in the depths of my eye, the picture is painted. The picture, certainly, is in my eye. But I am ~~not~~ in the picture.

INDEX

alienation, *see under* subject

arbitrary, *see under* repetition

chance, *see under* repetition

reversal into its opposite (*Verkehrung*), vii, 96

doubt, colophon of, *see under* subject

drive (*Trieb*), 49

eye, *see under* gaze

Freud, S., 49

Freud's works:

Beyond the Pleasure Principle (*Jenseits des Lustprinzips*), 49

gap, *see under* unconscious
gaze, eye, scopic field, 96

optics (geometral and perspective), 96
painting, picture, 96

screen, 96

instinct, instinctual, 49

optics, *see under* gaze

painting, the picture, *see under* gaze

psycho-analysis, psycho-analytic practice, praxis, experience, technique, treatment,

psych-analysis—*contd.*
49

analyst's desire, 49

training of analysts, training-analysis, 49

reversal into its opposite (*Verkehrung*), *see under* drive

network of signifiers, 49

subject, 49, 96

screen, *see under* gaze

signifier,

Unbewusste, see under unconscious
unconscious (*Unbewusste*) vii

training analysis, of analysts, *see under* psycho-analysis

truth, vii

The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis

JACQUES LACAN

Dr. Lacan's writings, and especially the seminars for which he has become famous, have provoked intense controversies in French analytic circles, requiring as they do a radical reappraisal of the legacy bequeathed by Freud. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* is based on a year's seminar, which is of particular importance because he was addressing a larger, less specialized audience than ever before, among whom he could not assume familiarity with his work. For his listeners then, and for his readers now, he wanted "to introduce a certain coherence into the major concepts on which psycho-analysis is based," namely, *the unconscious, repetition, the transference,* and *the drive.*

This particular seminar, in this particular edition, has often been used as the basic text for Anglo-American scholars and students alike seduced by the possibilities inherent in Lacanian psycho-analysis. In particular, notions of the gaze and ruminations on the role of subjectivity in two-dimensional representations have been adopted wholesale by spheres of film studies, art history, and visual studies. By default, Alan Sheridan, through this translation, has been key in the reception of Lacan in the Anglo-American academy. Alas, *particularly for visual studies*, a key phrase in this edition differs significantly from the French edition. An internet search proves that both versions of this phrase have been quoted equally in North American scholarly writings.

While arguments could be made as to the apt-ness of continuing to use Sheridan's translation as it exists – and we at Parasitic Ventures Press considered the possibility of presenting one such – we offer, instead, this edition, an *Erratum of The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis,* to allow our readers to decide for themselves.

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