

Dr Maryse TOUBOUL
Psychiatrist Psychoanalyst
Founder of the School of Aliveness & Adulthood

A NEW LANGUAGE FOR A NEW WORLD

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Abstract

Sigmund Freud said regression won over progress. The world we live in is indeed based on an old language of regression. But there can be no progress without regression, and the time has come to envisage a new world based on a new language that will allow real progress toward consciousness and humanity. This old language is that of the Unconscious: a language of death with its trilogy of lack, suffering, and hate; a language of dependence (our “natural” story), which obeys the laws of the other. Like Jacques Lacan said, “The Unconscious is structured like a language.” The question is how to pass from an old age repeating this old destructive language to a new age based on a new language, meaning a new way of thinking, doing and living according to new values: the laws of life. This passage is possible today by making a new language based on the consciousness of our desire to become the subject of our self, and to bring together our individual and social/political identities. This new language involves getting out of the Unconscious’ symbolic time and order, to enter real time: each day of our life. This is the passage from an inhuman subject (that of the Unconscious, already made) to a human subject, our own, which we need to make, consciously, through our experience of everyday life, and not based on ideas about life. This way, entering a new world, with a new mentality and language, will be possible.

A NEW LANGUAGE FOR A NEW WORLD

Who says new language says old language. So who says new world says old world?
I will first address this old language: the language of psychoanalysis, its way of thinking, its mental structure, which is reaching the end of its existence today as mindsets are ready to change for a new language: less symbolic, more real, obeying the laws of real time and not the laws of past time. This new language is a necessity to make our world anew.

WHERE DOES THIS OLD LANGUAGE COME FROM?

The Unconscious

It comes from the Unconscious, in other words from an old childhood story: a story of power of one over the other, a story of dependence, lack and love demand that psychoanalysis tells us about. All children depend on their parents; it is our “natural” story, one of fusion, passion, destruction, based on a language of domination of one over the other. I call it the parental language.

This story, we tell it later the way our memory remembers, but this is not necessarily the truth. It is an interpretation of what we truly experienced. Interpretation is essential in relation to both past and present time. Indeed, my experience taught me that the foundation of a patient’s way of functioning is not *what* he says about his past but *how* he relates *today* to himself, others, and time: from an old memory of past time to a new memory of present time.

Freud

Today, we know a lot about the language of the Unconscious. Freud was a pessimist; he said men will never change and death drives will repeat suffering, violence and hate indefinitely. Freud was never interested in the instinct of life or in any other language of life. This was a century ago.

Lacan

After Freud came Jacques Lacan, a famous psychoanalyst who brought a new language and a new interpretation of the language of the Unconscious. He told us that:¹

- 1) “*The Unconscious is structured like a language.*” This discovery was essential as it changed the perspective on this parental story inside each one of us. And above all, it changed the practice of psychoanalysis. J. Lacan was talking about a structure of

¹ Lacan Jacques, *Écrits*, Seuil, Paris, 1966

the Unconscious based on the structure of a symbolic language that dominates our story and our way of functioning all through our lives: the “Unconscious is the discourse of the other.” The symbolic is an order of language.

- 2) “*We are spoken beings.*” If the subject of the Unconscious is the other, I am its object; and when I speak, I speak about this other, not myself. This is a situation of dependence on a symbolic language, “above” us and forcing us to obey it and to build our real life based upon it instead of upon what we truly experience first. Then the question is, How to pass from being spoken to speaking?
- 3) “*The day we will understand what the hysteric [the woman] wants, we will understand all of humanity’s desire.*” This means that the hysteric resists against this symbolic language, in which she is captured as an object of desire, while still refusing this captivity.

This was half a century ago. These questions were crucial in the evolution of psychoanalysis, and they brought us closer to understanding what I call the laws of transmission than the myth of Oedipus did.

THE UNCONSCIOUS’ LAWS OF TRANSMISSION

Transmission of the Parental Language

What is transmitted from our parents’ Unconscious to ours? Essentially, what is transmitted is a parental language, meaning a symbolic, sexual language based on the laws of the other, which are responsible for our dependence on and our repetition of lack, suffering, violence and hate. This symbolic repetition and its logic rule our real lives. We are predetermined by a language of domination of one over the other. No one can be free this way; no one can choose his/her life. Everyone is forced only to repeat a lack of the self and to stay dominated by drives of destruction, all lifelong.

The Unconscious is the place of a mind “*jouissant*” of its power over the other. Here are the roots of inhumanity: when the mind’s authoritarianism takes the power over the body and its feelings. Yet, what carries life? What is the place of life? It is the body. And what is always killed in wars? Bodies, lives, real lives. Following the logic of the Unconscious, the mind is what needs to be saved, not life itself. What really alienates life is this transmission of a symbolic and sexual language of death: Deadly *jouissance* versus alive pleasure.

Laws of the Other: A Language of Lack and Jouissance

Suffering and *jouissance* go together: *jouissance*—like all fantasies—is a sign of regression, pain, suffering and lack. It is fed by the fantasy that something is missing, and by complete fusion with the other, thus by lack. But what, or who is missing? Our self, lost somewhere we do not exist anymore. Lacan further referred to the impossibility in the very structure itself of *jouissance*, that is, a lack of *jouissance in the essential of the structure*; what is prohibited is in fact already impossible.²

This wrong drive of fusion is immature and dangerous. Yet, giving up *jouissance* is not easy because this excitation is the foundation of relationships between men and women. When two people meet, two neuroses meet, each one entering the relationship with his personal story, problems and need for love. Lacan was right when he said, “To love is to give what we don’t have to somebody who does not want it.” Hence, often the link between two people is passionate, violent, and destructive. How can we bear one another when we cannot bear ourselves?

Jouissance also goes together with symbolic space-time: it is out of life, time, and reality. It is a drive always dependent on a language of instantaneity, in which capturing the other is a “real” obsession. Thus, *jouissance* cannot be love. In *jouissance*, we are alone and completely absorbed into the other: nobody really exists. *Jouissance* follows the logic of acquiring objects, not being a subject.

Lacan first gave a structural account of *jouissance* in connection with the subject entry into the symbolic in “The subversion of the subject and the dialectic of desire in the Freudian unconscious.”³ The speaking being has to use the signifier, which comes from the other. The signifier *forbids jouissance* of the body of the other. In his Seminar “Encore,”⁴ Lacan develops *feminine jouissance*, also known as the *Other jouissance*: The speaking being is alone with his or her *jouissance* as it is not possible to share the *jouissance* of the Other.⁵

² Glowinski Huguette, Zita M. Marks and Sara Murphy, eds, A Compendium of Lacanian Terms. London, Free Association Books, 2001

³ “The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious,” transl. by Alan Sheridan in *Écrits: A Selection*, W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1977.

⁴ *Le séminaire, Livre XX: Encore*, 1972-1973, (texte établi par Jacques-Alain Miller), Paris: Seuil, 1975. English: *The Seminar, Book XX: On Feminine Sexuality, The limits of Love and Knowledge: Encore*, 1972-1973 (edited by Jacques-Alain Miller), New York: Norton, 1998. Also a partial translation in *Feminine Sexuality*, New York: Norton, 1982.

⁵ Glowinski Huguette, Zita M. Marks and Sara Murphy, eds, A Compendium of Lacanian Terms. London, Free Association Books, 2001

The concept of *jouissance* can also be applied to society as a whole. We live in a world of objects. Today, to have is the law: to have money, a wife, children, a house, etc. More and more objects of *jouissance* are possible and easy to acquire in a “super ego society.” This situation where a society is under the influence and manipulation of “more and more” objects, quickly, and less and less subjects thinking by themselves, is dangerous because our lifetime gets absorbed, leaving us empty.

A Way Out: Relativity

We have to get out of this language, unconsciousness, and way of functioning, in which we are ruled by our drives. Remaining under the domination of the other, this exterior parental voice telling us what to do and what to think, and making us believe that we are important, is not the solution. The parental language’s power forced us to obey it, and to feel guilty if we disobey. Thus, instead of becoming adult, people become increasingly stupid, lost, and regressive, which finds expression in different forms of passivity or violence. In these conditions, there can be no adult, no pride, no aliveness, just immature beings lost within themselves.

Too often, patients are too curious about this suffering. Too many ask, “why do I suffer,” and too few ask, “how do I get out of this?” Generally, people think too much and they forget to do what is important to do every day. To think is to judge in accordance with the parental language. Instead, to feel good, we need to speak with words in accordance with our feelings. To live badly is to think badly, whereas feeling good comes from the desire to think as we feel, and not to feel as we think.

How to change this? How to free ourselves from this language of closed and inhuman space-time? The answer lies in Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity, of relative space-time. In the Unconscious, time does not exist: it is absolute and with no movement. In life, space-time is relative and real. It is in movement because it is experienced, and it changes because it is full. Emptiness does not exist in real space-time; there are no black holes. In the Unconscious, there is no body, no life, no movement, no change, only the repetition of a same non-alive language and way of functioning.

NEW LAWS OF TRANSMISSION FOR A NEW LANGUAGE

The Laws of Life

How to get out of this transmission and enter a new one, in which we become real men and women, conscious and subject of our lives? No new world is possible without a deep

change of mindsets, a new search and desire for becoming the subject and the object of our own life.

A new transmission means passing from a symbolic, sexual language of power obeying the *laws of the other*—made by and residing in the Unconscious—to a real, gendered language—to construct—obeying the *laws of life* and real space time. It means passing from a position of power to a position of will; from a position of lack to a position of desire for our life.

The transmission of values of life is missing in the Unconscious because the language of the Unconscious is “full” of parental bonds with the other and of thoughts about how we can conform to what the other wants from us. A new world will require consciousness that our desire for our life and for our self has to be stronger than our lack.

Yet, we cannot just transform lack of the other into desire for our self. These two languages do not have the same roots nor do they have the same logic. The first is done, the second is to do; the first obeys laws of the other; the second obeys laws of life; the first is based on death drives; the second is based on structuring the instinct of life.

A Language of Desire

For this change to happen, we need a new language. “A new world” is possible only if it is composed of beings who constructed a new language that makes them the subjects of their own lifetime and not objects of the other. Thus, consciousness of wanting to leave the supremacy of the Unconscious on every one’s life is essential. Indeed, we have to become conscious that the enemy is a language, inside of us, the one we come from, on which we depend, and leading us toward being objects of others instead of the subjects of ourselves. This logic, this language of our Unconscious is responsible for our lack and suffering, and for the power held by our death drives, violence and hate.

To rule out the power of this unconscious inhumanity—absolute, sexual, already done, and without movement or time—we need to build a conscious, relative and gendered humanity, based on real space time and relativity. The possibility of a new life, a new reality, a new era lies in the formation of a new subject, who will be subject and object at the same time, master and slave within the same body, and who will obey the laws of life. This way of thinking and speaking is out of *jouissance*, because out of power struggle and based on relation instead, inside a same body: our self. The interference in these conditions is the action made by “I” for “me.”

From Pre-Determination to Determination

This is specifically why I created the School of Aliveness and Adulthood (1994), which proposes to make the passage from a transmitted language—this of our Unconscious—to a language for us to construct that will lead us toward a consciousness made alive. It is the passage from parental identity to an identity *made* adult; the passage from a symbolic, sexual pre-determination to a real, gendered determination.

This means we have to stop obeying the laws of the other and to start obeying the laws of life. This involves a change in how we relate to space-time: energy is movement, and its reality is relative space-time, not symbolic, absolute space-time. The past is dead; today is to do. We have to live today, not yesterday.

We were born to live, not to die

To become alive is to *want* to construct a language that goes with time and to structure a strong instinct for life. This is how we will feel happier with our way of functioning, and our mind. For this to happen, we need to give priority to our real experiences, to how we do and not how we think. This means substituting *jouissance* with pleasure. Pleasure is movement, activity; it relates to our body and sensations. Pleasure is real and connected to doing on time. It is the positive of *jouissance*.

To make our instinct for life win is not natural; it requires work. It is a constant battle between death drives and a real, adult desire to succeed this challenge, which is essential for every human being. We have to earn our humanity, and to refuse values of violence, lack and hate.

All regressions are the expression of a refusal to separate from the other. Fusion and passion are natural, but love and separation have to be learnt. This is a work we need to do, and it is the precondition for our minds to evolve and change. Obeying the laws of the other forced us to be dependent and to always position ourselves against the other. But no reaction can be as valuable as an action. We make an action for ourselves; we react *against* another.

A TRANSFORMATION TOWARD A NEW WORLD? – Yes It's Possible!

Transforming this world will mean leaving behind the supremacy of absolute ideas of perfection, and entering a world that is relative but real and worth living. A new world is only possible if everyone everywhere goes through a deep transformation, fighting the authoritarianism of the Unconscious' deadly language and learning a new language, based on a new memory of what and how we do every day, and not on past time and how we think.

“I am what I make of myself”

This means putting real experiences, not thoughts, at the heart of our life: doing first, thinking after. This is the logic of experience, which teaches us when we succeed and when we fail, and how to achieve a mental structure of aliveness. This is how we will become adult and responsible—not guilty—human beings. The following sequence of aliveness has to be achieved through this new language: Real desire to live our life → doing in real time → coherence between our actions and our thoughts → making peace → making love.

From Parental to Adult Transmission

For this to happen, we need to pass from a parental transmission based on power struggle with the other to an adult transmission made by ourselves. A new world will be composed of new real subjects separated from their symbolic alienation to the other and from their impossibility to get out of lack, suffering, violence, and hate. In this adult world, real lifetime will take the power over symbolic time. This means we could truly desire our life and succeed it without wasting energy on lack, using freed energy instead, ready for action.

This fundamental change requires that we work each day of our life on loving our lifetime better. Real time is not an enemy; it is a gift of life that gives us the opportunity and the responsibility to be proud of our life, having structured our instinct of life and won over our death drives. In a new world, we could see the end of symbolic and sexual beings and the beginning of new identities of real and gendered men and women, making real children well transmitted and ready to build their lives freely.

Real life and energy will come when the man of the answer will become the man of the question. It will mean that judgment—the essential function of destruction and hate—will be destroyed, but no man will be killed by it.

Thank you.

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