The Denial of Justice and the Loss of the Subject

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Obstructed Representation

On Thursday, April 5, 2001, Mr. Oumar Khanbiev, the Minister of Health of the Chechen government, tried to make a statement before the United Nations Commission set up to investigate human rights in his country. A nongovernmental organization, the Transnational Radical Party, had given him five minutes of its own speaking time. Leaving aside all questions of politics and sovereignty, Khanbiev testified only to his experience as a doctor during the Russian siege and bombardment of Grozny before the withdrawal of the Chechen resistance from that town. Arrested after working in a hospital to treat seventy-six people injured in a bombing at a place called Alkhan-Kala, he spent three weeks "in the hell of a filtration camp," of which he said, "It is difficult for me to speak about this. I will limit myself to only say that I have spent the most difficult hours of my life there." Khanbiev later went into hiding for eight months in a mountain village and subsequently fell sick because of the tortures he had endured. Speaking to the Commission, he estimated that over 20,000 people had disappeared in his country and that almost the same number was then imprisoned. He continued, "87,000 were killed, 200,000 injured, more than 30 percent of the population has been ousted from their homes, 90 percent of the hospitals have been destroyed. Nearly every type of weapon has been used in this war — fragmentation bombs and hidden mines included."[1]

Khanbiev could not make a more detailed statement: he was unable to use the full five minutes allotted to him. The Russian delegation interrupted him four times for procedural reasons and finally forced the session's chair to silence him. Khanbiev could neither describe the condition of his country's people nor present his proposal for a United Nations resolution on their behalf. It was probably for reasons of sovereignty that the chair retreated before the pressure from the Russians; a democratically installed commission denied the rights of aman trying to speak on behalf of his people, and who had cared for them — and even for Russian soldiers — as a doctor. The muzzling of an opposition politician may be everyday in authoritarian regimes, but is upsetting in an organization set up to establish peace.

The foreclosure of Khanbiev's speech shows that the distance between authoritarian regimes and institutions guaranteed by the "free world" is not as great as it seems. We have to admit to a certain continuity between brutal power politics and international arbitration. Perhaps the interesting paradigm of our time has to do not with concepts of the "rupture" and "cut" between political discourses but with those of "repetition" and "eternal return of the same."

Politics of the Subject

Does psychoanalysis have any political relevance today? In answering this question, psychoanalysts have two basic attitudes. There are those who say that psychoanalysis should lead politics — but this is wishful thinking. Others, more modest, discuss the many political metaphors associated with Freud's concept of the unconscious. Analysts fight against the repression of desire. They also remember a passage Freud found in Virgil's *Aeneid*, and made the motto for his book *The Interpretation of Dreams*: "If I cannot bend the higher powers, I will move the lower ones," says Juno, the wife of Jove. Authentic psychoanalysis is indeed closer to hell than to heaven.

Given all the misery in the world, some consider psychoanalysis a frivolous attempt to look after the neurotics and psychotics of the Western middle class. But psychoanalysis need not be defended against this reproach; its defense of the subject can be seen as acting politically, constituting an "answer to the real." The notion of the subject implies responsibility. "The subject is responsible," says Jacques Lacan.[2]

What does this mean? Let us say that the subject emerges where you don't expect it to. To illustrate this effect of surprise, let me recall a patient who dreamed that she had killed someone. Her family's search for the killer was paralyzing their lives, so she decided to admit that she was the murderess, announcing "*C'est moi la meurtrière*" (The murderess is me). Recounting the dream, the patient was astonished that she had used in her confession not the French noun *assassin* but *meurtrière*, which means not only a woman who kills someone but the loopholelike window from which the defenders of a fortress shoot without revealing themselves to their enemies. This association produced the subject of the signifier in question. But what is the real dimension of her production?

The patient compared blind shooting from a loophole with her own speech: she uses speech to shoot the other. Also, on the one hand her speech is like the wall of a fortress, behind which she can hide herself and shoot. The other will not have time to shoot back. On the other hand she herself is the loophole, a hole in the wall of language: her speech is submitted to her oral drive, which is the real. The dream shows the articulation between the subject and her real self, the drive included in her symptom, her pathologically aggressive use of speech. The subject is produced by the contingent play of the signifier (the homonym *meurtrière*), but this contingency is linked to the real dimension of the subject's enjoyment (*jouissance*). Through her dream she became aware of her violent use of speech.

Many psychoanalytic patients may speak in their sessions of their unconscious feelings of guilt, as this young woman did, but every day we also see patients who are or have been mistreated by others. They suffer from real injustice. Let me mention the case of a woman, now fifty, who could never overcome what I would call her syndrome of powerless witness. Some forty years ago she had been unable to help her little sister, who suffered from a malformation of the heart that had led to a severe hypotrophy of the lungs. The problem could not be treated surgically at the time, and the two girls' brother had already succumbed to the same illness. When my patient was twelve years old, her father was killed in a car crash. A few months later her mother met another man, who was not tolerant of her sick little sister's crises of breath, and the girl, already terminally ill, was sent away, spending her last days living with foster parents. Having learned that her little sister was quite aware of being abandoned, my patient still feels very guilty about her own weakness. Having never found the courage to protest the brutal removal of her sick sister from her house, she feels paralyzed whenever she has to make a family decision. Surely in part as a result, her own son is a completely impractical young man, unable to separate from her.

Detectors and Attractors of Injustice

Injustice being one of the most important reasons for writing, we have a lot to learn from poets about the relationship between literature and injustice. Jean Genet wrote, "Writing is left to you when you are driven away from your given speech."[3] Melancholic poets are especially sharp detectors and attractors of injustice; their perceptions of the world being less veiled by illusion than neurotic perception is, they see what is wrong with the other. The beauty of language does not impress them. They pay a high price for their clairvoyance.

During the last two years before the death of the Romantic author Heinrich von Kleist (he engaged in a suicide pact with a lady friend), he wrote a series of works (drama, prose, essays) denouncing the abuse of power and deconstructing the devices of rhetoric. In *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* (Prince Friedrich of Homburg), completed in 1811, a powerful elector (a prince of the Holy Roman Empire) has pronounced a death sentence against the play's eponymous hero. When the prince of Homburg requests a pardon, the elector gives him a choice: if he really believes that his condemnation is wrong, he will be pardoned. But this is the very proposal that he cannot accept. Why? Because he doesn't see how anyone can believe that he really had a good reason to find the death sentence unjust — everyone will say that he only wanted to save his own life.

Kleist was concerned by the bad object at the heart of the death drive, here incarnated by the elector. We find other incarnations of this object in his stories "Das Erdbeben in Chili" (The Earthquake in Chili) and "Der Findling" (The Foundling). In the latter, a father loses his son in an epidemic. As the man is leaving the town in which his son has died, another boy, threatened by the epidemic, asks to be taken with him in his coach. The father adopts this child, a substitute for his lost son. But the boy, grown up, becomes the cause of his and his family's ruin.

Kleist fought a merciless fight against the appearances of rhetoric and of language. In "Letter from a Poet to Another One"[4] he expresses the desire to get rid of such charming devices as iambuses, rhymes, and assonances; he wants to find a real form that would transmit his thought directly. His reflections on language may seem remote from our problems, but are not. Kleist destroys the old notion that clear ideas always find clear expression. This prejudice notoriously disadvantages those who have no rhetorical faculties, or who are intimidated when they have to speak in public, before a law court, say, or in an interrogation. "If an idea is expressed inarticulately you should not conclude that the idea had been thought of inarticulately; it would more likely be that the most confusedly expressed ideas are thought of most clearly," writes Kleist.[5] Shy people are often silent in conversation, and then, if they get excited about some issue at a certain point and do begin to speak, they may come out with something incomprehensible. Yet they must have had clear, pertinent thoughts. This argument is precious for everyone seeking the truth in the discourse of the other.

Poetry is often considered esoteric, an expression of the inner self, disconnected from everyday life, let alone politics. The idea of "engaged poetry" derives from the prejudice that this supposedly esoteric quality of poetry excludes what is real. Recent history shows, however, that a poet can be a keener detector of political truth than many a social theoretician.

Durs Grünbein is one of the rare German poets who both comes from eastern Germany and never collaborated with the state security police (the Stasi) of the old German Democratic Republic. He owes this abstention more to his poetic consciousness than to lack of opportunity; although he was still in his twenties when the Berlin Wall fell — he was born in 1962 — there were East Germans who became police agents at the age of seventeen. Grünbein's first collection of poems, published in 1988, is a kind of "*tableau berlinois*" describing the condition of life in the East, a life weighed down by heavy bureaucratic machinery.[6] In trying to describe how people were dispossessed of their lives, how their bodies lost their contours, how they were deprived of their futures, he depicted the crepuscular moment of the Soviet system. His poems have been compared with the films of Charlie Chaplin, which show the comic condition of men at the height of the machine era. "Truth is naked to the bones" in Grünbein's poetry, writes the French critic Nicole Gabriel, who has explored the work's political dimensions.[7] Its language reveals what was really going on when the Berlin Wall fell, and with it the pompous rhetoric of the "workers' paradise."

What Grünbein teaches us is rather surprising. Instead of gratifying us with a hymn to the freedom attained with the dissolution of the Soviet empire, he describes an "eternal return of the same": an empire tumbled but people weren't set free. Instead they were recaptured by another empire, with its own violence and bureaucracy. The poet had understood his era: he had stood at the right place at the right time, at the frontier between two antagonistic political systems. Gabriel compares him to one of the dogs left behind by the border guards, their masters, when the wall fell. He was there when this terrible border was erased, awake enough to feel this truth himself: empires fall, and replace each other, without things really changing for the people. At these moments, in fact, the subject can know how lonely he or she is.

The poet Paul Celan lost his parents in the Holocaust. The Germans killed them both in 1942. His poetry is influenced by his loss, and by the destruction of the European Jews, but despite the tragedy to which it attests, his work was badly treated: written in a language that is hard to understand, it made many of his critics aggressive. In a sense, Celan's poems provoked these critics to say what they really thought of him, his writings, and his origins.

To explain Celan's poetry, to decipher it, the French philologist Jean Bollack has analyzed scholarly critiques of it. Bollack shows how close Celan is to the historical events that affected him, and also how far off the mark many critics are in their interpretations of him.[8] Instead of recognizing the precision of Celan's references, they bury them under vague theories, understanding the poems as protests against the loneliness and isolation of the modern subject.[9] Other critics, writing under the influence of Martin Heidegger, explain the extermination of the Jews as an effect of the Germans' discomfort with the social dominance of technology. The concentration camps, these theoreticians say, were the ultimate expression of modern scientific civilization, which had lost some quality of *life*. (These critics forget that *life* was a master signifier of Nazi ideology.) Celan's poetry has in turn been read as the "objective reflection of a social dissolution. . . as the reproductive process of atrophy,"[10] his language showing the wounds inflicted by technology. Claiming that his language was not clear enough, critics have attributed Celan's hermetic writing to the world of machines, not to what happened between 1933 and 1945.

The most offensive thesis on Celan, discussed by Bollack in the fourth chapter of his book, emerged on the poet's suicide, which has been interpreted as the price he paid for the difficulty and incomprehensibility of his writings.[11] His work was not readable enough, not "in perfection," and this was what led him to jump into the River Seine. He was too ambitious, some of his critics say, he could not cope with his own narcissistic ambition, so he had to be punished for his hubris, his presumptuousness, and his daring. Don't old anti-Semitic notions about the arrogant, esoteric Jew echo in this criticism? The real pain Celan suffered was not enough for these critics. They had to add insult to injury.

The Joke as a Message of Desire

Let us now go back for a moment to the realm of psychoanalysis. In his book Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious, Freud developed the thesis that jokes produce pleasure by allowing us to satisfy tendencies otherwise prohibited by social conventions or reasonable thinking. Some people have a leaning to attack others verbally; jokes let them satisfy this appetite without social proscription. The pleasure of harmless jokes often lies in homophonic plays with words; Freud discovered that the same language mechanisms structure a number of different symptoms. In that jokes defend pleasure against critical judgment from our conscious thoughts, the joke becomes a "factor of psychic power."[12]

For Lacan, the joke is a device we use to express our desire. Such devices are essential, for ordinary language does not permit adequate expression of desire; in ordinary language we can only demand, and the communication of our desire fails — we make more or less witty slips of the tongue. By making a joke, however, we render this failure acceptable for purposes of communication. Language recognizes and accepts the new signifiers created in the joke, even if the signifier is not part of its code. So, like a Trojan horse, the joke introduces desire into language, or into the Other, as Lacan would say.

So all seems well with the theory of the unconscious in the Freudian kingdom. Unconscious formations — dream, joke, lapse, symptom — show paths to the unconscious. The joke offers a remedy for the incommunicability of desire. The psychoanalyst need only imitate the joke to interpret the patient's verbal forms. But the joke also has a political dimension: it lets one tell an unpleasant truth to a strong and powerful other. For those who cannot directly say what they want, it really is a "factor of psychic power."

Unfortunately that success story had its limits. The joke recalls the generous offer that brought Khanbiev before the UN Commission. Situations exist in which the joke never works.

Bad News

Probably Franz Kafka had read Freud's book on the joke. On the night of September 22, 1912, he wrote a story called "The Judgment," all in one sitting.[13] In a letter to his beloved Felice Bauer a few months later, he says of this story, "it is a little wild and senseless and if it had not an inner truth (that which one can never establish, but which every reader has to admit or to deny) it would be nothing."[14] "A real birth covered with filth and slime" — this is how Kafka would refer to the writing of the story in his diaries.[15] In his love letter this becomes a "doubtful birth," but in the diaries he refers to the story's "doubtlessness."[16] What there is no doubt of is that he had Freud in mind during the writing — he says so in another diary entry, written the morning after that memorable night.

But why should we speak of it here? Why is it true? It is a story in which, because of a radical injustice, it is impossible for a subject to speak the truth. Kafka's writing, his way out, is his answer to this impossibility.

The story gives us bad news: some sixty years before Jacques Derrida, Kafka had understood that not every letter, however important it may be, always reaches its receiver. In the 1970s, in a paper on black holes, Stephen Hawking wrote a response to Einstein's famous aphorism, "God does not play with dice." "Not only does God play with dice," Hawking remarked, "he throws them where nobody would find them."

"The Judgment" is the strange story of a father who condemns his own son to death. There is an uncanny third person in the text, who precedes the father: it is a friend of the protagonist who lives far away, in St. Petersburg. Although Kafka's work is well-known, it may be useful to recount what happens in the story.

A Reading of "The Judgment"

On a Sunday morning in spring, the young businessman Georg Bendemann is sitting in his house, on the bank of a river, and writing a letter to an old friend who is now living abroad. This friend has

left his country to work in St. Petersburg, but he has failed in life and now lives alone, an embittered bachelor. He is "a big child," Georg thinks. Should he encourage his friend to return home? It would be humiliating for him to come back a poor man.

The situation makes it impossible to send the real news from home, the things that have changed in Georg's own life: since his mother's death, his aging father has kept in the background of the family business, leaving it to Georg, who is doing quite well now — even better than when his father ran the business, which has grown unexpectedly. Georg would also prefer not to reveal his engagement, to a Fräulein Frieda Brandenfeld, a girl from a well-to-do family. But Frieda wants him to invite his friend to their wedding, so Georg has no choice: he announces his marriage and invites his friend.

This is the first time Georg hasn't filled up a letter to his friend with insignificant and indifferent social events to fill up space. The letter in his pocket, he enters his father's room, when his troubles begin: seeing his father sitting in the dark, he thinks, "My father is still a giant of a man!" The remark corroborates Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's interpretation of the father in Kafka as a comic aggrandizement of the oedipal father.[17] Georg tells his father, "I really only wanted to tell you ... that I am now sending the news of my engagement to St. Petersburg." He lifts the letter out of his pocket and lets it drop back. Let me dwell on the turmoil this letter creates. Before it, Georg has had no significant correspondence. But this letter announces that he wants to marry Fräulein Brandenfeld. Now, before sending the announcement to his friend, he also tells his father of his intention. This second announcement has a devastating effect, and the rest of the story is full of an angry dialogue between Georg and his father.[18] Suffice it to say here that the father has three contradictory positions regarding the friend in St. Petersburg.

In the beginning, he exhorts his son to tell him the truth: "I beg you Georg, don't deceive me. It's a trivial affair, it's hardly worth mentioning, so don't deceive me. Do you really have this friend in St. Petersburg?" Interpreting this *questioning* of his friend's existence as a sign of his father's advanced age and fatigue, Georg imagines domestic changes that would give him a better life. But now the father *denies* the friend's existence: "You have no friend in St. Petersburg. You have always been a leg-puller and you haven't even shrunk from pulling *my* leg. How could you have a friend out there! I can't believe it." Georg reminds the old man that he has already met the friend at their home. Guiding him to the bed, Georg lays a cover over him, which the father finds odd: there is a metonymic link between "to cover up" and to bury, but the father isn't ready to die. Now he comes up with a third statement, in which he claims to *know* Georg's friend: "Of course I know your friend. He would have been a son after my own heart. That's why you've been playing him false all these years. Why else? Do you think I haven't been sorry for him?"

From this point onward the old man becomes a "nightmare vision," a *Schreckbild*, and now we come to what Slavoj Žižek calls "the knowledge about the father's obscenity."[19] Watching this "image of horror," Georg yet has another vision: his friend in Russia "whom his father suddenly knew too well, touched his imagination as never before." He hallucinates seeing his friend: "Among the wreckage of his showcases, the slashed remnants of his wares, the falling gas brackets, he was just standing up. Why did he have to go so far away!" Becoming more and more offensive, the father insults Georg's fiancée. He asserts that he is the representative of the friend "on the spot." This statement upsets Georg so terribly that he cries out, "You comedian!"

A subtle statement indeed! The father's inconsistency is indeed comical, but the cry of "You comedian!" also expresses Georg's wish: he wants his father to be only joking, rather than constituting the "nightmare vision" that he has actually seen. The exclamation is the first of four attempts at wordplay and jokes in which Georg tries to minimize his father's power, which has crossed all limits.

But his rhetoric is poor. When the father explains that he is strong because he is not alone, for example — "All by myself I might have had to give way, but your mother has given me so much of her strength that I have established a fine connection with your friend and I have your customers here in my pocket!" — Georg says to himself, "He has pockets even in his shirt ... and believed that with this remark he could make him an impossible figure before all the world. Only for a moment did he think so, for he kept on forgetting everything." After a last desperate attempt to make fun of his father, Georg comes to feel that "in his very mouth the words turned into deadly earnest." He has tried to use jokes to defend himself, but they have rebounded off the armor of the father's inconsistency, his link with Georg's dead mother, and the specter of Georg's friend. In the end the father condemns his son, and the death sentence is strangely linked with a judgment on the existence of his friend, almost as though Georg had denied it: "So now you know what else there was in the world besides yourself, till now you've known only about yourself. An innocent child, yes, but still more truly have you been a devilish human being! And therefore take note: I sentence you now to death by drowning!" Georg executes this sentence on him-- self, rushing out of his father's room and drowning in the river, all the while calling out softly, "Dear parents, I have always loved you."

It is worth mentioning that Kafka, in a letter to Max Brod, speaks of "these devilish powers" that are already there at the doorstep.[20] It is as if Georg had been driven to identify himself with these devils. The Lacanian father metaphor is a device for creation; "The Judgment" involves the opposite, the father as an agent of destruction. The story is what we might call an "antijoke," and also an "antimyth": Kafka has not told a tale of a hero overcoming his monstrous father through his wit, but has described in detail how the hero's jokes fail, and how he has to return to the water, from which, in myth, so many heroes have come.

"The Judgment" is a kind of slapstick comedy about a son unable to make a good enough joke to halt the aggression of his almighty father. In difference to Deleuze and Guattari, I don't see the father in Kafka as just a comic exaggeration of Oedipus; the comic dimension in Kafka's writing is undeniable, but his texts are always layered. The comic does not exclude the serious. To understand this, let us return to Freud.

When Freud Answers Kafka

In 1915, when Freud wrote "Mourning and Melancholia,"[21] he had not read Kafka, but he seems to have understood part of Kafka's message in "The Judgment." At the heart of Freud's article is an attempt to answer this question: why do melancholics so often attempt suicide? His discussion relies on two concepts still new at the time: *narcissism* and *sadistic drive*, a dangerous mixture in combination. The problem of the melancholic's *passage à l'acte* confronts Freud with serious questions about identity. Are you really killing yourself when you commit suicide? Is the agent of suicide really the person who has been killed? Freud suspects that nothing is less certain than this coidentity between the agent and the victim. He is quite clear in his belief that the neurotic who threatens suicide, or announces the intention of suicide, actually wants to kill another person within. To solve the problem of the agent, Freud argues that melancholics have sadistic, aggressive emotions against other people, but turn these onto themselves.

On the other hand, there is a strange twist in narcissism that pushes melancholics into a deadly contradiction: they easily lose their love object, but remain identified with it. In this "narcissistic identification," as Freud called it, the object is introjected by the subject. The subject is the best place to lose and keep the object at the same time. When the shadow of the object has fallen on the subject, the subject cannot find it anymore, but even if the object is dead, it is not really lost — on the con-

trary, what really happens is a "loss of the subject" (*Ichverlust*). The object now occupies the place of the subject, and becomes very strong. Not only does it subjugate the subject, it also subjugates all of the subject's social relationships. In fact the object that has been incorporated by narcissistic identification will go on to crush the subject completely.

Reading Freud's paper carefully, one finds that he distinguishes between three "persons": the subject (*Ich*), the object (*der andere*), and the other (*die andere Person*). The subject has indeed become poor, for the object has subjugated his other, the person who constitutes his alterity. This new Freudian triangle involves the same situation we find in "The Judgment," where Georg is the subject, his friend is his other, and the father is an object without limits. In this sense Freud has replied to Kafka without having read his story. He has supplied a clinical explanation for what the novelist imagined in Prague.

Because the father does not shrink from any contradiction, he mocks the real, which is, according to Lacan, the only category in which inconsistent events become possible. He owes his strength to others: to Georg's dead mother, and to the mysterious friend with whom he pretends to have established a "magnificent alliance." Commenting on the story in his diaries, Kafka remarks that the son is alone and "has nothing." As in Freud's explanation of melancholy, where the object crushes the subject, this father annihilates his son.

I do not claim here to be diagnosing Kafka himself, who was not a melancholic. His story is a kind of desublimating of the "factor of psychic power" that Freud called the joke. Kafka tells a story in which this factor fails, creating no social link: the son who incarnates the subject stays alone. Kafka is describing the process in which subjects lose all their symbolic supports. At the same time, though, the author transforms this failure into a comedy or a "grotesquerie." In Kafka's story, terror excludes wit but not humor.

The Attacked Subject

In the year 2000, Jean Hatzfeld, a reporter with the French newspaper *Libération*, published a series of narratives collected from survivors of the genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994. Hatzfeld went to Rwanda several times, and was astonished by the public invisibility of the genocide's survivors. Their own muteness also stupefied him: "The silence and the isolation of the survivors in the hills are disturbing."[22] This silence reminded Hatzfeld of the long period after World War II before the survivors of the Nazi concentration camps could be heard or read. A great deal was written on the Holocaust during this period, of course, but the essential narratives of the survivors themselves took a while to emerge.

Despite the enigmatic silence of the Rwandan survivors, Hatzfeld was able to publish fourteen testimonies, most of them from Tutsis. The intensity of these narratives shows that they came from gifted people. At the same time, they reflect the traumas that the genocide had inflicted on these subjects. Jean-Baptiste Munyankore, a sixty-year-old teacher, suffers from nightmares: "During the night I'll go through an existence that is too crowded, crowded with people from my family, who speak with each other as people who are being killed, and who ignore me and don't look at me anymore. During the day I suffer the pain of another loneliness."[23] Christine Nyiransabimana, a twenty-two-year-old planter, always has the same dream: she flees in the direction of the Congo but has to cross a field of cadavers that never ends.[24] Janvier Munyaneza, a fourteenyear- old shepherd, tells us that he could not see the faces of the killers who annihilated his family, for they passed him one behind the other, in lines, doing their '`work" while he hid in the swamp. Nor does he know their names,

but he does remember everything they did; he simply cannot either imagine or recognize their faces. It frightens him that he has no names or images of them. How can you hate an anonymous gang of killers? So Munyaneza's hatred remains an affect without representation.[25]

Édith Uwanyiligira, a thirty-four-year-old teacher who lost her parents and her husband, is in extreme distress because she doesn't know how her husband died or where he is buried. The couple had been in a refugee camp together, but one day *interahamwe* — the genocide's agents — came and took the men away. Uwanyiligira presents us with a strange paradox. On the one hand she says she has found some consolation in a new relationship with God. On the other she testifies to the isolation and loneliness of the survivors: "Everyone bears his pain in his own corner as if he were the only survivor, without being concerned by the fact that this pain is identical to all."[26] Uwanyiligira no longer feels the need to talk with other survivors about the genocide. She even says that she has pardoned the perpetrators: "If I don't pardon them it is I who will suffer." In the language of psychoanalysis we would say that Uwanyiligira's relation with God is a symptom she has created for herself in order to endure her loss. But this symptom carries a high price: she is even more isolated than the others are.

At the end of his long story, Innocent Rwililiza, a thirty-eight-year-old teacher, remarks, "The survivor has a tendency to disbelieve that he is really alive, which means that he is still who he was before, and in a certain way he lives a little from that."[27] These witnesses tell us that they were injured at the very foundation of their subjective lives.

Epilogue

Every kind of state terrorism is accompanied by a reinforcement of ideological conformity. In an appeal to citizens' egos, an imaginary unity is invoked through which they can be organized and integrated in a mass. Even. after a democratic regime is reestablished, this process forestalls justice and impedes the perception of truth. Even now, 65 percent of Serbs do not believe that non-Serbs were killed in their prison camps in Bosnia.

Such denials of justice and truth are in no way confined to the Serbs; they are very common. Justice and truth are problems that can only be handled when people are not completely identified with the reigning ideology, when they are not only egos but also subjects. Subjects are always divided between a part of them that can be represented through language (with the help of words, names, titles, ideals) and a part that stays outside such representations. This division is dangerous for conformist ideologies, because it means that there is a part of the subject that will never obey the terrorizing commands of power. Because of this resistance, the forces of terror attack their opponents not only in their bodies but also in their subjective life. Radical denials of justice always aim at a loss of the subject. There is a strong relationship between an oppressed minority and the silent part of the divided subject; both are smaller parts of a larger whole, but real acts of opposition against inhumanity always come from people who are terribly alone. And the effects of these acts are often so strong that they permit a whole society to liberate itself from subjugation.

There remains a more current reason to compare the political subject with the subject of psychoanalysis. The contemporary psychoanalytic clinic has to cope with the following difficulty: how is it possible to act with speech on the part of the subject that is not represented within the framework of language, to touch with words the unspeakable *jouissance* enclosed in the symptom? The politics of human rights are confronted with a complementary problem: today, nearly all important events are covered by the media. Very few places on earth stay out of their view. But this universal representa-

tion and imaging of the cruelest crimes, which now must be committed before the eyes of the whole world, are by no means followed up by the political decisions that would stop these crimes. Six years ago, 7,000 people were killed in Srebrenica, and 30,000 more were deported, within ten days, under the world's very nose. These people had been abandoned by a NATO army; the responsibility for this abandonment has still not been established. Meanwhile, after Yolanda Mukagasana lost her children during the Rwandan genocide she testified before a French parliamentary commission established to inquire into the role of France in that disaster. She says, "They accepted me as a witness, but behind closed doors, and my testimony does not figure in the final report."[28] Here the failure and symptom are on the side of those who see and know, not on the side of a secret place, hidden or concealed from the other.

In trials judging crimes of genocide and human-rights offenses, many of the accused deny their responsibility with the defense that they were acting under military or political command. They present themselves as ordinary men who were only following orders, instruments without their own will in a murderous chain. Yet it is this very argument that distinguishes the perpetrators of such crimes from subjects. Subjects are alienated, deported by language; they are nomads pushed around by signifiers, playthings of words. This is their *contingent* part. Subjects can be compared to immigrants who cannot choose the country of their destination. They simply have to go somewhere. But once they are on the road, they must use ruses to plot their journey, as Ulysses did. This is the subjects' *necessary* part. They have to recognize the demands of their drive and search for its satisfaction without getting overwhelmed by it. So they cannot trust only in the power of language — they have to get out of their alienation and separate themselves from the signifier that commanded them. In this respect the subject is the opposite of those perpetrators who flee their responsibility.

Franz Kaltenbeck. The Denial of Justice and The Loss of the Subject. In: Okwui Enwezor, Carlos Basualdo, Ute Meta Bauer, Susanne Ghez, Sarat Maharaj, Mark Nash, Octavio Zaya (ed.): Experiments with the Truth. Documenta11_Platform2. Hatje Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern-Ruit. 2002, pp. 261-275.

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18 I have analyzed this dialogue elsewhere. See Franz Kaltenbeck, "Quand Freud répond à Kafka," in Dits et contre-faits: Séminaire sur la transmission de l'expérience psychanalytique (Paris: Collège International de Philosophie, April 27, 2001). The papers of this conference are available at dire-subscribe@egroups.

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