

## How Do We Recognize Structuralism?<sup>1</sup>

Not long ago we used to ask: What is existentialism? Now we ask: What is structuralism? These questions are of keen interest, provided they are timely and have some bearing on work actually in progress. *This is 1967*. Thus we cannot invoke the unfinished character of such work to avoid a reply, for it is that character alone which gives the question its significance. So, the question *What is structuralism?* must undergo certain transformations. In the first place, *who* is a structuralist? In the current climate, rightly or wrongly, it is customary to name names [*designer*], to provide 'samples' [*echantillonner*]: a linguist like Roman Jakobson; a sociologist like Claude Levi-Strauss; a psychoanalyst like Jacques Lacan; a philosopher like Michel Foucault, renewing epistemology; a Marxist philosopher like Louis Althusser, once again taking up the problem of the interpretation of Marxism; a literary critic like Roland Barthes; writers like those from *Tel Quel*... Of these, some do not reject the word "structuralism," and use "structure," "structural." Others prefer the Saussurean term "system." These are all very different kinds of thinkers, and from different generations, and some have exercised a real influence on their contemporaries. But more import is the extreme diversity of the domains they explore. Each of them discovers problems, methods, solutions that are analogically related, as if sharing in a free atmosphere or spirit of the time, but one that distributes itself into singular creations and discoveries in each of these domains.—*Ism* words, in this sense, are perfectly justified.

There is good reason to ascribe the origin of structuralism to linguistics: not only Saussure, but the Moscow and Prague schools. And if structuralism then migrates to other domains, this occurs without it being a question of analogy, nor merely in order to establish methods "equivalent" to those that first succeeded for the analysis of language. In fact, language is the only thing that can properly be said to have structure, be it an esoteric or even non-verbal lan-

guage. There is a structure of the unconscious only to the extent that the unconscious speaks and is language. There is a structure of bodies only to the extent that bodies are supposed to speak with a language which is one of the symptoms. Even things possess a structure only in so far as they maintain a silent discourse, which is the language of signs. So the question *What is structuralism?* is further transformed—it is better to ask: What do we recognize in those that we call structuralists? And what do they themselves recognize?—since one does not recognize people, in a visible manner, except by the invisible and imperceptible things they themselves recognize in their own way. How do the structuralists go about recognizing a language in something, the language proper to a domain? What do they discover in this domain? We thus propose only to discern certain formal criteria of recognition, the simplest ones, by invoking in each case the example of cited authors, whatever the diversity of their works and projects.

### **I. First Criterion: The Symbolic**

We are used to, almost conditioned to a certain distinction or correlation between the real and the imaginary. All of our thought maintains a dialectical play between these two notions. Even when classical philosophy speaks of pure intelligence or understanding, it is still a matter of a faculty defined by its aptitude to grasp the depths of the real (*le réel en son fond*), the real "in truth," the real as such, in opposition to, but also in relation to the power of imagination. Let us cite some creative movements that are quite different: Romanticism, Symbolism, Surrealism... In doing so, we invoke at once the transcendent point where the real and the imaginary interpenetrate and unite, and their sharp border, like the cutting edge of their difference. In any case, we get no farther than the opposition and complementarity of the imaginary and the real—at least in the traditional interpretation of Romanticism, Symbolism, etc. Even Freudianism is interpreted from the perspective of two principles: the reality principle with its power to disappoint, the pleasure principle with its hallucinatory power of satisfaction. With all the more reason, methods like those of Jung and Bachelard are wholly inscribed within the real and the imaginary, within the frame of their complex relations, transcendent unity and liminary tension, fusion and cutting edge.

The first criterion of structuralism, however, is the discovery and recognition of a third order, a third regime: that of the symbolic. The refusal to confuse the symbolic with the imaginary, as much as with the real, constitutes the first dimension of structuralism. In this case again, everything began with linguistics: beyond the word in its reality and its resonant parts, beyond images and concepts associated with words, the structuralist linguist discovers an element of quite another nature, a structural object. And perhaps it is in this

symbolic element that the novelists of *Tel Quel* wish to locate themselves, in order to renew the resonant realities as well as the associated narratives. Beyond the history of men, and the history of ideas, Michel Foucault discovers a deeper, subterranean ground that forms the object of what he calls the archaeology of thought. Behind real men and their real relations, behind ideologies and their imaginary relations, Louis Althusser discovers a deeper domain as object of science and of philosophy.

We already had many fathers in psychoanalysis: first of all, a real father, but also father-images. And all our dramas occurred in the strained relations of the real and the imaginary. Jacques Lacan discovers a third, more fundamental father, a symbolic father or Name-of-the-Father. Not just the real and the imaginary, but their relations, and the disturbances of these relations, must be thought as the limit of a process in which they constitute themselves in relation to the symbolic. In Lacan's work, in the work of other structuralists as well, the symbolic as element of the structure constitutes the principle of a genesis: structure is incarnated in realities and images according to determinable series. Moreover, the structure constitutes series by incarnating itself, but is not derived from them since it is deeper, being the substratum both for the strata of the real and for the heights [*dels*] of imagination. Conversely, catastrophes that are proper to the symbolic structural order take into account the apparent disturbances of the real and the imaginary: thus, in the case of *The Wolf Man* as Lacan interprets it, the theme of castration reappears in the real since it remains non-symbolized ("foreclosure"), in the hallucinatory form of the cut finger.<sup>2</sup>

We can enumerate the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic: 1, 2, 3. But perhaps these numerals have as much an ordinal as a cardinal value. For the real in itself is not separable from a certain ideal of unification or of totalization: the real tends towards one, it is one in its "truth." As soon as we see two in "one," as soon as we make doubles [*de'doublons*], the imaginary appears in person, even if it is in the real that its action is carried out. For example, the real father is one, or wants to be according to his law; but the image of the father is always double in itself, cleaved according to a law of the dual or duel. It is projected onto two persons at least, one assuming the role of the play-father, the father-buffoon, and the other, the role of the working and ideal father: like the Prince of Wales in Shakespeare, who passes from one father image to the other, from Falstaff to the Crown. The imaginary is defined by games of mirroring, of duplication, of reversed identification and projection, always in the mode of the double.<sup>5</sup> But perhaps, in turn, the symbolic is three, and not merely the third beyond the real and the imaginary. There is always a third to be sought in the symbolic itself; structure is at least triadic, without which it would not "circulate"—a third at once unreal, and yet not imaginable.

We will see why later; but already the first criterion consists of this: the positing of a symbolic order, irreducible to the orders of the real and the imaginary, and deeper than they are. We do not yet know what this symbolic element consists of. We can say at least that the corresponding structure has no relationship with a sensible form, nor with a figure of the imagination, nor with an intelligible essence. It has nothing to do with a *form*: for structure is not at all defined by an autonomy of the whole, by a preeminence [*pregnance*] of the whole over its parts, by a *Gestalt* which would operate in the real and in perception. Structure is defined, on the contrary, by the nature of certain atomic elements which claim to account both for the formation of wholes and for the variation of their parts. It has nothing to do *with figures* of the imagination, although structuralism is riddled with reflections on rhetoric, metaphor and metonymy, for these figures themselves imply structural displacements which must account for both the literal and the figurative. Nor has it anything to do with an *essence*: it is more a combinatory formula [*une combinatoire*] supporting formal elements which by themselves have neither form, nor signification, nor representation, nor content, nor given empirical reality, nor hypothetical functional model, nor intelligibility behind appearances. No one has better determined the status of the structure as identical to the "Theory" itself than Louis Althusser—and the symbolic must be understood as the production of the original and specific theoretical object.

Sometimes structuralism is aggressive, as when it denounces the general misunderstanding of this ultimate symbolic category, beyond the imaginary and the real. Sometimes it is interpretative, as when it renews our interpretation of works in relation to this category, and claims to discover an original point at which language is constituted, in which works elaborate themselves, and where ideas and actions are bound together. Romanticism and Symbolism, but also Freudianism and Marxism, thus become the objects of profound reinterpretations. Not to mention the mythical, poetic, philosophical, or practical works which themselves are subjected to structural interpretation. But this reinterpretation only has value to the extent that it animates new works which are those of today, as if the symbolic were the source, inseparably, of living interpretation and creation.

## II. Second Criterion: Local or Positional

What does the symbolic element of the structure consist of? We sense the need to go slowly, to state repeatedly, first of all, what it is not. Distinct from the real and the imaginary, the symbolic cannot be defined either by pre-existing realities to which it would refer and which it would designate, or by the imaginary or conceptual contents which it would implicate, and which would give it a signification. The elements of a structure have neither extrinsic designation, nor intrinsic signification. Then what is left? As Levi-Strauss recalls

rigorously, they have nothing other than a *sense* [*sens* = meaning and direction]: a sense which is necessarily and uniquely "positional."<sup>4</sup>

It is not a matter of a location in a real spatial expanse, nor of sites in imaginary extensions, but rather of places and sites in a properly structural space, that is, a topological space. Space is what is structural, but an unextended, pre-extensive space, pure *spatium* constituted bit by bit as an order of proximity, in which the notion of proximity first of all has precisely an ordinal sense and not a signification in extension.<sup>5</sup> Or take genetic biology: the genes are part of a structure to the extent that they are inseparable from "loci," sites capable of changing their relation within the chromosome. In short, places in a purely structural space are primary in relation to the things and real beings which come to occupy them, primary also in relation to the always somewhat imaginary roles and events which necessarily appear when they are occupied.

The scientific ambition of structuralism is not quantitative, but topological and relational, a principal that Levi-Strauss constantly reaffirms. And when Althusser speaks of economic structure, he specifies that the true "subjects" there are not those who come to occupy the places, i.e. concrete individuals or real human beings—no more than the true objects are the roles that they fulfill and the events that are produced. Rather, these "subjects" are above all the places in a topological and structural space defined by relations of production.<sup>6</sup> When Foucault defines determinations such as death, desire, work, or play, he does not consider them as dimensions of empirical human existence, but above all as the qualifications of places and positions which will render those who come to occupy them mortal and dying, or desiring, or workman-like, or playful. These, however, only come to occupy the places and positions secondarily, fulfilling their roles according to an order of proximity that is an order of the structure itself. That is why Foucault can propose a new distribution of the empirical and the transcendental, the latter finding itself defined by an order of places independently of those who occupy them empirically.<sup>7</sup> Structuralism cannot be separated from a new transcendental philosophy, in which the sites prevail over whatever occupies them. Father, mother, etc., are first of all sites in a structure; and if we are mortal, it is by moving into the line, by coming to a particular site, marked in the structure following this topological order of proximities (even when we do so ahead of our turn).

"It is not only the subject," says Lacan, "but subjects grasped in their intersubjectivity, who line up... and who model their very being on the moment of the signifying chain which traverses them... The displacement of the signifier determines subjects in their acts, in their destiny, in their refusals, in their blindnesses, in their conquests and in their fate, their innate gifts and social acquisition notwithstanding, without regard for character or sex..."<sup>8</sup> One could not say more clearly that empirical psychology is not only founded, but determined by a transcendental topology.

Several consequences follow from this local or positional criterion. First of all, if the symbolic elements have no extrinsic designation nor intrinsic signification, but only a positional sense, it follows necessarily and by rights that *sense always results from the combination of elements which are not themselves signifying?* As Levi-Strauss says in his discussion with Paul Ricoeur, sense is always a result, an effect: not merely an effect like a product, but an optical effect, a language effect, a positional effect. There is, profoundly, a nonsense of sense, from which sense itself results. Not that we return in this way to what was once called a philosophy of the absurd since, for such a philosophy, sense itself is lacking, essentially. For structuralism, on the other hand, there is always too much sense, an overproduction, an over-determination of sense, always produced in excess by the combination of places in the structure. (Hence the importance, in Althusser's work for example, of the concept of *over-determination*^ Nonsense is not at all the absurd or the opposite of sense, but rather that which gives value to sense and produces it by circulating in the structure. Structuralism owes nothing to Albert Camus, but much to Lewis Carroll."

The second consequence is structuralism's inclination for certain games and a certain kind of theatre, for certain play and theatrical spaces. It is no accident that Levi-Strauss often refers to the theory of games, and accords such importance to playing cards. As does Lacan to his game metaphors which are more than metaphors: not only the moving object [*le furet*, literally the ferret; or, moving token in *the jeu de furet*, the game of hunt-the-slipper] which darts around the structure, but also the dummy-hand [*la place du mort*] that circulates in bridge. The noblest games such as chess are those that organize a combinatory system of places in a pure *spatium* infinitely deeper than the real extension of the chessboard and the imaginary extension of each piece. Or when Althusser interrupts his commentary on Marx to talk about theatre, but a theatre that is neither of reality nor of ideas, a pure theatre of places and positions, the principle of which he sees in Brecht,<sup>12</sup> and that would today perhaps find its most extreme expression in Armand Gatti's work. In short, the very manifesto of structuralism must be sought in the famous formula, eminently poetic and theatrical: to think is to cast a throw of the dice [*penser, c'est e'mettre un coup de des*].<sup>11</sup>

The third consequence is that structuralism is inseparable from a new materialism, a new atheism, a new anti-humanism. For if the place is primary in relation to whatever occupies it, it certainly will not do to replace God with man in order to change the structure. And if this place is the dummy-hand [*la place du mort*, i.e. the dead man's place], the death of God surely means the death of man as well, in favor, we hope, of something yet to come, but which could only come within the structure and through its mutation. This is how we understand the imaginary character of man for Foucault or the ideological character of humanism for Althusser.

### III. Third Criterion: The Differential and the Singular

What then do these symbolic elements or units of position finally consist of? Let us return to the linguistic model. What is distinct both from the voiced elements, and the associated concepts and images, is called a phoneme, the smallest linguistic unit capable of differentiating two words of diverse meanings: for example, "Millard" [billiard] and ">illard" [pillager]. It is clear that the phoneme is embodied in letters, syllables and sounds, but that it is not reducible to them. Moreover, letters, syllables and sounds give it an independence, whereas in itself, the phoneme is inseparable from the phonemic relation which unites it to other phonemes: b / p. Phonemes do not exist independently of the relations into which they enter and through which they reciprocally determine each other.<sup>14</sup>

We can distinguish three types of relation. A first type is established between elements which enjoy independence or autonomy: for example,  $3 + 2$ , or even  $2 / 3$ . The elements are real, and these relations must themselves be said to be real. A second type of relationship, for example,  $x^2 + y^2 - R^2 = 0$ , is established between terms for which the value is not specified, but which in each case, however, must have a determined value. Such relations can be called imaginary. But the third type is established between elements which have no determined value themselves, and which nevertheless determine each other reciprocally in the relation: thus  $dy + xdx = 0$ , or  $dy / dx = -x/y$ . Such relationships are symbolic, and the corresponding elements are held in a differential relationship.  $Dy$  is totally undetermined in relation to  $y$ , and  $dx$  is totally undetermined in relation to  $x$ : each one has neither existence, nor value, nor signification. And yet the relation  $dy/dx$  is totally determined, the two elements determining each other reciprocally in the relation.<sup>15</sup> This process of a reciprocal determination is at the heart of a relationship that allows one to define the symbolic nature. Sometimes the origins of structuralism are sought in the area of axiomatics, and it is true that Bourbaki, for example, uses the word "structure." But this use, it seems to me, is in a very different sense, that of relations between non-specified elements, not even qualitatively specified, whereas in structuralism, elements specify each other reciprocally in relations. In this sense, axiomatics would still be imaginary, not symbolic properly speaking. The mathematical origin of structuralism must be sought rather in the domain of differential calculus, specifically in the interpretation which Weierstrass and Russell gave to it, a *static and ordinal* interpretation, which definitively liberates calculus from all reference to the infinitely small, and integrates it into a pure logic of relations.

Corresponding to the determination of differential relations are singularities, distributions of singular points which characterize curves or figures (a triangle for example has three singular points). In this way, the determination of phonemic relations proper to a given language ascribes singularities in proximity to which the vocalizations and significations of the language are constituted. *The recipro-*

*cal determination* of symbolic elements continues henceforth into *the complete determination* of singular points that constitute a space corresponding to these elements. The crucial notion of singularity, taken literally, seems to belong to all the domains in which there is structure. The general formula, "to think is to cast a throw of the dice," itself refers to the singularities represented by the sharply outlined points on the dice. Every structure presents the following two aspects: a system of differential relations according to which the symbolic elements determine themselves reciprocally, and a system of singularities corresponding to these relations and tracing the space of the structure. Every structure is a multiplicity. The question, "Is there structure in any domain whatsoever?," must be specified in the following way: in a given domain, can one uncover symbolic elements, differential relations and singular points which are proper to it? Symbolic elements are incarnated in the real beings and objects of the domain considered; the differential relations are actualized in real relations between these beings; the singularities are so many places in the structure, which distributes the imaginary attitudes or roles of the beings or objects that come to occupy them.<sup>16</sup>

It is not a matter of mathematical metaphors. In each domain, one must find elements, relationships and points. When Levi-Strauss undertakes the study of elementary kinship structures, he not only considers the real fathers in a society, nor only the father-images that run through the myths of that society. He claims to discover real kinship phonemes, that is, *kin-emes [parentemes]*, positional units which do not exist independently of the differential relations into which they enter and that determine each other reciprocally. It is in this way that the four relations—brother / sister, husband / wife, father / son, maternal uncle / sister's son—form the simplest structure. And to this combinatory system of "kinship names" correspond in a complex way, but without resembling them, the "kinship attitudes" that realize the singularities determined in the system. One could just as well proceed in the opposite manner: start from singularities in order to determine the differential relations between ultimate symbolic elements. Thus, taking the example of the Oedipus myth, Levi-Strauss starts from the singularities of the story (Oedipus marries his mother, kills his father, immolates the Sphinx, is named club-foot, etc.) in order to infer from them the differential relations between "mythemes" which are determined reciprocally (overestimation of kinship relations, underestimation of kinship relations, negation of aboriginality, persistence of aboriginality).<sup>17</sup> In any case, the symbolic elements and their relations always determine the nature of the beings and objects which come to realize them, while the singularities form an order of positions that simultaneously determines the roles and the attitudes of these beings in so far as they occupy them. The determination of the structure is therefore completed in a theory of attitudes which explains its functioning.

Singularities correspond with the symbolic elements and their relations, but do not resemble them. One could say, rather, that singularities "symbolize" with

them, derive from them, since every determination of differential relations entails a distribution of singular points. Yet, for example: the values of differential relations are incarnated in species, whereas singularities are incarnated in the organic parts corresponding to each species. The former constitute variables, the latter constitute functions. The former constitute within a structure the domain of *appellations*, the latter the domain of *attitudes*.<sup>1</sup> Levi-Strauss insisted on this double aspect—derived, yet irreducible—of attitudes in relation to appellations.<sup>19</sup> A disciple of Lacan, Serge Leclair, shows in another field how the symbolic elements of the unconscious necessarily refer to "libidinal movements" of the body, incarnating the singularities of the structure in such and such a place.<sup>20</sup> In this sense, every structure is psychosomatic, or rather represents a category-attitude complex.

Let us consider the interpretation of Marxism by Althusser and his collaborators: above all, the relations of production are determined as differential relations that are established, not between real men or concrete individuals, but between objects and agents which, first of all, have a symbolic value (object of production, instrument of production, labor force, immediate workers, immediate non-workers, such as they are held in relations of property and appropriation).<sup>21</sup> Each mode of production is thus characterized by singularities corresponding to the values of the relations. And if it is obvious that concrete men come to occupy the places and carry forth the elements of the structure, this happens by fulfilling the role that the structural place assigns to them (for example the "capitalist"), and by serving as supports for the structural relations. This occurs to such an extent that "the true subjects are not these occupants and functionaries... but the definition and distribution of these places and these functions." The true subject is the structure itself: the differential and the singular, the differential relations and the singular points, the reciprocal determination and the complete determination.

#### **IV. Fourth Criterion: The Differentiator, Differentiation**

Structures are necessarily unconscious, by virtue of the elements, relations and points that compose them. Every structure is an infrastructure, a micro-structure. In a certain way, they are not actual. What is actual is that in which the structure is incarnated or rather what the structure constitutes when it is incarnated. But in itself, it is neither actual nor fictional, neither real, nor possible. Jakobson poses the problem of the status of the phoneme, which is not to be confused with any actual letter, syllable or sound, no more than it is a fiction, or an associated image.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps the word virtuality would precisely designate the mode of the structure or the object of theory, on the condition that we eliminate any vagueness about the word. For the virtual has a reality which is proper to it, but which does not merge with any actual reality, any present or past actuality.

The virtual has an ideality that is proper to it, but which does not merge with any possible image, any abstract idea. We will say of structure: *real without being actual, ideal without being abstract*.<sup>13</sup> This is why Levi-Strauss often presents the structure as a sort of ideal reservoir or repertoire, in which everything coexists virtually, but where the actualization is necessarily carried out according to exclusive rules, always implicating partial combinations and unconscious choices. To discern the structure of a domain is to determine an entire virtuality of coexistence which pre-exists the beings, objects and works of this domain. Every structure is a multiplicity of virtual coexistence. Louis Althusser, for example, shows in this sense that the originality of Marx (his anti-Hegelianism) resides in the manner in which the social system is defined by a coexistence of elements and economic relations, without one being able to engender them successively according to the illusion of a false dialectic.<sup>24</sup>

What is it that coexists in the structure? All the elements, the relations and relational values, all the singularities proper to the domain considered. Such a coexistence does not imply any confusion, nor any indetermination for the relationships and differential elements coexist in a completely and perfectly determined whole. Except that this whole is not actualized as such. What is actualized, here and now, are particular relations, relational values, and distributions of singularities; others are actualized elsewhere or at other times. There is no total language [*langue*], embodying all the possible phonemes and phonemic relations. But the virtual totality of the language system [*langage*] is actualized following exclusive rules in diverse, specific languages, of which each embodies certain relationships, relational values, and singularities. There is no total society, but each social form embodies certain elements, relationships, and production values (for example "capitalism"). We must therefore distinguish between the total structure of a domain as an ensemble of virtual coexistence, and the sub-structures that correspond to diverse actualizations in the domain. Of the structure as virtuality, we must say that it is still undifferentiated (c), even though it is totally and completely differential (t). Of structures which are embodied in a particular actual form (present or past), we must say that they are differentiated, and that for them to be actualized is precisely to be differentiated. The structure is inseparable from this double aspect, or from this complex that one can designate under the name of differential (t) / differentiation (c), where t / c constitutes the universally determined phonemic relationship.<sup>25</sup>

All differentiation, all actualization is carried out along two paths: species and parts. The differential relations are incarnated in qualitatively distinct species, while the corresponding singularities are incarnated in the parts and extended figures which characterize each species: hence, the language species, and the parts of each one in the vicinity of the singularities of the linguistic structure; the specifically defined social modes of production and the organized parts corresponding to each one of these modes, etc. One will notice that the process of

actualization always implies an internal temporality, variable according to what is actualized. Not only does each type of social production have a global internal temporality, but its organized parts have particular rhythms. As regards time, the position of structuralism is thus quite clear: time is always a time of actualization, according to which the elements of virtual coexistence are carried out at diverse rhythms. Time goes from the virtual to the actual, that is, from structure to its actualizations, and not from one actual form to another. Or at least time conceived as a relation of succession of two actual forms makes do with expressing abstractly the internal times of the structure or structures that are realized at different depths in these two forms, and the differential relations between these times. And precisely because the structure is not actualized without being differentiated in space and time, hence without differentiating the species and the parts which carry it out, we must say in this sense that structure *produces* these species and these parts themselves. It produces them as differentiated species and parts, such that one can no more oppose the genetic to the structural than time to structure. Genesis, like time, goes from the virtual to the actual, from the structure to its actualization; the two notions of multiple internal time and static ordinal genesis are in this sense inseparable from the play of structures.<sup>26</sup>

We must insist on this differentiating role. Structure is in itself a system of elements and of differential relations, but it also differentiates the species and parts, the beings and functions in which the structure is actualized. It is differential in itself, and differentiating in its effect. Commenting on Levi-Strauss's work, Jean Pouillon defined the problem of structuralism: can one elaborate "a system of differences which leads neither to their simple juxtaposition, nor to their artificial erasure?"<sup>27</sup> In this regard, the work of Georges Dumézil is exemplary, even from the point of view of structuralism: no one has better analyzed the generic and specific differences between religions, and also the differences in parts and functions between the gods of a particular, single religion. For the gods of a religion, for example, Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus, incarnate elements and differential relations, at the same time as they find their attitudes and functions in proximity to the singularities of the system or "parts of the society" considered. They are thus essentially differentiated by the structure which is actualized or carried out in them, and which produces them by being actualized. It is true that each of them, considered solely in its actuality, attracts and reflects the function of the others, such that one risks no longer discovering anything of this originary differentiation which produces them from the virtual to the actual. But it is precisely here that the border passes between the imaginary and the symbolic: the imaginary tends to reflect and to resituate around each term the total effect of a wholistic mechanism, whereas the symbolic structure assures the differential of terms and the differentiation of effects. Hence the hostility of structuralism toward the methods of the imaginary: Lacan's critique of Jung, and the critique of Bachelard by proponents of "New Criticism." The imaginariion duplicates and

reflects, it projects and identifies, loses itself in a play of mirrors, but the distinctions that it makes, like the assimilations that it carries out, are surface effects that hide the otherwise subtle differential mechanisms of symbolic thought. Commenting on Dumezil, Edmond Ortigues has this to say: "When one approaches the material imagination, the differential function diminishes, one tends towards equivalences; when one approaches the formative elements of society, the differential function increases, one tends towards distinctive values [*valences*]." <sup>28</sup>

Structures are unconscious, necessarily overlaid by their products or effects. An economic structure never exists in a pure form, but is covered over by the juridical, political and ideological relations in which it is incarnated. One can only *read*, find, retrieve the structures through these effects. The terms and relations which actualize them, the species and parts that realize them, are as much forms of interference [*brouillage*] as forms of expression. This is why one of Lacan's disciples, J.-A. Miller, develops the concept of a "metonymic causality," or Althusser, the concept of a properly structural causality, in order to account for the very particular presence of a structure in its effects, and for the way in which it differentiates these effects, at the same time as these latter assimilate and integrate it. <sup>29</sup> The unconscious of the structure is a differential unconscious. One might believe then that structuralism goes back to a pre-Freudian conception: doesn't Freud understand the unconscious as a mode of the conflict of forces or of the opposition of desires, whereas Leibnizian metaphysics already proposed the idea of a differential unconscious of little perceptions? But even in Freud's writing, there is a whole problem of the origin of the unconscious, of its constitution as "language," which goes beyond the level of desire, of associated images and relations of opposition. Conversely, the differential unconscious is not constituted by little perceptions of the real and by passages to the limit, but rather of variations of differential relations in a symbolic system as functions of distributions of singularities. Levi-Strauss is right to say that the unconscious is made neither of desires nor of representations, that it is "always empty," consisting solely in the structural laws that it imposes on representations and on desires. <sup>30</sup>

For the unconscious is always a problem, though not in the sense that would call its existence into question. Rather, the unconscious by itself forms the problems and questions that are resolved only to the extent that the corresponding structure is instantiated [*s'effectue*] and always according to the way that it is instantiated. For a problem always gains the solution that it deserves based on the manner in which it is posed, and on the symbolic field used to pose it. Althusser can present the economic structure of a society as the field of problems that the society poses for itself, that it is determined to pose for itself, and that it resolves according to its own means, that is, according to the lines of differentiation along which the structure is actualized (taking into account the absurdities, ignominies and cruelties that these "solutions" involve by reason of the struc-

ture). Similarly, Serge Leclaire, following Lacan, can distinguish psychoses and neuroses, and different kinds of neuroses, less by types of conflict than by modes of questions that always find the answer that they deserve as a function of the symbolic field in which they are posed: thus the hysterical question is not that of the obsessive." In all of this, problems and questions do not designate a provisional and subjective moment in the elaboration of our knowledge, but on the contrary, designate a perfectly objective category, full and complete "objectalities" [*objectites*]<sup>K</sup> which are the structure's own. The structural unconscious is at once differential, problematizing and questioning. And, as we shall see, it is finally serial.

### V. Fifth Criterion: Serial

All of the preceding, however, still seems incapable of functioning, for we have only been able to define half of the structure. A structure only starts to move, and become animated, if we restore its other half. Indeed, the symbolic elements that we have previously defined, taken in their differential relations, are organized necessarily in series. But so organized, they relate to another series, constituted by other symbolic elements and other relations: this reference to a second series is easily explained by recalling that singularities derive from the terms and relations of the first, but are not limited simply to reproducing or reflecting them. They thus organize themselves in another series capable of an autonomous development, or at least they necessarily relate the first to this other series. So it is for phonemes and morphemes; or for the economic and other social series; or for Foucault's triple series, linguistic, economic and biological, etc. The question of knowing if the first series forms a basis and in which sense, if it is signifying, the others only being signified, is a complex question the nature of which we cannot yet assess. One must state simply that every structure is serial, multi-serial, and would not function without this condition.

When Levi-Strauss again takes up the study of totemism, he shows the extent to which the phenomenon is poorly understood as long as it is interpreted in terms of imagination. For according to its law, the *imagination* necessarily conceives totemism as the operation by which a man or a group are identified with an animal. But *symbolically*, it is quite a different matter, not the imaginary identification of one term with another, but the structural homology of two series of terms: on the one hand, a series of animal species taken as elements of differential relations; on the other, a series of social positions themselves caught symbolically in their own relations. This confrontation occurs "between these two systems of differences," these two series of elements and relations."

The unconscious, according to Lacan, is neither individual nor collective, but intersubjective, which is to say that it implies a development in terms of series: not only the signifier and the signified, but the two series at a minimum

organize themselves in quite a variable manner according to the domain under consideration.<sup>VI</sup> In one of Lacan's most famous texts, he comments on "The Purloined Letter" by Edgar Allen Poe, showing how the "structure" puts into play two series, the places of which are occupied by variable subjects. First series: the king who does not see the letter, the queen who is thrilled at having so cleverly hidden it by leaving it out in the open, the minister who sees everything and takes possession of the letter.<sup>31</sup> Second series: the police who find nothing at the minister's hotel; the minister who is thrilled at having so cleverly hidden the letter by leaving it out in the open; Dupin who sees everything and takes back possession of the letter. Already in a previous text, Lacan examined the case of *The Rat Man* on the basis of a double series, paternal and filial, in which each put into play four relational terms according to an order of places: debt / friend, rich woman / poor woman.<sup>36</sup>

It goes without saying that the organization of the constitutive series of a structure supposes a veritable *mise en scene* and, in each case, requires precise evaluations and interpretations. There is no general rule at all; we touch here on the point at which structuralism implies, from one perspective, a true creation, and from another, an initiative and a discovery that is not without its risks. The determination of a structure occurs not only through a choice of basic symbolic elements and the differential relations into which they enter, nor merely through a distribution of the singular points which correspond to them. The determination also occurs through the constitution of a second series, at least, that maintains complex relations with the first. And if the structure defines a problematic field, a field of problems, it is in the sense that the nature of the problem reveals its proper objectivity in this serial constitution, which sometimes makes structuralism seem close to music. Phillipe Sollers writes a novel, *Drame*, punctuated [*rhythme*] by the expressions "Problem" and "Missing" [*Manque*], in the course of which tentative series are elaborated ("a chain of maritime memories passes through his right arm... the left leg, on the other contrary, seemed to be riddled with mineral groupings").<sup>17</sup> Or Jean-Pierre Faye's attempt in *Analogues*, concerning a serial co-existence of narrative modes.<sup>18</sup>

But what keeps the two series from simply reflecting one another, and henceforth, identifying each of their terms one to one? The whole of the structure would then fall back into the state of a figure of imagination. The factor that allays such a threat is seemingly quite strange. Indeed, the terms of each series are in themselves inseparable from the slippages [*decalages*] or displacements that they undergo in relation to the terms of the other. They are thus inseparable from the variation of differential relations. In the case of the purloined letter, the minister in the second series comes to the place that the queen had occupied in the first one. In the filial series of *The Rat Man*, the poor woman comes to occupy the friend's place in relation to the debt.<sup>19</sup> Or again, in the double series of birds and twins cited by Levi-Strauss, the twins are the "people from on high" in rela-

tion to the people from below, necessarily coming to occupy the place of the "birds from below," not of the birds from on high.<sup>4</sup>" This relative displacement of the two series is not at all secondary; it does not come to affect a term from the outside and secondarily, as if giving it an imaginary disguise. On the contrary, the displacement is properly structural or symbolic: it belongs essentially to the places in the space of the structure, and thus regulates all the imaginary disguises of beings and objects that come secondarily to occupy these places. This is why structuralism brings so much attention to bear on metaphor and metonymy. These are not in any way figures of the imagination, but are, above all, structural factors. They are even *the* two structural factors, in the sense that they express the two degrees of freedom of displacement, from one series to another and within the same series. Far from being imaginary, they prevent the series that they animate from confusing or duplicating their terms in imaginary fashion. But what are these relative displacements then, if they belong absolutely to places in the structure?

## VI. Sixth Criterion: The Empty Square [La Case Vide]

It appears that the structure envelops a wholly paradoxical object or element. Let us consider the case of the letter, in Edgar Allen Poe's story, as examined by Lacan; or the case of the debt, in *The Rat Man*. It is obvious that this object is eminently symbolic, but we say "eminently" because it belongs to no series in particular: the letter is nevertheless present in both of Poe's series; the debt is present in both *Rat Man* series. Such an object is always present in the corresponding series, it traverses them and moves with them, it never ceases to circulate in them, and from one to the other, with an extraordinary agility. One might say that it is *its own* metaphor, and *its own* metonymy. The series in each case are constituted by symbolic terms and differential relations, but this object seems to be of another nature. In fact, it is in relation to the object that the variety of terms and the variation of differential relations are determined in each case. The two series of a structure are always divergent (by virtue of the laws of differentiation), but this singular object is the convergence point of the divergent series as such. It is "eminently" symbolic, but precisely because it is immanent to the two series at once. What else would we call it, if not Object =  $x$ , the riddle Object or the great Mobile element? We can nevertheless remain a bit doubtful: what Jacques Lacan invites us to discover in two cases, the particular role played by a letter or a debt—is it an artifice, strictly applicable to these cases, or rather is it a truly general method, valid for all the structurable domains, a criterion for every structure, as if a structure were not defined without assigning an object =  $x$  that ceaselessly traverses the series? As if the literary work, for example, or the work of art, but other *oeuvres* as well, those of society, those of illness, those of life in general, enveloped this very special object which assumes control over

their structure. And as if it were always a matter of finding who is H,<sup>41</sup> or of discovering an  $x$  shrouded within the work. Such is the case with songs: the refrain encompasses an object =  $x$ , while the verses form the divergent series through which this object circulates. It is for this reason that songs truly present an elementary structure.<sup>42</sup>

A disciple of Lacan, Andre Green, signals the existence of the handkerchief that circulates in *Othello*, traversing all the series of the play.<sup>43</sup> We also spoke of the two series of the Prince of Wales, Falstaff or the father-buffoon, Henry IV or the royal father, the two images of the father. The crown is the object =  $x$  that traverses the two series, with different terms and under different relations. The moment when the prince tries on the crown, his father not yet dead, marks the passage from one series to the other, the change in symbolic terms and the variation of differential relations. The old dying king is angered, and believes that his son wants to identify with him prematurely. Yet responding quite capably in a splendid speech, the prince shows that the crown is not the object of an imaginary identification, but on the contrary, is the eminently symbolic term that traverses all the series, the infamous series of Falstaff and the great royal series, and that permits the passage from one to the other at the heart of the same structure. As we saw, there was a first difference between the imaginary and the symbolic; the differentiating role of the symbolic, in opposition to the assimilating and reflecting role, doubling and duplicating, of the imaginary. But the second dividing line appears more clearly here: against the dual character of the imagination, the Third which essentially intervenes in the symbolic system, which distributes series, displaces them relatively, makes them communicate with each other, all the while preventing the one from imaginarily falling back on the other.

Debt, the letter, the handkerchief or the crown, the nature of this object is specified by Lacan: it is always displaced in relation to itself. Its peculiar property is not to be where one looks for it, and conversely, also to be found where it is not. One would say that it "is missing from its place" [*il manque a sa place*] (and, in this, is not something real); furthermore, that it does not coincide with its own resemblance (and, in this, is not an image); and that it does not coincide with its own identity (and, in this, is not a concept). "What is hidden is never what is *missing from its place*, as the call slip puts it when speaking of a volume lost in the library. And even if the book be on an adjacent shelf or in the next slot, it would be hidden there, however visible it may appear. For only something that can change its place can *literally* be said to be missing from it: i.e., the symbolic. For the real, whatever upheaval we subject it to, is always in its place; it carries it glued to its heel, ignorant of what might exile it from it."<sup>44</sup> If the series that the object =  $x$  traverses necessarily present relative displacements in relation to each other, this is so because the *relative* places of their terms in the structure depend first on the *absolute* place of each, at each moment, in relation to the

object =  $x$  that is always circulating, always displaced in relation to itself.<sup>45</sup> It is in this sense that the displacement, and more generally all the forms of exchange, does not constitute a characteristic added from the outside, but the fundamental property that allows the structure to be defined as an order of places subject to the variation of relations. The whole structure is driven by this originary Third, but that also fails to coincide with its own origin. Distributing the differences through the entire structure, making the differential relations vary with its displacements, the object =  $x$  constitutes the differentiating element of difference itself.

Games need the empty square, without which nothing would move forward or function. The object =  $x$  is not distinguishable from its place, but it is characteristic of this place that it constantly displaces itself, just as it is characteristic of the empty square to jump ceaselessly.<sup>46</sup> Lacan invokes the *dummy-hand m* bridge, and in the admirable opening pages of *The Order of Things*, where he describes a painting by Velasquez, Foucault invokes the place of the king, in relation to which everything is displaced and slides, God, then man, without ever filling it.<sup>47</sup> No structuralism is possible without this degree zero. Phillippe Sollers and Jean-Pierre Faye like to invoke the *blind spot [tache aveugle]*, so designating this always mobile point which entails a certain blindness, but in relation to which writing becomes possible, because series organize themselves therein as genuine "litteremes" [*litteremes*].<sup>48</sup> In his effort to elaborate a concept of structural or metonymic causality, J.-A. Miller borrows from Frege the position of a *zero*, defined as lacking its own identity, and which conditions the serial constitution of numbers.<sup>49</sup> And even Levi-Strauss, who in certain respects is the most positivist among the structuralists, the least romantic, the least inclined to welcome an elusive element, recognized in the "mana" or its equivalents the existence of a "floating signifier," with a symbolic zero value circulating in the structure.<sup>50</sup> In so doing, he connects with Jakobson's zero phoneme which does not by itself entail any differential character or phonetic value, but in relation to which all the phonemes are situated in their own differential relations.

If it is true that structural criticism has as its object the determination of "virtualities" in language which pre-exist the work, the work is itself structural when it sets out to express its own virtualities. Lewis Carroll, Joyce, invented "portmanteau" words, or more generally, esoteric words, to ensure the coincidence of verbal sound series and the simultaneity of associated story series.<sup>51</sup> In *Finnegan's Wake*, it is again a *letter* which is Cosmos, and which reunites all the series of the world. In Lewis Carroll's works, the portmanteau word connotes at least two basic series (speaking and eating, verbal series and alimentary series) that can themselves be subdivided, such as the Snark. It is incorrect to say that such a word has two meanings; in fact, it is of another order than words possessing a sense. It is the nonsense which animates at least the two series, but which provides them with sense by circulating through them. It is this nonsense, in its

ubiquity, in its perpetual displacement, that produces sense in each series, and from one series to another, and that ceaselessly dislocates [*decaler*] the series in relation to each other. This word is the word =  $x$  in so far as it designates the object =  $x$ , the *problematic* object. As word =  $x$ , it traverses a series determined as that of the signifier; but at the same time, as object =  $x$ , it traverses the other series determined as that of the signified.<sup>52</sup> It never ceases at once to hollow out and to fill in the gap between the two series. Levi-Strauss shows this in relation to the "mana," that he assimilates to the words "thingamajig" [*true*] or "thingie" [*machin*]. As we have seen, this is how nonsense is not the absence of signification but, on the contrary, the excess of sense, or that which provides the signifier and signified with sense. Sense here emerges as the effect of the structure's functioning, in the animation of its component series. And no doubt, portmanteau-words are only one device among others that ensure this circulation. The techniques of Raymond Roussel, as Foucault has analyzed them, are of another nature, founded on differential phonemic relations, or on even more complex relations.<sup>51</sup> In Mallarmé's works, we find systems of relations between series, and the moving parts which animate them, of yet another type. Our purpose is not to analyze the whole set of devices which have constituted and are still constituting modern literature, making use of an entire topography, an entire typography of the "book yet to come" [*livre à venir*]; our goal is only to indicate in all cases the efficacy of this two-sided empty square, at once word and object.

What does it consist of, this object =  $x$ ? Is it and must it remain the perpetual object of a riddle, the *perpetuum mobile*!<sup>1</sup> This would be a way of recalling the objective consistency that the category of the problematic takes on at the heart of structures. And in the long run, it is good that the question *How do we recognize structuralism?* leads to positing something that is not recognizable or identifiable. Let us consider Lacan's psychoanalytic response:<sup>54</sup> the object =  $x$  is determined as phallus. But this phallus is neither the real organ, nor the series of associable or associated images: it is the symbolic phallus. However, it is indeed sexuality that is in question, a question of nothing else here, contrary to the pious and ever-renewed attempts in psychoanalysis to renounce or minimize sexual references. But the phallus appears not as a sexual given or as the empirical determination of one of the sexes. It appears rather as the symbolic organ that founds sexuality *in its entirety* as system or structure, and in relation to which the places occupied variously by men and women are distributed, as also the series of images and realities. In designating the object =  $x$  as phallus, it is thus not a question of identifying this object, of conferring to it an identity, which is repellant to its nature. Quite the contrary, for the symbolic phallus is precisely that which does not coincide with its own identity, always found there where it is not since it is not where one looks for it, always displaced in relation to itself, *from the side of the mother*. In this sense, it is certainly the letter and the debt, the handkerchief or the crown, the Snark and the "mana." Father, mother, etc., are

symbolic elements held in differential relations. But the phallus is quite another thing, the object =  $x$  that determines the relative place of the elements and the variable value of relations, making a structure of the entirety of sexuality. The relations vary as a function of the displacements of the object =  $x$ , as relations between "partial drives" constitutive of sexuality.<sup>55</sup>

Obviously the phallus is not a final word, and is even somewhat the locus of a question, of a "demand" that characterizes the empty square of the sexual structure. Questions, like answers, vary according to the structure under consideration, but never do they depend on our preferences, or on an order of abstract causality. It is obvious that the empty square of an economic structure, such as commodity exchange, must be determined in quite another way. It consists of "something" which is reducible neither to the terms of the exchange, nor to the exchange relation itself, but that forms an eminently symbolic third term in perpetual displacement, and as a function of which the relational variations will be defined. Such is *value* as expression of a "generalized labor," beyond any empirically observable quality, a locus of the question that runs through or traverses the economy as structure.<sup>56</sup>

A more general consequence follows from this, concerning the different "orders." From a structuralist perspective, it is no doubt unsatisfactory to resurrect the problem of whether there is a structure that determines all the others in the final instance. For example, which is first, value or the phallus, the economic fetish or the sexual fetish? For several reasons, these questions are meaningless. All structures are infrastructures. The structural orders—linguistic, familial, economic, sexual, etc.—are characterized by the form of their symbolic elements, the variety of their differential relations, the species of their singularities, finally and, above all, by the nature of the object =  $x$  that presides over their functioning. However, we could only establish an order of linear causality from one structure to another by conferring on the object =  $x$  in each case the type of identity that it essentially repudiates. Between structures, causality can only be a type of structural causality. In each structural order, certainly, the object =  $x$  is not at all something unknowable, something purely undetermined; it is perfectly determinable, including within its displacements and by the mode of displacement that characterizes it. It is simply not assignable: that is, it cannot be fixed to one place, nor identified with a genre or a species. Rather, it constitutes itself the ultimate genre of the structure or its total place: it thus has no identity except in order to lack this identity, and has no place except in order to be displaced in relation to all places. As a result, for each order of structure the object =  $x$  is the empty or perforated site that permits this order to be articulated with the others, in a space that entails as many directions as orders. The orders of the structure do not communicate in a common site, but they all communicate through their empty place or respective object =  $x$ . This is why, despite several of Levi-Strauss's hasty pages, no privilege can be claimed for ethnographic social structures, by

referring the psychoanalytic sexual structures to the empirical determination of a more or less de-socialized individual. Even linguistic structures cannot pass as symbolic elements or as ultimate signifiers. Precisely to the extent that the other structures are not limited simply to applying by analogy methods borrowed from linguistics, but discover on their own account veritable languages, be they non-verbal, always entailing their signifiers, their symbolic elements and differential relations. Posing, for example, the problem of the relations between ethnography and psychoanalysis, Foucault is right to say: "They intersect at right angles; for the signifying chain by which the unique experience of the individual is constituted is perpendicular to the formal system on the basis of which the significations of a culture are constituted: at any given instant, the structure proper to individual experience finds a certain number of possible choices (and of excluded possibilities) in the systems of the society; conversely, at each of their points of choice the social structures encounter a certain number of possible individuals (and others who are not)."<sup>57</sup>

And in each structure, the object =  $x$  must be disposed to give an account 1) of the way in which it subordinates within its order the other orders of structure, that then only intervene as dimensions of actualization; 2) of the way in which it is itself subordinated to the other orders in their own order (and no longer intervenes except in their own actualization); 3) of the way in which all the objects =  $x$  and all the orders of structure communicate with one another, each order defining a dimension of the space in which it is absolutely primary; 4) of the conditions in which, at a given moment in history or in a given case, a particular dimension corresponding to a particular order of the structure is not deployed for itself and remains subordinated to the actualization of another order (the Lacanian concept of "foreclosure" would again be of decisive importance here).

## VII. Final Criteria: From the Subject to Practice

In one sense, places are only filled or occupied by real beings to the extent that the structure is "actualized." But in another sense, we can say that places are already filled or occupied by symbolic elements, at the level of the structure itself. And the differential relations of these elements are the ones that determine the order of places in general. Thus there is a primary symbolic filling-in [*remplissement*], before any filling-in or occupation by real beings. Except that we again find the paradox of the empty square. For this is the only place that cannot and must not be filled, were it even by a symbolic element. It must retain the perfection of its emptiness in order to be displaced in relation to itself, and in order to circulate throughout the elements and the variety of relations. As symbolic, it must be for itself its own symbol, and eternally lack its other half that would be likely to come and occupy it. (This void is, however, not a non-being; or at least this non-being is not the being of the negative, but rather the positive being of the "problemat-

ic," the objective being of a problem and of a question.)<sup>5</sup>" This is why Foucault can say: "It is no longer possible to think in our day other than in the void left by man's disappearance. For *this void does not create a deficiency; it does not constitute a lacuna that must be filled in*. It is nothing more and nothing less than the unfolding of a space in which it is once more possible to think."<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, if the empty square is not filled by a term, it is nevertheless accompanied by an eminently symbolic instance which follows all of its displacements, accompanied without being occupied or filled. And the two, the instance and the place, do not cease to lack each other, and to accompany each other in this manner. The *subject* is precisely the agency [*instance*] which follows the empty place: as Lacan says, it is less subject than subjected [*assujetti*]-subjected to the empty square, subjected to the phallus and to its displacements. Its agility is peerless, or should be. Thus, the subject is essentially intersubjective. To announce the death of God, or even the death of man is nothing. What counts is *how*. Nietzsche showed already that God dies in several ways; and that the gods die, but from laughter, upon hearing one god say that he is the Only One. Structuralism is not at all a form of thought that suppresses the subject, but one that breaks it up and distributes it systematically, that contests the identity of the subject, that dissipates it and makes it shift from place to place, an always nomad subject, made of individuations, but impersonal ones, or of singularities, but pre-individual ones.<sup>60</sup> This is the sense in which Foucault speaks of "dispersion"; and Levi-Strauss can only define a subjective agency as depending on the Object conditions under which the systems of truth become convertible and, thus, "simultaneously receivable to several different subjects."<sup>61</sup>

Henceforth, two great accidents of the structure may be defined. Either the empty and mobile square is no longer accompanied by a nomad subject that accentuates its trajectory, and its emptiness becomes a veritable lack, a lacuna. Or just the opposite, it is filled, occupied by what accompanies it, and its mobility is lost in the effect of a sedentary or fixed plenitude. One could just as well say, in linguistic terms, either that the "signifier" has disappeared, that the stream [*flot*] of the signified no longer finds any signifying element that marks it, or that the "signified" has faded away, that the chain of the signifier no longer finds any signified that traverses it: the two pathological aspects of psychosis. One could say further, in theo-anthropological terms, that either God makes the desert grow and hollows out a lacuna in the earth, or that man fills it, occupies the place, and in this vain permutation makes us pass from one accident to the other: this being the reason why man and God are the two sicknesses of the earth, that is to say, of the structure.

What is important is knowing according to what factors and at what moments these accidents are determined in structures of one order or another. Let us again consider the analyses of Althusser and his collaborators: on the one hand, they show in the economic order how the adventures of the empty square

(Value as object =  $x$ ) are marked by the goods, money, the fetish, capital, etc., that characterize the capitalist structure. On the other hand, they show how contradictions are thus born in the structure. Finally, they show how the real and the imaginary—that is, the real beings who come to occupy places and the ideologies which express the image that they make of it—are narrowly determined by the play of these structural adventures and the contradictions resulting from it. Not that the contradictions are at all imaginary: they are properly structural, and qualify the effects of the structure in the internal time that is proper to it. Thus it cannot be said that the contradiction is apparent, but rather that it is derived: it derives from the empty place and from its becoming in the structure. *As a general rule, the real, the imaginary and their relations are always engendered secondarily by the functioning of the structure, which starts with having its primary effects in itself*

This is why what we were earlier calling accidents does not at all happen to the structure from the outside. On the contrary, it is a matter of an "immanent" tendency,<sup>63</sup> of ideal events that are part of the structure itself, and that symbolically affect its empty square or subject. We call them "accidents" in order better to emphasize not a contingent or exterior character, but this very special characteristic of the event, interior to the structure in so far as the structure can never be reduced to a simple essence.

Henceforth, a set of complex problems are posed for structuralism, concerning structural "mutations" (Foucault) or "forms of transition" from one structure to another (Althusser). It is always as a function of the empty square that the differential relations are open to new values or variations, and the singularities capable of new distributions, constitutive of another structure. The contradictions must yet be "resolved," that is, the empty place must be rid of the symbolic events that eclipse it or fill it, and be given over to the subject which must accompany it on new paths, without occupying or deserting it. Thus, there is a structuralist *hero*: neither God nor man, neither personal nor universal, it is without an identity, made of non-personal individuations and pre-individual singularities. It assures the break-up [*l'eclatement*] of a structure affected by excess or deficiency; it opposes *its own* ideal event to the ideal events that we have just described.<sup>64</sup> For a new structure not to pursue adventures that again are analogous to those of the old structure, not to cause fatal contradictions to be reborn, depends on the resistant and creative force of this hero, on its agility in following and safeguarding the displacements, on its power to cause relations to vary and to redistribute singularities, always casting another throw of the dice. This mutation point precisely defines a praxis, or rather the very site where praxis must take hold. For structuralism is not only inseparable from the works that it creates, but also from a practice in relation to the products that it interprets. Whether this practice is therapeutic or political, it designates a point of permanent revolution, or of permanent transfer.

These last criteria, from the subject to practice, are the most obscure—the criteria of the future. Across the six preceding characteristics, we have sought only to juxtapose a system of echoes between authors who are very independent from each other, exploring very diverse domains, and as diverse as the theory that they themselves propose regarding these echoes. At the different levels of the structure, the real and the imaginary, real beings and ideologies, sense and contradiction, are "effects" that must be understood at the conclusion of a "process," of a properly structural, differentiated production: strange static genesis for physical (optical, sound, etc.) "effects." Books against structuralism (or those against the "New Novel") are strictly without importance; they cannot prevent structuralism from exerting a productivity which is that of our era. No book *against* anything ever has any importance; all that counts are books *for* something, and that know how to produce it.

18. Eugen Fink, *Le Jeu comme symbole du monde*, Ed. de Minuit.

## Hume

1. In Francois Chatelet, ed., *Histoire de la philosophie, t. IV: Les Lumieres* (Paris: Hachette, 1972), pp. 65-78.

2. D. Hume, *Traite de la nature humaine*, trad. Leroy (Paris: Aubier, 1973), p. 552; *A Treatise of Human Nature*, II, Part 3, Sec.9. Either Deleuze or Hume's French translator mistakenly has "percussion instrument" for the original "string instrument" [Elie Dering's note].

3. Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, II, Part 1, Sec. 10.

4. Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, III, Part 2, Sec. 3 (footnote).

## How do We Recognize Structuralism?

1. In Francois Chatelet, ed., *Histoire de la philosophie* vol. VIII: *Le XXe Siecle* (Paris: Hachette, 1972), pp. 299-335.

2. Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), pp. 386-389 [in "Reponse au commentaire de Jean Hyppolite sur la 'Verneinung' de Freud"].

3. Lacan no doubt has gone the furthest in the original *analysis* of the distinction between imaginary and symbolic. But this distinction itself, in its diverse forms, is found in all the structuralists.

4. See Claude Levi-Strauss, "Reponses a quelques questions," *Esprit* 33A 1 (1963): pp. 636-637.

5. Trans: On the concept of a pure, unextended *spatium*, see Deleuze, *Difference et repetition* (Paris: PUF, 1968), pp. 296-297, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 229-231.

6. Louis Althusser, in *Lire le Capital*, 2 vol., (Paris: Maspero, 1965), 2: p. 157 [*Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Versom 1979), p. 180].

7. Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et les Choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), pp. 329-333 [*The Order of Things* (No translator attributed) (New York: Vintage, 1970), pp. 318-322],

8. Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits* p. 30 ["Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'," trans. Jeffrey Mehlman, *Yale French Studies* 48 (1972), p. 60].

9. Claude Levi-Strauss, "Reponses a quelques questions." *Esprit* 33.11 (1963), p. 637.

10. Trans: Althusser, *Pour Marx* (Paris: Maspero, 1965), pp. 87-128; *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Pantheon, 1969), pp. 89-127.

11. Trans: See Deleuze, *Logique du sens* (Paris: Minuit, 1969), pp. 88-89, *Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 71.

12. Trans: Althusser, *Pour Marx* (Paris: Maspero, 1965), pp. 131-152; *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Pantheon, 1969), pp. 131-151, "The 'Piccolo Teatro': Bertolazzi and Brecht."

13. Trans: *The coup de des* metaphor is associated in French literature with Mallarme's poem, "Un coup de des jamais n'abolira le hasard...", *Oeuvres completes*, Eds. Henri Mondor and G. Jean-Aubry (Paris: Gallimard, Pleiade, 1945), pp. 455-477, and Deleuze cites Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* in *Difference et repetition*, pp. 361-364 [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 282-284]. See also *Difference et repetition*, pp. 255-260, 364 [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 197-202]; *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (Paris: PUF 1962), pp. 29-31 [*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 25-27]; *Logique du sens*, pp. 74-82 [*Logic of Sense*, pp.

58-65]; *Foucault* (Paris: Minuit, 1986), pp. 124-125 [*Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 17].

14. Trans: Deleuze draws this example from the work of Raymond Roussel. See *Difference et repetition*, p. 159 [*Difference and Repetition*], p. 121.

15. Trans: On the three types of determination, see *Difference et repetition* pp. 221-224 [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 170-173].

16. Trans: See *Difference et repetition*, p. 237 [*Difference and Repetition*, p. 183] for a definition of "structure" as multiplicity and the criteria following which an Idea emerges.

17. Claude Levi-Strauss, *Anthropologic structurale* (Paris: Plon, 1958), vol. 1, pp. 235-242 [1963, *Structural Anthropology I*, Trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books), pp. 213-218].

18. Trans: It is clear from this and later arguments (cf. the fourth criterion below) that Deleuze establishes one correspondence represented by the "differential relations-species-variables" triad, and another represented by the "singularities-organic parts-function" triad. Hence, our translation of "les uns ... les autres" as "former" and "latter," rather than as "some species ... others"; this translation, i.e. as a random variation *between* species would miss the "double aspect," only one side of which bears on species as such, the other side expressing itself as the distribution of parts *within* a species. On the distinction species/parts, see *Difference et repetition*, pp. 318-327 [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 247-254] (in fact, most of chapter 5 deals with this "organization" that happens at the moment of "actualization").

19. Claude Levi-Strauss, *Anthropologic structurale* 1, pp. 343-344 [*Structural Anthropology* 1, pp. 310-312].

20. Serge Leclair, "Compter avec la psychanalyse," *Cahiers pour l'analyse* 8 (1967), pp. 97-105.

21. Louis Althusser, *Lire le Capital* (Paris: Maspero, 1965), pp. 152-157 [*Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Verso, 1979), pp. 177-180]. Cf. also Etienne Balibar in Althusser *Lire le Capital*, pp. 205-211 [*Reading Capital*, pp. 211-216]. Trans: See Deleuze's reformulation, *Difference et repetition*, pp. 240-241 [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 186-187].

22. Roman Jakobson, *Essais de linguistique generate*, 1 (Paris: Minuit, 1963), ch. VI [pp. 103-149] [*Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague: Mouton, 1956), pp. 3-51].

23. Trans: This expression is drawn from Proust's *Le Temps retrouve*, in *A la Recherche du temps perdu* (Paris: Gallimard, Pleiade, 1954), 3, p. 873; see *Marcel Proust et les signes* (Paris: PUF, 1964, 1970, 1971, 1976), pp. 71-73, *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: G. Braziller, 1972), pp. 56-59. On the concept of virtuality, see *Difference et repetition*, pp. 269-276 [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 208-214].

24. Louis Althusser, *Lire le Capital* 1, p. 82, 2, p. 44 [*Reading Capital* 64, pp. 97-98].

25. Trans: On the distinction between differentiation [*differencier*] and differential [*differentier*], see *Difference et repetition*, pp. 270-271 [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 209-211].

26. The book by Jules Vuillemin, *Philosophie de l'algebre* (Paris: PUF, 1960, 1962), proposes a determination of structures in mathematics. He insists on the importance in this regard of a theory of problems (following the mathematician Abel), and of principles of determination (reciprocal, complete and progressive determination according to Galois). He shows how structures, in this sense, provide the only means of realizing the ambitions of a true genetic method.

27. Jean Pouillon, "L'oeuvre de Claude Levi-Strauss," *Les Temps Modernes* 126 (1956), p. 155.

28. Edmond Ortigues, *Le Discours et le symbole* (Paris: Aubier, 1962), p. 197. Ortigues also marks the second difference between the imaginary and the symbolic: the "dual" or "specular" character of the imagination, in opposition to the Third, to the third term which belongs to the symbolic system.

29. Louis Althusser, *Lire le CapitaH*, pp. 169-177 [*Reading Capital*, pp. 187-193]. Trans: See J.-A. Miller, "La suture (elements de la logique du signifiant)," *Cahiers pour l'analyse* 1/2 (1966), pp. 49-51 ["Suture (elements of the logic of the signifier)," Trans. Jacqueline Rose, *Screen* 18.4 (1977-78), pp. 32-34].

30. Claude Levi-Strauss, *Anthropologic structural*, p. 224 [*Structural Anthropology*, p. 203].

31. Serge Leclair, "La mort dans la vie de l'obsede," *La Psychanalyse* 2 (1956). Trans: Deleuze refers to Leclair's analyses in discussing questions and problems as "living acts of the unconscious," *Difference et repetition*, pp. 140-141 [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 106-107, 316-317 fn. 17].

32. Trans: In a translator's note in *What Is Philosophy?*, Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell remark: "In her translation of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), Hazel Barnes translates *objectite*, which she glosses as 'the quality or state of being an object' (p.632), as 'objectness' or, on occasion, as 'object-state.' We have preferred 'objectality' in line with Massumi's translation of *visageite* as 'faciality' in *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1994], pp. 3-4). On the question/problem as objective instances, see *Difference et repetition*, pp. 219-221 & 359 [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 169-170, 280-281].

33. Claude Levi-Strauss, *Le Totemisme aujourd'hui* (Paris: PUF, 1962), p. 112 [*Totemism*, trans. Rodney Needham (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), pp. 77-78]. Trans: On totemism and its structuralist interpretation, see *Milleplateaux* (Paris: Minuit, 1980), pp. 288-89 [*A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 236].

34. Trans: On serialization and its relation to Lacan's analysis, see *Logique du sens*, pp. 51-55 [*Logic of Sense*, pp. 37-40].

35. Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits* 15 ["Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" p. 44].

36. Jacques Lacan, *Le Mythe individuel du nevrose* (Paris: CDU, 1953) ["The Neurotic's Individual Myth," trans. Martha Noel Evans, *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 48 (1979), p. 405-425], reprinted in revised form in *Ornicar*, pp. 17-18, 1979.

37. Philippe Sollers, *Drame* (Paris: Seuil, 1965). Trans: Deleuze says that Sollers's novel "takes as its motto a formula by Leibniz: 'Suppose, for example, that someone draws a number of points on the paper at random. ... I say that it is possible to find a geometric line the notion of which is constant and uniform according to a certain rule such that his line passes through all the points...'," and adds: "The entire beginning of this book is constructed on the two formulae: 'Problem...' and 'Missed...'. Series are traced out in relation to the singular points of the body of the narrator, an ideal body which is 'thought rather than perceived'," *Difference et repetition*, pp. 257 [*Difference and Repetition*, p. 326 fn. 16].

38. Jean-Pierre Faye, *Analogues* (Paris: Seuil, 1964).

39. Sigmund Freud, *Oeuvres completes*, vol. IX (Paris: PUF, 1998).

40. Claude Levi-Strauss, *Le Totemisme aujourd'hui* 115 [*Totemism*, pp. 79-81].

41. Trans: The allusion refers Arthur Rimbaud's enigmatic prose poem "H" and to the final line, "trouvez Hortense" [find Hortense]. See Rimbaud, *Oeuvres completes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972) 151.

42. Trans: On the refrain, see *Difference et repetition* 161 [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 122-123].

43. Andre Green, "L'objet (a) de J. Lacan," *Cahiers pour l'analyse* 3 (1966), p. 32.

44. Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 25 ["Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" p. 55; translation modified]. Trans: See also *Difference et repetition*, p. 157 [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 199-200].

45. Trans: On the simultaneously relative and absolute status of movements (as characterizing the concept), see *Qu'est-ce que la philosophic?* (Paris: Minuit, 1991) 26-27 [*What Is Philosophy?*, trans.

- Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 21-22].
46. Trans: See *Logique du sens*, pp. 55-56 [*Logic of Sense*, pp. 40-41].
47. Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et les choses*, pp. 19-31 [*The Order of Things*, pp. 3-16].
48. Trans: Deleuze cites Sollers and Faye in his discussion of the "blind spot" in *Difference et répétition*, p. 257 [*Difference and Repetition*, p. 326].
49. J-A. Miller "La suture (elements de la logique du signifiant)," pp. 44-49 ["Suture (elements of the logic of the signifier)," pp. 26-32].
50. Claude Levi-Strauss, "Introduction a Foeuvre de Marcel Mauss," pp. 49-59, in Marcel Mauss, *Sociologie et anthropologic*, Paris: PUF, 1950. Trans: See also *Logique du sens*, pp. 63-64 [*Logic of Sense*, pp. 48-50].
51. Trans: See *Logique du sens*, pp. 57-62 [*Logic of Sense*, pp. 44-47].
52. Trans: On the object =  $x$  and word =  $x$ , see *Difference et répétition*, pp. 156—163 [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 118-125].
53. Michel Foucault, *Raymond Roussel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963) [*Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*, trans. Charles Ruas (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986)].
54. Trans: See *Logique du sens*, pp. 266-268 [*Logic of Sense*, pp. 228-230].
55. Trans: On the phallus as "object =  $x$ ," see the thirty-second series in *Logic of Sense*.
56. Cf. Macherey in *Lire le Capital*, pp. 242-252, the analysis that Macherey carries out on the notion of value, showing that this notion is always staggered in relation to the exchange in which it appears.
57. Foucault *Les Mots et les choses*, 392 [*The Order of Things*, p. 380] Trans: On the status of different "orders" in relation to one another, see *Difference et répétition*, pp. 236-242 [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 182-186].
58. Trans: See *Difference et répétition*, pp. 251-266 [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 195-206] and *Logique du sens*, pp. 67-73 [*Logic of sense*, pp. 52-57].
59. Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et les choses*, p. 353 [*The Order of Things*, p. 342].
60. Trans: See *Difference et répétition*, pp. 316-319, pp. 354-357 (conclusion) [*Difference and Repetition*, pp. 246-248, pp. 276-279].
61. Claude Levi-Strauss, *Le Cru et le Cuit* (Paris: Plon, 1964), p. 19 [*The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 11].
62. Cf. the schema proposed by Serge Leclair, following Lacan, in "A la recherche des principes d'une psychotherapie des psychoses," *L'Evolution psychiatrique* 2 (1958).
63. On the Marxist notions of "contradiction" and "tendency," cf. the analyses of Etienne Balibar, in Althusser, *Lire le Capital*, pp. 296-303 [*Reading Capital*, pp. 283-293].
64. Cf. Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et les choses*, p. 230 [*The Order of Things*, p. 217]: structural mutation "[this profound breach in the expanse of continuities], though it must be analyzed, and minutely so, cannot be 'explained' or even summed up in a single word. It is a radical event that is distributed across the entire visible surface of knowledge, and whose signs, shocks, and effects, it is possible follow step by step."