I

The transfer of knowledges is almost always mediated by institutions and by authorized persons. I set up some metaphors in this paper to try to examine these mediating processes by which knowledges are both reproduced and transformed. In particular, I take psychoanalytic and religious training as metaphors for the transmission of a discipline, and then I briefly extend the figure of discipleship to talk about literary pedagogy and the training of graduate students.

Since the work of Foucault we ‘know’ that a discipline is not a body of knowledge alone, but is as well an organization of practices, a mode of institutional control, and a principle of limitation operating on discourse. This limitation, it must be stressed, is not the repression of a spontaneously developing knowledge but is precisely productive of knowledge; energy is an effect of structure, not its opposite. In Foucault’s lexicon there is a small but marked difference between ‘a discipline’ and ‘discipline’ in the sense of ‘disciplinary action’; and an equally small but marked difference between a discipline and a discursive formation. In each case, however, there is the possibility of recasting the unreflected concept of ‘a discipline’ in terms of the more complex concept to which it is opposed. Thus we could say that disciplines not only operate with a specific domain of objects, methods, techniques, and protocols for the recognition of true propositions, but they also act as mechanisms for the generation of new propositions within a particular conceptual and technical framework. These propositions may be either true or false; what defines them as valid propositions is that they are constructed in accordance with the rules for the formation of disciplinary objects and concepts. But disciplines function as much to reproduce an existing structure of knowledge as to produce new knowledge. For most disciplines, the complex interrelation between these two functions is bounded by the educational apparatus and established in the process of transmission of knowledge to ‘disciples’ and in their accreditation as legitimate knowing subjects. My first and most general line of argument, then, has to do with the forms of desire-for-knowledge which are mobilized in this process.

A second and more specific line of argument running through the article is concerned with understanding how the process of transmission of
disciplinary knowledge is bound up with processes of interpretation – that is, both how it authorizes interpretation and judgement, and how interpretative processes are intricated in a relation to disciplinary mastery. Here I suggest (but tangentially) the operation of a form of discipleship which is specific to the interpretative disciplines. If interpretative authority differs from other authorized knowledges, however, I do not seek to ground it epistemologically. My interest is in the institutional status of knowledge in its relation to desire.

This interest should immediately require me to question the standing of my own enunciation: to question the forms of recognition and of will-to-truth with which it is invested. These are questions, I suppose, about the monologic genres of the academic essay and the public lecture; but the political consequences of these genres cannot simply be read off from their formal structure of enunciation, and there are no formal guarantees of the political correctness of any act of speaking or writing. The prescription of dialogue or group discussion, for example, may still be a coercive gesture; and I shall write later of some of the ways in which silence can be used in a secular or religious transference relation as a form of enunciative control.

At the centre of these questions of speaking and authority is the problem of what Lacan calls le sujet supposé savoir. At stake here is the difference between ‘really’ knowing and being invested, under particular conditions, with a temporary and fictional attribute of knowledge. I shall be arguing that the failure to maintain the fictional status of the attribution of knowledge has reinforced the hieratic structure of the institution of psychoanalysis; but implicit in this argument is a presumption that the attribution of a right to know is indeed provisionally and fictitiously possible.

II

I begin, then, with that discipline which more than any other, and in an exemplary fashion, has both theorized and failed to theorize the social relations of interpretation involved in its practice. The striking thing about psychoanalysis, says Julia Kristeva in Histoires d’amour, is that it uses love as the basis of its cure. On the one hand it measures the confusions, the pain, the symptoms, and the hallucinations revealed by love against the minimal and irreducible reality of sex; and on the other hand it deliberately provokes a state of love between the patient and the analyst, in order not simply to mobilize these confusions and hallucinations, to present them for interpretation, but to work through them, to defuse them and finally to displace them in that ‘analytic pirouette’ by which the love transferred on to the analyst is again shifted in the achievement of an analysis. In this process the analyst is shown to be a lieu-tenant, the holder of the place of the Other, which he or she occupies ‘as a subject who is supposed to know – and to know how to love; as a consequence he becomes in the cure the supreme beloved and the chosen victim’.²
The text in which the transference relation is first opened to theorization is the ‘Fragment of an analysis of a case of hysteria’, or ‘Dora’—a fragment because the analysis was broken off by the patient in a refusal of these particular social relations of interpretation. The text has been intensively read in recent years, particularly by feminist critics, and I don’t want to repeat this history of reading. Let me instead simply outline the formal structure of the series of interpretations around which the case study is organized.

In the first place there is a reading of the symptoms produced on Dora’s body. Freud interprets these symptoms in terms of the overdetermined displacement of sexual memories and fantasies, but insists that, rather than imposing his interpretations, he elicits each of them from Dora: ‘She knew about it already but the question of where her knowledge came from was a riddle which her memories were unable to solve. She had forgotten the source of all her information on this subject.’

A second series extends this first set of interpretations into an analysis of the complex screen-relations between Dora’s father and Herr and Frau K., and of Dora’s role as an object of barter between the two men. Again, the analysis is said to be elicited from Dora herself; but Freud then proceeds to undermine it, and precisely because it is ‘a sound and incontestable train of argument’. When such coherence is encountered during treatment,

it soon becomes evident that the patient is using thoughts of this kind, which the analysis cannot attack, for the purpose of cloaking others which are anxious to escape from criticism and from consciousness. A string of reproaches against other people leads one to suspect the existence of a string of self-reproaches with the same content. All that needs be done is to turn back each particular reproach on to the speaker himself. (p. 35)

Freud then proposes Dora’s complicity in her father’s affair with Frau K. and her identification with the older woman. What he doesn’t discuss is the possibility of his own identification with the father, or the position of the father, and the bearing this possibility might have had on his intervention at this point.

The third set of interpretations is of those dreams that ‘seemed to call for insertion in the long thread of connections which spun itself out between a symptom of the disease and a pathogenic idea’ (p. 15). Two dreams are analysed in considerable detail, and reduced to a repressed matrix. Freud says of the second dream, for example, that ‘beyond the almost limitless series of displacements which were thus brought to light, it was possible to divine the operation of a single simple factor — Dora’s deep-rooted homosexual love for Frau K.’ (p. 105). The case that Freud builds up in the course of analysing the dreams is of a quasi-legal character, but he stresses that the interpretation is complicated by the role that the offer and the unravelling of the dream play in the relation between patient and analyst. ‘Everything’, he says of an earlier piece of dream interpretation, ‘fits together very satisfactorily upon this view; but owing to the characteristics
of “transference” its validity is not susceptible of definite proof’ (p. 74).

Transference is a radical form of interference in the interpretative process, and, whereas other explanatory techniques can be acquired relatively easily, ‘transference is the one thing the presence of which has to be detected almost without assistance and with only the slightest clues to go upon, while at the same time the risk of making arbitrary inferences has to be avoided’ (p. 116). Nevertheless, it cannot be evaded, since it is a factor in the interpretative process, and since ‘it is only after the transference has been resolved that a patient arrives at a sense of conviction of the validity of the connections which have been constructed during the analysis’ (pp. 116–17). Transferences thus constitute the fourth set of interpretations on which the analyst must work. They are described, in a textual metaphor which runs through the whole case history, as ‘new editions or facsimiles of the impulses and phantasies which are aroused and made conscious during the progress of the analysis; but they have this peculiarity, which is characteristic for their species, that they replace some earlier person by the person of the physician’ (p. 116). The analyst is inserted into a ‘psychical series’ which runs back to the fantasy structure of the Oedipus complex, and which is triggered off when repressed contents are in danger of being revealed. Here, Freud replaces both the father and – to his surprise – Herr K. But he is also inserted into a series of governesses: by being ‘dismissed’ with two weeks’ notice, ‘just like a maidservant or a governess’ (p. 105), he repeats both the K.s’ governess, who was seduced by K. and then sacked, and with whom Dora seems strongly to identify; and Dora’s own governess, who initiated her into sexual knowledge and who loved Dora’s father. Feminist readings of the case history have concentrated on the moment of Dora’s break with Freud; and indeed, in its assignment to the analyst of a blame which he refuses, it crucially reveals the desire of the analyst as a central component of the analysis.

It is with the failure to take account of this desire that Freud is taxed by later theorists of the process of counter-transference. Muslin and Gill focus on Freud’s prescription of what would constitute a ‘healthy’ sexual response to an older man’s forced advances as evidence of Freud’s libidinal involvement with Dora through an identification with Herr K. Marcus suggests that the counter-transference was largely negative, and that the case functioned ‘as part of the process by which Freud began to move toward a resolution of his relation with Fliess – and perhaps vice-versa as well’. And Rose argues that interpretation works in the case as a form of resistance on Freud’s part – resistance ‘to the pressing need to develop a theory of sexuality, whose complexity or difficulty manifests itself time and again’. Several instances in the case history of Dora’s exclusion from Freud’s triumphs of interpretation indicate the problematic position of the analyst when interpretation becomes a paranoid display of mastery. In this respect the ‘Fragment’ repeats the tension running through The Interpretation of Dreams between the principle that interpretation involves above all the productive activity of the dreamer, with the analyst playing
merely a catalytic role in the talking cure, and a conception of the dreamtext as an object given to interpretation ‘even independently of information from the dreamer’, and independently of the social relations set in play in the analytic situation. \(^8\)

But it is precisely in terms of the social relations involved that Lacan attempts to defend Freud in his various theorizations of the transference. The psychoanalytic experience, Lacan argues, proceeds in a ‘relationship of subject to subject, which means that it preserves a dimension which is irreducible to all psychology considered as the objectification of certain properties of the individual. What happens in an analysis is that the subject is, strictly speaking, constituted through a discourse, to which the mere presence of the psychoanalyst brings, before any intervention, the dimension of dialogue. \(^9\) With respect to this principle, the ‘conceptual inadequacy’ \(^10\) of the notion of counter-transference consists in its reduction of the analytic relationship to an ‘intersubjective introjection’, that is, to a ‘dual relation’ \(^11\) in which transference and counter-transference, as the psychological implication of two real individuals, balance each other out. But transference and counter-transference are not separate and opposed processes:

The transference is a phenomenon in which subject and psycho-analyst are both included. To divide it in terms of transference and counter-transference – however bold, however confident what is said on this theme may be – is never more than a way of avoiding the essence of the matter. \(^12\)

That is, the position of the analyst is always already involved in the transference, and this position which the person of the analyst occupies is a moment in a ‘psychical series’. Thus, ‘by opening up the dialectic of the transference, we must establish the notion of the Other with a capital O as being the locus of the deployment of speech.’ \(^13\)

It is because of Freud’s formal occupation of this function that Lacan can then argue that ‘the keys always fall into Freud’s hands even in those cases which are broken off like this one.’ \(^14\) The dialectical structure of the situation itself resolves the transference. In her exemplary reading of Lacan’s ‘Intervention sur le transfert’ Suzanne Gearhart suggests that his analysis ‘hinges on a distinction between an actor implicated in the scene and a neutral position not directly implicated in it’, and this ‘distinction between the Imaginary and the Symbolic, between the subject who is caught up in the imaginary relationships described by the scene and the (position of the) analyst, is absolute’. \(^15\) Thus, for Lacan, the ‘personal and historical’ blindness Freud displayed in his analysis of Dora nevertheless doesn’t affect the structural possibility of a ‘neutral perspective from which the problems it caused could have been resolved’. \(^16\)

This neutral position, that of the subject credited with possessing knowledge, is thought by Lacan in unitary and monolithic terms. It is affirmed as an institution rather than problematized as a place riven by desire, and this is because it rests upon a final appeal to the transcendental
subject of knowledge; I shall return to this point shortly. For the moment, let me dwell briefly on the metaphor of those ‘keys’ which ‘always fall into Freud’s hands’. These are the fixed hermeneutic ‘key’ which is one aspect of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and they presumably correspond to the ‘picklocks’ to which, Freud writes to Fliess, the case of Dora is yielding.\(^{17}\) If the metaphor is in the most banal way phallic, it is because that realism of knowledge which assumes that a stable and pre-given meaning can be released by use of the correct analytic instrument corresponds precisely to a realism of the phallus which equates it with the penis, as well as to what Lacan denounces in Freud himself as a ‘prejudice which falsifies the conception of the Oedipus complex from the start, by making it define as natural, rather than normative, the predominance of the paternal figure’.\(^{18}\) And it corresponds to that sexual realism which accepts the reality of female sexuality as the reality of the lack of the phallus, and which led Freud at a later date to believe that a male analyst could not be a suitable transference object for a homosexual woman patient (as he believed Dora to be).\(^{19}\)

The interpretative realism which both invokes and secures the authority of the analytic position is avoided in Kristeva’s account of the relativity of interpretation to the play of fantasies of desire and authority in analysis. The analyst is not fixed in the position of the classical interpreter, who interprets by virtue of stable meanings derived from a solid system or morality or who at least tries to restrict the range of his delirium through a stable theoretical counterweight. This is not to say that analytic theory does not exist but rather that, all things considered, its consistency is rudimentary when compared to the countertransference operation which is always specific and which sets the interpretive machine in motion differently every time.\(^{20}\)

And because ‘the efficacy of interpretation is a function of its transferential truth’, interpretation has a directly political dimension.\(^{21}\) At another level, however, this politics of interpretation is called into question by the institutional structure of psychoanalysis. Gayatri Spivak, for example, claims that Kristeva ‘fail[s] to question the sociohistorical symptomaticity of psychoanalysis as a disciplinary practice’.\(^{22}\) To a certain extent Kristeva is able to answer this charge by distinguishing between two different ways of assuming analytic authority:

The analyst provisionally occupies the place of the Great Other insofar as he is the metaphorical object of an idealizing identification. It is by knowing this and doing it that he creates the space for transference. By repressing it, however, the analyst becomes that Führer for whom Freud already showed his abhorrence in *Group Psychology*.\(^{23}\)

But this still conceives of knowledge, in Hegelian terms, as self-presence and a self-recognition which makes possible the resolution of the transference. If knowledge is thought, however, not through the model of
the capacity of a knowing subject to represent its knowledge to itself, but structurally, as the effect of particular disciplinary conditions of possibility, then this dialectic of self-recognition might perhaps lose some of its obviousness.

III

Let me develop a distinction here between two models of the transmission of knowledge. The first is the productive relation of an analyst to a client, or of a teacher to a student who is not being trained as a teacher. ‘Productivity’ here implies both that the knowledge transmitted may be transformed in its application, and that this transformation will not be built into the structure of the discipline. The second, reproductive, relation of a teacher to a disciple represents at once the strict control of disciplinary boundaries, and the possibility of a transformation of the boundaries which will be institutionalized in the discipline itself. It is to some of the contradictions and limitations of this second model that I want now to address my discussion through a consideration of the role of transference in the psychoanalytic training analysis.

The training analysis was instituted in 1922 to serve three functions: the transmission of technique; the provision of a control over the counter-transference; and the establishment of a lineal descent from Freud. It is thus a central part of that history of discipleship that Roustang recounts in Dire Mastery. This history is one of competition between Freud’s disciples for the position of favourite. Freud himself seems actively to have incited the struggle between Jung and Abraham, and Roustang suggests that he used his relation to Ferenczi as a means of liquidating his transference relation to Fliess, and that this process was then repeated with the other disciples. ‘At work in each case were: attachment to Freud’s person, demand for privileged recognition, jealousy of the others, and conflict about the inheritance.’ This culminated in the constitution of the International Psychoanalytical Association around the figure of the charismatic leader. The mechanism of transference thus became the central organizational principle for the psychoanalytic institution. Roustang comments:

If one compares Freud’s analyses of the Church and the army in Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego to his project for a psychoanalytic society in On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement, one is forced to notice a strange relationship between the two: loyalty to the founder, allegiance to one leader, adherence to one doctrine, rejection of dissidents, and other aspects. All these features defining the new society can be explained in psychoanalytic terms only by an identification with the leader as an object of love, as the ego ideal... if every psychoanalytic society reproduces the Church or the army, if by its very structure it passes on to its members the influences and the ill effects of identification and love, then psychoanalysis itself is certainly threatened or subverted, and its fine edge is blunted.
In institutional terms, it is crucial that no provision is made for the
dissolution of the transference in the process of training.

Psychoanalysis is constituted as a discipline and as an institution in
relation to an orthodox knowledge embodied in a knowing subject. Lacan
says of this relation:

As soon as the subject who is supposed to know exists somewhere . . .
there is transference.

What does an organization of psychoanalysts mean when it confers
certificates of ability, if not that it indicates to whom one may apply to
represent the subject who is supposed to know?

Now, it is quite certain, as everyone knows, that no psychoanalyst can
claim to represent, in however slight a way, a corpus of absolute
knowledge. That is why, in a sense, it can be said that if there is someone
to whom one can apply there can be only one such person. This one was
Freud, while he was alive. The fact that Freud, on the subject of the
unconscious, was legitimately the subject that one could presume to
know, sets aside anything that had to do with the analytic relation, when
it was initiated, by his patients, with him.

He was not only the subject who was supposed to know. He did
know, and he gave us this knowledge in terms that may be said to be
indestructible, in as much as, since they were first communicated, they
support an interrogation which, up to the present day, has never been
exhausted. No progress has been made, however small, that has not
deviated whenever one of the terms around which Freud ordered the
ways that he traced, and the paths of the unconscious, has been
neglected. This shows us clearly enough what the function of the subject
who is supposed to know is all about.

The function, and by the same token, the consequence, the prestige, I
would say, of Freud are on the horizon of every position of the analyst.
They constitute the drama of the social, communal organization of
psychoanalysts.26

While it is crucial always to allow for duplicity and indirection in Lacan, it
does seem that what he here invokes is a transcendental subject of
knowledge, and that the invocation works to preserve the place and the
reality of truth. In other words, this is a cognitive realism in the sense that it
locates knowledge in a fixed place rather than in that structural relation in
which the analyst – every analyst – stands in for the Other who is endlessly
displaced in the Symbolic. Where Laplanche, for example, thinks of
transference in terms of metaphor (Übertragung/metapherein), of fiction,
of a misplaced and displaced addressee,27 Lacan here anchors the language
game of interpretation in a finally secure reality – and this despite the
whole structuralist and anti-naturalist bent of his work.

Although in principle there is always a discontinuity between texts and
their consequences, it nevertheless seems likely that this reliance upon a
trancendental subject has had marked disciplinary effects, with the
repetition in the Lacanian community of precisely those structures Lacan
had denounced as resembling the religious community of the church. In this reformed society external boundaries are maintained by the central role accorded to excommunication, and internal cohesion is built around the poles of adulation of the Master and the abjection of the disciples. Roustant again:

In a group whose only goal is to acknowledge Lacan and to be acknowledged by him, the dissolution of the transference is a theoretical absurdity. After each congress, the participants wonder whom among the speakers Lacan will notice, which papers he will praise or condemn. And if he mentions no-one, whatever allusions he makes will be copiously interpreted. A system based exclusively on recognition by Lacan inexorably leads to the sterility of his disciples. Although Lacan himself complains of this, however, he refuses to acknowledge his responsibility or his need to remain unique.  

The 1979 dissolution of the École Freudienne (which was justified explicitly as a way of breaking the transference of the disciples on to Lacan) was followed almost immediately by the founding of the Cause Freudienne. And it is telling that all contributors to the journal Scilicet remained anonymous — with the single exception of Lacan. The opposition is that between the namelessness of those who are supposed to know, and who are subsumed in their formal roles, and the naming, indeed the father-naming, of the one who knows.

The question at issue here is whether the structured organization of a discipline (and I take it that there can be no cohesive discipline of knowledge in the absence of a formal structure) is possible without a reliance upon the master/disciple couple, in however mediated a form, and in particular without a structural non-resolution of the transference. Roustant is pessimistic, arguing that ‘if the transference can be resolved in regard to the analyst, it must reappear in the very act of producing disciples’. My final metaphor for the disciplinary process, to which I now turn, is again concerned directly with this process of discipleship.

IV

In Ruth Prawer Jhabvala’s novel A New Dominion, Lee and Margaret, two English girls of about 20, are living with their swami in an ashram built on cheap land outside Benares. The conditions are primitive, but these discomforts could be and were interpreted as blessings, for what surer test could there be of a disciple’s sincerity than the ability to overcome discomforts? There were many who fell short and one by one they went away, and Swamiji saw them do so with a smiling, loving acquiescence. It only made him draw those that remained closer to himself.  

The focal point of the group’s activities and of its relation to Swamiji is a
hutment which has been fitted out as a communal prayer hall. The room is dominated by a picture of Swamiji’s own guru, ‘a very holy man who wore no clothes and sat on a deer skin’ (p. 82). Beneath it, seated in a big velvet armchair, Swamiji encourages the devotions of the disciples, inspiring them to chant the names of the gods ever more loudly and more devotedly. Lee and Margaret are at first embarrassed, reserved, unable to sing with the same abandon as the others; but slowly, as the days passed, cunningly, he enticed them out of themselves. To each of them it appeared and became clear beyond doubt with each successive meeting that he was concentrating only on her. At first, Lee thought she must be imagining it – after all, there were all these others, all intent only on him and drawing their inspiration only from him – what was so special about her that he should single her out from among them? To cure herself of her misapprehension, she would lower her eyes away from him but she could never do so for long because he seemed to be drawing her back, beckoning to her, telling her come, look up, look at me. And when she did, sure enough, there he was smiling at her – yes! at her alone! – so that she had to smile back and sing the way he wanted her to and cry out ‘Rama! Gopala! Hari! Krishna!’ with as much abandon as she could manage. And afterwards, when he distributed the bits of rock sugar that served as holy offerings, then too at her turn, as he put it into her mouth, there was this special message for her, this speaking without words that went right through her and reached it seemed to her into regions which no one had hitherto penetrated. (p. 83)

In this community the ‘lateral’ relations between the disciples are characterized by competition and jealousy, whereas their ‘vertical’ relation to the swami is one of immediacy. Lee visits Swamiji and realizes that he had been expecting her; ‘she knew he could see right into her and it both thrilled and frightened her’ (p. 101). This relationship is, of course, one of power, but what is at stake is accepting this, and thereby moving it to a different level. When Lee refuses to make a gesture of submission demanded of her, this refusal itself then becomes the object of an inquisition (just as ‘resistance’ in psychoanalysis is construed as a symptom); and Lee senses that her rebellion is not against Swamiji but ‘against myself, my own feelings’ (p. 123). Swamiji himself is clear-sighted about what is involved in this process. He tells her friend Raymond:

Lee is now in my hands. She is my responsibility to mould and to make. But before I can mould and make, I have to break. The old Lee must be broken before the new Lee can be formed, and we are now only at the first stage of our task. . . . I have to help her and guide her every step so that she will know that everything is nothing and also that she herself is nothing. Only then can she belong to me as the disciple must belong to the guru. (pp. 144–6)

As time passes, Lee comes to realize that she has failed some test and
incurred her guru’s disfavour. Becoming deeply depressed, she begins to withdraw from the group:

I drag myself around. I’ve never been like this before. Everything is so strange, so dismal; it’s as if there’s no light in the sun, and those glorious Indian nights, well they too now are dark and drab to me. Even at the hymn-singing we have morning and evening when he always seems to be singling out each of us separately, even then I’m not there for him. Lately I’ve stopped joining in with the others when they sing. I must stand there silent; I don’t feel like singing. I’m sure he’s noticed – he always notices when anyone doesn’t sing fervently enough – but now with me he pretends not to. He ignores me completely. I don’t know why. I think about it all the time. (p. 185)

When she speaks about this to another disciple, the girl avoids answering directly and tells Lee that ‘what was happening now was only between me and him. And if I could bring myself to understand that his present neglect of me was nothing but an extension of his love and care for me, my suffering would be at an end’ (pp. 185–6). The silence of the guru, that is, works like the tactical silence of the analyst in giving shape to a transference relation.33

Lee continues to be unable to accept and trust Swamiji’s disregard of her (although she recognizes that this indicates her low stage of spiritual development). When she eventually reproaches him, he abuses her, rapes her, and defiles her, and then turns her out of the ashram. Other disciples are sent to fetch her back; and at the end of the book, despite her deeply ambivalent feelings (based in part on the fact that Margaret, who, in accordance with the guru’s teaching, has refused Western medicine, has become fatally ill and died), she returns to the ashram to take up her position as the favoured disciple.

My interest here is in the abstract pattern of the master–disciple relationship. A novel doesn’t of course provide valid anthropological material, but this one does produce a clear general model of the process of doctrinal transmission – one which corresponds closely to other accounts of religious discipleship. This model is that of a practice of initiation and guidance, structured as a rite of passage with clearly defined stages and a definite psychological progression. The central moment is that of the transference on to the guru. He in turn is qualified to take on the responsibility for this transference because of his own successfully resolved training and his command of an esoteric lore and technique. (It is irrelevant that the lore may be totally banal in content; what matters is its charismatic enunciation.) The guru is characterized above all by his insight: Lee feels that she has been singled out by Swamiji; a former Rajeeshi writes in a very similar way that it seemed as though Bhagwan noticed only her in the crowd;34 and Lacan’s disciples clearly envisage a similar possibility of recognition. But noticing may be extended to non-conscious levels, in a process of mind speaking to mind. Thus Freud recommends that the analyst should ‘turn his own unconscious like a receptive organ toward the
transmitting unconscious of the patient’. The precondition for this is that he ‘must be able to communicate more freely with his own unconscious’, and it is precisely the purpose of the training analysis to make this possible.\cite{35}

The literature on the sociology of religion and religious psychology seems, for whatever reason, to be strikingly poor in descriptions of the process of doctrinal transmission. Let me follow van Gennep in isolating three stages in the passage through discipleship – first, separation; second, the transition across a threshold; and, third, aggregation.\cite{36} The separation stage involves a passage out of an unsatisfactory community or an immature status; the finding of the single appropriate teacher; and the entry into a community of novitiates. Movement to the second, liminal stage is marked by various forms of dispossession – of one’s name, of clothes, of social status and its insignia. The central process here is the breaking down of the old ego. This may involve a ritual humiliation, as in the rape of Lee, or a ritual ordeal. The point is to enforce submission to the will of the master, and this will include both direct attack and what Goffman calls ‘looping’, in which defensive responses are themselves taken as an object of attack\cite{37} – hence Lee’s feeling of bad faith when she is unable to make a gesture of submission. Finally, the liminal stage may incorporate an actual alienation, a period of wandering in the wilderness, as with Lee’s attempt to escape and Dora’s turning away from Freud. In this process of loss, what is discovered is that the guru had nothing to teach except that he had nothing to teach. The initiate discovers, in other words, that he or she already possessed the knowledge that was to be acquired, and that the task of the spiritual master was to bring about an awareness of this. The form of the process is its content.

The last moment of the rite of passage is a rebirth into a new self. In theory this leads to a decisive break with the master, as the initiate in turn becomes a teacher, an enlightened one. In practice it seems that this resolution of the transference on to the master involves essentially a recognition of its fictionality; the guru teaches sitting beneath a portrait of his own guru, and it is through this resolution that the esoteric lore and the techniques associated with it are transmitted intact.

V

Transference relations of various kinds and various degrees of intensity obviously occur throughout any pedagogic system, although I shall suggest that the charismatic role of the teacher has been given a very particular institutional form in modern, text-oriented literary studies. But the analogy I want to pursue for the moment is with the training of graduate students – that is, with the moment of reproduction of the relations of literary knowledge. The ritual of the PhD has to do at once with the authorization of interpretative credentials and with the transmission – but also the controlled transformation – of a disciplinary structure. In its usual form it
is organized as a passage from an undergraduate community to postgraduate loneliness; a breaking down of ego; and the acquisition of a specialized lore through a difficult and intense relation to a supervisor. The ordeal of candidature is a mad process in its assignment of a structural role to insecurity. It challenges the candidate's sense of worth, provoking a trauma of loss as one of its central knowledge-producing mechanisms, one which is often cruelly prolonged or repeated. And this process is individualized; the absence of any theorization of its institutional dimensions works to isolate the candidate by denying him or her a procedural rationale for the trauma.

It is not, of course, an individual process. In the first place, disciplines have external conditions of access, support, and reproducibility, which I have not attempted to discuss here. In the second place, the relation to the supervisor is no more a relation of one to one than it is in psychoanalysis. The supervisor is a representative of institutional and disciplinary authority, and the holder of a place in both diachronic and synchronic relation to the disciplinary authorities (although struggle within the discipline is also at stake in, and an effect of, the training – this is formalized in the French soutenance, where the supervisor acts as an advocate (rapporteur) for the candidate against the critique launched by the assesseur, and where what is at issue is in part the prestige and the strength of the supervisor). He or she thus mediates the candidate's relation to the absent masters of the discipline, and in principle this mediation can be dispensed with, treated as a point of passage rather than as an embodiment of authority. But the embodiment is important both in terms of providing a focus for the relations of disciplinary authority and in terms of setting up the possibility of response. Embodiment should also be taken quite literally, however. The pedagogic relation in general and the candidate–supervisor relation in particular are erotic relations, in the sense that they depend upon the mechanisms of transference love. (This love may, of course, take the form of resentment or hatred.) In the case of a male candidate the relationship will take the form of Oedipal rivalry (in the German university system the supervisor is called the Doktorvater, 'doctoral father') – that is, a fantasy relationship involving at once emulation and hostility and culminating in the occupation by the candidate of the place of the displaced father figure: the place that had always been reserved for him. This pattern is complicated in the case of female candidates by the possibility that the erotics of the transference and the counter-transference can be taken literally, and realized in the form of either sexual blackmail or an exploitative physical relationship. Charisma and harassment are the two faces of pedagogic authority. I have assumed that the supervisor is a male, because it is a normatively masculine position. But there are clearly special problems for female supervisors, because they tend to be isolated in predominantly male departments; because they are often required to serve in an overdetermined erotic and maternal role in relation to female students; and because their anomalous occupation of a
normatively masculine position subjects them to a continued pressure to prove their worth.

This account sounds and in part is critical; but a criticism of a disciplinary structure can only be correctly based if it is aware of the functions this structure performs. A discipline is an organization of relations and techniques for the production and use of knowledge; there can be no knowledge whatsoever that is not enabled by some such structure, however informal, however embedded in everyday life it may be. The question is not, therefore, whether or not there should be disciplines and disciplinary relations, but can only be about their form, their relative flexibility, their productiveness, and so on.

In a recent paper on the 1921 Newbolt Report on *The Teaching of English in England* Noel King suggests that the development of modern ‘English’ – modern literary studies – both depends upon and reinforces a moral pedagogy in which the central charismatic role of the teacher and the character-forming effects of engagement with literary texts are foregrounded. Techniques of classroom teaching using texts as the basis for a continuous interrogation of moral experience are developed – in particular, dramatic declamation and a form of close reading relying upon a power of judgement which is at once literary and moral. The need the Newbolt Report responded to was for

a form of teaching and examination . . . which could place the teacher–student relation at its centre, in a new kind of way, such that the student would be open to infinite non-coercive correction. The moral stature of the teacher had to be established, as the embodiment of certain norms and as the point at which a disciplinary system corrected students in an embodied fashion. The teacher becomes a point of relay for the construction of an autonomous, self-policing ‘pupil-life’.38

Such self-regulation is the end effect of the mediating role of the teacher in relation to the literary text. The teacher’s enthusiasm will finally make possible an unmediated relationship of the pupil to literature, but ‘the “disappearance” of the teacher as a part of the pedagogical mechanism can occur only to the extent that the pupil has successfully mastered the techne of self.’39 To focus on the centrality of the teacher–pupil relationship to this ‘experiential’ pedagogy, says King, ‘is to remind ourselves of that set of emulable norms, the presence of an exemplary personage, at once therapeutic and charismatic; to remind ourselves, that is, of a system of pedagogical exchange from which we have yet to escape.’ And he suggests that ‘one of the current tasks of criticism might usefully consist in indicating the extent to which it is now possible for “English” to drop away without that system of pedagogy disappearing.’40

This system of pedagogy was developed in the first instance for use within secondary schools and for university undergraduate teaching. Let me recall the distinction I made before between two models of the transmission of knowledge: the first working through the ‘productive’
relation of a master to a non-professional client or student; the second through the ‘reproductive’ relation of a master to a disciple. This distinction corresponds very roughly to that between secondary and undergraduate education, on the one hand, and specialized postgraduate study, on the other. But the point is that the distinction is in no way absolute, since the first relation always in principle contains the possibility of the second (that is, of a reproductive use); and this, in turn, need not be structurally distinct from the first, ‘productive’ relation.

Moreover, the correlation between the two models seems to me to be more striking in the case of literary study than for most other disciplines. I want to suggest that this is a result of the interpretative focus of literary study – its simultaneous nurturing of independent moral judgement, and control of the limits of judgement through the mechanisms of embodied correction.

The questions of graduate-training and of a charismatic pedagogy are thus questions about the moral and experiential dimension given to judgement in literary studies, and about the processes of authorization of such judgement. This linkage is a part of our New Critical inheritance, and it does not seem to me to have been substantially modified by the structuralist and post-structuralist orthodoxies which have succeeded the New Criticism. But, while a rejection of the relatively intimate teaching relations fostered in this tradition might be salutary as a refusal of charismatic authority, it might well entail no more than a repression of the reality of transference relations and of the mediated transferential structure of interpretation. It might mean no more than a return to the positivist pedagogy of those ‘hard’ sciences, philology and history, which the New Criticism displaced from the centre of the discipline.41

To ask whether the ordeal of discipleship can be dispensed with involves asking another, more fundamental question: whether there can be a dispassionate acquisition of knowledge. Perhaps there can be no generally valid answer to this question; but I believe that in the case of literary studies the answer must be that there can not. It is for this reason that I have placed the master–disciple relation at the centre of the process of doctrinal transmission. To assert the passional basis of the acquisition of at least certain kinds of knowledge is to say that there can be no unmediated relation to knowledge (no simple ‘love of knowledge’). The master–disciple relation, whether in a focused or a diffuse form, is a mechanism – archaic and clumsy – for investing the process of transmission of knowledge with a productive intensity. It is a politically fraught mechanism; and it remains, directly or indirectly, the horizon of all our disciplinary transactions.

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NOTES

11 Ibid., p. 246.
16 Ibid., p. 115.
21 Ibid., p. 86.
23 Kristeva, *Histoires d’amour*, p. 36.
25 Ibid., p. 17.
28 Roustang, op. cit., p. 28.
30 Roustang, op. cit., p. 31.
Ibid., p. 34.
33 Cf. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), p. 62: ‘The agency of domination does not reside in the one who speaks (for it is he who is constrained), but in the one who listens and says nothing; not in the one who knows and answers, but in the one who questions and is not supposed to know.’
40 King, op. cit., p. 33.
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