

I Love You

je-t'-aime / I-love-you

The figure refers not to the declaration of love, to the avowal, but to the repeated utterance of the love cry.

1. Once the first avowal has been made, "*I love you*" has no meaning whatever; it merely repeats in an enigmatic mode—so blank does it appear—the old message (which may not have been transmitted in these words). I repeat it exclusive of any pertinence; it comes out of the language, it divagates—where?

I could not decompose the expression without laughing. Then there would be "me" on one side, "you" on the other, and in between a joint of *reasonable* (i.e., lexical) affection. Anyone can feel how much such a decomposition, though conforming to linguistic theory, would disfigure what is *flung out* in a single impulse. *To love* does not exist in the infinitive (except by a metalinguistic artifice): the subject and the object come to the word even as it is uttered, and *I-love-you* must be understood (and read here) in the Hungarian fashion, for instance, for Hungarian uses a single word, *szeretlek*, as if French, renouncing its splendid analytical quality, were an agglutinative language (and it is, indeed, agglutination which is in question here). This clump is shattered by the slightest syntactical alteration; it is, so to speak, beyond syntax and yields itself to no structural transformation; it has no equivalent among its substitutes, whose combination might nonetheless produce the same meaning; I can say *I-*

R.H.: Conversation.