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.