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The journal of ***Language and Psychoanalysis*** is a fully peer reviewed online journal that publishes twice a year. It is the only interdisciplinary journal with a strong focus on the qualitative and quantitative analysis of language and psychoanalysis. The journal is also inclusive and not narrowly confined to the Freudian psychoanalytic theory.

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# Metaphors in Dreams: Where Cognitive Linguistics meets Psychoanalysis

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**Abstract**

This article approaches the study of metaphors in dreams from an interdisciplinary perspective, which aims at bringing together the psychoanalytic tradition, and the main views that constitute what is commonly known as the contemporary cognitive theory of metaphor. Our perspective aims at showing how these approaches can (and need) to be integrated, and suggests why in this endeavour it is necessary to consider the personal background of the dreamer and her need to re-establish/confirm her identity within each metaphor.

## Introduction

The most acclaimed contemporary theory of metaphor today is the *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* (CMT), fathered by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) and already anticipated in Ortony's collection (1979). As Gibbs points out, "CMT is the dominant force in the contemporary world of interdisciplinary metaphor studies" (2013, p. 14). CMT suggests that metaphors are matters of thought rather than mere figures of speech. The two authors, a linguist and a philosopher, argue that metaphors characterize our way of thinking and contribute to structure our conceptual knowledge, which is grounded in bodily experiences and reflected in the metaphoric linguistic structures that populate our everyday language. In the past thirty years CMT has had significant influence in both linguistics and cognitive science, generating a large amount of supportive research (see Gibbs 2011 for an overview of the empirical studies supporting CMT), as well as critical contributions (see for example Tendahl & Gibbs, 2008). One of the main critiques of CMT is that in its first years of existence it was derived solely from the analysis of *verbal* expressions (McGlone, 2007). Another critic noted the fact that neuroimaging studies have recently shown that some metaphoric expressions are understood by native speakers on a linguistic level, as quickly as literal expressions, raising the point that at least some metaphors might remain a linguistic phenomenon, rather than functioning at a deeper conceptual level (Glucksberg, 2003). The debate remains open whether all metaphors are

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processed by comparison or whether some linguistic metaphors are processed as polysemic expressions that require a simple meaning disambiguation on a lexical dimension (Gentner & Bowdle, 2008; Glucksberg, 2008).

Another crucial debate raised by CMT is whether an alignment between two concepts (or two domains), always stimulates us to map exclusively features belonging to the source domain onto the target domain, or whether it pushes us to construct a new mental space where features from both domains are merged. The latter suggestion was proposed by the supporters of Blending Theory (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). According to this theory, metaphors stimulate us to create novel conceptualizations that result from the blending of two or more interacting mental spaces.

In more recent years a large body of empirical studies tackled the activation of conceptual metaphors and image schemas (Lakoff, 1987), i.e. bodily-motivated conceptual structures that derive from recurring sensorimotor experience (e.g., SOURCE-PATH-GOAL), in a variety of cognitive tasks that are independent from linguistic metaphorical expressions (e.g., Casasanto, 2009; Boroditsky & Ramscar, 2002), and in a variety of modalities that range beyond the verbal one, such as gestures, images, movies, and music (e.g., Cienki, 1999; Forceville & Urios-Aparisi, 2009).

Far from denigrating the importance of Lakoff's and Johnson's work, the most recent insights in cognitive semiotics and metaphor studies have also underlined the fact that the experiential bases of conceptual metaphors are not only subconscious, but also deeply rooted in personal, interpersonal, and cultural dynamics, and for this reason it is not surprising that conceptual metaphors vary across time and cultures. Such insights have prompted a new interest in the study of creative, deliberate, and epistemic uses of metaphor, in which "the individual is recast as a permeable cognitive system coupled from the start with its environment and with individual and cultural practices" (Fusaroli & Morgagni, 2013, p. 6). From this perspective, as suggested by Fusaroli and Morgagni, the richness and variety of dimensions added to the original Conceptual Metaphor Theory "call for more extensive integration of CMT into a complex framework of social and cognitive dynamics" (Fusaroli & Morgagni, 2013, p. 5). In other words, the focus on social, communicative, and cognitive functions of metaphors has recently prompted a new wave of enthusiasm and scientific study.

Within this complex and lively framework of discussion, we propose to address the analysis of the metaphors that emerge in the mind from a deep, pre-linguistic dimension, where the communicative function of metaphor is taken to an extreme border: the activity of dreaming. Since CMT has been proposed, to our knowledge only a few studies tackled the application of such an approach to dreams, which are traditionally considered a domain of psychoanalysis. On the other hand, as suggested by Borbely (2008), psychoanalysts have paid little attention to cognitive linguistics' claims, as "their knowledge base gains expressions in the idiosyncratic terminologies of rival psychoanalytic schools, making integration with cognitive science claims more difficult" (Borbely, 2008, p. 412).

In a notable contribution Marco Casonato (2003) analyzes the metaphors that emerge during therapy sessions, in relation to cognitive disorders and to the changes produced by psychotherapy. The author proposes an extensive analysis of the emerging conceptual metaphors, dividing them by type of disorder, and comparing patients in psychiatric

conditions to control subjects. For example, in a case study on patients with eating disorders he observes the emergence of metaphors such as BULIMIA-IS-A-GAME, and FASTING-IS-LOVE, which in control patients seem to correspond to the conceptual metaphors EATING-IS-A-GAME, and EATING-IS-LOVE. Casonato demonstrates that it is possible to track the process of cognitive transformation through the study of the metaphors used in clinical discourse and how they change during therapy.

Another interesting contribution is provided by Terri Eynon (2002), who suggests that metaphors that appear in dreams seem to reveal crucial information for the therapist. For example, Eynon reports the dream of a patient, who was suffering from depression and had a dream where a sheep was being rescued from the bottom of the ocean, and slowly pulled up, out of the deep waters. As the author points out, this dream employs at least two well-known conceptual metaphors: GOOD-IS-UP (depression is the bottom of the ocean, while a healthy state of mind is up, out of the waters), combined with MENTAL STATES-ARE-LOCATIONS. The patient feels half way through the healing process, a coded message for the therapist that the therapy is producing good outcomes. Lakoff himself applied CMT to the analysis of unconscious thought, and provided the interpretation of some dreams (Lakoff, 1992, 1993, 1997), suggesting that the function of metaphors here is to "map the dream onto the meaning of the dream, giving relevant knowledge of the dreamer's life" (1992, p. 9).

In our opinion, these pioneering and valuable contributions aimed at integrating CMT with dream theory and psychoanalytic insights did not receive as much recognition as they should have. To the contrary, we realized that in the most recent literature about metaphors and dreams, the insights achieved from the integration of CMT and dream theory were left aside or even outlined in a misleading way. In a recent contribution published in a notable journal, for example, the authors (Edwards et al., 2013) indicate that "a common *linguistic* metaphor within the English language is the LOVE-IS-JOURNEY metaphor" (2013, p. 3): this claim suggests that the *conceptual* nature of such a metaphor (highlighted also by the conventional use of capital letters) was completely missed. Moreover, Edwards et al. claim that "Lakoff (1993) proposes that cognition during dreaming […] involves the mapping of abstract concepts onto physical concepts" (2013, p. 3), while it seems to be commonly understood that the direction of the metaphor is the opposite, since portions of the meaning of the source domain are generally mapped onto the target domain, in order to shed light on its content. Lakoff himself writes, "what constitutes the LOVE-IS-A-JOURNEY metaphor is not any particular word or expression. It is the ontological mapping across conceptual domains, *from the source domain of journey to the target domain of love*" (Lakoff, 1993, p. 208). Even when Lakoff specifically says that the function of metaphors in dreams is to "map the dream onto the meaning of the dream" (1992, p. 9), he seems to suggest that the concrete realization of the dream (source domain) has to be mapped onto the meaning of the dream (target domain, plausibly a more abstract concept).

We believe that the pioneering studies of psychoanalytic inspiration about the role of conceptual metaphors in dreams (e.g., Lakoff 1992, 1993, 1997) together with the new wave of interest around the possible applications of CMT (Fusaroli & Morgagni, 2013) can generate new insights and new research questions about, for example, the relationship between emotions and metaphors in dreams. In this sense, we believe that emotions are subconscious forces that provoke the emergence of specific metaphors in dreams. A long tradition of empirical studies supports the crucial role of dreaming for gaining insight into

our emotional life (e.g., Freud, 1900; Rycroft, 1979; Blechner, 2001; Hartmann, 2010). Hartmann for example suggests that dreaming is a hyperconnective mental activity in which the connections created are *guided* by emotions. Recent neuroscientific literature supports the idea that (at minimum) REM sleep is involved in the process of consolidating and regulating emotional memories (Walker & Van der Helm, 2009; Perogamvros & Schwartx, 2012; Groch et al., 2013). Still, these insights have not been clearly integrated with CMT in a contemporary fashion. We argue that metaphors that appear in dreams, which are then reported verbally to the therapist during therapy sessions, are manifestations of a world that pertains to the dreamer: they carry meanings, and they are structured in a way that allows these meanings to be communicated between internal parts of the individual. These metaphors surely lack the communicative aspects that characterize communication between *two* individuals, such as the pragmatic and inferential elements that stimulate us to moderate and modulate our messages, taking into account our listener's previous knowledge and her/his ability to infer our communicative intentions, as indicated for example in Relevance Theory, proposed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1986). But as we will see, metaphors that appear in dreams are indeed a form of communication whose main objective is to implicitly carry specific emotions by means of cross-domain conceptual mappings, and in this way communicating them to the dreamer.

## *Unconscious Thought in Psychoanalysis*

With his psychoanalytic theory, Sigmund Freud provided flesh for ideas that were already present in philosophy, addressed by philosophers such as Leibniz, Kant, Schelling, Schopenhauer, and Bergson. The idea of an unconscious thought was already "out there", but it was somehow lacking structure and contents, which have been provided by Freud, and later developed in different directions, by scholars such as Melanie Klein, Donald Meltzer, and Wilfred Bion. Klein, for example, proposed an unconscious intended as a complex combination of intertwined internal entities, which communicate to one another. With this idea, Klein distanced herself from the more "economic" Freudian concept of unconscious. She also disentangled feelings (and in particular adult ones) from oedipal figures, providing more space and new dimensions for unconscious thought. For Klein, unconscious fantasies are the result of non-conscious activity that meets feelings and emotions deriving from the body and the mind. Wilfred Bion (e.g., 1962, 1963), starting from this perspective, provides further developments for the idea of unconscious thought, widening its boundaries even more. For Bion, unconscious thought is not only what has been removed, but includes all the realities that continuously develop the experiences inside the self. Today we know that our unconscious thought organizes the contents of our experiences by representing them internally.

Unconscious thought, as described above, works day and night, without any apparent effort. Such activity is necessary so that we can feel, elaborate, and organize new thoughts, which can be expressed verbally or shown through our behaviours. In this framework, Carl Jung proposed the idea of unconscious thought as always active and wide enough to incorporate and represent the place where meaning is created, and thus is that from which consciousness emerges. Bion (1962, 1963) suggests that the activity of dreaming is characterized by a natural function, called *alpha*, which is able to determine a vocabulary of emotionally dense images. In this perspective Bion's unconscious is creative, complex, and infinite; as Grotstein suggests, Bion's objectives are deeply ontological, epistemic, phenomenological, and full of hope (Grotstein, 2007). In some

ways, Bion brought divinity back inside the human being, something traditionally conceptualized as an external entity.

With regard to emotions, we believe that such internal states lie somewhere in between the body and the mind. This hypothesis finds partial support in Lakoff's and Johnson's theory, and in general in the *embodied cognition* account, according to which our conceptual knowledge and therefore our ideas (even the most abstract ones) are grounded in sensorimotor experiences, and as a consequence their processing provokes a re-enactment of those neural substrates dedicated to sensorimotor perception and emotional response that are activated during real bodily experiences (Barsalou, 1999; Pecher & Zwaan, 2005).

In principle we believe that not all our emotional responses to perceptual experiences enter our mental (conscious or unconscious) life. Some of them get 'diluted' within our body, throughout our organism, and eventually come to the surface of the body through somatic manifestations. On the other hand, emotions that enter our mental life through our bodies can get shaped in the form of primary metaphors, i.e., some emotions are understood by our mind in terms of bodily reactions, which are often associated with those emotions in our everyday experiences. As Grady points out (1997), these primary metaphors cannot be explained by more sophisticated cognitive mechanisms such as analogy or cause-effect relation, but instead derive from recurring correlations between particular types of perceptual experiences that allow these emotions to be transformed into mental objects. For example, Grady suggests that we understand *affection* through the bodily experience of physical proximity, and therefore of physical *warmth*. This recurrent correlation between feeling loved and feeling warm (for example, during development children perceive their mothers' physical warmth), establishes a conceptual metaphor in our mind that can be expressed as AFFECTION-IS-WARMTH. From this perspective, the concept of *affection* becomes a mental object, which is metaphorically understood (at least in part) in terms of physical warmth. From this mental structure we can then derive linguistic expressions such as "she is a cold person", or "she warmly welcomed us".

Primary metaphors such as AFFECTION-IS-WARMTH explain how specific emotions can enter our mental life and be understood in relation to our bodily experiences (as Lakoff and Johnson suggest: "metaphors allow us to conceptualize our emotions in more sharply defined terms", 1980, p. 58). But in addition, there are conceptual metaphors that *carry* rather than *explain* emotions. In other words, conceptual metaphors that are not based directly on correlations in experience trigger emotional responses by comparing two apparently distant concepts. Emotions here are not explicitly explained by the metaphor, but they are implicitly triggered by the alignment of two concepts, thus behaving as *conceptual mappings*. This aspect, we believe, plays a crucial role when we look at converging insights across cognitive linguistics and psychoanalysis.

Concluding, in line with the psychoanalytic tradition and with the cognitive linguistic theory, we believe that metaphors that appear in dreams are structures that can be interpreted, even though they cannot be predicted. As a matter of fact, Freud suggested that dreams are not just confused associations but rather the product of mental activity (see Domhoff 2000 for an extensive, even though critical, overview on Freudian and Jungian theories of dreams). Lakoff himself suggested "the imagery used in dreams is not arbitrary" (Lakoff, 1997, p. 106).

Within the dimension of communication, evolution provided humans with powerful cognitive tools that we use to interpret other people's intentions and actions, simulating them in our own mind. From recent neuroscientific discoveries, we now know that human beings are equipped with neural structures called *mirror neurons*, which map sensory representations of others' actions onto the observer's neural substrates, allowing humans to understand (in specific circumstances) other people's actions, intentions, and emotions by reproducing the same underlying neural patterns inside their own mind (e.g., Rizzolatti et al., 1996; Gallese et al., 1996). Such a revolutionary discovery suggests that in order to get as close as possible to a deep understanding of other people's actions and behaviours we need to represent such actions and behaviours within ourselves. In other words, our visual system combined with logical inferential processes based on other people's utterances is not enough for understanding the deep meaning and intentions of others. Our motor system needs to get involved as well. However, in order to get our motor system involved, we need to have a previous experiential reference inside ourselves for representing other people's actions: as Iacoboni and his colleagues showed in 1999, and Gallese and his colleagues discussed again in 2011, the mirror neuron regions are only barely activated when we watch barking dogs, because our bodies do not afford such action and therefore do not allow a trustworthy internal representation of *barking* (Iacoboni et al., 1999; Gallese et al., 2011). This study highlights the self-referential quality of mirror neurons: in order to understand other people's actions, intentions, and emotions, we need to have a somehow similar experiential background that allows our neural system to mirror another person's behaviour.

The discovery of mirror neurons suggests two crucial ideas: 1) in order to interpret another person's dream, we must take into account and represent in our own mind the experiential framework (i.e., the personal background) of that person, because only by simulating internally similar patterns can we understand them; 2) dreams represent structured manifestations of the dreamer's mental life, guided by the dreamer's emotions, which emerge to allow the conscious self to access the contents of unconscious thoughts, representing them inside the mind through the dream. Such manifestations must already be part of the dreamer's mental life, otherwise they could not be represented nor understood (i.e., we cannot simulate in our mind and thus deeply understand the action of barking because we are not dogs). As Rizzolatti suggested in a personal communication after an invited talk in Livorno, Italy, in the fall of 2013, it seems a logical intuition that mirror neurons also would be activated during dreams. Dream expressions are manifestations of natural, spontaneous, but not casual contents.

## Metaphors in Cognitive Linguistics

Effective metaphors are classically considered a prerogative of a few talented artists, created for producing artistic effects, with the intention of evoking vivid scenarios. However, today we know that our everyday language is pervaded by metaphors — that they are used consciously or unconsciously every time we speak: if life "goes wrong" (even though literally it does not go anywhere) we might "fall into depression" (even though we do not fall anywhere).

Metaphors allow us to think and talk about abstract and complex concepts, such as emotions, through easier and more concrete concepts. In this view, emotions to a certain extent can be understood through metaphors (e.g., as we described above, AFFECTION-IS-WARMTH, and therefore a person that manifests affection is defined as *warm*). On

the other hand, emotions (internal reactions that lie in between the body and the mind) are implicitly carried by metaphors. In other words, *metaphors carry emotions*.

For example, in Western culture, whose rhythm is defined through economic achievements and trading objectives, we often conceptualize *time* as if it was a tangible entity, such as *money*, and, thanks to this popular conceptual metaphor (TIME-IS-MONEY), we can "spend time", "earn time", "waste time", "lose time", "save time" and so on, as we do with money. This metaphor is a classic of our times, and it is often used as an example for explaining CMT. However, to the best of our knowledge, the fact that this metaphor carries specific emotions — such as the feelings of *urgency* and *desire* (or *greediness*) to accumulate time as we accumulate money — is almost always left aside. We understand easily this metaphor because it refers to an emotional substrate that is peculiar to our culture, where individuals are constantly prompted to earn and consume. Time is thus related to emotional conditions that pertain to human survival, the achievement of economic wealth, and the concepts of *life* and *death*. The underlying emotions of *urgency* and *transience* lead us to associate *time* and *money*.

Consider now the following novel metaphorical expression produced by Gibbs (2013) in a notable contribution where he assesses the strengths and the weaknesses of CMT: "my life as a professor has been one long, slow march through a windy desert". As Gibbs argues, CMT suggests that people understand this metaphor by accessing the underlying conceptual structure LIFE-IS-JOURNEY (or CAREER-IS-JOURNEY). However, he notes that it is still unclear whether people process such sentences by fully accessing all the components of the more abstract LIFE-IS-JOURNEY structure. In any case, a deliberate expression like this clearly carries emotions and personal introspections that differ from, say, "my life as a professor has been a swim through an ocean full of sharks", or even "my life as a professor has been one long, slow procession through a church hall", even though all these three expressions point, eventually, to the LIFE-IS-JOURNEY structure. In Gibbs' example one could arguably perceive a sense of fatigue, struggle, and isolation. The second example brings forth emotions such as fear, danger, and transience; in the third example one can perceive a sense of sacredness, desire for absolute recognition, and spiritual glory.

In this respect, it must be pointed out that CMT is traditionally concerned with the identification of those conceptual metaphors that are shared by individuals, and that characterize a way of thinking that is common of human beings. In other words, CMT is mainly concerned with those conceptual metaphors that are used by human beings to communicate with one another rather than with those metaphors that characterize a single individual's identity. For this reason, conventional conceptual metaphors are commonly expressed at a superordinate lexical level.

We believe that the ultimate function of metaphors that appear in dreams is to keep a trace, in the mind of the dreamer, of emotions and personal experiences that are important specifically to the dreamer and contribute to shaping the dreamer's identity. For this reason, and supported by the recent suggestion of Fusaroli and Morgagni, we want to highlight the personal dimension of metaphors that appear in dreams and the importance that this dimension has for the dreamer.

In psychotherapy sessions the therapist has the arduous task of carefully identifying the source and the target domains employed in the metaphors that appear in a patient's

dreams, taking into account the patient's past experiences that motivated the metaphor as well as the meaning that the dreamer attributes to the words chosen to describe the dream. This is not an easy task, as it will be shown in the case studies, because the meaning of the words chosen by the dreamer to describe the dream is also determined by the dreamer's experiences (see Franco's dream). From this perspective, words are symbols whose meaning is grounded in the individual's experiences, and not simply defined on the basis of a social convention shared among individuals. The interpretation of the metaphors that appear in dreams should therefore take into account the personal life of the patient, focusing on the emotional contents that emerge within the metaphors, or that remain implicit in the mappings, which constitute the real feelings of the dreamer. Focusing on the emotional contents of metaphors that appear in dreams is crucial because, we believe, emotions provide the flesh and the force that structures the dream.

The point that we would like to stress here derives from the optimal integration of the psychoanalytic and the cognitive linguistic traditions: we believe that both, metaphors that appear in dreams, as well as the conceptual metaphors that have been identified by Lakoff and Johnson, are (at least partially) grounded in emotions. Emotions are activating forces, provided with their own autonomy, that constitute the basis of our indeed precarious and inconstant rationality (Bichisecchi, 1999). For this reason, it is necessary to approach psychotherapy sessions not only by taking into account a patient's phenomenological manifestations. It is preferable to observe both, the way a patient lives and expresses him/herself, as well as the way in which he/she dreams. In this view, metaphors can explain our thought's activity, relying on the assumption that the comparison that has been brought to life in the form of a metaphor is meaningful for the individual, and it contributes to establish or consolidate a feeling of internal unity.

## *Metaphor and Identity*

Human beings have the natural need of perceiving themselves as coherent units. We need to elaborate the experiences that we live, and make them ours. "Being ourselves" means living the coherence of our internal emotional and mental states. Metaphors emerge from these constraints and fulfil these needs. In this landscape a contradictory metaphor cannot live in a fairly healthy mind, because it would clash against the need of personal integrity. Our mind would naturally discharge what enters in conflict with our sense of unity. Think about those situations in which we contradict ourselves. We do not do it on purpose. And at the beginning our mind is not aware of the contradiction. But when we see the contradiction, we quickly search for a possible alternative explanation, or we deny the thesis, or the antithesis. We feel the urge to re-establish an internal order. Similarly, metaphors that emerge in our mind have to be coherent with our identity, rather than expressing concepts in contradictions with one another, because contradiction is not perceived as truth. While our mind tends to reject contradictions that pertain logic arguments, what happens with regard to emotions? Contradictory emotions generate an internal conflict, and it follows that our aware mind tends to eliminate or to deny the contradictions that rise not only on a logical level, but also on an emotional level, in order to maintain an internal coherence. When we are not aware of the internal conflict on an emotional level, we suffer.

It is a metaphor's destiny to confirm and consolidate the identity of the individual who produced it. It could be claimed that metaphors are expressed 'out there', in our everyday language, shared among human beings. But, as a matter of fact, each individual has to

integrate a specific metaphor with his or her personal identity and sense of unity. In this view, the broad spectrum of the conceptual metaphors identified by Lakoff and Johnson are accepted and shared by the individuals of a given community because they contain elements of a societal and a cultural identity to which they feel belonging.

An individual's identity, in this sense, is not only the expression of a continuous relation between experiential contents, as indicated by philosophers such as John Locke and David Hume, but it is also the human destiny within the reality in which we live: our deeper need to elaborate the experiences in which we live, in order to make them ours. Therefore, an individual's identity is not only what makes him/her different from other individuals, but it is a necessary function that allows us to exist in our unitary mental life, which is the environment in which we live and for which we live. We exist because we have our own truth, our own unity, and our own uniqueness. Our mental life constitutes our primary environment, metaphors being the expression of its contents that allow us to feel congruence between the external and the internal world.

Even though the interpretations of a dream might arguably be various, for the dreamer the range of meaningful interpretations of a specific dream cannot be too wide. The interpretative space of a dream is delimited by what is known about the dreamer, his/her description of the dream, and the associations (driven by emotions) that accompany the description. In this we agree with Hartmann, who suggests that "dreaming contextualizes a dominant emotion or emotional concern. The dream, or the striking dream image, explains metaphorically the emotional state of the dreamer" (Hartmann, 1996, p. 147).

We believe that each individual wants to live inside his/her own ideas, which are associations and metaphors that are crucial for constructing and consolidating our mental world. An entertaining excerpt from Manzoni's classic novel *The betrothed* summarizes this need of cultivating an internal world of ideas in which we believe, and which reflect our identity: "Donna Prassede governed herself with her ideas as some would do with their friends; she had very few, but to these she was much attached. Among these few, were a number unfortunately a little narrow and unreasonable, and they were not those she loved the least" (Manzoni, 1834, p. 307).

As a last observation, we would like to point out that even a common say, such as "Paul is a sheep", can be interpreted in different ways, according to different background experiences, emotional responses, and internal coherences of the listeners. As a matter of fact, the person who produces this metaphor might want to underlie the fact that Paul has a quiet and non-aggressive personality. But the listener, having a different mental world, might understand that Paul lacks of personality, that he is a follower. In this frame, the sheep is interpreted in light of its impact on the emotional and conceptual background of the two individuals. Thus, we should be cautious in perceiving dreams as just "mundane" mappings of universally salient properties of the source domain onto the target domain.

In a communicative situation like the example sketched above, the need of transferring effectively a message and confirming our belonging to a common way of thinking, co-exists with the need of maintaining an internal coherence, and respecting the coherence of our own mental world. The two needs meet in that part of our mind where we internalized and we represented our listener. The situation is different when the presence of the other (the listener) disappears, and an individual's truth and ideas do not need to be mediated by a verbal expression, as it happens in dreams. The four case-studies reported below will

elucidate our claims.

Taking into account the psychoanalytic tradition, Lakoff's and Johnson's CMT, The Conceptual Blending theory proposed by Fauconnier and Turner (2002), integrated with the need to focus on the dreamer's past experiences and emotional contents, we would like to propose an analysis of some dreams, collected during therapy sessions (all patients have authorized the disclosure of the presented data, and the patients' names have been modified to protect their identity). We avoided on purpose the use of specific techniques such as the *transference*, commonly used in psychoanalysis (see for example Freud 1916-1917), because we wanted to leave to the patient the maximum degree of freedom of expression. The practice of interpreting dreams, we suggest, helps the patient developing metacognitive skills, and searching for meaning with a reinvigorated motivation. This activity makes the patient feeling passionate about elaborating daily-life aspects, as well as other individuals' behaviours. We do not argue that the development of such metacognitive competences is an exclusive privilege of this type of analysis, but we believe that the practice of elaborating one's dreams within this framework contributes to suggest the establishment and consolidation the individual's identity and sense of unity.

## Case study 1: Piero's dream

Piero invents precision instruments for aircrafts, and in his spare time he is a fitness trainer. He is around 40 years old, lively, smart, and quite reserved. He finds very difficult to establish relationships with Italian women, because, he says, he does not understand their way of thinking. Piero lives in Italy, but he spent a few years first in California and then in Florida. A few months ago, in Italy, Piero met a woman, who works at a store where he frequently goes. They start greeting each other and chatting, every time they meet at the store. Piero decides to contact her on Facebook, asking for a date, and through the social network he finds out that she loves sports, in particular skating, skiing, and trekking on the mountains. He also finds out that she is currently dating another man. From that moment, every time Piero goes to the store, the girl avoids his stare and pretends she does not know him, provoking Piero's delusion and sadness. In these days Piero reports the following dream during a therapy session: "we were both in California, at Venice Beach. She was skating and I was exercising. I was watching her and she was watching me".

The novel and personal metaphors that emerge in this dream are:

- COMFORTABLE/WELCOMING PLACE-IS-CALIFORNIA
  (mappings: feeling safe, feeling accepted)

- PLACE WHERE ONE CAN EXPRESS HIMSELF AND WATCH OTHER PEOPLE-IS-VENICE BEACH
  (mappings: feeling free to express oneself, feeling watched and appreciated)

Both these metaphors carry emotions, mapped from source to target, which are the containers of an individual's truth. As such, an individual's truth involves necessarily both, body and mind, and needs to fulfil the need of internal unity and coherence. Both of these metaphors fit into the pattern of a more conventional conceptual metaphor, which is GENERIC-IS-SPECIFIC, but the emotions that emerge from those specific source


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domains, target domains, and mappings, are peculiar of Piero's identity and derive from his personal past experiences.

Finally, the two participants to the dream are meaningfully staring at one another, and this physical action represents a reciprocal feeling of affection: because MENTAL/EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT-IS-PHYSICAL INVOLVEMENT, then AFFECTION-IS-STARE, and the mapping is the reciprocity of the action described in the domains.

Piero has often referred about his life in California. Talking about women, he often pointed out that American girls tend to answer to a greet with a smile on their face, and they do not see any problem with going out with a man to get a drink or to see a movie. In comparison, Piero's perception of Italian women is that they deny any kind of contact because they feel threatened by the fact that they perceive males to have only sexual interests in mind. Piero's thoughts suggest that for him America is the place where he is free to express himself, seeing and being seen. Venice Beach is like a store window: a place where people are free to display their bodies and look at one another. As it was suggested above, *love* is often conceptualized as a *journey*. Even though Piero's dream lacks of explicit metaphoric expressions that point to this conceptual metaphor, the dreamer made a journey, because he transferred himself and the girl to California. Since in California, according to Piero, things go in the way described above, also the girl that in Italy avoids his stare, behaves in a different way. The dreamer makes the girl acting consistently with the environment, as it was conceptualized by him. The Californian habits and culture influence the Italian girl's behaviour. This suggests that Piero does not accept the girl's refusal, and he does not want to blame this fully on the girl's will. Piero seeks for an explanation of the girl's behaviour, that goes beyond the individual. He does not want to recognize and accept the refusal, and all the emotional consequences that derive from it. For this reason, he denies the girl's will and brings her to a place where, he knows, he cannot be refused or neglected, and therefore feeling inexistent.

The women's refusals, led Piero to lose his self-confidence, and to focus on his job, in an attempt to forget his feelings and his need of love. However, denying his need of love Piero denied a part of his own identity, and his integrity was not so solid anymore. The sense of integrity that makes us feel as a coherent unit passes also through the stare of a girl, on which affective fantasies have been projected. In this regard, everything that happens in a dream pertains the dreamer. Piero mentally brought the girl to California because it is in this place that he feels appreciated and loved, he can establish a communication with a girl, and he does not feel refused. In California she would skate and he would exercise, and they would stare at one another, and she would appreciate his physical ability. The girl would had confirmed and reinforced those aspects that Piero feels crucial for defining his own identity. This dream, therefore, constitutes an emotional experience that allows the dreamer to mentally reorganize past experiences: an essential step for the dreamer's psychic balance.

Concluding, we perceive a desire when we define it in our mind. For example, we desire a product after we have imagined it in our mind, and we have integrated it as an element of our mental world. At this point, if the product is denied to us, we feel bad, because it was already part of us, in our mind. For this reason, metaphors that appear in dreams, more than those that are used in verbal communication, reflect in a deeper way an individual's needs.

## Case study 2: Franco's dream

Franco is 43 years old. During a therapy session he reports the following dream: "I meet a friend and, while talking with him, I feel that I want to abandon myself to him". Franco cannot describe explicitly his emotions during the dream, but he says that he did not feel passionate love for his friend.

The meaningful elements are the friend and the action of abandoning oneself. The co-existence of these two elements suggested that there was something unclear with the dream: the desire of abandoning oneself to someone else is generally related to feelings of love and admiration toward that person, but in Franco's case, these feelings were apparently missing. In this case, it was necessary to understand not only the content of the dream, but also the meaning that the dreamer attributed to the specific words he used. As a matter of fact, as we will see, if we followed the common meaning attributed to the words used by Franco, we would had missed the point. In order to understand the metaphor of this dream, it is necessary to understand the cognitive overlap between the concepts of abandoning and succumb, in Franco's mind. For the dreamer, these two concepts defined the same experiences, lived and cultivated in the relationship with his father.

The concepts of *abandoning oneself* and *succumbing* are generally perceived as different: the desire of abandoning oneself to another person, triggers emotions such as trust, confidence, and faith. We associate to this action a sense of tranquillity, peacefulness, and letting go. Instead, succumbing or submitting oneself to another person implies the recognition of the other's superiority, probably a feeling of pain and fear, in experiencing such superiority, and a lack of freedom. We think about domination and subordination, as well as surrendering to another person's will, in order to avoid negative consequences. However, in Franco's mind the two concepts seemed to be *blended* in a unique conceptual space:

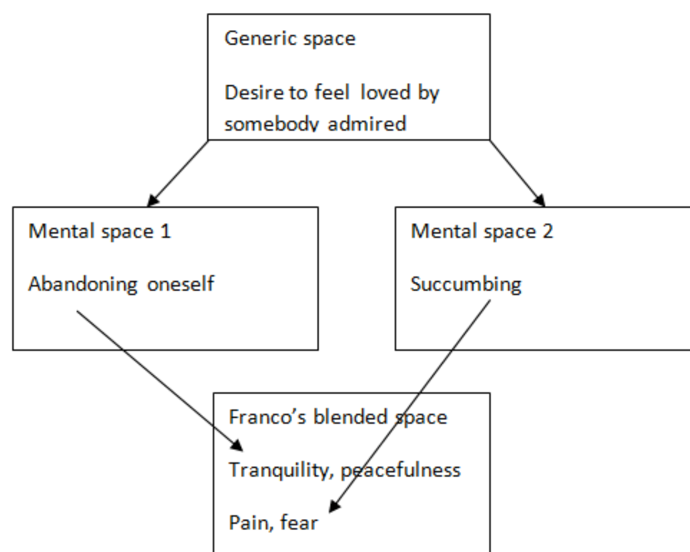


**Figure 1**

Franco's blended space

In such conceptual blend both the emotions triggered by each original domain are perceived: the pleasure of meeting somebody to talk with co-existed with the desire to avoid a relationship of equality. These two aspects were united in a contradictory existence that was not cognitively understood, and it was affectively suffered. While abandoning himself, for the need of affection, Franco reduced his defenses, stimulating the other to overcome and use him. Franco's will somehow wanted to succumb, so that he could abandon himself. The relationships that he entertained with other people encompassed simultaneously the abandoning and the personal submission. This was Franco's way to establish relationships with others. By feeling submitted to another person, he felt that he could completely abandon himself to that person, and this made him feeling alive, used, real, functional, dominated.

We reported this example to demonstrate that the interpretation of dreams can be misleading if we rely only on the linguistic expressions used by the dreamer, and on the meaning that we might attribute to them. Each linguistic expression must be carefully evaluated, in light of the dreamer's personality and past experiences, because it can reveal conceptual blends that are peculiar of an individual. In other words, sometimes it is not enough to rely on the common sense and the shared meaning that we attribute to words. We need to pay attention to the way in which the dreamer uses specific linguistic expressions, in order to understand the meaning that he/she attributes to them in context. Words that humans use are tied with meanings that are themselves linked to emotional states that constitute the individual's unity and identity.

## Case study 3: Riccardo's dream

Riccardo is a young married man, who works in the field of education, in an institution where also his wife is affiliated. He suffers from insomnia, and his greatest desire is to have a deep and restorative sleep. He has a deep fear: he fears that people around him might not appreciate him or having a high esteem of him. This worry is constant, and pushes him to seek other people's appreciation, and to avoid critiques. He appears deeply respectful, correct, never annoying, and sometimes he observes and follows others people's choices, even if this might cause him suffering. Considering these feelings, which characterize Riccardo's personality, we can approach the analysis of one of his recent dreams with a key that allow us to give a very plausible interpretation of the metaphors involved. We chose this case-study because we would like to show a specific cognitive function of the metaphors that appear in dreams, which is a defensive function. In particular, in this case-study, Riccardo seems to use metaphors to defend himself from painful emotional states, which would deeply move and disturb not only his superficial tranquility, but also deeper emotional balances.

The dream is the following: "A colleague at work was pregnant, she felt desperate and exhausted, and she could not come to work. She was sad and crying because her husband was not present during the pregnancy. Personally I was very surprised for this absence".

The metaphors that emerge from this dream, and are explained below, are the following:

- IDEAS-ARE-CHILDREN with relation to development (therefore an important decision to be taken is represented by a pregnancy). More in general, THINKING/DELIBERATING-IS-GIVING BIRTH.

(mappings: it's a long and painful process, it requires energies and commitment)

The pregnant woman is in the condition of having a new reality growing inside her. The pregnancy is perceived as the expectation of a new mental event, a new decision.

- MENTAL ACTIVITY-IS-PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (in the case of the pregnant woman's husband) and therefore not contributing to take an important decision is represented as a physical absence).

(mapping: requires active participation)

This quite conventional conceptual structure suggest metaphors that seem to be conventional and shared across human beings. However, there is an additional metaphor that emerged from Riccardo's past, which provides a leap forward in the process of interpreting correctly his dream. Riccardo had previously referred in a brief communication that his wife, who works at the same institution, needed to make a difficult decision that could bring her to live abroad for a couple of years. The consequences of such choice would be, for Riccardo, living apart from his wife. The apparent lack of weight that Riccardo attributed to this event aroused suspicions. A loving husband is hardly insensible to this situation. In fact, Riccardo has probably managed to keep himself detached from such emotional shock by hiding his wife behind a non-better-identified colleague, and thus establishing the overarching personal metaphor WIFE-IS-COLLEAGUE, which unravels a new interpretative key to the conventional metaphors identified above. When the dreamer thinks about the colleague, his feelings are weaker and less involving than when he thinks about his wife. Another interesting point is the absence of the colleague's husband. The surprise perceived by the dreamer, in relation to the absence of the colleague's husband, suggests that he expected the husband to be there, to participate to the pregnancy. The dreamer, also in this case, projected on the relationship between the colleague and her husband, a situation that pertains himself and his wife, so that the emotional involvement is minimal. The dreamer is not present to the decisions that his wife is taking, which involve their future life together. He did not take part to the decision and avoided potential conflicts and attritions because these could had provoked his wife's resentment, and loss of esteem. He preferred to leave the decision to his wife, so that she would continue to love him in the same way.

## Case study 4: Giuseppe's dream

Also in this case-study, as for the previous ones, we left aside the classic psychoanalytic idea of interpreting the dream on the basis of the transferences. We preferred to follow the ideas proposed by Bion: suspend judgment, forget preconceptions derived from theories, and just listen to the words and the associations provided by the dreamer. The interpretation, therefore, is achieved together by the therapist and the dreamer.

"I am in a church, where my former Italian teacher has gathered some people to celebrate her retirement. She gives a speech, but some people are not listening. A city representative interrupts her and starts talking about his own things. This man walks around and he stains my brother's shirt. My brother tells him to pay more attention, but the city representative instead of apologizing answers with offensive words. The man's

wife tries to calm him down but he walks away. I follow him and tell him that he still did not apologize. He goes away, crying. I am satisfied".

The metaphors that emerge from this complex scenario are the following:

- SPIRITUAL POWER-IS-DREAMER'S TEACHER

  (mappings: humble, peaceful, mild)

- MATERIAL POWER-IS-CITY REPRESENTATIVE

  (mappings: arrogant, aggressive, unkind)

The dichotomy between the church and the city representative suggests that there is a clash between a spiritual power and a material power, the latter being associated with arrogance. These metaphors, however, need to be related to the dreamer's life and perception. It is necessary to understand the dreamer's feelings and his way of connecting these contents.

This dream emerges in the mind of an individual who is generally mild and respectful. He loves classic music and gardening. He is a good listener, lives profoundly the spiritual aspects of life, and expresses his ideas with clarity and determination. The Italian teacher had an important role in the dreamer's life: she taught him about the importance of spirituality (not religious faith), making him feeling passionate about ancient history, medieval constructions, and nature. On the other hand, the material power, for the dreamer, is a necessary force that characterizes states and communities, and pertains concrete things. The dreamer is aware of the necessity to fulfil material needs, but he lives and he is projected towards the spiritual aspects of life, which he considers more valuable. In this scenario, the actions performed by the city representative and by the dreamer also acquire metaphorical meaning: in particular, the city representative's actions can be interpreted as following: OVERPOWERING/DOMINATING-IS-INTERRUPTING ANOTHER'S SPEECH (the city representative interrupts the teacher's speech); IMMORAL-IS-DIRTY[3] (the man that is perceived as immoral stains another's shirt); MORAL DEFEAT-IS-WALKING AWAY (the city representative is defeated and walks away).

The dreamer perceives a conflict between spirituality and materiality, two abstract concepts that he personifies in his teacher in the church and the city representative. In the confront, the city representative is not destroyed by the dreamer's anger, but he is defeated by his words. The city representative in the end cries, expressing the presence of emotions inside him, which finally are manifested. Giuseppe lives inside himself the presence of a materialistic part, and he feels satisfied when this part is conciliated with

[3] The conventional metaphor is commonly expressed by MORALITY-IS-CLEANLINESS, and it emerges in linguistic expressions such as "money laundering", and "dirty job", as well as in behavioural studies that suggested the existence of such metaphor beyond the above mentioned linguistic expressions (Zhong & Lilgenquist, 2006; Schnall, Benton & Harvey, 2008).

the spiritual part, establishing an internal balance that helps consolidating the dreamer's identity.

The role of the brother is also functional for achieving the final objective. The dreamer's brother is not exactly the dreamer himself, but a close person. Also in this case, if the dreamer himself was stained and offended by the city representative, his emotional conditions would had been more profound. Projecting the offense and its emotional consequences on his brother, the dreamer can maintain a sort of objectivity and partial dispassion toward this injustice, and he can approach and solve it, in order to re-establish his internal balance.

## Conclusions

With this work, we tried to open the route to new interdisciplinary studies regarding metaphors and unconscious thought, in light of the recent plea launched by Fusaroli and Morgagni (2013), aimed at bringing CMT to a new level, where among other aspects the individual peculiarities and the individual identities of the human beings are taken into account.

As we pointed out in this study, when we communicate verbally we want to achieve two main objectives: on one hand we want to transfer a message, enriched with emotional, affective, and cognitive contents; on the other hand we want to make our words adhere to our truth, in order to consolidate our own identity. Creating good metaphors contributes to pursue this goal; since we need to continuously define ourselves, and confirm the harmony between our mental contents, when we perceive a metaphor as convincing, our identity is consolidated. Human beings express themselves through words and metaphors not only for communicating and explaining contents to others, but also for communicating and explaining contents to themselves. Metaphors, in this view, are cognitive mechanisms that allow us to expose ourselves, get out of balance, and eventually re-compose our identity in a deeper and more compact sense of truth. Through metaphors we consolidate and expand our own identity.

In the psychoanalytic tradition, and in particular according to Freud, metaphors are condensations: they gather contents and synthesize meanings in a new reality that is not anymore the simple sum of its constituents. In this process specific representations are substituted with new ones, which are associated to the original ones, by means of condensations. The result of such mechanism can be the substitution of an element with another, or the substitution of the verbal expression with another (see Freud 1900). The resulting new entity is an effect of the censorship that prevents subconscious desires from reaching our conscious thought. Thus, metaphors are seen as mechanisms that hide obscure truths. Freud's focus, in this sense, is on the parts that compose the new truth, rather than on the new truth itself. Yet, this new truth, resulting from the construction of the metaphor, enters the (conscious or subconscious) mental life of the dreamer, and therefore needs to find a place and a connection with the other elements of the dreamer's thought. We argue that metaphors that appear in dreams do not have simply the function to hide and cover deformed contents, but they are cognitive mechanisms that we use to confirm, reinforce, and expand our identity by enriching it with representations of emotional contents, whose power tries to break the surface of consciousness through the dream's manifestation. In this sense, indeed "the individual is recast as a permeable cognitive system coupled from the start with its environment and with individual and

cultural practices" (Fusaroli & Morgagni, 2013, p. 6).

Finally, we pointed out that in order to get as close as possible to another person's thought it is necessary to carefully trying to reproduce a similar scenario in our mind. Neuroscientific findings support this view, in that we intuitively understand what other people do, by *living inside our mind the same actions* (e.g., Ramachandran, 2000). In order to understand and give meaning to other people's words, we must reproduce inside our mind experiences that match those in the speaker's mind. Language, in this sense, is a sophisticated tool that drives mental simulations also in absence of real perceptual stimuli. Yet, in order to fully understand another person's actions and intentions, we need to simulate those actions in our own mind, and therefore we have to have somehow experienced them before. Through the case-studies proposed, we showed supporting evidence for the presence of conventional conceptual metaphors in dreams. However, we also showed that this is not the whole story: a helpful interpretation of the metaphors that appear in dreams needs to start from a basic level of interpretation, that starts from the mapping of features belonging to the source domain (the dream manifestation) onto the target domain (meaning of the dream manifestation). This process needs to take into account the personal experience of the dreamer, in order to disclose the emotional contents that are implicitly carried in the conceptual mappings. We also suggested that the main function of the metaphors that appear in dreams is to keep a trace of the emotional responses to personal experiences, in order to consolidate the dreamer's identity. This goal, in some cases is achieved by the dreamer through a projection of deep emotional contents onto other participants to the dream (case studies 3 and 4). In this way the dreamer can protect his own emotional integrity, and at the same time can observe such emotional contents 'from outside', with a more objective eye.

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# Fixation and Needle Fixation

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**Abstract**
Terminology is important in psychoanalysis. The words and language used by psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic theorists to describe particular phenomena are governed by the therapeutic or interpretative context in which they are used. The word 'projection', for example, means one thing in the ordinary social world and quite another for the psychoanalyst, patient or theorist. The same can be said of fixation and some addiction theorists are beginning to question the use of the term needle fixation because of its implied unconscious content. This paper proposes that needle fixation can be understood and articulated as a bona-fide fixation through the use of contemporary and traditional psychoanalytic theorists. The problem of language and terminology, identified by Fraser et al., (2004) no longer applies and the term 'needle fixation' stands both in its psychoanalytic usage as arrested development and the contemporary reference by addicts and addiction theorists to compulsive injection as needle fixation.

## Introduction

Terminology is important in psychoanalysis. The words and language used by psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic theorists to describe particular phenomena are governed by the therapeutic or interpretative context in which they are spoken. For the contemporary reader, the word 'projection', for example, means one thing in the ordinary social world and quite another for the psychoanalyst, patient or theorist. (Freud, 1895, p.109; Klein, 1946) The same can be said of fixation in relation to a bona-fide, unconscious fixation and needle fixation. Some addiction theorists are beginning to question the use of the term 'needle fixation' because of its implied unconscious content (Fraser et al., 2004). I propose that needle fixation can be understood and articulated as a bona-fide fixation through the use of contemporary and traditional psychoanalytic theorists. I address the problem of language and terminology, identified by Fraser et al. (2004) needle fixation stands both in its psychoanalytic usage as arrested development at an unconscious stage and the contemporary reference by addicts and addiction theorists to compulsive injection.

This paper, then, not only explores the world of the injecting drug user through the use of psychoanalysis, it raises questions of language and authority. Who can say what fixation is? If we are to believe Fraser et al., (2004) then it seems psychoanalysis has a monopoly on the term and, if we are to use it, we must play by their rules. We must define needle fixation as an unconscious fixation for the term to have any value and ultimately for the

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phenomenon to be recognised and treated. The importance of language and its usage cannot be understated here.

## Literature Review

Pates and McBride define needle fixation as the compulsion to inject regardless of the substance. (McBride, Pates & Arnold 2005, p. 47) The debate regarding their views on needle fixation, however, has elicited no response from psychoanalysis. This is in spite of controversy over whether this term, originating in psychoanalysis where it carries a specific meaning, is being used appropriately in the context of debates on needle use (Fraser et al., 2004, p.73). Thus, while psychoanalysis has contributed to the literature on addiction, there are only a handful of contributions on needle fixation. This is to the detriment of an informed discussion of Pates and McBride's claims that compulsive injection represents a fixation as well as the counter claims of Fraser, Hopwood, Treloar and Brenner regarding the psychoanalytic origins of the term. Some of the historical observations made by McBride in the context of his discussion of intravenous use indicate a negative reaction from the establishment to the use of the needle. This includes one instance in which a medical doctor from the nineteenth century personally discontinued the practice of injecting because of what appears to have been a fear of patients exhibiting signs of needle fixation (McBride, Pates & Arnold 2005). The same is true of Latimer and Goldberg, and there is evidence of moral panic over what appears to be instances of needle fixation in some of the experiences implicitly but effectively documented by Burroughs in the novel *Junky* (Latimer & Goldberg, 1981; Burroughs, 1953).

In one of the articles in *Cocaine Papers*, Freud describes a young doctor, a friend who arrives at his door one night with bloody arms, wounded as a result of compulsive injecting (Byck, 1972, p.188). Before the invention of psychoanalysis, Freud seems to be describing the phenomenon of needle-fixation well before the notion of 'needle-fixation' was introduced. This term, first used by addicts themselves, has become a subject of recent controversy among addiction theorists because the term has emerged from addicts' experience and not from theoretical claims. I show however, how a psychoanalytic understanding of needle fixation can contribute to this debate.

A recent study by Fraser et al. of a sample of methadone users who had injected the syrup compelled Pates and McBride to declare that these addicts were motivated by the phenomenon of needle fixation (Pates & McBride, 2005). In a subsequent publication, McBride, Pates and Arnold define needle fixation as 'the compulsion to inject', while in an article titled *Needle Foucation*, they describe a plethora of colourful characters, among them Burroughs, and their particular relationship with the needle (Pates & McBride 2005; Latimer & Goldberg 1981). The notion of needle fixation has been contested by their colleagues who reject the fact that there is something compulsive about injecting. For instance, Fraser et al. claim instead that "needle fixation can be understood as a product of discourse, and as such, as both fact and fiction." (Fraser et al., 2004). Unlike Rowe, who argues in *The Feel of The Steel* that needle fixation can be explained by an anticipation of the affect of the substance, I argue that injection is a metaphor for the satisfaction of unconscious urges (Rowe, 2009). Fraser et al., in a subsequent response to Pates and McBride's claims, caution that because needle fixation "encompasses very different behaviours, is in some ways limiting, and has negative connotations, careful consideration should be given before it is accepted as a useful and therapeutic tool"

(Fraser et al., 2004, p. 1). However, McBride, Pates and Arnold speculate that it is a useful concept because a shared understanding exists between addicts and the agencies that treat them. (McBride, Pates & Arnold 2007) Fraser et al. claim that needle fixation is the product of discourse encompassing both fact and fiction, advising we proceed with caution (Fraser et al., 2005).

The idea of needle fixation is present in Burroughs' *Junky*, which presents itself as fiction but provides as much insight into the problem as many theoretical works through a first-hand examination of addict culture. The term 'needle fixation' however, is yet to be considered in a psychoanalytic context.

Addiction has long been associated with masturbation; Freud made the link and Latimer and Goldberg (1981), citing Bulkley, a doctor of divinity in 1840, writes,

> Drug abuse was merely a certain consequence of self-abuse, the substituting of one sensual vice for another. Masturbation usually followed the same abominable behaviour pattern. It is usually continued until the unfolding reason and conscience open the victim's eyes to the true nature of his habit. (Latimer & Goldberg 1981, p.193)

Whilst this may appear to be on par with the superstitious notion that masturbation causes blindness and Bulkley's claim seems to be directed more toward the habit of masturbation than addiction, the connection between masturbation and addiction is of particular importance.

In *Subject of Addiction* (2002) Rik Loose claims that masturbation and addiction represent a single phenomenon or two phenomena that share certain similar properties, and appeals to Freud on masturbation to construct a psychoanalytic theory of addiction. As Loose points out, Freud saw masturbation as the greatest of all addictions (Loose 2002). Loose's psychoanalytic theory of addiction is based on the notion that addiction offers the complete satisfaction masturbation fails to provide. He explains that addicts suffer from a disturbance at the mirror stage due to libidinal content in the encounter with the parental other, who helps the infant stand so that he/she can view him/herself in the mirror. This creates a specific dissatisfaction from the universal practice of masturbation, causing them to seek out something else in pursuit of complete satisfaction.

For addicts, masturbation fails to provide complete satisfaction because the libidinal encounter with the parental other at the mirror stage offers the illusion of complete satisfaction. Drawing on Loose's explanation of addiction, I will engage with the disputed phenomenon of needle fixation. As I will show, injection represents too much of what Lacan calls 'the real' while needle fixation can be understood as a fixation on the libidinal encounter with the parental other at Lacan's mirror stage of development (Loose 2002). Whilst Loose seems to propose that addiction to substances and activities such as gambling is an attempt by addicts to self-soothe a disturbance at the mirror stage, I

propose that the contemporary addict's non-medical, compulsive self-injection constitutes a fixation at the mirror stage.

According to Lacan, the mirror stage occurs at a moment in the human subject's life when his or her body is experienced as being in bits and pieces as it strives toward self-recognition or identification with its own image in the mirror. Loose, who addresses addiction to substance and gaming and characterizes the human subject of the addict as suffering from an invasion by 'the real' due to a trauma at the mirror stage, refers to the 'libidinal encounter' with the parental other at this unconscious stage (Loose, 2002, p.184). Injection is symbolic of this libidinal encounter. The satisfaction enjoyed by the addict who compulsively injects, regardless of substance, is repeating this unconscious libidinal encounter and, I claim, that this constitutes an unconscious fixation. The process of self injection can be conceived as a form of masturbation that better replicates the unconscious desire for intercourse with the parental other and the accompanying "insufficient orgasm" experienced by addicts during masturbation (Loose, 2002). The needle fixator is suffering from a repetition of this invasion of the real in the form of a libidinal encounter with the parental other at the mirror stage. This invasion of the real can manifest itself as insufficient orgasm in the universal practice of masturbation (Loose, 2002, p.184). Therefore, perhaps the addict requires something else, something beyond masturbation to achieve the satisfaction the ordinary human subject takes for granted, satisfaction ordinarily brought about by the orgasm achieved through the practice of masturbation. Loose seems to claim that the addict experiences a disturbance at the mirror stage causing this insufficient orgasm. Needle fixation, addiction to the needle or injection, can be understood as a fixation or arrested development at this stage, particularly a fixation on the libidinal content, what Loose calls the incestuous oneness with mother, or the parental other (Loose, 2002). The possible symbolic value of injection is represented in the infantile sexual drives of the incomplete human subject. Hence, what is the self injector doing when he self-injects? I propose he is satisfying infantile sexual drives.

There is a significant body of work based on the self-medication hypothesis. Due to the chemical foundations of this theory, that is, the emphasis on 'substance' to self-medicate, there is no space within it for speculation on a form of addiction to what McBride, Pates and Arnold call the mechanism of the needle (Kantzian et al., 2008). Since needle fixation is not a form of self-medication, there is no place for it in psychoanalytic discourse. Khantzian's article proposing the self-medication hypothesis, the dominant addiction theory in psychoanalysis, divides addicts according to their choice of substance. McBride, Pates and Arnold's work, on the other hand, is concerned with addiction to the needle; the mechanism.

Around the AIDS crisis in the 1980s and 1990s, the question of needle use became important in fields of cultural studies and sociology, sometimes examining the meaning of the needle. For example, Manderson observes that "the fetishization of the objects of drug use makes the law and the drug addict far more alike than often thought". (Manderson, 1995, p. 783) Howard and Borges, Feldman and Biernacki, Paige and Smith seem, in some measure, to recognise the importance of the needle in drug using culture, without directly acknowledging or identifying the idea of needle fixation. (Howard & Borges, 1971; Paige & Smith, 1990). However, these are not psychoanalytic theorists and they do not seek to address the issue of fixation with the needle, its meaning or content. More recently, Pates has expanded on his research with McBride in *The*

*Development of a Psychological Theory of Needle Fixation* where he refers to the work of Levine, who he says, may have pioneered this contentious notion in his *Needle Freaks: Compulsive Self-injection by Drug Users* in 1974 (Pates & Gray, 2009; Levine, 1994) As Pates observes, the concept is contentious because the idea that one might become addicted to a mechanism, a physical object is foreign to a discourse based on chemical hypotheses such as that of self-medication. Levine's publication occurs in the discourse around the same time E. M. Brechter claims that addicts use the needle for the orgasmic rush and that the slow acting methadone could counteract this compulsion (Brechter, 1972). In my view, Pates' attempts to claim that needle fixation is a genuine problem for the field of addiction have failed to convince his colleagues because of his emphasis on compulsive injection rather than unconscious fixation. Fraser et al. recognize that the term 'fixation' is a psychoanalytic term. Curiously, they appeal to this fact to argue against the existence of the phenomenon of needle fixation. Below, I engage with both McBride, Pates and Arnold and with Fraser et al., using the psychoanalytic writings of Loose and Lacan, as well as Freud's concept of fixation, to show how 'needle fixation' can be understood as a phenomenon with an unconscious cause.

There have been some recent contributions on the subject in psychoanalytic journals, and a number of contributions from psychoanalysts have appeared in addiction journals. Valentine and Fraser have contributed psychoanalytic insights to the debate with a detailed study of the connection between types of drug use and ritual pleasures (Valentine & Fraser, 2008). Their claims are based on empirical studies and descriptions of drug users with an emphasis on social status and poverty. This component of their claim, that is, the social status of drug users, very much resembles a reference to Freud by Lacan.[2] However, Valentine and Fraser's study is too empirical, too overtly social, to be connected with my claim, which emphasizes the unconscious fixation of the needle-fixator at Lacan's mirror stage.

A stray comment by Freud has been used to explain the enjoyment of injection as displaced male sexual aggression (Freud, 1900). Hopper claims that the enjoyment of self-injection is due to the unconscious homosexual fantasies the injector is entertaining while injecting (Hopper, 1976). This can be linked to the Freudian idea of displaced male sexual aggression in an inverted form. Hopper's thesis is consistent with the connection Loose makes between masturbation and addiction. If homosexual fantasies are being entertained while injecting as Hopper claims, this may indicate a form of masturbation; the practice of injecting replacing masturbation. However, while Hopper attributes unconscious motivations to self-injecting and Loose proposes an unconscious cause for addiction, neither Hopper nor Loose directly address the question of needle fixation. Hopper's theory cannot be described as a theory of needle fixation in the same way that Freud sees fixation because, whilst Hopper speculates on possible unconscious motivations for injection, he does not directly identify an unconscious stage at which the human subject is detained. The idea that the human subject is detained at an unconscious stage is crucial to Freud's concept of fixation. Like McBride and Pates and perhaps Loose, Hopper does not address the idea of fixation. Rather, Hopper's claim is a small component of a more general theory of addiction based on the idea of latent homosexuality.

[2] This is comparable with Lacan's comment on Freud where he claims that "those jouissances which are forbidden by conventional morality are nevertheless perfectly accessible and accepted by certain people" (Lacan, 1959-1960, p. 200).


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Much has been said in recent years about the problem of transgressive intravenous drug use, however, most of the literature seeks sociological explanations for phenomena associated with the needle. For example, the *British Journal of Addiction* adheres to an epidemiological approach to illicit drug use (Giovanni et al., 1992). The problem of needle-sharing has brought with it an entire body of research including examinations of the social circumstances of drug users and endless attempts to sterilize' the drug users environment through theoretical means. However, the idea of approaching drug addiction through epidemiology is rejected by Pates who claims ethnography is a more useful tool of analysis (McBride, Pates & Arnold, 200). It is, however, the case that epidemiologists frequently employ ethnographic methods. For example, a study of the transmission networks for HIV utilised a conversational method at a truck-stop with female sex workers. (Nyamuryekung'e et al., 1997) The new discipline of drug studies is also driven by the epidemiological approach. Much of the literature is concerned about the problem of needle sharing, such as Howard and Borges in *Needle sharing in the Haight* exploring the psychological function or problem of needle-sharing (which perhaps explains the epidemic idea because physical disease is spread through the use of the needle). However, there is very little literature that speculates on what might drive the addict to share needles, and no psychoanalytic material on an unconscious cause for this behaviour which might lead to the use of the term 'needle fixation'. I claim that this problem of needle-sharing and its psychological motivations may include a sexual metaphor. I claim, however, that the enjoyment of injecting the other is merely a vicarious enjoyment of injecting oneself which I claim is the origin of needle fixation.

Julie Miller has speculated that the needle represents a transitional object, that is, a replacement for the first object of the mother. Miller examines an aetiology of heroin addiction from the perspective of object relations (Miller 2002). Her focus is on the needle as a transitional object in patients who have experienced early childhood deprivation and separation trauma. She claims that the needle represents an object that replaces the closeness of the mother's breast on the face concluding that "for the heroin addict the transitional object is transformed into pathological process" (Miller, 2002, p. 193). Miller does not directly state that the heroin addict has needle fixation. However, by claiming the needle acts as a transitional object that is later transformed into a pathological process, she implies that the enjoyment of injection is based around a fixation on such a transitional object caused by arrested development at this infantile stage. Loose's use of Lacan's mirror stage to explain the general phenomenon of addiction furthers Miller's claims by identifying a precise moment in an unconscious stage, the libidinal encounter at the mirror stage and that this allows for an understanding of needle fixation as a genuine unconscious problem requiring the attention of psychoanalysis. Miller's work, like much of the literature on addiction, places too much emphasis on the substance rather than the needle. Whilst she presents a viable claim regarding an unconscious cause for injection, she makes this claim in the context of a theory on heroin addiction, thereby emphasizing substance. On the other hand, McBride, Pates and Arnold make claims regarding injection, and particularly needle fixation, without offering an unconscious cause for either. My research has a relationship with both Miller and McBride but with particular attention to the term 'needle fixation' in a psychoanalytic context. Miller's claim that the needle is a transitional objectis curious. The transitional object, according to Winnicott, is an object that replaces the closeness of the infant to the mother (Winnicott, 1953). This idea is not particularly prevalent in the process of injection described by McBride in *Injecting Illicit Drugs*. For the three

elements of body, substance and mechanism at the injection site do not include any reference to an object that might be considered a transitional object. Freud's description of Dr Taylor however, goes somewhere toward assigning the needle the quality of a transitional object.

> His hypodermic syringe with which he gave himself the cocaine, had been taken away and no form of substitute was allowed. He was about as rational as a man who had been taking whisky or opium freely and about as nervous as one from whom these agents had been suddenly taken. (Byck 1975 quoting Freud 1887, p.189)

Notice that in this description, it is not merely the injection that the subject craves but a particular closeness with the hypodermic syringe. In this way, the syringe that has given the self-injection in Freud's description, acquires the quality of a transitional object. This however, is not Miller's claim. Rather, she equates heroin with mother's milk and in this sense reverts to the almost universal emphasis on substance rather than the mechanism of injection or the fixation on the needle and its use (Miller, 2002, p.293).

A recent collection titled *Understanding Abnormal Behaviour* (Sue, Sue and Sue, 2006) identifies the phenomenon of the addicts' needle habit, observing the ritual that accompanies self-injection. However, whilst this is briefly mentioned, the authors make little attempt to deal with the subject of needle fixation. Sue et al. explain, in detail, the ritual of injection in the context of treating addicts. The conceptual leap from the idea of needle habit prevalent in Sue et al.'s claims, to the concept of 'needle fixation' in the recent work of McBride, Pates and Arnold is profound.

Jen-chieh Tsai's article, *From Need to Needle: the Cult of Addiction in William Burroughs*, reveals a significant relationship with my work, my emphasis is on formulating a theory of needle fixation, a concept to which Tsai does not refer. Additionally, whilst Tsai seems to speak against the self-medication hypothesis by emphasizing the addicts' use of and relationship with the needle, he also seems compelled to incorporate it into his theory. And whilst he seems to deal with Loose and the jouissance provided by the needle his theory, while claiming to bring addiction into the realm of the symbolic, lacks an extensive extrapolation of Lacan's mirror-stage: "The euphoria experienced by Lee returns one to Loose's definition of addiction: it pertains to the act of administration to execute a certain economy and distribution of pleasure and jouissance" (Tsai, 2006, p.10). Here, as in the rest of the article, he grapples with the issue of administration only to return to the concept of self-medication before finally merely restating a component of Loose's thesis, "namely, through self-medication, an individual regains feelings of reciprocity, by which self and other engage in the triangular dialectic and the subject is somehow able to live on, with minimalism of pain" (Tsai, 2006, p.10). This characterization of Loose makes him sound like a self-medication hypothesist. Whilst Loose ultimately reverts to the dominant self-medication hypothesis, I believe his discussion of Lacan's mirror stage and its connection with addiction provides a far more compelling explanation for intravenous use and forms the foundations for a theory of needle fixation. Whilst this does not appear to be Tsai's

intention, he certainly sets out to argue against the dominant emphasis on substance encompassed in the discourse on addiction, and I share his view. However, he emphasizes the toxicity in Loose and, whether this toxicity exists in the realm of the physical or the symbolic it gives the appearance of self-medication. That is, Tsai claims that the needle, because of its symbolic value, self-soothes in a way that the self-medication hypothesis says that heroin self-soothes. I also use Loose's theory to explain needle use or 'administration', however my emphasis is on the mirror stage component of Loose's theory and a fixation at this unconscious stage. Tsai seems more concerned with how administration or injection self-soothes the trauma at the mirror-stage, though he does not mention the mirror stage. This, despite it being fundamental to Loose's addiction theory and Lacan's concept of jouissance, both of which he discusses at length. I will use Loose's theory in terms of the mirror stage, emphasizing Lacan's discussion of the prop of the parental other, proposing a fixation at this stage as the cause for compulsive injection thus answering the concerns of Fraser et al. regarding Pates and McBride's theory of needle fixation.

Psychoanalysis seems primarily caught up in the chemical hypothesis with regard to the more general problem of addiction, as opposed to needle fixation. The assumption that the body is nothing but a chemical entity provides the foundation for imagining it might be in need of chemical medication, whether from the self, as in the self-medication hypothesis, or from a medical authority. However not all psychoanalysts take this approach. Mitchell May, for instance, attributes addiction to the addict's fear of intimacy and subsequent transference to the substance: "It [addiction] signified the fear of intimacy based on deep-seated distrust, which the analyst must be able to tolerate with a sense of hope that it will lead from a non-human to a human relationship" and further concludes that "cocaine use is a substitute for a human relationship, a transference" (May, 1991, p. 10).

When McBride, Pates and Arnold identify the three elements present at the injection site as body, substance and mechanism, they pave the way for a vital and unexplored area of interest for psychoanalysis: the needle (McBride, Pates & Arnold, 2005). This represents a departure from the dominant self-medication hypothesis, the primary focus of which is the substance and the chemical hypothesis of the body. This chemical hypothesis is adhered to by May, Khantzian and many others approaching the subject, one notable exception being Rik Loose. For whilst May, for example, identifies the addict's non-human relationship with cocaine, this non-human relationship is assumed to be based on attraction to the substance not the mechanism of the needle. By locating the source of addiction at Lacan's mirror-stage of development, which is a specific, unconscious moment, Loose departs from previous psychoanalytic thinking. Nevertheless, even Loose proposes a kind of self-medication hypothesis, albeit rather abstract, by suggesting that addiction medicates the dissatisfaction from the insufficient orgasm of masturbation. Lacan classifies jouissance as a form of satisfaction akin to the satisfaction of a drive (Lacan, 1959). This understanding of the word extends beyond mere satisfaction. The satisfaction of a sexual drive, for example, is completely distinct from the satisfaction one feels from a good meal. The jouissance of the needle refers to the needle as a means "of getting off…however clean or dirty" (Fink, 1997, p. 9). Pates and McBride's research reflects this notion of jouissance. They quote one addict as saying of the needle, that "without it, life would be unsupportable" (McBride, Pates & Arnold, p. 48). Moreover, in this article, I claim that the satisfaction an addict derives from compulsive injection finds its origins at the unconscious mirror stage of development and that the kick addicts get

from the needle is caused by a fixation at this stage. The addicts in Fraser et al.'s study volunteered the term 'needle fixation' (Pates & McBride, 2004). This term is then used by McBride and Pates to further the idea of needle fixation and elicits a 'response' from Fraser et al., in which they argue that fixation is not the correct term to describe the phenomenon, that it is a psychoanalytic term and therefore they say, it has no currency in the current debate. My research will involve an exploration of the term 'fixation', addressing this question whether needle fixation is a genuine phenomenon with an unconscious cause. In order to do this, I will use the work of Rik Loose in Subject of Addiction and Freud's use of the term 'fixation' as developed in his Three Essays on Sexuality. Central to Loose's work is Lacan's notion of jouissance. He draws a connection between jouissance and addiction. I will use this notion of jouissance to formulate a psychoanalytic theory of needle fixation, a theory that is absent from the current discourse, both in relation to addiction theory and psychoanalysis.

## *Fixation and Needle Fixation*

In *Injecting Illicit Drugs* Andrew McBride describes needle fixation as the compulsion to inject regardless of substance (McBride, 2005). The descriptive term used here has been rejected on the basis that so called 'needle fixation' is not a fixation in the psychoanalytic sense. Fraser et al., for example, question the use of the term 'fixation', citing its psychoanalytic origins as arrested development at an unconscious stage and claim the term has no value in describing compulsive injection (Fraser et al., 2004). I will present a theory of needle fixation, using Freud's definition of the term 'fixation' to argue that the term 'needle fixation' describes a fixation on the libidinal content at the mirror stage of development. That is, needle fixation, the repeated puncturing of the skin and veins by injecting drug users is the imaginary consummation of the libidinal encounter with the parental other at the mirror stage.

In his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud discusses, or at least refers to, fixation at length. In one of these discussions he states:

> Many persons are detained at each of the stations in the course of development through which the individual must pass; and accordingly, there are persons who never overcome the parental authority and never, or very imperfectly, withdraw their affection from their parents. (Freud, 1962, pp. 617-618)

Hence, fixation represents a failure in the human subject to move through a particular unconscious stage. The question remains whether addiction to the needle can be accounted for in terms of this definition of fixation. A disturbance at the mirror stage that, for Loose causes addiction and, for me, causes needle fixation is related to the libidinal content to which Lacan fleetingly refers. The presence of the mother becomes a third party at the mirror stage. The players in the drama of the mirror stage, as it is described by Lacan, include the child, the image in the mirror and the mother, who acts as a prop and holds the child up to the mirror. The presence of the mother is further problematised by her symbolic value and the child's unconscious sexual drive toward the figure of the


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mother. In the development of the ordinary child, this unconscious stage is merely one of life's unfolding developments. However, as Freud explicitly states, we can become stuck at one of the many unconscious stations in life and this is how he describes the phenomenon of unconscious fixation. Loose, in his book *Subject of Addiction*, claims that addiction is caused by a disturbance at the mirror stage. Perhaps the mother is overbearing. Or perhaps the child confuses his or her own mirror image with image of self and mother or prop, holds the child and appears in the image in the mirror. The human subject's fixation at this unconscious moment causes him/her to seek out activities that satisfy these unconscious drives.

I claim that one such activity is compulsive self injection with the medical needle, recently characterised in drug and alcohol circles as needle fixation. The criticism of needle fixation is that it appears to have no unconscious cause. I claim that an unconscious fixation on the libidinal content at the mirror stage creates a disturbance in the addict with the will to compulsively inject and provides this unconscious content. It is the missing piece of the jigsaw, as it were. The traditional argument supposes that the addict compulsively injects for the orgasmic rush of an immediate and excessive injection of the substance into the body using the hypodermic needle (Brechter, 1972). Theorists such as Brechter claim that addiction to the needle is, in fact, addiction to the substance. If Brechter is correct, then it seems fixation is not an appropriate term and this perhaps explains why some theorists reject its use in this context. The interplay between reality and description here is the central point of interest. The question of whether what we call needle fixation is indeed a fixation is not a frivolous or pedantic one. For the language we use to describe a phenomenon affects the way in which we understand it and treat it. By describing compulsive injection as needle fixation, we risk the phenomenon being neglected by drug and alcohol counsellors and/or theorists. Part of the problem with the use of the term 'needle fixation' is not that it does not correctly describe the phenomenon to which it refers but that there is a poverty of understanding when it comes to terms such as fixation, sourced from the language psychoanalysis but misused in other fields such as drug and alcohol.

Brechter's theory may explain the desire to inject or the addicts' choice to use the needle as a means of administration over other means. However, it does not explain the recently identified *compulsion* to inject regardless of substance (Pates & McBride, 2007). The compulsive nature of the behaviour, the desire to repeat the act of injection, is not accounted for by the association with substance, which is the genesis of psychoanalysis' self-medication hypothesis and other theories of addiction that see needle use in terms of the administration of the drug. Thus, the compulsive, repetitive injection appears to provide the addict with a satisfaction that is independent of substance. Hence, the needle and its interaction with the body have been sexualized by some users and this has little, if anything, to do with the substance being injected. It is here that the term 'fixation' is appropriate. For I claim that the compulsion is caused by arrested development at the mirror stage and a libidinal encounter with the parental other. If this is what the addict is unconsciously experiencing when he/she injects, then the term 'fixation' is most certainly appropriate and the problem of language from psychoanalysis in Drug and Alcohol is considerably diminished.

## *Perversion and Compulsive Injection*

What is the needle fixator experiencing when he/she injects? What are we describing when we say 'needle fixation'? This idea of needle and body taking precedence over substance removes one of the three elements identified at the injection site by McBride, Pates and Arnold in *Injecting Illicit Drugs* (2007). The mechanism and the body are the sources of enjoyment for addicts studied by these authors. This seems to require a discussion of the body. What is happening in the body of the segment of the population of intravenous drug users I have labelled the needle-fixators? Freud (1905) discusses erotogenic zones on the body. These zones are sources of pleasure that have been unconsciously eroticized and form the foundation for various compulsive activities such as thumb-sucking. In the case of thumb-sucking, the mouth has been eroticized.

> In the perversions which claim sexual significance for the oral cavity and the anal opening the part played by the erogenous zone is quite obvious. It behaves in every way like a part of the sexual apparatus. In hysteria these parts of the body, as well as the tracts of mucous membrane proceeding from them, become the seat of new sensations and innervating changes in a manner similar to the real genitals when under the excitement of normal sexual processes (Freud, p.27).

With this in mind, how might we understand needle fixation and is it an appropriate term to describe compulsive injection? Are we using the correct language when we talk about needle fixation? Needle fixation is the eroticisization of the activity of self-injection, regardless of substance. The disassociation of the sexual instinct provides the injecting drug user with a new location for pleasure, the injection site on the body, the needle itself behaving in every way "like a part of the sexual apparatus" (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, p.162). Further to this, various recently published health journals and users' guides warn users not to inject repeatedly in the same vein (NCHRC, 2014). This implies that, without this warning, users otherwise would inject into the same vein. Indeed, many of the health problems associated with intravenous drug use, such as collapsed veins, are caused by this single tendency. Therefore, is the compulsion to inject an eroticization of the injection site on the body? Perhaps this represents an attempt by the intravenous drug user to create a new location for pleasure on the body, a new orifice by which the addict might satisfy an unconscious drive. It appears to be common among the particular group or segment of the population of addicts said to be suffering from needle fixation.

Needle fixation is not only the compulsion to inject but an eroticization of the injection site on the body, evidenced by the failure of the addict to rotate the injection site and it has an unconscious cause: the traumatic unconscious experience with the parental other at Lacan's mirror stage (Lacan, 1976). Compulsive self-injection represents a consummation of this libidinal encounter. The compulsion to inject regardless of substance, experienced by a portion of the addict population, is a symbolic satisfaction of this infantile sexual drive. This assigns needle fixation to the realm of the unconscious and explains the desire to inject regardless of substance. Therefore, I argue that needle

fixation is not only a real and genuine phenomenon experienced by injecting drug users with a lust for the needle, it is an unconscious fixation best described using the language of psychoanalysis. If we treat compulsive injection as a conscious desire for the orgasmic rush from the intake of an excessive dosage of substance, then we ignore the word 'fixation' and the unconscious drama it potentially describes. By viewing needle fixation as a fixation on the libidinal content at the mirror stage, we not only create revelations for alcohol and drug treatments, we also explore the potential for language from psychoanalysis to inform our understanding in other areas.

## *Libidinal Attachment to the Needle*

The libidinal encounter with the parental other at Lacan's mirror stage is the unconscious fixation of needle fixation (Lacan, 1976). This libidinal content explains the almost irrational connection with the needle, described by addicts in the research conducted by McBride Pates and Arnold. In the case of needle fixation, the libido has been transferred from the erogenous regions to new locations for pleasure, the injection site where addicts are identified as injecting into the same spot. It is this libidinal attachment to the arm and the needle, the fluid and the blood that has been missing from the current debate, where needle fixation is referred to as the act of compulsive injection, whether it has an unconscious cause or not.

I claim that the act of compulsive injection is merely symptomatic of a deeper, unconscious drive. This explains recent research that has identified a particular way of conducting relationships specific to addicts: "such relationships are characterized by parental models of self-control and emotion regulation" (Ries et al., 2009, p. 64). By identifying a mode of relating, specific to the addict, these recent medical researchers are identifying a phenomenon prevalent in the process of treating addicts with psychoanalysis, that the relationship is not apriori as it is in ordinary psychotherapy (Loose, 2002). Combining this tendency, common to addicts including needle addicts, with psychoanalytic research and McBride and Pates' data, I claim that the addict is satisfying an unconscious drive by the act of compulsive injection. The compulsion of compulsive injection resembles masturbation, which Freud described as the greatest of all addictions. It is the compulsive nature of masturbation that connects it with needle fixation or an addiction to injecting. The insufficient orgasm achieved through the universal compulsion to masturbate leaves the human subject with "surplus energy…released in laughter, crying and other pathologies of everyday life" (Loose, 2002, p. 72). Loose seems to argue that addiction to substances and other compulsions are attempts to achieve the complete satisfaction that masturbation fails to provide. Expanding on this, I propose that the act of injection for some needle using drug addicts constitutes a form of masturbation. It is an attempt to achieve complete satisfaction which cannot be provided by masturbation because of the disturbance at the mirror stage at which the needle fixator is fixated.

What is important about the notion of needle fixation is not the repeated puncturing of the skin, as McBride, Pates and Arnold claim, but the fact that for the intravenous drug user, "libido has attached itself [to the needle and it produces a particular mode of satisfaction" (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973). This libidinal content, identified by Laplanche and Pontalis as the definition of fixation gives substance to the ethnographic descriptions of 'compulsive self injectors' offered by recent addiction theorists (McBride, Pates & Arnold, 2005). It also offers insight into the "incestuous and masturbatory activities' that

are taking place at the site of injection" (Loose, 2002, p. 83). The libidinal attachment to the needle can be traced back to the mirror stage where Lacan describes the prop, the parental other who holds the child to the mirror and becomes integrated into the child's self-image and the needle, rather than the world becomes the source of self-completion. This can explain the disputed notion of needle fixation. I argue that compulsive injection, particularly, can be traced back to a disturbance at this unconscious stage.

I contend that needle fixation, as opposed to addiction generally, is located at the unconscious moment of the mirror stage. The needle is the third party during the mirror stage of development, the parental other, who helps and encourages the child to recognize its image in the mirror "a third element that can function as a reference point" (Loose, 2002, p. 26). The existence of this reference point, coupled with the idea that the organism is in bits and pieces creates a symbolic matrix that "precipitates the formation of the 'I' before this 'I' is able to identify with psychically processed sexual drives" Loose, 2002, p.26). This is where the possibility of a relationship with the needle is established and the self-completion it provides in the addicts identity. Addicts quoted by McBride, Pates and Arnold say of the needle: "Without it, life would be unsupportable" (McBride, Pates & Arnold 2007, p. 48). Fraser et al. claim that this fact alone does not warrant the use of the term 'fixation'. What is required is an unconscious explanation and that is the concern of my thesis. The experience of self-injection, for example, can be explained by appealing to Lacan's jouissance. This is why it excites both enjoyment and repulsion in the user and the other. Examples of this enjoyment and repulsion can be found in McBride, Pates and Arnold. Self-injectors describe an enjoyment elicited from "self-inflicted pain…they talk as though self-punishment were a pleasure" (McBride, Pates & Arnold 2007, p. 51). Some of Burroughs' descriptions of injection barely disguise the metaphor with intercourse, 'Ike's gentle finger' and 'Ike was good.' The simultaneous existence of enjoyment and repulsion assigns needle fixation to the realm of jouissance.

Non-medical self-injection represents a fixation, an activity in which "the subject seeks out a particular activity or else remains attached to certain properties of the object whose origin can be traced back to some specific occasion in the sexual life of his childhood" (Laplanche & Pontilus, 1973, p. 163). This specific occasion is the libidinal encounter at the mirror stage of development where addiction, as well as anxiety and aggression are located. The problem with the current debate is that it seems only to deal with the notion of injection, or compulsive injection, with regard to the construction of a theory of needle fixation.[3] It addresses the problem of the needle and ignores the fixation of the user, who reveals a preference for injecting. This is primarily caused by a disproportionate emphasis on substance, the origins of the self-medication hypothesis and Brechter's theory that addicts inject for the orgasmic rush brought about from the rapid and efficient administration of substance. A compelling recent example that questions this view is the practice of femoral injecting, where the user repeatedly injects into the femoral area, the enjoyment seeming to be independent of substance and overtly concerned with the enjoyment of the activity of repeated injection (Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League, 2006).

[3] McBride, Pates and Arnold, *Injecting Illicit Drugs*.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, needle fixation is caused by a disturbance at the unconscious mirror stage of development. It is indicative of an overdependence on the parental other and the mirror stage, a fixation on the libidinal encounter. The needle, for the needle-fixator, is not merely a means of administering a drug, it provides the sense of self-completion usually assumed to be the function of substance to self-medicate, particularly in the field of psychoanalysis (Loose, 2002). This self-completion is achieved by a sexualization of the needle and the injection site on the body, the creation of a new orifice, and it has an unconscious cause. This unconscious cause is a disturbance at the mirror stage and compulsive self-injection is a form of masturbation, fantasising intercourse with the parental other. This departs from the conventional understanding of the term, which is at issue for Fraser et al. What this essentially means that the argument over needle fixation is one about language, over who owns such a term, who is entitled to use it and the conditions that must exist for the term to be used as a description. In order to have the phenomenon of needle fixation recognised and treated by a resistant establishment, we must not only speak in the language of psychoanalysis, we must reinterpret the experience such language describes. What is the needle? What does it mean? Why do I feel compelled to use it? If it is a fixation, it must have an unconscious cause. In this paper, I have built on the recent work of Rik Loose on addiction, using Lacan's mirror stage as a possible unconscious point at which the 'compulsive injector' is 'detained. By doing this, I am conforming to Freud's definition of "fixation" and the psychoanalytic language that will allow such a compulsion to be recognised as having an unconscious cause.

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# The Lacanian Subject: Subject of Desire or the Subject of Drive?

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"The notion of the subject surely demands revision from the Freudian experience" – Jacques Lacan, *Seminar V*

**Abstract**

This article reviews the concepts of Alienation and Separation as two distinct "logical moments" constitutive of subjectivity as theorized by Jacques Lacan. These logical moments, mediated by the materiality of language and enabling subjective orientations to the Other, are to be regarded as distinct psychical events that fundamentally structure a person's relation to the dimension of the Other, and without which linguistic subjectivity – becoming a subject of language – would not be possible. It is emphasized here that these events are by no means an inevitable sequence in a natural developmental teleology but are rather contingent occurrences related to *both* the underlying cognitive capacities of a young child *and* to the specific nature of the child – caregiver relationship. That is to say, there may be underlying cognitive-developmental issues at stake impeding the occurrence of Alienation and Separation as subjective psychical events in a caregiving environment where they would normally occur, just as much as there may be a disturbance in the child-caregiver relationship that objectively disrupts these occurrences from ever taking place. It should also be noted that Lacanian Psychoanalysis is a culturally specific discourse, responding to and intervening within specific cultural configurations – those of Western modernity in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The clinical practice of Lacanian Psychoanalysis advocates the production of a third moment of subjectivity, beyond Alienation and Separation, wherein subjectivity is finally construed with regard to objects of drive / *jouissance*, rather than the Other's demand or the Other's desire. This article limits itself to an overview of the first two moments of subjectivity, Alienation and Separation. The concept of Alienation in the Other's demand will be used as a way to clarify the clinical intervention made by Melanie Klein with the developmentally disordered Little Dick, described in her 1930 article, "The Importance of Symbol Formation in The Development of the Ego".

## Introduction

Lacanian psychoanalysis defines subjectivity not as an innate or universal human condition but rather as a contingent possibility enabled by the effect of signification on the living organism.[2] It holds that the "subject of the signifier", a subject divided between

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[2] For example, Colette Soler (1995) writes, "The Other as the locus of language – the

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an Imaginary conscious intention and a Symbolically anchored unconscious desire / knowledge, is the result of two distinct events or “logical moments”[3] which may or may not transpire in an individual’s early life history: Alienation and Separation. The first of these moments, alienation, occurs at that incalculable instant when an infant accedes to the exigencies of communicating its bodily needs through a particular representational order – a mother tongue such as English, Spanish, or French. By agreeing to use this representational order a child becomes “eclipsed” by its signifiers and forfeits the possibility of an unmediated access to a supposedly original plenitude or unvarnished state of being.[4] Separation occurs at another indefinite instant, sometime after alienation, when a child implicitly accepts and suffers a second momentous indignity, this time the recognition that it is not the sole object of the Other’s desire. This discovery sets the child on a fateful expedition to unearth the agalma, the precious object of the Other’s desire, so that s/he might one day incarnate it and thus become its cause.[5] The rest of the journey entails living out in one way or another the buried treasure that was found – fantasy.[6]

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Other who speaks – precedes the subject and speaks about the subject before his birth. Thus the Other is the first cause of the subject. *The subject is not a substance; the subject is an effect of the signifier. The subject is represented by a signifier, and before the appearance of the signifier there is no subject*. But the fact that there is no subject does not mean that there is nothing, because you can have a living being, *but that living being becomes a subject only when a signifier represents him*. Thus prior to the appearance of the signifier, the subject is nothing” (p. 43).

[3] See Bruce Fink’s (1990) seminal article “Alienation and Separation: Logical Moments in Lacan’s Dialectic of Desire”.

[4] This is the neurotic’s myth of a child’s fall from grace, their expulsion from an Edenic world of pre-Symbolic bliss into the debased and disorganized universe of signification, where nothing is what it at first appears. I will discuss further along why Lacan regards this prelapsarian scenario as an unavoidable myth and that the fantasy of pre-Symbolic plenitude / fullness of enjoyment it presents is of course just that – a fantasy which smooths over irreconcilable antagonisms, not through Symbolic *resolution* a la Claude Levi-Strauss’ definition of myth, but by proposing an idealized pre-Symbolic past, a vanquishing of the Symbolic realm altogether in an Imaginary scenario of completion.

[5] Thus enters the father “figure” for Lacan, or, more precisely, the father *function*, the agency of separation between mother and child. Lacan holds that in Western cultures, the biological father is culturally mandated with the responsibility to interrupt the unmediated “dyadic” relation between mother and child. Whether Lacan’s assessment tacitly perpetuates the patriarchal conditions of subjectivity it purports to merely describe is a matter that is certainly open to, and has been, questioned.

[6] Fantasy understood in its Lacanian sense as an *interpretation* of the Other’s desire — an interpretation oriented just as much toward the conscious demand of the Other as the Other’s enigmatic (unconscious) desire. Fantasy, then, crucially enables a drive satisfaction of the subject while simultaneously providing / functioning as an answer to the Other’s desire — a compromise. The difficulty of altering a fantasy, of “traversing” it, has to do as much with re-interpreting the Other’s desire as preserving or maintaining the pittance of drive satisfaction that fantasy provides and ensures.

While this pithy narrative conveys a general sense of alienation and separation and is therefore not without its didactic use-value, the dynamic vicissitudes of alienation and separation, with their manifold twists and turns, is far from a simple linear progression or process of cognitive "development".[7] Although it can be plausibly argued that the predominance of alienation and separation as two distinct logical moments in the constitution of subjectivity is largely superseded by Lacan's final elaboration of the Borromean knot as a way to theorize the complex imbrications of the Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real dimensions of human psychical experience, I believe that the concepts of alienation and separation have an enduring relevance for any Lacanian theory of subjectivity.[8] Accordingly, I wish to provide here an account of the Lacanian Subject as conceived of through Alienation and Separation and to explicate the two modalities of subjectivity that these logical operations engender: the Subject of Demand and the Subject of Desire. I will begin by examining Freud's epistemological break and the destiny of a misrecognized notion.

## *Drive: Freud's Incredible Vanishing Concept*

The first mystery concerning Freud's concept of drive is that it appears nowhere in the widely used *Standard Edition* of his writings. This, however, is not because it was never clearly formulated by Freud and requires retroactive reconstruction but is rather due to an inauspicious choice of translation committed by the English translator James Strachey – one that may have seemed harmless at the time but nevertheless set in motion the repression of a concept that provided a compelling account for why humanity is such a uniquely denatured species. Strachey, as one might have already guessed, is a *bete noir* of Lacanians for the following reason. Although Freud consistently distinguished between an innate, genetically pre-programmed animal *Instinkt* and a much more malleable *Trieb* which he used to designate the character of specifically human motivation, Strachey's translation summarily dispensed with this distinction and rendered both terms using the English word "instinct". Strachey justifies this choice of translation by contending that the existing English cognate "drive" for the German *Trieb* lacked any determinate meaning or even indeterminate connotations for usage as a term of psychology in the English language.[9] While this may certainly have been true at the time, the failure to nonetheless *forge* a distinction into English utterly obfuscated and almost consigned to oblivion one of Freud's central interventions on the topic of human motivation.

Freud's first sustained speculations on the nature of a uniquely human drive appear in his *Three Essays On The Theory Sexuality* published in 1905. Above all, these essays are preoccupied with accounting for the striking plasticity of erotic object choices among human beings. Near the end of this essay Freud (1989) remarks,

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[7] Alienation and Separation, in Lacan's usage, are not "stages of development", for example, along the lines of those delineated by Jean Piaget or Erik Erikson.

[8] And, moreover, retain inestimable clinical utility.

[9] See James Glogowski's (1997) article "Remark Concerning the Drive" in the *Umbr(*a*)* issue *On The Drive.*


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> Experience of the cases that are considered abnormal has shown us that in them the sexual instinct and sexual object are merely soldered together— a fact which we have been in danger of overlooking in consequence of the uniformity of the normal picture, where the object appears to form part and parcel of the instinct. We are thus warned to loosen the bond that exists in our thoughts between instinct and object. *It seems probable that the sexual instinct is in the first instance independent of its object; nor is its origin likely to be due to its object's attractions*. (p. 246)

The groundbreaking implications of Freud's claim, namely that the sexual object choices of human beings obey a logic other than that regulated by the laws of evolutionary biology is to this day still militated against in some contemporary neo-positivist scientific circles. Freud contends that human sexuality is *not primarily* directed towards the reproduction of the species but *first and foremost* towards the satisfaction of independently operating drives embedded in relatively circumscribed erogenous zones (classically, the oral, anal, and genital "zones"). This notion no doubt proved anathema to the majority of scientifically minded people during Freud's own time, who, like today, attempted to rebuke his ideas by defending Darwin's evolutionary / functionalist theory as the incontrovertible account on matters of human sexual motivation. Indeed, Freud's propositions on the radically distinctive character of human sexuality are often dismissed, or, more likely, conspicuously overlooked on much the same evolutionary grounds.

Nonetheless, there are numerous intellectuals of various dispositions and allegiances who recognize in Freud's conception of human sexuality an unprecedented rupture that introduces a new set of epistemological coordinates for understanding both the human condition and the particularly fraught sexuality associated with it. Regarding Freud's intervention as nothing short of a world-historical Event, the philosopher Alain Badiou (2007, p. 74) remarks,

> For Freud this sexuality is so insistently marked by its polymorphous perversity that any idea according to which sex is regulated by nature is immediately exposed as inconsistent. Freud is perfectly aware of his doctrine's disruptive potential, which is why he urges his pupils to accumulate their direct observations, so that in the coming controversies they will be armed with a vast empirical arsenal.

Even in Freud's triumphant disruptive gesture however, Badiou notes that he still sought legitimacy within the reigning hegemonic discourse of scientific empiricism. Also, as Adrian Johnston (2005) points out, the *Three Essays On The Theory of Sexuality*


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continues to endorse an inherently conservative developemental-teleological trajectory of human sexual maturation in spite of its emphasis on the contingency of object choice since Freud concedes that the oral and anal drives of infancy come under the "tyranny" of the genital zone in "normal" / "mature" adult sexuality (p. 172). Thus Freud's desire for the scientific and social respectability of psychoanalysis tended to domesticate the more iconoclastic implications of his drive theory by re-inscribing it into pre-existing paradigms of thought and conventional social mores. Ten years after the original publication of *Three Essays On The Theory of Sexuality* Freud (1989) returns to the topic of drive in his metapsychological paper, "Drives and Their Vicissitudes". This paper contains Freud's most comprehensive account of drive and definitively establishes it as a formal concept in psychoanalytic theory. It may come as some surprise therefore that Freud petitions for the necessary ambiguity of drive from the very beginning of this paper and refrains even from conferring upon it the minimal consistency of a preliminary definition. Instead, he treats his readers to an extended foray into the nature of scientific theory construction, emphasizing the impossibility of completely dispensing with pre-existing ideas or "conventional" concepts when initially collating empirical observations, even if these categories must be continuously modified to most adequately approximate the supposed immanent logic of the phenomena under consideration.[10] Now, with his audience duly prepared for a bit of haphazard groping in the dark, Freud goes on to propose an incisive distinction between a momentary physiological stimulus originating from the external world and something he tentatively qualifies as *Trieb* – a constant force clamoring for satisfaction that originates from within the organism itself. While stimulus and drive are not correlative, i.e., they are to be distinguished according to their topological orientation and temporal duration, Freud (1989) notes that what appears to constitute their common ground are the exigencies of the pleasure principle.

> When we further find that the activity of even the most highly developed mental apparatus is subject to the pleasure principle, i.e. is automatically regulated by feelings belonging to the pleasure-unpleasure series, we can hardly reject the further hypothesis that these feelings reflect the manner in which the process of mastering stimuli takes place – certainly in the sense that unpleasurable feelings are connected with an

[10] Freud (1989) offers these illuminating reflections on the process of scientific theory construction: "Even at the stage of description it is not possible to avoid applying certain abstract ideas to the material at hand, ideas derived from somewhere or other but certainly not from the new observations alone. Such ideas — which will later become the basic concepts of the science — are still more indispensable as the material is further worked over. They must at first necessarily possess some degree of indefiniteness; there can be no question of any clear delimitation of the their content. So long as they remain in this condition, we come to an understanding about their meaning by making repeated reference to the material of observation from which they appear to have been derived, but upon which, in fact, they have been imposed" (p. 563).

> increase and pleasurable feelings with a decrease of stimulus. We will, however, carefully preserve this assumption in its present highly indefinite form, until we succeed, if that is possible, in discovering what sort of relation exists between pleasure and unpleasure, on the one hand, and fluctuations in the amounts of stimulus affecting mental life, on the other. *It is certain that many very various relations of this kind, and not very simple ones, are possible.* (p. 566)

Whether an organism is impinged upon by an external stimulus or provoked from within by an internal drive, Freud postulates that in each case the pleasure principle will require a reduction in the tension or "pressure" that is disrupting its organic homeostasis. Curiously enough however, Freud is compelled to conclude his brief discussion on the universality of the pleasure principle with a very significant qualification. Regarding the apparently straightforward dynamics of pleasure and un-pleasure in their correspondence to states of lesser and greater tension Freud remarks, "It is certain that many very various relations of this kind, and not very simple ones, are possible". Here, Freud surreptitiously calls into question the necessity of posing an inverse relation between pleasure and tension, be it from an external or internal source. Indeed, his central assumption that pleasure is only produced by a *decrease* in somatic-psychical tension is precisely the pre-formed "conventional" concept of his drive theory that he already in "Drives and Their Vicissitudes" begins to interrogate.

Eventually, Freud (1989) reconsiders his most basic assumptions about the nature of human pleasure in his last great treatise on drive – *Beyond The Pleasure Principle*. He begins his exposition by concisely restating his prior hypothesis regarding the nature of the pleasure principle.

> We have decided to relate pleasure and un-pleasure to the quantity of excitation that is present in the mind but is not in anyway 'bound'; and to relate them in such a manner that un-pleasure corresponds to an *increase* in the quantity of excitation and pleasure to a *diminution.* What we are implying by this is not a simple relation between the strength of the feelings of pleasure and un-pleasure and the corresponding modifications in the quantity of excitation; least of all — in the view of all we have been taught by psycho-physiology — are we suggesting any direct proportional ratio: the factor that determines the feeling is probably the amount of increase or diminution in the quantity of excitation *in a given period of time*. (p. 595)

This succinct summary provides the necessary context for his ensuing departures. Freud postulates that the pleasure principle is challenged by two main sources of resistance: the impediments of external reality to the attainment of satisfaction and the ego's (internal) striving for self-preservation. Again, just as before, Freud sets up an opposition between external reality (corresponding to the external "stimulus" in "Drives and Their Vicissitudes") and internal reality (the force of ego-preservation as an internal drive). He emphasizes that these two sources of resistance are not alike, but neither do they constitute an easy diametric opposition. Freud argues that the resistance put up by external reality poses a contingent impasse that can be overcome by patience and calculation. External reality thus imposes the reality principle which is nothing more than a temporary rerouting or tempering of the pleasure principle.[11] The ego's predilection towards self-preservation, however, constitutes a necessary, unavoidable impasse to the pleasure principle, and it is here that a "beyond" of the pleasure principle is obscurely manifested. Freud writes,

> In the course of things it happens again and again that individual instinct or parts of instincts turn out to be incompatible in their aims or demands with the remaining ones, which are able to combine into the inclusive unity of the ego. The former are then split off from this unity by the process of repression, held back at the lower levels of psychical development and cut off, to begin with, from the possibility of satisfaction. If they succeed subsequently, as can so easily happen with repressed sexual instincts, in struggling through, by roundabout paths, to a direct or to a substitutive satisfaction, *that event, which would in other cases have been an opportunity for pleasure, is felt by the ego as unpleasurable.* (p. 597)

Freud argues that some drives, presumably the ego-preservation drives, are incompatible with other drives, namely the sexual drives, and this causes an internal conflict that produces the ego as a (meta)psychological artifact and a source of repression. The above text suggests that the emergence of certain libidinally cathected drive representations into

[11] "We know that the pleasure principle is proper to a primary method of working on the part of the mental apparatus, but that, from the point of view of the self-preservation of the organism among the difficulties of the external world, it is from the outset insufficient and even highly dangerous. Under the influence of the ego's instincts of self-preservation, the *pleasure principle* is replaced by the *reality principle*. This latter principle does not abandon the intention of ultimately attaining pleasure, but it nevertheless demands and carries into effect the postponement of satisfaction, the abandonment of a number of possibilities of attaining satisfaction and the temporary toleration of unpleasure as a step on the long indirect road to pleasure" (p. 596).

consciousness is defended against even without the added "external" prohibition against sexual gratification imposed by the father. This is certainly not the commonly received image of Freud since we typically attribute resistance to sexual drive satisfaction as deriving from exposure to the father's prohibition and / or identification with the ego-ideal – that is, resistance from some external source or agency and not immanent within the organism itself. A slightly closer and more adventurous reading of the above text however can extrapolate a much more fraught scenario. Notice that Freud says "individual instincts *or parts of instincts* turn out to be incompatible in their aims and demands with other instincts". This speculation that "parts of instincts" may be incompatible with other "parts of instincts" is a subtle but important hint that Freud secretly entertains a different model of drive antagonism than the one he explicitly enumerates — one, perhaps, that he even defends himself against. The implicit drive theory suggested by the conflict between "parts of instincts" rather than, say, "whole instincts", is the notion that ego-preservation does not originally constitute a discrete agency or force in its own right but is rather driven by the sexual drive itself. This suggests that the ego's "drive" for self-preservation is a result of a *splitting* of the sexual drive, that it is a by-product or expression of a dehiscence immanent to the sexual drive. This extrapolated drive theory, which I claim is implicit in Freud's text, would seem to be duly corroborated by the panopoly of neurotic illnesses whose various repetitive symptoms often not only impede / replace the pursuit of direct sexual gratification, but even contravene, if not militate against the basic homeostatic requirements of the organism, such as attaining adequate nutrition and sleep, thereby increasing somatic-psychical "quantities of excitation" rather than relieving the organism of excess excitation in accordance with the standard pleasure principle. These speculations, however, still leave the cause of this splitting of the sexual drive a mystery, particularly if this splitting is construed as somehow an innate, natural propensity of human being rather than induced strictly by "external factors".[12]

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud inches precipitously close to suggesting an immanent splitting of the sexual drive itself, but shirks back from this radical formulation to endorse a disappointingly conventional proto-mythical binary opposition between Eros (the life drive) and Thanatos (the death drive) in order to account for the twists and turns of drive. The surprising incongruence of the primary clinical evidence that Freud references in support of his new drive theory – war neurosis and children's games – is symptomatic of the peculiar asymmetry between "self-preservation" and "sexuality", "external" and "internal", that he is attempting to delineate. Freud views a soldier's re-living or re-experiencing of a traumatic event as an attempt to bind that trauma to some kind of (meaningful) representation, in Lacanian terms to Symbolize the Real, and thus retroactively preserve the ego / self that had been externally threatened. The *Fort* / *Da* game played by Freud's grandson, in which the child represents his mother's departures and arrivals in fantasy by hiding and retrieving a cotton ball, appears to Freud to have the very same goal of symbolizing a trauma after the fact and thus constituting an archaic form of the ego-preservation function. The primary difference between these two examples, of course, is that the soldier's war trauma is a contingent trauma (external but unnecessary) while the frustration of the child by the mother's increasing inaccessibility is a necessary trauma (external and necessary). The key question Freud pondered was why, even after a trauma is "bound" or "cathected" by representation, does it continue to

[12] Such as the Law of the Father, Culture, etc.

be repeated via mental representations in a manner that still causes at least some amount, if not considerable, suffering? As I have suggested, one possible answer, implicit in Freud's thought, is that the impulse for self-preservation becomes, in a way, "sexualized", producing a uniquely human form of pleasure-in-pain (*jouissance*) *derived from ego-preservation in the absence of any external threat – an immanent beyond of the pleasure principle*. This depiction of the Freudian death drive distills the notion of internal drive conflict into a most condensed nodal point. The drive for ego-preservation / the death drive, is a concealed immanent split of the sexual drive / the life drive, which introduces a traumatic tendency of the ego's self-preservation (from the perspective of the organism and its homeostatic pleasure principle) as repetition gone awry. In order to further explicate the precise link between the ego and the death drive, I will now turn to Lacan's notions of Alienation and Separation as two logical moments in the constitution of subjectivity, specifically as a subject of language and the Other. I will illustrate these concepts with the help of an exemplary clinical case study by one of Lacan's most important psychoanalytic antecedents[13], the child analyst Melanie Klein.

Klein's (1987) seminal 1930 paper, "The Importance of Symbol Formation in the Development of the Ego" presents the case and treatment of "little Dick", a four-year-old boy trapped in an autistic state of pre-subjective development. Upon initially observing Dick's behavior Klein was struck by his conspicuous lack of anxiety and apparent indifference toward the presence or absence of his mother or nurse. She also noted that Dick was oddly uninterested in his surrounding environment or in occupying himself with any play activities. Most remarkable, however, was the condition of Dick's basic motor skills, which were woefully underdeveloped for a child his age, as well as his patent inability to distinguish his own body from objects in his immediate vicinity. This last observation was dramatically confirmed by Dick's tendency to walk or run directly into both people and furniture, the difference between these not being evident to him, combined with his alarming insensitivity to the pain that must have resulted from these collisions. In short, it was all but apparent to Klein that Dick had no awareness of himself as an individual person defined by the limits of a unique spatio-temporal embodiment. From a Lacanian perspective however, what is undoubtedly the single most important factor of Dick's clinical picture, providing a key to decipher the logic of his manifest symptoms, is his particular way of using language. Klein's description of this bears quoting at length.

> For the most part he simply strung sounds together in a meaningless way, and certain noises he constantly repeated. When he did speak he generally used his meager vocabulary incorrectly. *But it was not only that he was unable to make himself intelligible: he had no wish to do so. More than that one could see that Dick was*

[13] Indeed, Melanie Klein's work is a major inspiration, if not a condition of possibility, for Lacan's own intellectual development. For a detailed account of the relation between Klein and Lacan see Kate Briggs (2002) "The Gift of Absence: Lacan on Sublimation and Feminine Sexuation".

> *antagonistic to his mother, an attitude that expressed itself in the fact that he often did the very opposite of what was expected of him.* For instance, if she succeeded in getting him to say certain words after her, he often entirely altered them, though at other times he could pronounce the same words perfectly. Again, sometimes he would repeat the words correctly but would go on repeating them in an incessant mechanical way until everyone round him was sick and tired of them. *Both these modes of behavior are different from that of a neurotic child. When the neurotic child expresses opposition in the form of defiance and when he expresses obedience (even accompanied by an excess of anxiety) he does so with a certain understanding and some sort of reference to the thing or person concerned. But Dick's opposition and obedience lacked both affect and understanding.* Then too, when he hurt himself, he displayed very considerable insensitivity to pain and felt nothing of the desire, so universal with little children, to be comforted and petted. (p. 98)

Considering this description in tandem with further biographical information on Dick's family life provided by Klein, one can reasonably speculate that Dick's autism resulted from an early and profound emotional rejection by his mother. The possibility of a psychogenic etiology in *some* (i.e. *not all*) instances of childhood autism is supported by the pioneering work of Leo Kanner who first proposed the notion of early infantile autism in 1943. Kanner contended that the principle causal factor in psychogenic autism are emotionally frigid parents, "who are typically obsessed by details but lacking in feeling".[14] Klein documents that while Dick was given adequate attention and a live-in nurse routinely attended to his everyday needs, he was not provided with the heartfelt emotional warmth and tender affection that most healthy infants receive. An alternative way to frame Dick's predicament, introducing a more properly psychoanalytic assessment to his case, is that he did not occupy any place in his mother's desire.[15] From a Lacanian perspective, the result of this massive dearth in the Other's desire is that Dick either actively negated or was simply unable to register the dimension of the Other that his mother would have incarnated for him had her desire been in evidence through the tone of her voice, the feel of her touch, and the look of her gaze. The demands she issued to him, for instance to pronounce a certain word correctly, conveyed a lack of maternal warmth and desire for Dick, and almost seemed to provoke their own repudiation.[16]

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[14] See Silvia Tendlarz (2003) *Childhood Psychosis: A Lacanian Perspective*

[15] Indeed, it is apparent from Klein's account that Dick's mother exhibited an overwhelming ambivalence towards Dick and often outwardly rejected him.

[16] Regarding the status of the Other in early infantile autism, Rosine Lefort (1994)

Dick's problem was likely not *initially* at the level of an organically disrupted cognitive development (although, of course, it is impossible to definitively rule that out) but rather an inability to establish a primary (yet by no means symmetrical, as I will show) transitive identification[17] with his mOther, premised upon a mutually shared and wholly amorphous desire, which would have provided the foundation for all future (inter)subjective possibilities defined as characteristic stances adopted towards the Other's enigmatic desire. Because of the impossibility for Dick to share in his mother's desire he was denied even the chance of attaining a rudimentary psychotic subject position wherein his entire body could have been metaphorically substituted as an answer to the Other's desire, thereby constituting a situation that could be accounted for in Lacanian terms as *total* alienation – such a metaphoric substitution could only have been possible had Dick been admitted entrance to the Other's desire in the first place. Instead, as child psychologist Silvia Tendlarz (2003) notes, "[autistic] children experience the external world as a threat from the start. Every action performed by someone else is perceived as an intrusion (and this would include feeding, looking after the child's body, or even the simple presence of someone else). One can explain Kanner's position from a Lacanian perspective: without the Symbolic order, care is experienced as an intrusion" (p. 9). Considering Dick's predicament, it is clear that he has not assented to becoming a subject of the Other's demand through which a Symbolic order is originally installed since he has been prevented from (and has thus rejected) taking up residence in the Other's desire.

## Structure of the Lacanian Subject I: Alienation, Demand, Drive

A Subject of Demand in Lacanian theory is exemplified by an infant or child who has agreed, albeit tacitly, to an initial instance of alienation in the Symbolic order – the Other as an initially foreign medium of representation through which a child's physical needs are necessarily expressed and consequently distorted.[18] Typically, alienation is said to

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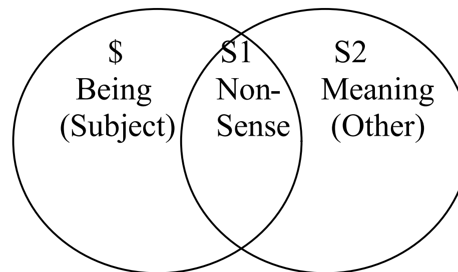
writes, "What characterized Marie-Francoise's object relation was that there was no Other— indeed, there was no small other either — and that for her I was an object among the other objects. This does not mean that I was not in a way privileged... she distinguished me from the other objects by treating me in a special way: my privilege was to receive a series of monumental slaps... Such was the contact that Marie-Francoise had with me on September 30th, which concerned the muscular more than the scopic and which, in that sense, *aimed at destroying me rather than seeing me*" (p. 223).

[17] Rosine Lefort (1994) observes, "The Other could not be established as separate without Nadia's attempting to fulfill it — filling my mouth with the cracker or the toy car. The image of the Other she wanted to fulfill was also her own image: the sucking noises she made when she put some object or other into my mouth were evidence of this. To fulfill me in order to fulfill herself — that was transitivism in action, which is at the basis of the most archaic form of identification, where it is not just a question of consuming an object to be fulfilled *but also of the Other not suffering and not losing anything in the process: refusal that the Other be barred*" (p. 37).

[18] This distortion occurs since a child's cries, presumably indicating discomfort of some kind, must inevitably be given a specific interpretation by its parents, "Is she hungry, thirsty, hot, cold, tired, etc.?" This interpretation, leading to precise concrete

occur when a child "submits" to the domain of the Symbolic by acknowledging their name or some other word, as a signifier that represents them to the Other as the field or "locus" of all further signifiers. The logical operation of alienation is represented by the following diagram:




In alienation, the pre-Symbolic being of an infant is rendered asunder by signification and subsequently transfigured into a divided subject – a subject divided at the uncertain intersection between Being and Meaning. As Bruce Fink (1995) has emphasized however, alienation by itself only provides the psychical *condition of possibility* for a subject (p. 52). Since alienation is formulated in Lacanian theory as constituting a contingent but nevertheless *logical* moment (as opposed to an *empirical* event per se or even less to a cognitive "developmental stage" with all its implications of teleological necessity) that irrevocably structures the future possibilities of a child's psychical experience, it is difficult if not impossible to objectively pinpoint its exact occurrence. The best one can do is to qualify its "ex-sistence" using the ambiguous future anterior tense which has the distinct advantage of reducing the connotations of an objectively observable empirical occurrence to its subjective logical effects – a child *will have been* alienated in so far as s/he testifies to or exhibits a certain relationship to the Other.[19] What then are the telltale signs of an alienated subject, for example, with regard to the case of Melanie Klein's little Dick?

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actions to alleviate the child (and the parents), may be a more or less accurate interpretation of the child's demand, nevertheless it is impossible to prove that it will be in perfect correspondence with his / her Real need.

[19] It is certainly legitimate to question why there appears to be such an overwhelming emphasis in Lacanian epistemology on theses "logical moments" that ultimately engender specific subjective relations to the Other (i.e., obsessional neurosis, hysteria, phobia, the perversions / personality disorder, and the psychoses) at the seeming expense of any empirical or phenomenological inquiry. A possible Lacanian reply is that since the "object" of psychoanalytic inquiry is the unconscious, it is by definition impossible to study it somehow through direct inspection, intrinsically, or "in itself", as a biologist studies a living system such as a cell. The existence of the unconscious cannot be definitively proven once and for all but only nominated in the mode of an ethical decision by acknowledging and remaining attentive to its effects. These effects must be read or interpreted, not primarily at the level of manifest behavior, but by attention to speech where the Other discourse of the unconscious can occasionally be heard.

Accepting alienation in the Symbolic order – and thus in the mOther's demand – entails a basic willingness or ability to *recognize* her pronouncements as demands. To take the most paradigmatic example, an infant or young child who has passed through alienation will recognize its name being called (thus responding to a demand) by his mother or primary caregiver and will be able to call out to her with some variant of "Mama" in return. While this scenario presents the rather prosaic and seemingly inevitable picture of a mother-infant bond, it in fact presupposes that quite a significant and by no means biologically necessary transformation has occurred in the child's psychical life. This is because the act of acknowledging the mother's demands in the sense of an elementary self-reflexive re-cognition also implicitly involves inadvertently affirming a harsh reality – "I am a separate being from my mother, *and subject to her every whim"*. Thus even if a child who *has* undergone alienation refuses to comply with his mother's demands, insisting that they are unfair or unjust – something of an inevitability it would seem from time to time – he nevertheless retains a fundamental awareness of himself as a separate individual upon whom demands are placed and who can in principle make demands on others (perhaps to demand that his mother reconsider or retract her own "exorbitant" demands). Indeed, the child who vehemently protests against and rejects the mother's demands unwittingly demonstrates that he situates himself entirely with respect to them, that they are the disavowed condition of possibility[20] for all his ostensibly "autonomous" activities. As Melanie Klein (1987) observes, "When the neurotic child expresses opposition in the form of defiance and when he expresses obedience (even accompanied by an excess of anxiety) he does so with a certain understanding and some sort of reference to the thing or person concerned. But Dick's opposition and obedience lacked both affect and understanding" (p. 98). The explicit rejection of the mother's demand by the neurotic child in Klein's example belies its more fundamental and implicit acceptance, a basic recognition that entails not only what Lacan calls alienation or, synonymously, an initial "splitting of the subject"[21], but also what Freud originally referred to as "primary repression".

In contrast to Klein's neurotic child that exhibits both understanding and affect when he opposes the Other's demand, Dick's relation to demand is much more ambiguous. Sometimes he appears to violently reject it, but in a way that displays neither understanding nor affect. At other times he seems to grudgingly or gleefully accept it, yet again in manner that indicates he does not really comprehend what is at stake. While at a certain level Dick can vaguely intuit his mother's demands (evidenced by his ability upon occasion to pronounce words correctly), he simply does not recognize them as demands addressed specifically to him *as a discrete individual* and thus conversely he cannot / will not recognize his mother as a *separate and distinct external locus* from where these demands are issued. Although Dick had reached the age of toddlerhood, his mal-adapted behavior and above all his use of language suggests that no instance of alienation had yet occurred which would have imposed a rudimentary Symbolic structuring upon his psychical experience of the world. In an important sense, the "psychical" dimension as such, the very division between "soma" and "psyche" has not yet occurred for Dick. A passing observer of Dick's situation might very well assume he is suffering from some kind of innate cognitive deficit, perhaps genetic or a result of pre-natal / birth complications, but nevertheless a malfunction at the level of (neuro)biological

[20] And simultaneously, of course, the condition of impossibility.

[21] With the caveat that this splitting is actually constitutive of the subject.

functioning. We know from Klein's case description, however, that there has been a marked disturbance in the relation between Dick and his mother due to the preponderance of her ambivalence and, indeed, her lack of desire for Dick.

Klein's (1987) speculations on the etiology of Dick's "arrested development" differ substantially from the notion of a primordial pre-egoic defense against a lack of maternal desire. Rather, she believed that the root cause of Dick's pathology stemmed from his nascent ego's inability to accommodate the anxiety aroused by unconscious sadistic fantasies directed against his mother's body and the imagined retaliations that would ensue from his father's penis as a result. Thus Klein's first intervention is to attempt to symbolize this supposedly repressed fantasy life to Dick and thereby render it accessible to his conscious awareness. She recounts,

> When I showed him the toys I had put ready, he looked at them without the faintest interest. I took a big train and put it beside a smaller one and called them 'Daddy-train' and 'Dick-train'. Thereupon he picked up the train I called 'Dick' and made it roll to the window and said 'Station'. I explained: 'The station is mummy; Dick is going into mummy'. He left the train, ran into the space between the outer and inner doors of the room, shut himself in, saying 'dark' and ran out again directly. He went through this performance several times. I explained to him: 'It is dark inside mummy. Dick is inside dark mummy'. Meantime he picked up the train again, but soon ran back into the space between the doors. While I was saying that he was going into dark mummy, he said twice in a questioning way: 'Nurse?' I answered: 'Nurse is soon coming', and this he repeated and used the words later quite correctly, retaining them in his mind. The next time he came he behaved in just the same way. But this time he ran right out of the room into the dark entrance hall. He put the 'Dick' train there too and insisted on its staying there. He kept constantly asking: 'Nurse coming?' In the third analytic hour he behaved in the same way, except that besides running into the hall and between the doors, he also ran behind the chest of drawers. There he was seized by anxiety, and for the first time called me to him. Apprehension was now evident in the way in which he repeatedly asked for his nurse, and, when the hour was

> over, he greeted her with quite unusual delight. *We see that simultaneously with the appearance of anxiety there had emerged a sense of dependence, first on me and then on the nurse, and at the same time he had begun to be interested in the words I used to soothe him and, contrary to his usual behavior, had repeated them and remembered them.* (p. 102)

Should we then take these remarkable changes as conclusive proof that Klein's theory of pre-Oedipal fantasy life is in fact correct? Klein's intervention clearly induces a momentous shift in Dick's subjective experience. While Klein was no doubt convinced by the veracity of her speculations given the remarkable progress of the therapy, an alternative explanation can be provided through a Lacanian perspective. From this vantage point it is crucial to examine exactly how the nature of Klein's symbolic intervention precipitates Dick as a subject of demand. Whereas before Dick behaved somewhat akin to a wind-up automaton exhibiting little or no sense of conscious volition, he is now capable of symbolizing his own experience to an Other (by repeatedly going into the closet and saying "dark"), making a demand on an Other (by asking for "Nurse?"), and exhibiting a simultaneous sense of anxiety and desire through his speech (desire for his nurse, anxiety at being away from her). It is especially notable that Dick's feeling of anxiety and his sense of dependence emerge together at the precise moment he is able to meaningfully represent himself to an Other and regard the Other's speech as constituting a message for him.

Let us take a more precise look at Klein's intervention. She begins by offering Dick two trains, distinguishing the larger one as "Daddy-train" and the smaller one as "Dick-train". Dick then proceeds to roll his train to the window where he proclaims the signifier "Station". Such a remark must have seemed of some significance to Klein (indeed, the Train / Station couplet was the only conceptual-verbal opposition Dick was capable of making) and she immediately seized the opportunity to graft an unadulterated Oedipal scenario upon a new Symbolic distinction that spontaneously emerged in the interstices between her own signifying designations (Dick-train / Daddy-Train) and Dick's original opposition (Train / Station). Notably, Klein's original signifying constellation Daddy-train / Dick-train made no impression upon Dick whatsoever, however, her improvised Dick-Train / Mummy-Station arrangement, taking a cue from Dick himself, produced dramatic results. Is this because "Mummy" is represented by the signifier "Station" in Dick's unconscious, as Klein implicitly suggests? What other possible explanation can be given for Dick's almost volatile reaction? Rather than viewing Klein's intervention as a successful analytic interpretation of an unconscious infantile fantasy (although that is not out of the question), it can *also* be understood as successfully inscribing a primordial Symbolic distinction between Dick and his first Other, thereby establishing a subject / Other division where such a division had not previously existed. In other words, from a Lacanian perspective Klein's intervention had the effect of alienating Dick in the Symbolic order and thereby producing him as a Subject of Demand — a subject capable of recognizing the Other's speech as a message specifically *for him* and of directing a demand back to the Other. The pertinent question to consider then is, why was Klein's

initial Daddy-Train / Dick-Train of no consequence to Dick's subjective positioning while her improvised Dick-Train / Mummy-Station makes of him a subject of demand?

Rosine Lefort's psychoanalytic work with psychotic and autistic children, documented with singular clarity in her pathbreaking (1994) study *Birth of The Other*, convincingly demonstrates through case material how the dimension or field of the Other as a subjective psychical experience can be established through a primordial signifying operation which produces the Other as a lacking, holed, or incomplete Other. She contends that what is at stake in constituting the Other is the capacity for the small subject to appropriate objects from the mOther's body so that it might plug up, that is, "repress", its own lack. Real objects of biological need are transformed into Symbolic objects of psychical demand to the extent that they are regarded by an incipient subject as originally belonging to the Other and constituting gifts from this Other. Such gifts are literally detached from or at least fantasmatically detachable parts of the mOther's body. In so far as these "objects" originate from the Other, they are "partial" objects instituting partial drives since they are objects that the Other has lost.[22] There can thus be no direct *relationship* with an Other *as such*, a whole or complete Other, but only a mediated relationship with a lacking Other which is mediated precisely by the partial objects that have been appropriated from the Other and render it lacking. The proto-Symbolic or representational valence of these objects[23] is originally that they indicate a loss or gift from the Other's domain. For an incipient subject the primordial signified of any object, what imbues this object with *semantic resonance* is that it represents a *loss / gift* from the Other. One can conclude that Meaning / Representation as such, *in its zero degree*, is consubstantial with loss – and not just any loss – but specifically the Other's loss.[24] Thus the very dimension of the Other is paradoxically established *at the moment when there is something missing from it* – something that has been appropriated by the subject. Conversely, the alienated subject, or the subject of drive, is established *at the moment when it returns the Other's loss or gift from itself back to the Other.*[25] Lefort's work is particularly compelling since she shows in a very bodily and visceral way how a literal piece or part of the Other establishes the dimension of the Other as a "place of lack" and therefore as a *locus of signification (the original meaning of which is loss itself).* This is not to say, however, that the drive object is a signifier proper, an actual word that represents and sustains the dimension of the Other as a place of lack. What then of the signifier itself, as opposed to the object? If this account of the co-emergence of subject and Other through "object relations" is indeed viable, then what is the precise role of the Symbolic dimension that Klein has so emphatically demonstrated in the case of little Dick?

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[22] Lefort (1994) argues, "There is only one type of object: the drive object; it is an object that takes its place in a montage, the circuit of the drives, which absolutely implicates the Other and deprives the object of its Real dimension by marking it as a loss. *The drive object is an object that the subject recognizes as signifying a loss for the Other".* (p. 327)

[23] Their psychological as opposed to simply biological meaning.

[24] It is important to note that the drive object will become correlated not only with the Other's loss but also a sign of the Other's love.

[25] This complex operation of returning the object to the Other, which retroactively establishes the subject of drive, will be clarified shortly.

Lefort argues in her case study "Nadia, Or the Mirror" that the communicating of an original signifying opposition to a psychotic infant — "Nadia" / "Mama" — has the effect of producing this child as a subject of demand and enables her to adopt *three* distinctive subjective positions in relation to the Other whereas before none of these subject positions were possible. Lefort writes,

> On December 10th, my calling her by her name had an effect of separation: she lost the inclusion through the eye, found my real body, and encountered in it the two sides of her true relation to me: that she could take in it the place of the metaphoric object, that is to say, the object that had fallen from it; or, by reversal, Nadia's calling me "mama", she could put this body at a signifying distance. In concrete terms this metaphor was the horror of being stuck to me, of being a part of my body, of being my breast; the metonymy, the signifying distance, was her foot that she held out to me, my hand that she took, her "mama" that she sent out as an echo of my calling her by name. From then on, the body of the Other that I was, was to be at the center of this pre-specular phase in two ways. On the one hand it was an object of contemplation; on the other, it was the carrier of objects *a*. In it, she was seeking both love and the drive object. She oscillated incessantly between her unconditional demand for love and the aggressivity that sought to take away the object from my body. *This oscillation can be described as ambivalence; her search for love put her in the position of making herself my object, a metaphorical position, and her quest for the object introduced her into the register of this object on my body, the signifier, the metonymic position.* (p. 66)

By Lefort imposing the signifying opposition "Nadia" / "Mama" between herself and Nadia, she is able to effectuate their separation from an impossible amorphous Real where no-*body* exists, just as Klein achieves with Dick. In order to maintain a consistent use of terminology, however, this first separation should be understood as a subject's *Alienation* in the Symbolic, wherein a subject and Other are initially established. After a division between subject and Other has been installed by a signifying opposition where one signifier "Nadia" represents a subject to anOther signifier "Mama", there is now a question of bodies and the objects those bodies lack. The signifying couplet S1 / S2 designates subject and Other but, crucially, also produces a remainder – *object a* – a lack that *has no proper, definite place in either subject or Other but circulates precariously*

*and indeterminately between the two*. This circulation of object *a* is potentially dangerous for the subject of demand and must be continuously negotiated until a provisional solution is found via the second "logical moment" in the constitution of subjectivity – Separation.

As Lefort describes, the first impulse of the nascent subject is to place itself in the metaphoric position, that is, to regard its entire body as the object of the Other's lack, the object that is missing from the Other and that could possibly complete it. In other words, the subject situates itself as a sacrificial object of *love* for the mOther and attempts to make up for her loss by metaphorically substituting itself as representative of the totality of her lack or desire (which the child has identified with), thereby annihilating the subject / Other distinction that had recently come into being. Although definitively adopting the metaphoric position would indeed commit the subject to psychosis since the Symbolic Other – the Other of lack – is dissolved by this metaphorical stance, the very fact that a metaphoric position is available to the subject indicates that an initial phase of alienation has already occurred, albeit tenuously. The second position that Nadia adopts is to call out to her "Mama" and to offer her foot as a *sign of love*, rather than her whole body. Lefort qualifies both of these actions as metonymic in the sense that they preserve a "signifying distance" between subject and Other rather than collapsing it. Moreover, Nadia's foot as object *a* can be understood as metonymic in so far as it offers a part of her to *represent* all of her as such – an operation that maintains her as a subject in the Symbolic (represented by S1 "Nadia" for S2 "Mama") but, crucially, as a subject of lack, a subject without the object *a*. The third position Nadia begins experimenting, associated with nascent sexuality / aggression rather than love, is the appropriating of objects *a* from the body of the Other. This position has the benefit of allowing the subject access to the object of libidinal satisfaction but also proves to be a very tenuous position since the "completed" subject eventually inevitably slips back into being the metaphorical object of the Other's lack or loss – a position that threatens subjectivity and the distinctive pleasure of the emerging self.[26] As Lefort shows, the distance opened up by the subject's acceding to representation by a signifier can either be preserved and extended by a metonymic exchange of partial objects and the continued use of proper names, which serve to variously demarcate the domains of lacking subject and lacking Other, or it can be collapsed if the subject constitutes itself solely as an object of love that incarnates the Other's loss or lack – the Other's drive object.

In the analytic literature there is another better known case of a child newly constituted as a subject of demand – Freud's grandson busily at play with his *Fort* / *Da* game famously observed and commented on by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Freud interprets his grandson's game of throwing a cotton reel out of sight, saying *Fort* (Gone), and dragging it back to him, exclaiming *Da* (Here), as the child representing the comings and goings of his mother and attempting to achieve a fantasmatic sense of mastery over them. What complicates matters for Freud is his observation that the child would, "as a rule", only play at the first half of the game and that the second half, which visibly brought the boy greater satisfaction, constituted the exception. Attempting to deduce the obscure motives for a game that would appear to cause his grandson more pain than it would pleasure, Freud (1989) speculates,

[26] Here then would be the place to situate the sadistic pre-Oedipal fantasy life described by Klein, after the occurrence of Alienation.

> At the outset he was in a *passive* situation — he was overpowered by the experience [of his mother's absence]; but, by repeating it, unpleasurable though it was, as a game, he took on an *active* part. These efforts might be put down to an instinct for mastery that was acting independently of whether the memory was in itself pleasurable or not. (p. 600)

While Freud's interpretation of this game's underlying motive seems sensible enough and even intuitively correct, Lacan (1998) provides a different interpretation of the *Fort / Da* game in his *Seminar XI* that at first sight appears diametrically opposed to Freud's own.

> When Freud grasps the repetition involved in the game played by his grandson, in the reiterated *fort-da*, he may indeed point out that the child makes up for the effect of his mother's disappearance by making himself the agent of it – but this phenomena is of secondary importance... For the game of the cotton reel is the subject's answer to what the mother's absence has created on the frontier of his domain – the edge of his cradle – namely, a *ditch*, around which one can only play at jumping. This reel is not the mother reduced to a little ball... it is a small part of the subject that detaches itself from him while still remaining his, still retained. (p. 62)

The question thus arises, how, if at all, are we to reconcile Freud's and Lacan's divergent interpretations of the *Fort / Da* game repeated so indefatigably by Freud's grandson? While Freud was convinced that the cotton reel represented the boy's mother, Lacan maintains that it is in fact a piece of the subject *himself* that he plays at detaching. Is Lacan's interpretation simply correct and Freud's wrong? If Lacan thought this was the case surely he would have been more vocal about it. Instead, he remarks rather off-handedly that the phenomena Freud observes "is of secondary importance".

The key to deciphering the basic compatibility of Freud's and Lacan's apparently contradictory interpretations of the *Fort / Da* game is to recognize that they constitute two distinct positions of the *metonymic activity* of a subject who has undergone an initial alienation in the Other's demand but has not yet achieved a durable separation through the Other's desire. Freud's interpretation that the cotton reel represents the boy's mother corresponds to the notion that, by fantasmatically representing her presence and absence, the boy is trying to control their occurrences in subjective fantasy, rather than be directly submitted to the exigencies of an unmitigated Real, the mother's actual departures and

arrivals. While he plays, as a rule, mostly at the *Fort* / Gone portion of the game, thereby himself controlling his mother's departures, he also occasionally indulges in the *Da* / Here part of the game, ostensibly taking the mother for himself as a partial object of gratification. Freud believes that the greater frequency of the *Fort* portion of the game is as an archaic manifestation of Thanatos or the death drive, a compulsive repetition that traumatizes the conscious self. Lacan's emphasis that the cotton reel is in fact a detachable part of the boy, however, allows his activity to be construed as *metonymically placating* the Other with something in his stead, a piece of him rather than all of him.[27] Furthermore, what Lacan allows us to see very clearly in the example of the *Fort* / *Da* game is how the relinquishing of object *a*, the "piece" of Freud's grandson in the guise of a cotton reel, is linked with locating the signifier in the field of the Other – *Fort*. *Da* might then be understood as a signifier that represents the subject himself and his fantasmatic re-appropriation of the drive object from the Other's domain. The *Da* portion of the game is indulged in far less often by Freud's grandson as it would entail his disappearance as subject, since a subject in possession of the drive object is implicitly at risk of becoming the Other's "metaphorical" drive object. While the metonymic "gift" in the *Fort* portion of the game has the benefit of momentarily staying off the Other's implacable vortex and ensuring a place for the subject, it has the serious drawback of compelling the subject to sacrifice object *a*, the libidinal Thing that satisfies the subject's (sexual) drive. Lacan's interpretation shows us that Freud's grandchild, through his playing the *Fort* / *Da* game, preserves himself as subject in the Symbolic register only by for(t)feiting a piece of himself to the Other (*Fort*). Freud's observation that the greater frequency of *Fort* rather than *Da* is the manifestation of an archaic "death drive" beyond the pleasure principle can be interpreted as the traumatic *jouissance*, the pleasure-in-pain, that the subject experiences by *maintaining* himself as a subject of the signifier.[28]

As I have argued, a nascent subject can situate itself either in a metaphoric position as an archaic incarnation of the Other's drive object or metonymically sacrifice a piece of itself as the price for establishing / positioning itself in the Symbolic order. I also introduced *three* subtle yet important distinctions that exemplify a crucial *asymmetry*: the Other's metaphorical drive object / loss, the Other's metonymical drive object / loss, and the subject's metonymical drive object / loss. The asymmetry here is that while the Other can have both metaphorical and metonymic drive objects, the subject cannot *have* a drive object in the metaphoric position because it *is* the Other's drive object when in that position. With this asymmetry in mind, the logical moment of alienation can be framed as

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[27] Lacan (1998) states, "Through the function of the object *a* the subject separates himself off, ceases to be linked to the vacillation of being, in the sense that it forms the essence of alienation" (p. 258). I would argue that here Lacan is referring the metonymic activity of the subject relinquishing object *a* to the Other in order to sustain himself as a lacking subject of the signifier. This activity would cease, or at least temporarily suspend, the vacillation between *being* object *a* for the *Other* (love) or having object *a* for oneself (aggression / drive satisfaction), neither of which are sustainable positions.

[28] Lacan (1998) states, "The distinction between the life and death drive is true in as much as it manifests *two aspects of the drive*. But this is only on condition that one sees all the sexual drives as articulated at the level of signification in the unconscious, in as much as what they bring out is death— *death as signifier and nothing but signifier*, for can it be said that there is a being-for-death?" (p. 257)

the subject's *impossible choice* between *being* the Other's drive object or (retroactively) *having* had object *a* but relinquishing it in order to maintain the subject / Other boundary. This forced choice substantially rationalizes and clarifies the theoretical problematic introduced by Freud in *Beyond The Pleasure Principle,* although in a manner that is admittedly not immediately obvious. Freud's notions of Eros, love, and the pleasure principle can now be read as the metaphoric tendency of the subject to situate itself as the Other's drive object which leads towards an eradication of the subject / Other distinction. Conversely, his notions of Thanatos, death drive, and beyond the pleasure principle can be situated as the metonymic striving of the subject oriented towards preserving and consolidating the subject / Other boundary through remaining in the Symbolic and sacrificing the drive object. This application of Lacan's concept of alienation to Freud's myth of the timeless Eros / Thanatos antagonism is certainly counterintuitive – in this reading it is precisely the "death drive" which is the agency that preserves the ego or self! The death drive is thus intimately linked with repetition, a signifying repetition exemplified in the *Fort* / *Da* game of Freud's grandson that acts to preserves the nascent ego, even at the expense of the subject's drive satisfaction and biological need. Clearly, the choice of alienation as an impossible or forced choice in an important sense *remains impossible* until a further separation consolidates "what will have been". Alienation can thus be succinctly described as an impossible choice between the metaphoric and the metonymic positions of the drive object / subject.

It is truly remarkable that after Klein's intervention, Dick engages in the very same "Gone" game immortalized by Freud's grandson. Klein (1987) relates,

> During the third analytic hour, however, he also for the first time, looked at the toys with interest, in which an *aggressive tendency* was evident. He pointed to a little coal-cart and said: "Cut". I gave him a pair of scissors, and he tried to scratch the little pieces of black wood which represented coal, but he could not hold the scissors. Acting on a glance which he gave me, I cut the pieces of wood out of the cart, whereupon he threw the damaged cart *and its contents* into a drawer and said, "Gone". (p. 103)

How can we understand Dick's demand for Klein to cut out a chunk of coal from the coal-cart combined with his ensuing impulse to dispose of *both* the cart and its contents into a drawer, exclaiming 'Gone'? Considering the ambiguous parallax status of the drive object at the moment of alienation, we might presume that these two gestures of Dick correspond to his situating the object in metonymic and metaphoric positions. From one side of the partial object parallax, Dick's newly found aggression, related to his emergence as a proto-subject, compels him to metonymically appropriate a drive object – the coal – from the coal-cart that presumably represents his mother and thereby performing a subject / Other division. From the other side of this parallax however, Dick inverts / retracts his aggressive impulse and attempts to erase the division he has just

created by disposing both coal and coal-cart into a drawer where they hence disappear – a metaphorical gesture *par excellence* wherein the coal represents Dick as an object of sacrificial love that completes his mOther's loss. It is notable, however, that Dick does not enact this metaphorical operation by directly placing the coal back in the cart, but only indirectly by *representing* how this subject position entails a return to nothingness.[29] While Klein's treatment of little Dick brings him beyond the threshold of alienation, it is unclear if this alienation is consolidated by Lacan's second logical moment in the constitution of subjectivity – Separation.

## *Structure of the Lacanian Subject II: Separation, Fantasy, Desire*

As I have demonstrated, alienation in the Other's demand leaves the subject entirely at the mercy of an omnipotent / voracious lacking Other – omnipotent because it is regarded by the subject as lacking either the subject itself or the object *a* as what is "in the subject more than the subject". Through a metonymic sacrificing of the drive object the subject attempts to maintain its autonomy, but at an unacceptable price, the relinquishing of object *a*. Re-appropriating object *a*, while (potentially) satisfying the subject's biological need and drive satisfaction[30], always entails a risk of subjective aphanisis / annihilation since it will expose the subject again to a potentially voracious lacking Other. This situation is clearly not psychically sustainable, and Lacan explains that the Other's demand must be staved off in a more durable way. Following Freud, Lacan controversially claims that this separation is effectuated through the Oedipus complex, a heated rivalry with the child's father that subsides only with an eventual recognition of the father's dominance and his Law as reigning over both mother and child. Lacan's formalization of the Freudian Oedipus complex through a creative appropriation of Saussure's structural linguistics constitutes the very cornerstone of his psychoanalytic theory. Lacan presents an unprecedented analysis of the father's role in separating child from mother which highlights for the first time the fundamentally linguistic / Symbolic dimension involved in such a separation. Rather than positing the father as someone whose interventions in the mother-child relationship fulfills a natural role, Lacan denatured the Freudian father by distinguishing between its Real, Imaginary, and Symbolic components. The overarching question / theme I would like to explore in this section is: How does a subject's internalizing / identifying with the Name-of-the-Father effect a subject's separation, consolidate its alienation, inaugurate fantasy, and shelter the subject from the Other's demand by introducing it to the Other's desire?

As Lefort's example of Nadia illustrates, a nascent subject begins by considering itself metaphorically as the Other's loss or lack, and thus believes that it is the sole object of the Other's desire. Yet very rare is the mother who takes her child as the one and only object of her desire, and even if this happens, it is likely due to what she "sees in" her child – an element of her fantasy – above and beyond any direct satisfaction she attains with the child's body. Also, as Melanie Klein's case of little Dick aptly demonstrates, it is entirely possible for a mother to want nothing at all to do her child. This, however, is the exception rather than the rule, and has the likely effect of preventing alienation and thus

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[29] Perhaps indicative of a defensive tendency towards sacrificing his newly acquired autonomy.

[30] It should be noted that it is possible to achieve drive satisfaction without sustaining the body's biological needs — anorexia is a prominent example of this.

foreclosing the very condition of possibility for subjectivity. Most often an infant is compelled to join with the Other's lack, to be its drive object, or to maintain itself metonymically through identification with the signifier and the sacrificing of the drive object. Lacan, agreeing with Freud, holds that the child's father is the primary person who introduces an opening into the suffocating closer characteristic of the early mother-child relationship. He argues that in most Western patriarchal cultures, the biological father of the child is the person who is culturally mandated with the task of limiting a child's access to the realm of maternal enjoyment. In so far as this culture is patriarchal however, it is generally boys more than girls who receive the sharpest and most definitive separation.[31] Lacanian analysts as well as developmental psychologists believe that the kind of separation an infant or child experiences, the time when it occurs, and its affective intensity constitute crucial factors in a child's psychical development. Indeed, Lacan claims that the type of separation (or lack of separation) an infant undergoes determines the type of fundamental fantasy it will foment about its place or position with respect to the Other's desire. What Lacan insists upon is that separation should *not* be regarded first and foremost as an empirical occurrence but rather understood as a psychical event. This is not because the empirical occurrence of separation, the actual removal of a child from its mother's ministrations, is unimportant, but because it is only the subjective experience of psychical separation that induces the structuring effect that will impart a lasting shape to subjectivity.

In order to designate empirical from psychical separation Lacan carefully distinguishes between the Real, Imaginary, and Symbolic dimensions of the father. A Real father can be understood simply as the biological organism whose genetic information contributes to the production of a child. The Real father may henceforth abscond and never be seen or heard from again or alternatively remain present to raise his child – the point is that the Real father, while contributing to the production of a child, does not necessarily take on the paternal role of raising the child and becoming the major authority figure in its life. An Imaginary father, in comparison, corresponds more or less to the prototypical image of the Freudian father, the empirical authoritative father who is often viewed as a *rival* for the affections of the mother in a child's psychical experience. The Imaginary father is thus the jealous father, the father who is jealous of the mother-child intimacy, and the person who the child jealously imagines to unfairly deprive it of (maternal) enjoyment.[32] Finally, the Symbolic father is a unique signifier, typically the actual Name-of-the-Father in Western cultures, that provides a precise designation in language of what the mOther wants beyond her child, the "law" of her desire.[33] As Lacan emphasizes, the Name-of-

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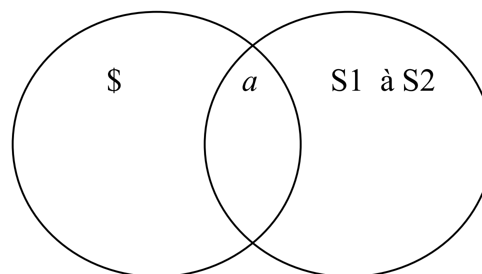
[31] Bruce Fink (1997) notes, "Fathers… tend to view their sons as greater rivals for their mother's attention than their daughters, and are thus more vigilant in their efforts to separate son's from mothers than they are in their efforts to separate daughters from mothers. Indeed, they are often happy to let their daughters be a source of solace, consolations, and joy to the mother, sensing that the mother's relationship with her daughters makes up for certain inadequacies in the mother's relationship with her husband" (p. 257).

[32] Lorenzo Chiesa (2007) notes, "… by depriving the mother of the child *qua* phallus, the (imaginary) father also simultaneously dispels the child's mistaken belief that he is the only object of his mother's desire. For both mother and child, what is prohibited by the (imaginary) father is their incestuous relationship ('You will not sleep with your mother'; 'You will not re-integrate your offspring.')" (p. 76)

[33] The law of her desire both in the sense of how and what she desires as well what

the-Father, is an element of language that may very well *not* correspond to the child's actual father. Its importance has to do with the fact that this particular element of language, this signifier, is linked with a law or prohibition against the child's wish to conjoin its own lack with its mOther's (or vice versa), its alienating endeavor, albeit highly ambivalent, to be the sole object of the mother's love and desire. The Name-of-the-Father is thought of by Lacan to be a kind of metaphor since it is a replacement of one thing (the indeterminate Real of the mOther's desire) by something to which there is no previous (semantic) relation – a signifier that is meaningless at first but subsequently provides the condition of possibility for phallic meaning. The logical moment of Separation is represented by the following diagram:




The concept of separation is best understood with reference to what has previously occurred in alienation. In alienation there is an opposition between two signifiers ("Fort" and "Da", for example), an opposition which first establishes the fields of Other and subject. Signifier, subject, and object *a* are all present in the logical moment of alienation and the same goes for separation, however in separation these elements undergo a fundamental shift of configuration due to the re-structuring effect of the paternal metaphor or Name-of-the-Father. The first thing to notice about the diagram of separation is that it differs from alienation only in so far as object *a*, rather than S1, occupies the intersection between the subject and the Other. This is surprising, since what defines the logical moment of separation is the subject's encounter with the (Symbolic) Name-of-the-Father which substitutes for the (Real) Desire-of-the-Mother, instantiates a first transcendent law (that is, a law applying equally to mother and child). When interpreting the diagrams of alienation and separation, it is important to understand that S1 and S2 do not have the same status in each. In alienation, S1 corresponds to "Da", the signifier representing the subject's metonymic (but nevertheless potentially dangerous) appropriation of object *a* from the Other, and S2 corresponds to "Fort", the signifier in the field of the Other and the subject's relinquishing of the object *a*. In separation however, S1 designates the Name-of-the-Father while S2 represents all further signifiers, including all of the mOther's overt demands. What the diagram of separation depicts is a shift of S1 to the field of the Other, which now contains both S1 (the Name-of-the-Father as the Enigmatic Signifier of the Other's desire) and S2 (the mOther's demands as Imaginary signifieds, now interpreted with reference to S1 / the Name-of-the-Father), *and* the positioning / prohibiting of object *a* at the intersection between subject and Other, S1 providing a kind of barrier to object *a*. As such, object *a*, which was once a Real impossibility – the indeterminate metaphoric and metonymic positions of the subject in

her desire submits or acquiesces to.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alienation – becomes Symbolically prohibited, and subsequently reimagined in a phallic way.

To give a similarly detailed account of Separation as I have tried with Alienation will not be possible here, but I will attempt a schematic outline of its major features. As I have mentioned, separation occurs when an alienated subject encounters the Name-of-the-Father as a unique signifier that reliably refers to some aspect of the mOther's desire that extends beyond the subject. In so far as this signifier designates the actual father or a father figure, it introduces a distinct Imaginary of what is being *signified* by the mOther's desire, and this Imaginary Lacan frankly relates to the image of the father as a "phallic Gestalt" because he possesses a penis. Thus Lacan distinguishes between the Symbolic phallus, which is the Name-of-the-Father as a signifier, and the imaginary phallus, which relates to the image of completion (from the child's perspective) of the father's "well-endowed" body and therefore to a certain signified of the mOther's desire. The logical point of separation, however, is that a child is prevented by the Name-of-the-Father from becoming the mOther's "phallus", the object that the child imagines to be her loss / lack / desire and thus the object that could complete her. As Bruce Fink (1995) notes, "While alienation is based on a very skewed kind of *either* / *or,* separation is based on a *neither* / *nor*" (p. 53). Fink continues,

> This approximate gloss on separation posits that a rift is induced in the hypothetical mother-child unity due to the very nature of desire and that this rift leads to the advent of object *a*. Object *a* can be understood here as the remainder produced when the hypothetical unity breaks down, as a last trace of that unity, a last *reminder* thereof. By cleaving to that rem(a)inder, the split subject though expulsed form the Other, can sustain the illusion of wholeness; by clinging to object *a* the subject is able to ignore his division. That is precisely what Lacan means by fantasy, and he formalizes it with the matheme $ <> *a*, which is to be read: the divided subject in relation to object *a*. It is in the subject's complex relation to object *a* that he or she achieves a fantasmatic sense of wholeness, completeness, fulfillment, and well-being. (p. 53)

Here, Fink describes separation as the logical moment that produces object *a*. As my previous argument would imply however, this is not quite the case since object *a* as a paradoxical "object of lack" already shows up as the effect of a subject's alienation in the Symbolic order, but as a drive object rather than an object of desire. In alienation either the Other possessed the subject as drive object, completely ("metaphorically") or in part ("metonymically"), or the subject appropriated object *a* from the Other at risk of subjective aphanasis / fading. While the object *a* in alienation designates the subject's or Other's lack, it is an actual object that can be appropriated by *either* one, however in such

a way that creates an impossible situation for both. In separation however, *neither* the subject *nor* the Other can appropriate the object *a* due to the prohibition introduced by the Name-of-the-Father as the law of the Other's desire. The Name-of-the-Father can be understood as instituting a repression not of need by the Other's demand (which occurs in alienation), but of the Other's / subject's situation of mutually unsustainable demand by the Other's desire. In separation the subject is barred from being the sole object of the Other's desire and introduced not only to a signifier of the Other's desire but also to an imaginary / fantasmatic scenario of what that Other's desire might be – a fantasized scenario that imagines the subject's completion through appropriating that which causes the Other's desire.

## Conclusion

This article has attempted an overview of Lacan's concepts of Alienation (in the Other's Demand) and Separation (through the Other's Desire) in order to demonstrate their continuing theoretical and clinical relevance for psychoanalysis. These concepts, conceived of as logical moments mediated by language and imparting a structuring effect to subjectivity / psychical experience, were formalized by Lacan during his Seminar XI given in 1964, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Still today, they have the capacity to suggest and inform research regarding personality, psychopathology, and psychical structure. From a theoretical vantage point, the logical moment of Alienation may be seen as a hinge distinguishing autistic from psychotic subject positions, whereas Separation may be seen as a hinge distinguishing psychotic from perverse and neurotic subject positions. Recent work in theoretical psychology and psychiatry, such as that presented by Antoine Mooij in his 2012 book *Psychiatry as a Human Science: Phenomenological, Hermeneutical and Lacanian Perspectives*, shows the continuing relevance of the concept of subject positioning for an accounting of subjective psychical experience and its implications for therapeutic treatment.

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## Book Review

*The Talking Cure: Wittgenstein on Language as Bewitchment & Clarity*. John M. Heaton. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, xvi + 227 pages, £19.99 (paperback), ISBSN-13 978-1-137-32643-0.

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John M. Heaton's *The Talking Cure: Wittgenstein on Language as Bewitchment & Clarity* follows a number of other publications by the author on Wittgenstein and psychoanalysis, including The Talking Cure: Wittgenstein's Therapeutic Method for Psychotherapy (2010). His latest book continues a project that attempts to inject a measure of clarity into the discourse on psychotherapeutic praxis by moving away from schematic approaches that rely upon "picture-driven theorising which takes 'the mind' to refer to some sort of substance with an innate structure" (p. xii). Instead, by attending to Wittgenstein's insights on usage and the particularities of linguistic convention, psychotherapy as "initiate learning" can be distinguished from psychoanalytic approaches that assume "empirical notions such as de facto norms of the mind and society that underwrite an individual's actions" (p. xiii).

In Chapter 1, "The Problem," Heaton connects Freudian psychoanalysis to a larger positivist metaphysical tradition in which "'reality' is scientific reality" (p. 2). With a brief canter through the history of geometry, he likens the common psychotherapist to "people who thought that space is Euclidean" (p. 5), rather than an instrumental representation with explanatory power. Theory, he argues, is not to be identified with: Heaton links the plausibility of the theoretician's conceptual apparatus with an abstraction from the particular case. Paraphrasing Wittgenstein's concerns with a related linguistic approach, then, it is "our craving for generality and the contemptuous attitude with the particular case" that "leads us astray" (p. 7). In the same way that linguistic confusion leads to epistemological errors, a patient's dogmatic adherence to/acceptance of the psychoanalytic theory du jour can actually produce neurosis and psychosis; thus, if the therapist and patient confuse a theoretical apparatus with an accurate schematic representation of the psyche, the patient may be 'tricked' by language that blocks her ability to speak for herself.

Chapter 2, "Fearless Speech", begins with a "brief account of psychotherapy in the ancient world of Greece and Rome" (p. 15) that traces the historical significance of parrhesia (free speech or fearless speech) in therapy. Heaton relates this practice to free association in the psychoanalytic process. However, the important distinction is made through the re-casting of the relationship between analyst and analysand: "it is as important for the patient to assess the therapist's truthfulness as it is for the therapist to judge the patient's" (p. 19). Free, fearless speech cannot be evaluated solely from an expert position but is dependent upon pragmatic contextual concerns like "the nature of

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the situation, and how [the parties] react to the demands it places upon them". This discourse is ethical, since free, truthful speech is a call for plain, intimate language at the expense of 'rules' that depend upon theories of the 'psychical apparatus' accessible only to the therapist. Heaton links this targeted discourse to Wittgenstein's confessional writing practice.

Chapter 3, "Talking versus Writing", begins with a longue duree history of the development of writing and the transformation of oral to literate cultures. Heaton articulates the major difference as one dealing with the speakers' positions of enunciation, writing as "detached from [its] sender" and possessing "a stable physical presence on paper", the reification of which becomes a temptation to view language as having "an existence in its own right apart from people" (p. 39). Picking up on well-known arguments from places like Plato's Phaedrus, Heaton provides the Wittgensteinian lesson of this history as the imperative to "bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use" (Wittgenstein 1953, p. 116), thereby bypassing a Freudian tendency to obscure the 'answerability' inherent in spoken language (the domain of "agreement in judgment" (Wittgenstein 1953, p. 242) in favor of self-contained linguistic-conceptual systems that eliminate chance elements like gesture. "The meaning-bearing elements in language do not mirror the world but depend on our involvement in practices from which meaning is acquired…Speaking can remind us of this weaving between language, gesture, and action much more than writing" (p. 49).

Chapter 4, "The Critical Method", repeats further Heaton's focus on the "clarification of language use" (p. 51), linking therapy to mathematics, which Wittgenstein understood to consist not in the collection of theories but as a practice that disavows (despite, perhaps, what Frege argued) "a system of eternal truths waiting, in some third realm, to be discovered" (p. 52). In practice, then, the psychotherapist gives patients 'space' to think, feel, and speak, which generates an 'activity' that is "timely and moving" (p. 53), questions posed and answered by both therapist and patient ("[we] can only understand a neurotic complaint when we have understood the question which it is trying to answer"). This 'method' requires the 'problem' to be conceived not merely as something to be diagnosed but as something that grips a patient in an embodied way; language well-suited to this endeavor is not purely referential but contains traces of a form, style, and position of enunciation. Heaton also, here as elsewhere, draws attention to the ways Wittgenstein's own writing does this, careful not to distinguish between "the saying and the content of what is said" (p. 63). When Heaton quotes him as writing, "really one should write philosophy as one writes a poem" (Wittgenstein 1980, p. 28), he means to direct one's attention to the physicality of words and the aphorism that is "lost in the traditional case history."

Chapter 5, "Reasons and Causes", appropriately begins with Wittgenstein's claim that "it was Freud's confusion between reasons and causes that led his disciples into making an abominable mess" (p. 64). Since causal accounts identify agents, what we pin down as a cause has significant consequences for treatment. Generally, causal explanations in therapy "assume that at root all mental patients are essentially the same" when it is actually "the beliefs of the therapists that are in common" (p. 66). Recognizing language itself as a root, and that reason is itself tied up in linguistic conventions, Heaton attempts to move beyond the notion that naïve argumentation is the appropriate framework for psychotherapy: "arguments are of little use in neurosis or psychosis. In fact, people with phobias and obsessions, for example are usually well aware their troubles are irrational"

(p. 77). The talking cure does not consist merely in the uncovering of a cause but in helping patients to 'develop' reason "in the particular area where they have lost it". A form of pragmatism with a Wittgensteinian basis, this is also to understand action "in terms of capacities rather than dispositions" (p. 92), moving beyond a representational view of the mind dominant in much cognitive behavior theory.

Chapter 6, "Elucidation", moves specifically to Wittgenstein's critique of correspondence theories of language, motivating a "turn toward the concrete phenomena of language-in-use" in order to "clarify the shifting patterns of how symbols symbolize" (p. 95). Heaton argues that theorists of psychotherapy often construct their understanding of language on top of a theory of mind in which "thinking is conceived as rule-bound information processing and manipulation of symbols, mirroring an autonomous, pre-existing reality" (p. 96). This conceals "the role in which we live in our descriptions", the way we actually talk (p. 97). 'Elucidation' refers to the clarification of our linguistic confusions that brackets the mind as referential object. Ultimately, it leads to "the recognition of the autonomy of language" (p. 99), the understanding that language as a system has no foundational structure beyond use. Focusing on three aspects of Wittgenstein's investigations (the infant's acquisition of a mother tongue, the language-game, and the status of logic in relation to sense-making), Heaton consolidates a number of Wittgenstein's insights around the proposition that there is no 'gap' between language, thought, and reality. While the language-game specifies "the connection between spoken words, actions and situations, which need not be spoken" (p. 109), attention to formal logic enforces the distinction between propositions that represent states of affairs and propositions "that draw attention to how the expressions of our language are being used" (p. 122): the latter are the concern of therapeutic 'elucidation.'

Chapter 7, "Back to the Rough Ground", looks more closely at the Freudian (and Jungian) assumptions behind mental disorders in order to further develop a practical distinction between 'empirical' and 'elucidatory' approaches. While Freud "was fond of a metaphor of depth" (the passions) and Jung "appealed to the heights" (the sublime idea) (p. 136), the "rough ground" of a Wittgensteinian analysis reconciles and contextualizes the two by locating "[human] misery, confusion and despair" in "culture and the place of the person within it" (p. 137). Ultimately, Heaton works from Wittgenstein's skeptical rejection (or qualification) of metaphysics, finding in neurosis or psychosis a "confused practice" instead of an abnormal, disordered "entity or set of processes" in the mind (p. 139). Then, instead of seeing ordinary language as the veil of a true meaning that needs a specialized language for its articulation, expression and meaning are linked directly in a talking cure that rejects the unconscious as an ontological category – "meanings are not in the head…but are anchored by language in the physical environment and in social practice" (p. 146). Looking at traditional psychoanalytic material like slips of the tongue and dreams, Heaton rejects the idea of both as containing an inner process that causes meaning in a 'dead' symptom.

Chapter 8, "The Self and Images", examines the ontological problem of selfhood in the context of therapy. For Freudian psychoanalysis, explaining subject-formation requires speculating about the infant, "who is assumed to be originally wrapped up in the pleasure principle, totally out of touch with 'reality'" (p. 178). Heaton argues here that this picture of development and the entire problematic of accounting for the reality principle is incoherent as a theory of mind. Related to Wittgenstein's rejection of private languages, any solipsistic "language of sensation" (on which this model is based) is nonsensical; a

language of “tension and needs” already “owes its meaning to its connections to the physical world” (p. 179). As such, Heaton argues, there is no ‘self’ prior to the reality principle, no solipsistic “wordless primary experience,” since this kind of language is itself circular, asserting that “infancy is the origin of language and language the origin of infancy” (p. 182). The Freudian model, in other words, “[makes] impossible demands on language” (p. 183), leading to nonsensical propositions of the self as something we ‘have’ or possess; rather, he says, the ‘I’ is a “use, not an entity; it is enacted in speaking or thinking” (p. 191).

Chapter 9, “A Non-Foundational Therapy”, completes the work with a final look at desire, wishing, and love. Beginning with a critique of Freud’s account of the oral phase, in which “we seek fulfillment of unconscious wishes through the restoration of signs which are bound to the experience of satisfaction” (p. 200-201), Heaton looks at Wittgenstein’s conception of desire, which is expressive rather than (merely) descriptive. Thus there is a logically intricate relationship between desire and language: disorders (neurosis and psychosis) stem from the assumption that “part or the whole of language is a calculus which pre-determines instructions as to how things are, irrespective of the range of situations in which the person may find themselves” (p. 209). Assuming that both Wittgenstein and the major psychoanalysts believed happiness to be the purpose of life, Heaton claims that we lack happiness when we ‘act mechanically’; the ‘talking cure’ is simply “the creation of reflective judgments concerning mechanical rule following” (p. 210). Heaton ends by returning to Wittgenstein’s famous statement about philosophy and the ‘fly-bottle’ – both philosophy and therapy are about liberation, but this liberation requires recognition of the indexical limits of psychoanalytic theory.

Heaton’s continued study is an interesting one, and this book in particular is quite useful for analysts and theorists in an age when a lack of clarity in the literature breeds a series of schematic monstrosities that are not always useful in practice. An incorporation of Wittgenstein into the theory is a necessary, if limited, remedy. Heaton’s focus on language and use, however, leads one to wonder why Lacan is nearly ignored completely in this book: could not Lacan’s structuralist analysis of speech aid this project and eliminate the need to dismiss psychoanalytic theories of the subject with a wave of Wittgenstein’s wand? A brief mention and dismissal of the mirror stage and the Imaginary ego (in Chapter 8) conceals the relevance of Lacan’s analysis of the Symbolic order and the subject of the signifier – if it is inevitable that Heaton has another brave effort in him, he would do well to deal fully with Lacan.

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## Book review

*Culture/Clinic 1, "We are all mad here": Applied Lacanian Psychoanalysis Series.* Jacques-Alain Miller & Maire Jaanus (Eds.) (2013). Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 248 pages, £22.10 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-8166-83192

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This is the first of a series of edited volumes on applied psychoanalysis from the University of Minnesota Press that seeks to demonstrate how useful the theories of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan can be within the domains of culture and the clinic. Even while these domains are invoked as seemingly separate categories here, there is also a simultaneous attempt to show how they are actually structured as a continuum (of both theoretical and practical concerns) within 'the Freudian field'. So, for instance, while the early Freudians made universal claims for psychoanalysis as a discourse, there is now a growing realization that the cultural articulations of psychoanalysis are as important as Freudian metapsychology. It is therefore important to pitch psychoanalysis as a discourse that is continually aware of how 'culture' and 'clinic' affect each other rather than to say that clinical discourse can situate and subsume cultural discourse or is fundamentally superior as a source of explanation about human action. These revised approaches to psychoanalysis are based on the realization in the works of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan that the pre-figurations of psychoanalysis in the works of great artists and writers must not be read reductively, but must instead be related to psychoanalytic theory through more nuanced forms of methodological reciprocity. So while it is true that the Freudian clinic has a lot to say about culture, it must be remembered that there are different forms of clinical interventions and that there is no form of clinical intervention that remains totally unaffected by socio-cultural determinants. This is one of the main gains in methodology that comes in the wake of research in areas like anthropology, deconstruction, and the history of medicine. The title of this volume brings out the methodological challenges and problems quite well. What does it mean to be mad? Is madness defined by medical discourse? Or is it a way of situating behavior in the context of society and culture? Where, for instance, does psychoanalysis itself get its models of psychosis? What, for instance, is the contribution that literary representations can make to the history of madness? Once we articulate these questions, we will realize at once the importance of invoking ancillary domains to thinking through the history of either reason or madness. This series of volumes on 'applied psychoanalysis' is an attempt to facilitate this process of discovery, and takes further the idea that psychoanalysis has a lot to learn and not just teach on matters that bear a thematic resemblance to its main concerns; hence, it is not false modesty to contemplate a limit, as Miller does, to the discourse of analysis.

The contributors to this volume of essays are related to the 'Freudian Field' – a term that brings together theorists from those forms of psychoanalysis that are inspired by the

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foundational teachings of Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Jacques-Alain Miller and the institutions that are devoted to disseminating these teachings and practices like the Department of Psychoanalysis at the University of Paris VIII, Ecole de la Cause Freudienne, and the World Association of Psychoanalysis. The term 'field' implies a range of applications that are possible in what the French call 'the human sciences'; another term for the 'Freudian Field' is 'French Freud'. French theorists have made an important attempt to reinvent the theory and praxis of psychoanalysis from both within the contexts of cultural analysis and clinical practice. What this series of volumes attempts to do is to take these forays in the Freudian field forward to a larger audience that is wondering what such interventions look like. There are four parts to this volume: the first part comprises brief exercises in Lacanian metapsychology including the topology of knots, the second part is a collection of essays on the phenomenology of analysis, the third part spells out the formal considerations of how popular culture is shaped and the final part discusses the institutional structure and applications of psychoanalysis in a globalizing world. While it may not be possible to discuss all the essays included in this volume, I will try to pick up the main theoretical themes and adduce a few examples of how psychoanalysis is deployed within the discourses of culture and the psychoanalytic clinic. The theme that organizes the entire volume however is the fact that a universal notion of normalcy or normality is under threat in the context of globalization; it is not easy, for instance, to work out the criteria of diagnostic evaluation that would apply without exception anywhere in the world. It is therefore time to ask whether the cultural determinants of Freudian metapsychology have been well-understood, and whether clinical practitioners are careful enough to consider cultural-differences sufficiently when they apply analytic theory while making cultural or clinical interventions.

The volume begins with three important interventions of Jacques Lacan that attempt to differentiate, in a sense, between the 'discourse of analysis' and the 'discourse of the university'. Lacan's main preoccupation – as always – is whether it is possible to teach psychoanalysis? What does it mean as Lacanians put it, to 'teach that which cannot be taught', but can only be learnt? The fact that the texts of Lacan's interventions at Paris (1979), Yale (1975), and Columbia (1975) have not been easily available before in translation does not mean that these questions have not already passed into the discourse of psychoanalysis and into theories of pedagogy. A great deal of the work that was done by the Yale critics (in both deconstruction and psychoanalysis) was an attempt to bring precisely these type of questions into prominence following Lacan's Kanzer Seminar at the Yale Law School in 1975 and even earlier. The topics articulated in these interventions however are worth noting: they include the problem of delusions, the body, and the symptom. This volume is actually about the ubiquity of delusional behavior in the human subject since what is really at stake is the 'scope' of metapsychology in Freudian theory and differential diagnosis in clinical practice.

Defining the scope of analysis is important because an important cultural difference between French and English psychoanalysis is the question of 'borderline phenomena', which make it difficult to separate the psychoses from the neuroses. While there is no consensus on whether or not borderline phenomena exist as such and whether clinical interventions will be more successful by assuming models of psychopathological 'continuity' or 'discontinuity' between such phenomena, the very fact that there is a lack of consensus is important for those theorists who want to consider – as do the theorists assembled in this volume – the relationship between culture and the clinic. If we want to

put this theoretically, we might even go to the extent of saying that cultural differences in matters pertaining to differential diagnosis have implications for what we presuppose by the (ontological or 'pre-ontological' notions of the) unconscious and its 'formations'. The term 'delusion' is also important because we must differentiate between delusional symptoms and delusional states. The complicating factor here is globalization since the encounter with alien forms of jouissance (considered here as forms of existential alterity) could be an exacerbating factor for delusional phenomena because they trigger off the need by socio-cultural units to dominate. Delusional fantasies are not just specific to patients (especially 'delusions of grandeur'), but can affect whole communities; they can be addressed only if we understand the need to move beyond conventional diagnostic models and relate the phenomena in question to both the problem of identifying cognitive universals and relating it in any given instance to the emergence of the particular in a given culture.

While Lacan has already considered some of these problems in detail in his earlier work on the psychoses (including most famously in his doctoral dissertation on the paranoid forms of the psychoses), what makes the rediscovery of his articulations on the differences between analytic and university discourses at Paris, Yale, and Columbia useful for us is the potential that it has to throw light on the problem of how making explicit the structural inter-dependence between culture and the clinic can serve as cognitive matrices (for rethinking these phenomena in a globalizing world). What is also at stake is the role of psychoanalysis in the search for cognitive universals (which is not unlike what was at stake for Claude Levi-Strauss in structural anthropology). Understanding how culture and the clinic relate to each other then has important implications for the Lacanian notion of discourse, which as the editors of this volume put it, must not be 'driven by pedagogy but by the transmission of desire and its enigmas'. Lacan's Paris intervention of 1979 introduces the four discourses of Lacanian theory and points out the difficulty in teaching these discourses (given their lack of universality) and the main achievements of the department of psychoanalysis in the University of Paris VIII. The challenge going forward for Lacan, when the department was being moved to Vincennes, was to overcome the 'antipathy between the university and analytic discourses'. This antipathy is related to the fact that all the four discourses make claims to being in the locus of the dominant player. This problem however is not reducible to the specific instance in which Lacan found himself since the peripheral relationship that psychoanalysis has had with the discourse of the university in many parts of the world illustrates the problem, the symptom, that Lacan tried to call attention to in 1979. The main criterion for inclusion in the university curriculum, needless to say, is that a discourse must have a universal scope.

What shape will psychoanalysis take if it problematizes the cognitive universal in the discourse of the academy? Miller attempts to resolve this impasse by arguing that while all the four discourses constituted by the discourses of the master, the university, the hysteric, and the analyst try to dominate in their turn, what makes a discourse 'the best' is its awareness of its own constitutive structure as provisional, as a semblant. What follows from this is that, as Miller points out, the discourse of psychoanalysis should not attempt to dominate. He thinks that it is naïve to argue that all politicians should be analyzed or even that 'mass analysis' of the population, as envisaged by the early Freudians, is a good idea. Any attempt to extent the scope of analysis beyond reasonable proportions – in an epidemiology of the neuroses or the psychoses - is self-defeating since psychoanalysis will then become subject to its own forms of delusions. It is important then to situate

psychoanalysis as that which exists between the universal and the particular. The introduction of a self-imposed limit is not only a matter of epistemological nicety but, above all, a form of political hygiene. Two important examples of this are given in the last part of this book: they pertain to the problem of war neuroses in the Weimar republic and whether the findings of psychoanalysis are applicable to all societies - or are they reducible to those that already have sufficient exposure to psychoanalysis? Freud, for instance, wanted psychoanalysis to treat war neuroses (created by shell-shocks and bomb explosions) to be made available widely to treat injured personnel in the German Army during World War I. This would not only help to make psychoanalysis useful for a large number of patients in need, but also make it possible to extend the 'scale-and-scope' of psycho-therapeutic interventions. This however was not to be since when the war ended, the German Army was not in a position to fund such large scale interventions. There was also the danger that psychoanalysis would lose its formal structure and become something else altogether; the unintended social consequences of applying the analytic method in mass analysis to either cure patients or to treat ideological distortions must not be under-estimated.

There was however an idealistic attempt to make psychoanalysis available to the masses – including those who could not pay for the treatment - through the Berlin Policlinic starting in 1919-1920. The Freudians however noticed that not charging for their clinical interventions did not mean that patients were sufficiently incentivized to participate in analysis. There was an interesting link that analysts observed between the socio-economic conditions of the patients and the symptoms that they suffered from. The adhesiveness of their symptoms was not reducible to forms of psychopathology per se since the symptoms also had a defensive function; they were ways of coping with difficult situations in the lives of the patients. So it was not analysis per se that could cure them since the incentive to participate in seeking a cure had to be socio-economic rather than just clinical in its orientation. The patients were willing to get well (i.e. drop their symptoms) only if there was a sense of assurance from society that their lot in life was about to improve substantially after the war. The idea that psychoanalysis is more likely to be deployed on patients who could pay for the treatment has some truth to it since it appears that the evidence of the Berlin Policlinic gives us reason to believe that poverty exacerbates the symptom in ways that were not sufficiently anticipated by the Freudians who set out on programs of 'mass analysis'. The problem of psychotherapy in societies - with prior exposure to analysis - relates to examples of how relief efforts in areas prone to natural calamities and disasters often have relief workers who try psychological techniques that don't necessarily make sense to the native populations. The problem here, as one of the contributors to this volume points out, is that despite good intentions we wind up 'exporting our expectations about symptomatology'; and furthermore 'we are disconnecting that local population from indigenous modes of healing' that may be available from local healers (who can make more effective interventions since they understand those who are affected better than relief workers). The risk factors in making interventions across cultures then in matters pertaining to mental health have important implications for both the epistemological foundations of psychoanalysis as a discourse and for the ethical dimensions involved in designing these interventions successfully; one solution might be to get relief workers to partner with local healers rather than design interventions on their own.

This volume also has brief narratives of analysts who recount their own formative encounters with psychoanalysis and how they came to terms with their desire to become

analysts. These narratives, including what it means to be analyzed while free-associating in more than one language, make for fascinating reading. Habitual readers of Lacan will know that he was given to experimenting with the structure of the analytic session by varying the length in order to precipitate the disclosures of the unconscious, but they may not have stopped previously to consider what it means to work-through their sessions in more than one language. If the 'unconscious is structured like a language', what does it mean to unravel its structure in ways that correspond to the structure of more than one differential system? Will this compound the problems of translating the symptom into an idiom that makes sense for the patient? Or is it rather the case that 'switching between linguistic codes' (as a linguist might put it) will be much more therapeutic for the patient? Will not free-associating in more than one language 'precipitate the disclosures of the unconscious', reduce resistance, and make it much more difficult – if not impossible – for the patient to manage the sessions with any number of rehearsed remarks rather than say whatever comes to the surface of his mind? These then are some of the more important - though not the only considerations - that this interesting volume of essays will leave the reader with. As Lacan points out in one of the citations included in this volume, it is important for an analyst to understand not just the structure of language per se, but engage with the problem of translation (across natural languages and psychic systems) as well if he is to make sense of 'desire and its enigmas' in the patient; or more generally, 'be aware of his function as an interpreter in the strife of languages', since he cannot avoid 'the whorl into which his era draws him in the ongoing enterprise of Babel'. This however is only the first of the forays that this series of volumes from the University of Minnesota Press has made to make sense of this 'enterprise of Babel' – readers who share at least some of the psychoanalytic concerns articulated in this review should not only read this volume for its theoretical content, but dig out even more examples - in addition to those that I have done so in this review - to make sense of how increasing interactions or even exposing the theoretical interdependence of the structure of the culture and the clinic will make it possible to re-vitalize the applications of psychoanalysis in contemporary society.