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TOPOLOGY OF THE IMAGINARY:
THE ORIGIN AND STRUCTURE OF THE LACANIAN UNCONSCIOUS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the psychoanalytic theory of the unconscious as formulated by Jacques Lacan and some of his followers. Widely respected in France, Lacan is becoming known outside of his own country as a curious blend of orthodox Freudian and radical revisionist. Lacan's teachings are surrounded by controversy and the parameters of his thought appear impenetrable at first glance. His texts are impossible to follow without a commentary for two reasons: intellectual complexity and deliberate obscurity. Careful examination of his theories reveals that the respect he has earned from his countrymen is not ill-founded as his ideas provide a revitalizing structural perspective on psychoanalytic subjects--particularly, the unconscious.

Lacan advocates a return to the early Freud of the time of The Interpretation of Dreams and the topographical theory of conscious, preconscious, and unconscious. From his point of view, the fact of the existence of an unconscious was Freud's greatest discovery and attempts to revise or improve upon the original theory are viewed as efforts to deny or repress the unsettling implications of this discovery. Lacan is not simply a purist, however, as his own theories go far beyond Freud. Applying the models of linguistic theory along with the method of structuralism to parapraxes, dreams, and free associations,

Lacan opens new vistas in theorizing about the origin and structure of the psychoanalytic unconscious.

One of Lacan's well-known slogans is that the unconscious is structured like a language. This orientation provides the initial focus of this study--the Lacanian unconscious as a linguistic structure. An examination of one of Lacan's essays, "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason Since Freud," serves as an introduction to Lacan's thinking in this area. Lacanian analyses of two examples of clinical phenomena elaborate further. Freud's forgetting of the name Signorelli is presented as an example of the unconscious as a gap in the conscious discourse. Anthony Wilden's analysis of this parapraxis provides a forum for a discussion of related points. The second clinical example is the dream of a patient in Lacanian treatment. Serge Leclaire's analysis of this dream permits an excursion into drive theory and a unique interpretation of the death instinct.

The theoretical origin of the unconscious was an issue Freud sidestepped which the Lacanians tackle head-on. Lacan's writings reveal a theory of development which relates the acquisition of language to the birth of an unconscious. Followers of Lacan have elaborated this process by associating it with the concept of primal repression. In the second section of this study, Lacan's developmental theory is presented along with six theoretical positions on primal repression.

The structure of the unconscious is then examined from three different perspectives. The first is Lacan's ontological categories of the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real. Situating the unconscious within this theoretical framework demands that one speak of different forms of the unconscious. Although different in structure, these forms of the unconscious are created by only one process--negation. This particular interpretation of primal repression is explicated using Wilden's communication theory model, the analog-digital relation. An original model of development is then presented which relates the different forms of unconscious to different stages of negation. In this model, differentiation of self and reality is represented in terms of a movement from zero dimensional space to a three dimensional perspective. This structural interpretation is seen to be in keeping with some of Lacan's more recent formulations regarding unconscious structure and function.

INTRODUCTION

Jacques Lacan is one of the most controversial figures in psychoanalysis today. His strident polemics and radical doctrine rarely fail to inflame adherents of all schools of interpretation, from the most orthodox and conservative to permissive liberals. His style of writing and speaking is obtuse and obscure, torturous to those seeking an understanding of his meanings. Yet, at this time, Lacan is the most famous and respected psychoanalyst in France and his importance and influence in other countries is growing at a rapid rate. His theories, while radical, speak to the desperate need of revitalization that is apparent in the current state of the art. His ideas amount to more than props and crutches, however. Although embedded in labyrinthine complexity and deliberate obscurity, Lacan's gems are well worth the search.

One of Lacan's central theses is that a return to Freud is required to revive the present state of psychoanalysis. What he advocates is a re-reading of Freud's primary writings with a new eye and an openness to novel interpretation. This is necessary because psychoanalysis has become burdened and misled by faulty metaphors and improper developments of theory at the expense of Truth. Lacan, in fact, rejects the structural theory of ego, superego, and id and all developments beyond that of the early topographical model of conscious, preconscious, and

unconscious. His reading of Freud ignores all of the biological and mechanical metaphors which preoccupied Freud in his quest of a truly scientific discipline.

For Lacan, the fact of the unconscious is Freud's most significant discovery and what is central in psychoanalysis is the relation of the unconscious to language and symbolic behavior. Deviations from or improvements upon the topographical theory are viewed as attempts to deny and repress the implications of the theory of an unconscious. Glimmers of the unsettling conclusions resultant from a complete acceptance of this fact are evident in some of Freud's writings where he stressed the limited nature of analytic cures and the determined quality of human behavior. American analysts, in particular, are criticized by Lacan for a massive denial of these possibilities in their emphasis on the mastery of an autonomous ego.

Although Lacan begins with Freud's essential discoveries and theory of the unconscious, his approach and final product are more Lacan than Freud. His approach has been described as structural and it does, in fact, bear similarities to the method of Claude Levi Strauss and other leading structuralists. His interpretations make use of linguistic theory, particularly that of Saussure. In practice, he views psychoanalysis as a way of life rather than a treatment for illnesses:

Lacan personifies a conception of psychoanalysis not as a quasi-medical technique focused on "cure" but as a scientific discipline and a process of individual research and self discovery that needs no further "therapeutic" justification. (Turkle, 1978, p. 15)

His theory is a remarkable edifice of thought which is difficult to approach in a step-by-step manner. The concepts are so interrelated and interdependent that they reveal themselves only in holistic fashion.

Lacan's obtuse and often incoherent style of speech is often blamed for one's difficulty in comprehending the outlines of his thought. Attempting to read Lacan without familiarity with his concepts is akin to listening to the rambling associations of a schizophrenic. This style is purposeful. It is designed to facilitate free associations from the reader and allow for multiple interpretations and intersecting meanings. Lacan rejects analytic and scientific clarity in favor of complexity of perception and a truth which is multilayered and paradoxical. He deliberately attempts to introduce in his writings the free play of the unconscious because he believes that there is no difference between style and content. He has said, "I don't have a conception of the world; I have a style." One knows and understands by letting his discourse inhabit him.

Lacan also does not go out of his way to clarify his theory due to his philosophical position on truth and understanding. The Truth, for Lacan, is unobtainable, forever removed in the realm of the Real. As a consequence,

language never really captures the truth and, in fact, discourse is more likely to result in misunderstanding than genuine comprehension. What is commonly thought of as comprehension is, for Lacan, not the rectification of an original misunderstanding but the acceptance of misunderstanding as truth:

"The more closely one grasps things, the more clearly one sees that, somewhere in the discourse made by the other, there is a mistake in the agreed usage of the signs." As one looks for terms which conform more closely to a truth which cannot be reached, since it is of the order of the Real, one notices that something "arranged in a certain manner operates in a more satisfactory way, has a positive result, but still leaves out what one does not understand: the Real."

(Lemaire, 1970/1977. p. 116)

The practice of psychoanalysis is even more problematic because of the nature of its field of study. Because of the conditioning effects of language and the Symbolic order, Man attempts to know himself from a position in which he is already divided from and against himself. The subject of psychoanalytic study is thus the subject as he is transformed by language. The truth of the subject lies in his unconscious which is known only in the act of closing itself off. Even his reason for undertaking the search is mistaken as what he seeks is but a signifier of an original lost pleasure:

What an author seeks without knowing it, what motivates him in his scientific quest without his being aware of it, is a substitute for (a), the forbidden object of his desire, which has now entered into the imaginary and which has been transformed into a quest for social status.

(Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 115)

Lacan distinguishes between knowledge (epistemè) and opinion (doxa). The epistemè are the valuable discoveries of Masters which point in the direction of truth. The epistemè is transmitted from generation to generation in the form of doxa which only serves to weaken the value and blunt the sharpness of the original discoveries. This dissertation inherently is composed of doxa yet it contains seeds of the epistemè. To minimize the effects of doxa and provide optimal conditions for the growth of epistemè, it is suggested that this study be read as not just descriptive but injunctive as well. The discourse thus becomes a process, not just a vehicle for conveying a content. In this regard, G. Spencer Brown speaks clearly of the purpose of injunction:

The primary form of mathematical communication is not description, but injunction. In this respect it is comparable with practical art forms like cookery, in which the taste of a cake, although literally indescribable, can be conveyed to the reader in the form of a set of injunctions called a recipe. Music is a similar art form, the composer does not even attempt to describe the set of sounds he has in mind, much less the set of feelings occasioned through them, but writes down a set of commands which, if they are obeyed by the reader, can result in a reduplication, to the reader, of the composer's original experience.

(Brown, 1972, p. 77)

At the time of this writing there are a number of articles available in English which serve as introductions to the study of Lacanian theory (Bär, 1974; Bowie, 1979; Evans, 1979; Kurzweil, 1980; Leavy, 1977; Mehlman, 1972; Miel, 1966; Muller & Richardson, 1978a, 1978b, 1979a, 1979b; Richardson, 1978-79; Turkle, 1978). There are few

studies, however, which move beyond a survey of Lacan's ideas to a more in-depth approach to his theories. This dissertation falls within the latter category, thus an elementary understanding of Lacanian concepts is presumed. It is composed of a series of "mini-studies" of the unconscious from the points of view of different members of the Lacanian camp. Thus, the ideas of Lacan were not the only ones explored. Those of Lacan's disciples (whether or not they have since jumped ship) are also included, so the term "Lacanian" refers not just to the man but to the general parameters of his thought.

The first chapter focuses on the Lacanian unconscious as a linguistic structure. The initial section documents Lacan's application of linguistic theory to psychoanalysis, specifically his views in 1957 as revealed in his essay, "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason Since Freud." This essay demonstrates both the Lacanian emphasis on the importance of the unconscious as well as the conviction that it is structured like a language.

The remaining two sections of Chapter I are Lacanian studies of clinical phenomena which further delineate the unconscious according to Lacan. The first example studied is Freud's forgetting of the name Signorelli, the first parapraxis analyzed in Psychopathology of Everyday Life (1901/1960). Here, Anthony Wilden's interpretation will be relied upon heavily as well as the views of Lacan

and his former disciple, Jean Laplanche. The analysis of Freud's memory lapse serves as a jumping-off point for the explication of the theses of the unconscious as a gap in the conscious discourse, Freud's "linguistic" unconscious, and repression as metaphor.

The second clinical example is the dream of an obsessional patient in treatment with Serge Leclaire, a Lacanian analyst. The dream and analysis are presented in an article on the unconscious which was jointly authored by Leclaire and Laplanche. Leclaire's analysis permits an exploration of the Lacanian theory of desire and its relation to Freud's drive theory. Two concepts in particular are singled out for special study: the "ideational representative," and the death drive.

In the second chapter the subject is approached somewhat differently. A single topic is presented, the origin of the unconscious. This topic is examined from two points of view, Lacan's "developmental" theory of the relationship between language and the unconscious and the concept of primal repression. The first section introduces the Symbolic order, the model of the cotton-reel game, the role of the Oedipus, and object (a). These points are discovered to be benchmarks in the Lacanian thesis which links the origin of the unconscious to the acquisition of language.

Freud connected the origin of the unconscious with

the process of primal repression. In the second section of Chapter Two, six theoretical positions on primal repression are presented--Freud's, Lacan's, and that of four Lacanians. A synthesis of their views is upheld as a "Lacanian theory of primal repression."

The subject of Chapter III is the structure of the unconscious. This chapter includes three different approaches to this subject, each of which is an attempt to situate the unconscious within a given theoretical framework. The first section presents Lacan's theory of the three registers of being--the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic. Early in the presentation a detour is taken through the mirror phase and birth of the ego, the subject of the Symbolic order, and negation, the essential function of the ego. With the return to the principle subject of this section, the idea of different forms of the unconscious is introduced.

The second section presents a model from communications theory. Anthony Wilden has applied the relationship of analog-digital, originally from the field of cybernetics, to Lacan's developmental theory. This perspective regards the acquisition of language as the emergence of digitalization in the world of the child. The place of the unconscious in this conception is related to primal repression, one of the effects of accession to the Symbolic order.

In the last section of Chapter III an original

model for development is presented which promises to unite the various lines of development previously presented. The Lacanian theories for the development of self, the unconscious, and the three registers of being are outlined along with Wilden's analog-digital model. These schemas are then structured according to a "dimensional" model of development. This section ends with a brief description of four different forms of the unconscious.

The conclusion briefly addresses some of Lacan's more recent formulations of the unconscious as presented in the book, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (1973/1978). These conceptions are seen to be in keeping with those developed in this study. The mythical ending contains an allusion regarding the unconscious well worth bearing in mind. The fact that one can not bear it in mind merely underlines the elusiveness of the slippery critter. Just when one feels it at hand, it retreats out of view, seducing us further along this quest without end.

CHAPTER I

THE LACANIAN UNCONSCIOUS

The Unconscious is Structured Like a Language

Jacques Lacan is known for his linguistic interpretation of psychoanalysis. For Lacan, language is the appropriate subject matter of psychoanalysis and his reading of Freud is consequently strongly influenced by contemporary linguistic science. This orientation results in particular biases evident in his interpretation of psychoanalysis. Lacan tends to attend to those aspects of Freudian theory which are amenable to a translation into linguistic concepts. The mechanistic and neurological metaphors which characterized Freud's early work are read symbolically rather than accepted in an absolute manner.

While some aspects of Freudian theory are ignored or reformulated in a more acceptable manner, Lacan chooses to highlight other aspects which, he feels, have not received the attention they deserve. One of these is what Freud considered his most important discovery, the unconscious. Lacan's high estimation of the importance of the unconscious and his linguistic orientation are both conveyed in one of his well-known slogans, "the unconscious is structured like a language." One of his clearest and most extensive statements on this aspect of

the nature of the unconscious is contained in an essay in his Écrits (1966/1977) which was written in 1957, "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason Since Freud." Examination of the key points in this essay will serve as an introduction to his reinterpretation of the Freudian unconscious.

The Linguistic Structure of the Unconscious

While proclaiming his allegiance to Freud, Lacan announces early in the essay that his interpretation is different:

What the psychoanalytic experience discovers in the unconscious is the whole structure of language. Thus from the onset I have alerted informed minds to the extent to which the notion that the unconscious is merely the seat of the instincts will have to be rethought. (1966/1977, p. 149)

The unconscious as a forbidding place of undisguised primitive urges is to be replaced by an unconscious which, although no more accessible, is at least not as foreign, chaotic, and removed as is frequently thought to be the case. This sense of the unconscious as approachable is conveyed in a statement from another essay in Écrits:

For interpretation is based on no assumption of divine archetypes, but on the fact that the unconscious is structured in the most radical way like a language, that a material operates in it according to certain laws, which are the same laws as those discovered in the study of actual languages, languages that are or were actually spoken. (p. 234)

The fact of the unconscious having structure would be considered heretical by many Freudians today. That it

should be interpreted as a language has attained more currency (e.g. Fromm's The Forgotten Language), but few have thought to apply the methods of the science of linguistics to the material of psychoanalysis.

Lacan takes special pains to insure that he be considered within the Freudian field. An unconscious structured as a language would not be incomprehensible to Freud, Lacan insists, and he proceeds to document Freud's linguistic orientation:

In the complete works of Freud, one out of every three pages is devoted to philological references... the proportion of analysis of language increasing to the extent that the unconscious is directly concerned.
(1966/1977, p. 159)

Specific reference is made to the section in The Interpretation of Dreams (1900/1965) where the dream is portrayed as a rebus (Chapter 6). Here the context is clearly linguistic as Freud writes of the dream-thought and the dream-content as two different languages. The dream-content is compared to a transcript of the dream-thoughts "in a pictographic script, the characters of which have to be transposed individually into the language of the dream-thoughts" (p. 312). The translation of the dream-content occurs when the images are treated as signifying something other than what they literally represent. Thus a dream, like a rebus, is considered nonsensical and illogical until it is perceived as a language to be interpreted.

Signifier and Signified

In a similar manner, Lacan submits that all formations of the unconscious must be treated as rebuses and a distinction maintained between what is concretely manifest and its underlying context. This distinction Lacan represents in his use of the concepts "signifier" and "signified." These terms he borrowed from Ferdinand de Saussure, one of the pioneers of the science of linguistics. Saussure used the terms to distinguish a concept from its sound image:

The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image....I propose to retain the word sign to designate the whole and to replace concept and sound-image respectively by signified and signifier.

(Quoted in Muller & Richardson, 1979b, p. 367)

Lacan uses the terms more generally to refer to two distinct orders separated by "a barrier resisting signification" (1966/1977, p. 149). This relationship Lacan represents by $\frac{S}{s}$, an algorithm which is read as the signifier over the signified.

As Lacan employs the terms, the relationship between signifier and signified is easy to misunderstand. The signified is not the thing itself which exists in reality, nor is it the meaning of the signifier. The signifier and the signified exist in two separate systems in which there is no one-to-one correspondence between members. The separation between these two systems is absolute such that the signifier and signified are

considered to be on different levels of reality much like the difference between word and image or sound and meaning. The relationship between these two orders of reality is not word-to-word but "arbitrary" such that

We can say that it is in the chain of the signifier that the meaning "insists" but that none of its elements "consists" in the signification of which it is at the moment capable. (1966/1977, p. 153)

In other words, one signifier relates to a signified only through other signifiers: "no signification can be sustained except in its reference to another signification" (p. 150).

Consider a series of free associations. Each association may be considered a signifier which refers to another signifier which, in turn, gives rise to another. The analyst listening to these associations will be mistaken if he considers the signified to lie within any particular association (signifier); rather, it is to be found within the sequence as a whole. Likewise, if any particular signifier relates to any particular signified, it does so through the mediation of the rest of the signifying system. The relation of signifier to signifier Lacan calls a signifying chain. This chain he compares to "rings of a necklace that is a ring in another necklace made of rings" (p. 153).

Metaphor and Metonymy

The relations within and between signifying chains (i.e. between signifiers) may be classed according to

two fundamental types: metonymy and metaphor. Lacan describes metonymy as based upon "word-to-word" connections-- i.e. the substitution of signifiers between which there is a relation of contiguity; that is, they are connected by a common context. Metonymy thus refers to the shifting of signification between words related in terms of context (much like associations within a series of free associations). Lacan gives as an example the expression "thirty sails." Sail replaces boat in this example because of the connection in context between "boat" and "sail." In the expression, "I drink a cup," "cup" replaces "tea contained by the cup" due to the contiguous relationship between cup and tea.

Metaphor is described as "one word for another"; substitution rather than connection is the active principle here. Metaphor is the substitution of one signifier for another when the relationship between them is based on similarity. Lacan's example is taken from a poem by Victor Hugo about "Sleeping Booz." "His sheaf was neither miserly nor spiteful" describes Booz dozing beside a woman he has just impregnated. "Sheaf" substitutes for Booz and, more particularly, for his penis. The line is comprehensible only because of the connections of similarity between these terms. This leads Lacan to describe metaphor as occurring "at the precise point at which sense emerges from non-sense" (1966/1977, p. 158). Another of Lacan's

definitions, the implications wherein may not be immediately apparent, is:

Metaphor must be defined as the implantation, in a signifying chain, of another signifier whereby the supplanted signifier falls to the level of a signified and, as a latent signifier, perpetuates there the interval in which another signifying chain may be grafted. (Quoted in Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 197)

Later on in "The Agency of the Letter," Lacan amplifies his comments on metaphor and metonymy by way of some seemingly obscure formulas. Beginning with the Saussurian algorithm which represents the relation between signifier and signified ($\frac{S}{s}$), Lacan asserts that the relation therein expressed is the same as the "topography of the unconscious." Thus, signifier and signified are understood here to represent the relationship between conscious and unconscious. In order to illustrate the "two fundamental structures called metonymy and metaphor" Lacan transforms the Saussurian algorithm into $f(S)\frac{1}{s}$. This transformation furthers the following algebraic interpretations of these linguistic concepts.

The metonymic structure is symbolized as:

$$f(S...S') \approx S(\text{---})s$$

Lacan explains this formula as "it is the connexion between signifier and signifier that permits the elision in which the signifier installs the lack-of-being in the object relation" (1966/1977, p. 164). To this confusing explanation is added that the minus within the pair of parentheses represents "the maintenance of the bar."

What seems to be signified by this particular formula is that the metonymic movement from the original signifier (S) to and through other signifiers (...S') is congruent with ($\cong$) or results in "the maintenance of the bar" (S(—)s) or the strict separation between the systems of signifier and signified. Further interpretation suggests that in terms of the "topography of the unconscious," metonymy maintains the repression as the movement lies within the horizontal signifying chain and the bar (repressive barrier) is not crossed.

The metaphoric structure is represented as:

$$f\left(\frac{S'}{S}\right)S \cong S(+)s$$

Lacan elaborates:

It is in the substitution of signifier for signifier that an effect of signification is produced that is creative or poetic, in other words, which is the advent of the signification in question. (1966/1977, p. 164)

He adds that the plus between the parentheses represents "the crossing of the bar." "This crossing expresses the condition of passage of the signifier into the signified" (p. 164). S' represents the new terms or signifier which replaces the old signifier (S). The substitution of signifiers results in a "crossing of the bar" such that the new signifier takes the place of the old in the signifying chain and the old signifier is moved vertically to the level of the signified. In the terms of the topography of the unconscious, the old signifier is repressed into the unconscious by the metaphoric process of substitution.

The aforementioned definition of metaphor as an "implantation" should at this point assume more significance.

Stopping at this point to summarize, what Lacan appears to be doing is distinguishing between two types of structures and process which are represented in linguistic theory by the terms metaphor and metonymy. This distinction is then applied to psychoanalysis to illuminate what was previously unclear in Freud's original formulations regarding the unconscious. The process of "metaphor" is a vertical movement between hierarchical levels. In terms of the topographical theory of the unconscious, it is a movement from conscious representation to unconscious representation. The movement is a substitutive one as one signifier is replaced by another, the former falling to the ranks of the signified which is unconscious in relation to the signifier. The structure of "metaphor" is represented as $\frac{S'}{S}$, representing the substitution of signifiers and their existence on two different and separate levels.

The process of "metonymy" is a horizontal movement among signifiers. The bar is not crossed, thus the signifiers may change but the signified remains the same. Movement occurs only on the conscious level and repression is maintained. The structure of "metonymy" is represented as $\frac{S...S'}{S}$, symbolizing the movement on one level while the underlying significance is constant.

Condensation and Displacement

These two fundamental types of organization are applied by Lacan to Freud's formulations of the unconscious in the following manner. Freud described the two organizing principles of the unconscious as the mechanisms of condensation and displacement. These mechanisms of the primary process are characteristic of formations of the unconscious such as dreams and symptoms. Lacan views these mechanisms as structurally identical to the principles of metaphor and metonymy:

The mechanisms described by Freud as those of "the primary process," in which the unconscious assumes its rule, correspond exactly to the functions that this school believes determines the most radical aspects of the effects of language, namely metaphor and metonymy--in other words, the signifier's effects of substitution and combination of the respectively synchronic and diachronic dimensions in which they appear in discourse. (1966/1977, p. 298)

This is the meaning of the slogan, "the unconscious is structured like a language"; both the unconscious and language are organized around the same two principles:

There is a homogeneous structure in symptoms, dreams, parapraxes and jokes. The same structural laws of condensation and displacement are at work in them; these are the laws of the unconscious. These laws are the same as those which create meaning in language. (Lacan quoted in Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 192)

Freud defined condensation as a process which creates a composite formation in which a single idea represents several associative chains insofar as it is located at the point at which they intersect (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967/1973, p. 82). In "The Agency of the Letter,"

Lacan identifies condensation as "the structure of the superimposition of the signifiers, which metaphor takes as its field" (p. 160). The principle in both definitions is that one formation/signifier is substituted for one or more others and carries a significance beyond what is immediately manifest.

In the same essay, Lacan describes displacement as "closer to the idea of that veering off of signification that we see in metonymy" (1966/1977, p. 160). For Freud, displacement is a process whereby an idea's emphasis, interest, or intensity is detached from it and passed on to other ideas of less intensity but related to the first by a chain of associations (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967/1973, p. 121). Linguistically, the signification moves from one signifier to another and can be traced back to its source by the signifying chain of associations.

Whereas Freud accounts for the mechanisms of condensation and displacement with his economic theory of energy and cathexis, Lacan's correlations with linguistic theory allow for a structural explanation, more in keeping with the current notion of acceptable theory.

Symptom and Desire

In "The Agency of the Letter," Lacan goes one step further in accomodating psychoanalytic concepts to linguistic principles. The modes of metaphor and metonymy are linked with symptom and desire: "For the symptom is

a metaphor whether one likes it or not, as desire is a metonymy, however funny people may find the idea" (p. 175).

For the symptom as metaphor:

Between the enigmatic signifier of the sexual trauma and the term that is substituted for it in an actual signifying chain there passes the spark that fixes in a symptom the signification inaccessible to the conscious subject in which that symptom may be resolved-- a symptom being a metaphor in which flesh or function is taken as a signifying element.

(1966/1977, p. 166; Italics mine)

For desire as metonymy:

And the enigmas that desire seems to pose of a "natural philosophy"--its frenzy mocking the abyss of the infinite, the secret collusion with which it envelops the pleasure of knowing and of dominating with jouissance, these amount to no other derangement of instinct than that of being caught in the rails--eternally stretching forth towards the desire for something else--of metonymy. (pp. 166-7)

Symptoms are metaphors for lived experiences. They symbolize, at the level of an organ or a function, an unconscious signifier. "The symptom is here the signifier of a signified repressed from the consciousness of the subject" (p. 69). As a substitute for a traumatic experience, the symptom is related to it as one signifier which has been put in the place of another. The rationale for the cure of the symptom follows naturally from its linguistic structure. If a symptom can replace a traumatic experience, then again by the process of metaphor, an interpretation can take the place of a symptom. The analysis of the symptom must be based upon the free associations of the subject, as only he holds the key to the

repressed signifier which is accessible via the signifying chain.

Lacan's mention of desire will not be fully explicated until further on. The formula, "desire is a metonymy," signifies the alienation of desire in a signifier which is removed from the original signifier by a series of associative connections. The manner in which this occurs is explained in Lacan's theory of the transition from lack to desire to demand which will be touched on later. At this point, recalling the explanation Lacan provided for the formula of metonymic structure:

It is the connexion between signifier and signifier that permits the elision in which the signifier installs the lack-of-being in the object relation, using the value of "reference back" possessed by signification in order to invest it with the desire aimed at the very lack it supports. (1966/1977, p. 164)

Desire is frequently used by Lacan to denote the feeling of lack which is the result of the frustrated primitive need to join with the mother in primal oneness. "Desire is a metonymy" indicates the progressive alienation of the need for union with the mother which occurs because of the mediation of this need through language (Lemaire, 1970/1977).

A lot of theoretical territory has been covered in these few pages so it might be wise to stop at this point and elaborate some of the ideas expressed with the use of some clinical examples. The themes of symptom as metaphor and desire as a metonymy will be represented in two illustrations taken from actual experience. The first is a

symptom experienced by Freud himself which he analyzed in the first few pages of Psychopathology of Everyday Life (1901/1960). The symptomatic parapraxis to be examined involves the forgetting of the name Signorelli. The metonymic movement of desire will be well illustrated in the second clinical example, a dream of a unicorn by an obsessional patient who was treated by Serge Leclaire, a Lacanian analyst.

The Repression of Signorelli

The Unconscious as a Gap

The choice of Freud's parapraxis as an example of a symptom of the unconscious is fortuitous as it permits a brief development of another Lacanian perspective. Slips of the tongue and pen, the mislaying of objects, mistakes, errors, and forgetting have typically been associated with unconscious mental process, even before Freud published Psychopathology of Everyday Life. It was Freud, though, who through careful analysis demonstrated that parapraxes are created by the same processes which give rise to the psychoneuroses. Lacan's studies continue the spirit if not the letter of this research by demonstrating that the neurotic symptom and the parapraxis are similar in structure--they are both metaphors.

The parapraxis occupies a special place in Lacanian psychoanalysis not just due to its structure but because it illustrates the thesis that the unconscious exists as

a gap in conscious discourse. Freud stated that conscious discourse is lacunary (1915b/1957, p. 166). Lacan interpretes this in linguistic fashion. The conscious discourse which forms the fabric of our being is at times rent and torn, allowing the discourse of the Other, the unconscious, to speak:

Since Freud the unconscious has been a chain of signifiers that somewhere (on another stage, in another scene, he wrote) is repeated, and insists on interfering in the breaks offered it by the effective discourse and the cogitation that it informs. (Lacan, 1966/1977, p. 297)

These weak points in the continuity of discourse reveal the existence of a subject besides ego who speaks with the same lips yet is not confined to the same body:

The unconscious is that part of the concrete discourse, in so far as it is transindividual, that is not at the disposal of the subject in re-establishing the continuity of his conscious discourse. (p. 49)

This subject speaks Truth although it may not be immediately apparent, for its language is not that ordinarily understood as speech:

The unconscious is that chapter of my history that is marked by a blank or occupied by a falsehood: it is the censored chapter. But the truth can be rediscovered; usually it has already been written down elsewhere. Namely:

- in monuments: this is my body. That is to say, the hysterical nucleus of the neurosis in which the hysterical symptom reveals the structure of a language, and is deciphered like an inscription which, once recovered, can without serious loss be destroyed;
- in archival documents: these are my childhood memories, just as impenetrable as are such documents when I do not know their provenance;
- in semantic evolution: this corresponds to the stock of words and acceptance of my own particular vocabulary, as it does to my style of life and to my character;

--in traditions, too, and even in the legends which, in a herocized form, bear my history;
 --and, lastly, in the traces that are inevitably preserved by the distortions necessitated by the linking of the adulterated chapter to the chapters surrounding it, and whose meaning will be re-established by my exegesis. (1966/1977, p. 50)

This theoretical position dictates a particular attitude in analytic practice. Laplanche and Leclaire (1966/1972) state that "free floating attention" is frequently interpreted as implying a type of listening they term "the attitude of simultaneous translation," This approach

Allows a suspicion of inexactness to weigh on the totality of the patient's discourse; every act and every word is capable of dissimulating a hidden meaning and is no more than material to be translated into terms of pathology. (Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 136)

In contrast, they advocate a different approach which is termed "the attitude of attention to lacunary phenomena." This is a diffuse, even listening aimed at "bringing into relief the nodal points in the patient's speech: points of intensity, of absence of intensity, lacunae, hollows" (Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1972, p. 125).

Laplanche and Leclaire conclude with the obvious implication of this perspective: the unconscious is not the latent meaning of the manifest text, it does not exist parallel to consciousness. The unconscious stands in relation to consciousness much in the same way as signified is to signifier--as two separate systems or structures.

The unconscious is not the ground which has been prepared to give more sparkle and depth to the painted

composition: it is the earlier sketch which has been covered over before the canvas is used for another picture. If we use a comparison of a musical order, the unconscious is not the counterpoint of a fugue or the harmonics of a melodic line: it is the jazz one hears despite oneself behind the Haydn quartet when the radio is badly tuned or not sufficiently selective. The unconscious is not the message, not even the strange or coded message one strives to read on an old parchment: it is another text written underneath and which must be read by illuminating it from behind or with the help of a developer.
 (Leclaire quoted by Lemaire, 1970/1977, pp. 137-8)

In practice, then, as well as in theory, unconscious phenomena as a privileged manifestation or formation becomes figural. At the same time, not all of the patient's speech is interpretable; there are times when speech means just what it says and "a cigar is just a cigar."

The Parapraxis

Freud's forgetting of the name Signorelli constituted a gap in his conscious discourse allowing the unconscious to speak. This incident must have been of some personal significance to him as it appears to have inaugurated his investigation of parapraxes as a path to the unconscious. Two accounts were published; one in 1898 under the title of "The Psychological Mechanism of Forgetfulness," the other was in 1901 as the first parapraxis analyzed in Psychopathology of Everyday Life. A summary of the two accounts is as follows.

While on a summer vacation, Freud was traveling by carriage from Ragusa to a town in the country of Herzegovina. Conversing with a stranger, the discussion centered

around the two countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the customs of their inhabitants. Freud talked about the peculiar habits of the Turks living there, in particular, their resignation to fate when informed by a doctor that a relative was going to die. In response to the news, the reply was often, "Herr, what is there to be said? If he could be saved, I know you would have saved him."

This statement prompted a recollection of the value placed on sexual enjoyment by the same people. A Turkish patient of one of Freud's colleagues had once said, "Herr, you must know that if that comes to an end then life is of no value." This memory Freud suppressed, due to the "delicacy" of the subject, and he deliberately turned his thoughts to other topics.

The conversation then turned to Italy and Freud began to recommend to his companion that he see the frescos in Orvieto of the end of the world and the Last Judgement. In the course of asking the man if he had ever seen the painting, Freud was unable to recall the name of the famous artist. That this proved disturbing is evidenced by Freud's description of his effort to recall the name which was ordinarily quite familiar and the "inner torment" he experienced until, a few days later, he was told the forgotten name, Signorelli. His efforts to recall the missing name resulted only in the recollection of the names of two other painters, Botticelli and

Boltraffio. He knew without question that neither of these was the name he was looking for. In place of the missing name, there arose in his consciousness the image of the frescos and the artist's face which had been painted in the corner of one of the paintings. This "ultra-clear vision" vanished only after he was relieved of his misery and had recovered the forgotten name.

Freud's Analysis

In his analysis which followed this incident, Freud concluded that the reason the name Signorelli was forgotten had nothing to do with the significance of the name itself or the context in which it was found. Both were relatively innocuous and neither shed light on the subject. Instead, Freud reasoned that the discussion which preceeded the loss of memory was intimately associated with it as suggested by the fact that he deliberately and intentionally diverted his thoughts from a subject which proved uncomfortable. "I wanted, therefore, to forget something; I had repressed something" (1901/1960, p. 4). What he wanted to forget was not the name Signorelli, however; yet the name was bound by associative connection to what was repressed so that it, too, was unavailable to consciousness. His analysis revealed that the substitute names which presented themselves to consciousness were not accidental; rather, they expressed in a compromised manner both the forgotten name and the themes he wished

to repress. As a result, the repression was neither a complete success nor a complete failure.

What Freud wanted to forget were thoughts of sexuality and thoughts of death. This was evident from certain facts derived from his self-analysis to be touched on later:

For this topic [sexuality] to have been able to produce such effects it is not enough that I should have suppressed it once in conversation--an event brought about by chance motives. We must assume rather that the topic itself was also intimately bound up with trains of thought which, in spite of the intensity of the interest taken in them, were meeting with a resistance that was keeping them from being worked over by a particular psychical agency and thus from becoming conscious. That this was really true at that time of the topic of "death and sexuality" I have plenty of evidence, which I need not bring up here, derived from my own self-investigation.

(Freud, 1898/1962, pp. 293-4)

What remains unclear is the way in which the name Signorelli became linked with the topics of death and sexuality. Freud's analysis of this process provides a model for a linguistic assessment of the unconscious.

As illustrated in Figure 1, Freud begins his analysis by dividing the name Signorelli into two parts: "Signor" and "elli." The syllable "elli" is retained in the first substitute word Botticelli, as the representative of the forgotten word. The syllable "Signor" is repressed because of its association with "Herr." "Signor" is Italian for "Herr" (Sir) and it is not insignificant that for the past few days Freud had been translating German into Italian in his head. "Herr" forms the beginning of

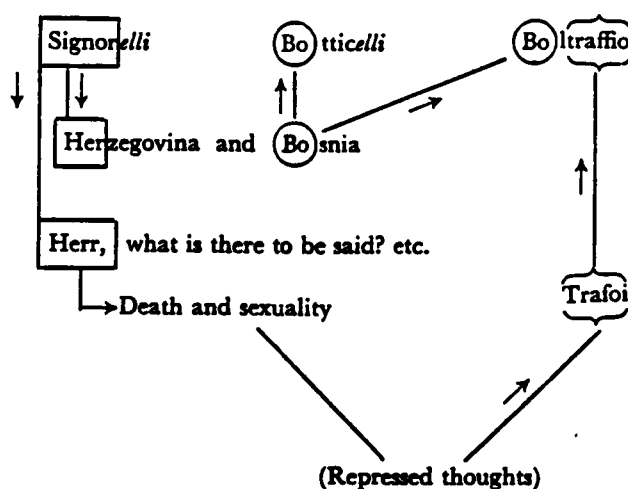


Figure 1. Freud's Analysis of the Signorelli Parapraxis
(From Freud, 1901/1960, p. 5)

the two sentences which preceded the repression, the sentences which proved disturbing due to their themes of death and sexuality. The substitute name Botticelli got its first syllable from the contigual association between Herzegovina and Bosnia which were habitually mentioned in the same breath. The repressed "Signor" thus makes its appearance through the displaced "Bo."

"Bo" also appears in the second substitute name, Bottraffio. The significance of "traffio," however, is unclear from the facts that have been presented. Freud suggests that this syllable is associated with the repressed themes of death and sexuality through an intermediary, the word Trafoi. One of the reasons he gives for consciously wishing to avoid thoughts of death is that not too long before, when he was staying at Trafoi, he heard that a

patient over whom he had expended much effort had taken his life because of an incurable sexual disorder. Although he claims not to have consciously thought of this incident prior to the repression of Signorelli, Freud states that it apparently influenced his choice of the name Boltraffio, an artist about whom he knew little.

A Lacanian Analysis

From a Lacanian perspective, the Signorelli incident is an example of the relatively common occurrence of a gap in one's conscious, concrete discourse. Freud's analysis of the linguistic coursing of his desire reveals the dynamic roots of the repression. This incident provides ample illustration of the condensations of metaphor and the displacements found in metonymy. In addition, it allows a brief explication of the topographical relations between word and image and the dynamics of metaphor as illustrated by repression.

The significance of Freud's forgetting of the name Signorelli can be discovered in the relationships between the forgotten name and the substitute names (and image) which replaced it. The name Signorelli is a signifier. As a proper name, it has no signification or meaning; rather, it has only a designating power. Thus, in and of itself, "Signorelli" does not mean anything at all (Wilden, 1966). In the context of Freud's forgetting, however, it assumes a significance far beyond that of designating an

Italian artist. This significance becomes known through an analysis of the two substitute names.

The signifier Signorelli was replaced by two metaphoric substitutes which are seen to be condensations. Decondensing the two substitutes reveals the metonymic progression of signifiers which occurred within the context of the metaphor. Of the three replacements which became conscious after the repression of "Signorelli," "Botticelli" bears the closest resemblance to the original signifier. Using the formula for metaphor ($\frac{S'}{S}$), the replacement of "Signorelli" by "Botticelli" may be written as $\frac{\text{"Botticelli"}}{\text{"Signorelli"}}$. Decondensing "Botticelli" reveals the following metonymic movement of desire:

BO(TTIC) → Bosnia → Her-z-egovina → "Herr..." (Death and sexuality) → Herz (death)--ELLI (Wilden, 1972, p. 55)

The "TTIC" within parentheses is interpreted by Wilden (1966) as

An instance of what Freud calls the essentially meaningless "hieroglyphic determinative" in the dream text, an element "not intended to be interpreted"... but whose function is to establish the meaning of some other element" (XIII, 177). (p. 345)

The initial phoneme "Bo" is obtained through the association of the countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The first syllable of the latter is linked with the first word ("Herr") in the two sentences of death and sexuality which preceded the instance of repression and the German

word for heart (Herz) which had the personal associative significance of death for Freud.

The "nodal point" of this progression is Herr-Herz ("Sir" and "heart"). The word "Herr" is significant for the issues of authority which are resonant within it. This issue was of critical importance for Freud at the time of his parapraxis. In his self-analysis he was wrestling with feelings about the death of his father which had occurred just two weeks before. He had just discovered the Oedipus Complex and thus was likely particularly sensitive to themes of rivalry and castration. In his correspondence with Fliess he was struggling with the desire to become his own master. Freud alluded to "Herz" in his 1898 account: "'Herz' appears in the name 'Herzegovina' and the heart itself, as a sick bodily organ, played a part in the thoughts I have described as having been repressed" (1898/1962, p. 296). Freud's father had died of heart disease and Freud himself was experiencing at the time hysterical symptoms of heart trouble. To these examples, Wilden (1966) has added many more which serve to document the overdetermined nature of the relations between Herr-Herz and the repressed thoughts of death. These are nicely summed in the content of Signorelli's "Last Judgement," the Father with his son, the little master (Signorelli), at his right hand.

The second symptom in the chain of signifiers was

"Boltraffio." It may be assumed to be second because of its lack of any manifest similarity to "Signorelli" as well as the relative obscurity of the artist. "Boltraffio" may be decondensed in the same manner as "Botticelli":

BO(L) → Bosnia → Her-z-egovina → "Herr..." (Death and sexuality) → Trafoi → TRAFFIO (Wilden, 1966, p. 346)

The "L" in parentheses may be accounted for by the fact that Freud had seen Signorelli's work at Bolsena in 1897 (Wilden, 1972). Thus, BO → L → Bolsena → Signorelli etc. The second symptom brings an even more intimate connection with death as suggested by the association of Trafoi with suicide. The wish for the death of one's father which was represented in the first symptom here becomes one's own death wish. The repressed signifier is still the same, it is the "instinct" of which the signifier "Signorelli" is only a representative. Wilden's interpretation maintains that although elements of Freud's desire for his mother and his wish for the death of his rivals are evident in the analysis of the signifiers, it is the death instinct (Thanatos) that is at the root of the repression.

The death instinct could never make an appearance on the conscious level in a raw, unadulterated form. Even on the unconscious level, the instincts (drives) are only present through a medium or vehicle:

Even in the unconscious...an instinct cannot be represented otherwise than by an idea. If the instinct did not attach itself to an idea or manifest itself as an affective state, we would know nothing about it. (Freud, 1915b/1957, p. 177)

In this instance, the death instinct, ineffable unless attached to a representative, has become attached to the image of Signorelli. On the conscious level, Freud loses the signifier Signorelli in a regression from word to image. Complete understanding of this process requires an explication of Freud's "linguistic representation" of the unconscious.

Freud's "Linguistic" Unconscious

In his 1915 article on the unconscious, Freud distinguished between thing-representations and word-representations. Thing-representations characterize the unconscious and constitute the language of dreams. Word-representations are found on only the preconscious-conscious level which also contains thing-representations. Freud describes the difference between unconscious presentation and conscious presentation in these words:

What we have permissibly called the conscious presentation of the object can now be split up into the presentation of the word and the presentation of the thing....We now seem to know all at once what the difference is between a conscious and an unconscious presentation. The two are not, as we supposed, different registrations of the same content in different physical localities, nor yet different functional states of cathexis in the same locality; but the conscious presentation comprises the presentation of the thing plus the presentation of

the word belonging to it, while the unconscious presentation is the presentation of the thing alone.
(1915b/1957, p. 201)

For Freud, the "language of the unconscious" appears on a conscious level in schizophrenia:

In schizophrenia words are subject to the same process as that which makes the dream-images out of latent dream-thoughts--they undergo condensation, and by means of displacement transfer their cathexes to one another in their entirety. The process may go so far that a single word, if it is especially suitable on account of its numerous connections, takes over the representation of a whole train of thought.
(p. 186)

In the language of psychosis words are not treated as words but as things, as images in a dream. Freud later notes that in dreams one can find schizophrenic-like language because the dream-work occasionally treats words like things. The crucial distinction between dream-language and psychotic language he makes in "A Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams":

In [schizophrenia], what becomes the subject of modification by the primary process are the words themselves in which the preconscious thought was expressed; in dreams, what are subject to this modification are not the words, but the thing-presentation to which the words have been taken back. In dreams there is a topographic regression; in schizophrenia there is not. (1917/1957, p. 229)

In other words, the primary process manifestations in the thing-presentation in the dream are the result of the condensation and displacement within the word-presentation of the dream thoughts. The regression from words to images which occurs in dreams then brings with it the evidence of primary process.

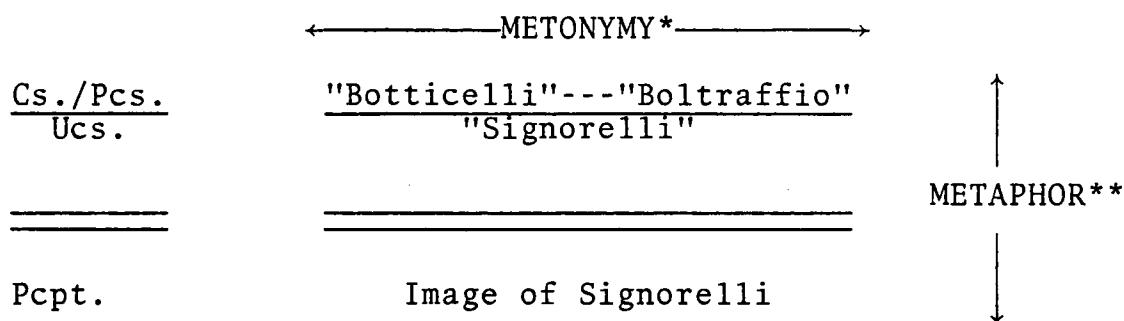
In the example at hand, the repression of the signifier "Signorelli" creates a gap in Freud's conscious discourse. This gap generates "inner torment" for Freud as he unsuccessfully searches for the missing element. This element is replaced by two verbal substitutes which both reveal and conceal the wish which engendered the loss. In addition, a regression occurs from word-presentation to thing-presentation as an image of the missing verbal unit is present. What could not appear in consciousness as a word was available as a sense-perception, the hallucinated "ultra-clear image" of Signorelli.

"Signorelli" was available only as a thing-presentation, not a word-presentation. This corresponds with one of Freud's statements on the nature of repression:

Now, too, we are in a position to state precisely what it is that repression denies to the rejected presentation in the transference neuroses: what it denies to the presentation is translation into words which shall remain attached to the object. A presentation which is not put into words, or a psychical act which is not hypercathected, remains thereafter in the Ucs. in a state of repression.
(1915b/1957, p. 202)

The restoration of the word to Freud's conscious discourse then relieves his torment and the focus of his discomfort, the image, fades along with the significance of "Signorelli."

Wilden (1972) proceeds to represent the relationship between the conscious and the repressed in symbolic fashion in the diagram presented in Figure 2. Further



*Diachronic axis of succession: desire, displacement, combination, syntagm, message, context, contiguity.

**Synchronic axis of simultaneity: symptom, condensation, substitution, paradigm, code, text, similarity.

Figure 2. Wilden's Depiction of the Relationship between the Conscious and the Repressed

(From Wilden, 1972, p. 55)

elaboration of this relationship necessitates an examination of the nature of repression as structured in the form of metaphor.

Repression as Metaphor

In a now-famous study of the unconscious in the spirit of Lacan ("The Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Study" by Jean Laplanche and Serge Leclaire), Laplanche makes use of a formula given by Lacan for metaphor to demonstrate the structure of repression as that of metaphor. Lacan's formula appears in "On a Question Preliminary to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis" (1966/1977, pp. 179-225). Recalling the definition cited earlier, metaphor consists of the substitution of one signifier (S') for

another signifier (S) which then falls to the level of a signified. This process Lacan symbolizes in these terms:

$$\frac{S'}{S} \times \frac{S}{s} \rightarrow S'(\frac{1}{s})$$

The original signifier (S) has dropped out of the formula to the right of the arrow and now S' is the signifier for the signified (s). Laplanche demonstrates that the original signifier (S) has been repressed, that it has been "simplified out" in the algebraic sense of the term. Laplanche's argument is mathematical. Using the algebraic model

$$\frac{A}{B} \times \frac{C}{D} = \frac{\frac{A}{D}}{\frac{B}{C}},$$

Laplanche transforms Lacan's formula into:

$$\frac{S'}{S} \times \frac{S}{s} = \frac{\frac{S'}{s}}{\frac{S}{S}}.$$

This formula differs from Lacan's in that it shows what happened to the repressed signifier (S). It has fallen to the level of the signified but is, at the same time, present as a latent signifier. This, Laplanche argues, is the diagram for the process of repression where what has been lost on the conscious-preconscious level is present on another, separate level. This formula is then used to account for characteristics of repression as well as the relation between the repressed unconscious and

the preconscious and of the structure of the unconscious chain.

The essential feature of this new formula is its layered structure. The two lower layers make up the unconscious chain of signifiers while the two upper layers comprise the conscious-preconscious signifying chain. Each chain is divided into signifier and signified levels but not in precisely the same way. The structure of the unconscious signifying chain will be examined in a moment. First, the application of this diagram to the process of repression will be explored.

Freud defined two main categories of repression: secondary repression (after-expulsion or repression proper) and primal repression. In the case of secondary repression, the representation is repressed by a double action: a repulsion by the preconscious and an attraction by the unconscious (what has already been repressed). The preconscious repulsion occurs in two stages: the withdrawal of cathexis and counter-cathexis, the replacement of the repressed element by another. This definition of secondary repression coincides with the Laplanche formula for repression. The situation is less clearcut where primal repression is concerned.

Freud posited the need for a primal repression to establish an unconscious which then performs one of the operations necessary in the action of secondary repression.

Several features are essential to primal repression: the object of primal repression was never conscious but then again neither was it unconscious since the distinction did not previously exist. Additionally, the sole mechanism of primal repression is countercahesis since the withdrawal of cathexis is impossible with the preconscious not yet established as a system. In order to account for primal repression with his diagram of metaphor, Laplanche splits the process into two stages which will be detailed at a later point. At present, suffice it to say that Laplanche's formula is better suited to secondary repression than it is to primal repression.

Examining now the unconscious chain, what appears striking is the identity of the sign for signifier and that for signified. Laplanche interprets this artifact in terms of the distinction Freud made between thing-representations and word-representations. Recalling that only thing-representations exist on the level of the unconscious, Laplanche claims that his formula illustrates this perfectly:

At the level of preconscious language, the distinction between signifier (words) and signified ("images") exists. At the level of unconscious language, there are only images, serving simultaneously and inseparably as signifier and signified. In a sense, it may be said that the unconscious chain is pure meaning, but one can say as well that it is pure signifier, pure non-meaning, or open to all meanings.

(Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1972, p. 161)

Laplanche concludes that the unconscious is composed of

signifiers which refer only to themselves. These signifiers comprise the "words" of the language of the unconscious, a language which can not be assimilated to our verbal language because of its imaginary nature.

Lacan himself has made no specific statements on the nature of the signifiers in the unconscious nor of the quality of the language found there. He does say that

An unconscious signifier is radically distinct from a conscious signifier even if it is formally identical and that the difference arises from the context into which the signifier is inserted.

(Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 123)

It is difficult to speculate on the nature of unconscious language since all that is available for study are formations of the unconscious. Lacan is more specific about his opinion of Laplanche's formula. Lemaire relates that in a personal conversation in 1969, Lacan stated that his formula was intended for didactic purposes only (1970/1977, p. 122). That Laplanche should attempt to draw conclusions of a psychoanalytic nature after literalizing and then mathematically manipulating a metaphorical formula, Lacan regards as foolhardy. More to the point, in The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (1973/1978), Lacan, in reference to Laplanche's formula, states:

Such a formula is quite definitely unsatisfactory. First, because one ought to know that there can be no relations between the signifier and itself, the peculiarity of the signifier being the fact that it is unable to signify itself, without producing some error in logic....It is so much easier to realize

that what is happening is that a substitutive signifier has been put in the place of another signifier to constitute the effect of metaphor. (p. 249)

Nevertheless, Wilden has diagrammed the process of repression in the Signorelli incident in a manner which is modeled after the Laplanche formula. For what it is worth, it is included here in Figure 3 with some modifications.

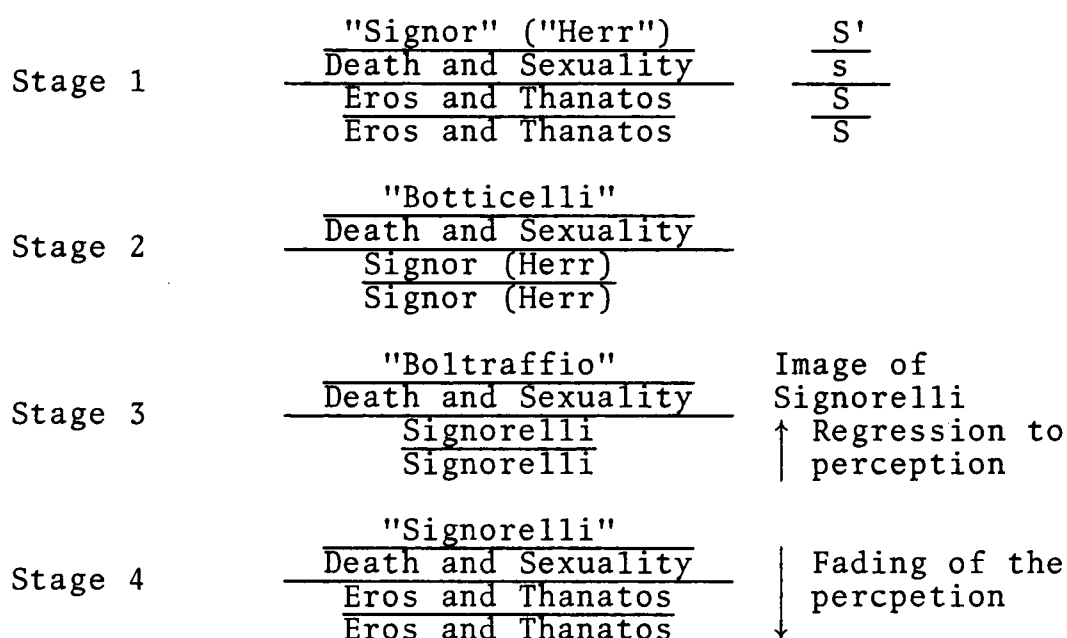


Figure 3. Wilden's Diagram of the Repression of Signorelli
(From Wilden, 1966, p. 362)

Stage One illustrates the situation prior to the repression. The unconscious signifying chain is composed of the two basic instincts Eros and Thanatos. The conscious

signifying chain shows that the signifiers "Signor" and "Herr" refer to the signified "Death and Sexuality."

Stage Two occurs after the secondary repression of the signifier "Signor." This repression occurred in the double action of the repulsion by the preconscious (Freud's deliberate suppression of thoughts of death or sexuality) and the attraction by the unconscious (the already repressed instincts of Eros and Thanatos). Countertransference has resulted in the replacement by the signifier "Botticelli." The unconscious signifying chain is now composed of the images of the master (Signor or Herr).

Stage Three illustrates the second symptom replacement and the appearance of the image of Signorelli. The unconscious signifying chain is now composed of images of Signorelli.

Stage Four illustrates the situation after the return of "Signorelli" to consciousness. The image fades and the unconscious signifying chain returns to the two basic instincts.

The Unicorn Dream

In the article by Laplanche and Leclaire which was cited earlier, a dream is presented and analyzed in a manner which illustrates Lacanian technique. The analysis of the dream provides the means for Serge

Leclaire to address two theoretical issues of importance to this study. The first is what he calls the "topographical question of unconscious inscriptions." This is the concept of the vorstellungsrepräsentanz, translated "ideational representatives," which form the meeting ground of drive energy and mental representation in Freudian instinct theory. The second issue he labels "the economic problem of the energy proper to the unconscious system." This turns out to be the controversial death drive which Leclaire relates to the castration complex, the sexual drives, and language. In the process, he develops a case for the origin of the unconscious which will be left in abeyance at this point to be taken up in the next chapter. In place of it, Leclaire's treatment of Lacanian desire will figure prominently in this analysis.

The Dream Analysis

The dream is the "unicorn dream" of Philippe, a "thirty-year-old obsessional neurotic" in analysis with Leclaire. The manifest text of the dream as he reported it is as follows:

The deserted square of a small town; it's odd, I'm looking for something. Liliane--whom I do not know--appears, barefoot, and says to me: it's been a long time since I've seen such fine sand. We are in the forest and the trees seem peculiarly colored, with bright and simple shades. I think that there are a lot of animals in this forest and, just as I am about to say it, a unicorn (licorne) crosses our

path; we walk, all three of us, toward a clearing
that we suppose is down below.

(Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1972, p. 136)

Lacanian technique is modeled after Freudian dream interpretation. Consequently, the analysis of the dream will consist first of an examination of the manifest content. The elements which make up the dream are seen to be derived from the day residue or elements from experiences the previous day which are united by the unconscious wish that is fulfilled in the dream. In the case of this dream, the unconscious wish is a desire to drink. This is not evident from the dream itself but in the associations of the patient which followed the dream report. In this regard, Philippe stated that he woke up not long after having this dream with a strong thirst. This he attributed to having eaten "Baltic herrings" before retiring. He also remembered having taken a walk in the forest with his niece Anne the day before the dream. They had stalked game and discovered, in the numerous tracks of deer and does, which indicated that it was place the animals came to drink. Anne said at some point, "It's been a long time since I saw such bright heather."

It can be seen that the dream incorporated certain material from the previous day in quite a literal fashion. At one point in the dream, Philippe is in a forest just as he had been the previous day with his niece. In the

dream he is with Liliane rather than Anne yet the similarity between names is more apparent than the differences. During their walk, Anne remarked in an animated way about the color of the heather. In the dream, the same phrasing is applied to "such fine sand" and the colors of the heather appear in the trees. A unicorn appears in the dream, calling to mind the does and deer who left tracks in the path the day before. It is suggested that the clearing towards which the dreamers walk is the site where the animals came to drink.

The amplification of the dream elements and their connection with the unconscious wish are discovered in the free associations of the patient to the dream content. Often, childhood memories are recovered which ground the manifest text of the dream to personal elements representing the patient's desire. In his free associations, Philippe recalled three childhood memories. Associating to the image at the beginning of the dream, the deserted square, he remembered the square of a small town in which there was a fountain with a unicorn statue. Philippe recalled that on a summer vacation when he was about three years old, he tried to drink the water that bubbled from the fountain into the hollow of his cupped hands.

Associating to the colors of trees in his dream which seemed derived from the color of the heather the previous day, Philippe recalled a walk in the Swiss

mountains. This memory was linked to another wherein he tried to imitate an older friend who could make the sound of a siren by holding his two hands in the shape of a conch shell and blowing through them.

The third memory arrived by way of the herrings of the Baltic, the reference to sand in the dream, and the name Liliane. Philippe broke down the name into Anne, his niece, and Lili, a cousin of his mother's. This gave rise to the memory of being at a beach on the Atlantic when he was about three years old. Throughout the stay, Philippe was teased by Lili for his constant repetition to her, in a serious and insistant tone, "I'm thirsty" ("Philippe-j'ai-soif"), an expression which became a sign of recognition between them in the following years.

From this information, Leclaire attempts a first approximate interpretation of the dream:

By way of a thirst clearly motivated by the consumption of herring, on the occasion of this need to drink, we might say, arises a dream which, for a time at least, calms to a certain extent the desire to drink and puts off the moment of awakening.

(Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1972, p. 138)

He quick to point out, however, that the dream concerns not only the need to drink but also the desire to drink, as represented in Philippe's declaration, "I'm thirsty."

At this point it is necessary to elaborate upon the distinction here between need and desire. Remembering the Freudian hypothesis that dreams are the fulfillments

of wishes, it is helpful to note that the French translate "wish fulfillment" as "realization of desire." Desire thus becomes equated with wish, and the dream becomes a means by which desire is realized.

Need is of a different order than desire. Freud viewed need as an organic, physical energy which arises from a state of internal tension and is satisfied by procurement of a specific object (e.g. food). Desire (wishes) is of a psychical nature rather than physical:

Wishes...are indissolubly bound to "memory-traces," and they are fulfilled through the hallucinatory reproduction of the perceptions which have become the signs of this satisfaction.

(Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967/1973, p. 482)

Need is a biological phenomenon related to the requirements of the physical organism. Desire is a psychological concept, parallel to need and no less real, but of a different order of being.

Between need and desire, Freud introduced the concept of the instinctual drive. Ontologically, the drive is neither physical nor psychical; Freud defined it as "lying on the frontier between the mental and the physical." Although its source is biological, the instinct can not be subsumed under physical concepts. It has effects in the mental sphere, yet it is not purely a mental phenomenon. Although it has effects in the mental sphere, the instinctual drive does not exert its influence directly. It must go through a mediator, its

representative in mental life, the ideational representative (vorstellungsrepräsentanz).

The Ideational Representative

As mentioned earlier, the question of the ideational representative was one of the theoretical issues to which Leclaire addresses himself. The concept is important in two fundamental ways, only one of which will be discussed now--its link between drive energy and desire. Freud emphasized that the instinctual drives can never appear in mental life, they function within the psychical apparatus only through the mediation of representatives:

An instinct can never become an object of consciousness--only the idea that represents the instinct can. Even in the unconscious, moreover, an instinct cannot be represented otherwise than by an idea. If the instinct did not attach itself to an idea or manifest itself as an affective state, we could know nothing about it. (Freud, 1915b/1957, p. 177)

In Lacanian terms, the ideational representative becomes the signifier for the signified instinctual impulse. They are of two different orders, the signified in this case can never be directly experienced. In the case of Philippe, the dream analysis reveals that his libidinal drive which was directed towards Lili became expressed as a desire to drink on the psychical level in the form of the ideational representative or signifier, "I'm thirsty." This conclusion was reached by the following line of reasoning.

Evidence for Philippe's libidinal desire of Lili

is found by a linguistic analysis of some of his associations. Focusing on the name "Lili," Leclaire notes the similarity of "lili" to "lolo," a French double entendre for both milk and breast. This would not be so significant if Philippe had not revealed that "Lili" was a nickname used only by her husband. Whether or not Philippe actually called her by this name is unclear from the text. Philippe obviously feels strong affection for Lili as his associations to her name focus on the first phoneme "li," reminding him of "lit," French for "bed." Leclaire relates that Lili's bed has the significance for Philippe of the "happy couple" which is in contrast with the relationship between his parents.

This libidinal drive found expression in the formula "I'm thirsty" which not only denoted Philippe's need but also connoted his desire. Lili must have been aware on some level of the connotation in this formula as she came to respond with the ambiguous "Philippe, I'm thirsty." From then on the verbal expression "I'm thirsty" had strong personal resonance for Philippe which exceeded the conventional meaning of the phrase. Likewise, to drink became a gratification far beyond that of the satisfaction of an organic need. Leclaire notes the presence of another ideational representative evident in Philippe's associations which signifies the gratification to be found in drinking. Rather than verbal,

this representative is gestural: two hands joined together like a conch shell. This image appeared in the first memory of Philippe satisfying his thirst at the unicorn fountain. It also appeared in the second memory of the whistling friend. This gesture, Leclaire states, will remain forever bound to the drive such that with each repetition it will evoke desire.

The Lacanian theory of desire posits a fundamental lack as the basis for the origin of desire. Desire is viewed as a force whose aim is to replace something missing, cover up an absence, make up for a loss. This lack is said to exist from the very beginning of life and is to account for a fundamental and irreversible incompleteness at the core of man. First known through the loss of unity which occurs at birth, through weening, psychological birth, and all subsequent individuation, the lack persists at the heart of being despite all attempts to seal it over or pretend it does not exist. Mythologically expressed as the lost paradise or the exile from the garden of Eden, the recovery of this loss is held to lie at the bottom of all motivation for an individual's strivings and growth.

Just as an organic need and desire results from the absence of some necessary substance, so too does the instinctual drive originate from a basic lack, absence, or loss:

The eroticized partial instinct refers back to the organic need which founds it, but it also refers back beyond this to a loved experience of radical lack resulting from separation from the maternal body.
(Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 162)

Lacan refers to this lack as the zero, the void, the manque (lack) or béance (gap) which lies before instinct or desire. Desire follows from the lack experienced by the child separated from his mother. In Philippe's case, his libidinal desire for Lili was, at base, a desire to close the gap and reestablish the missing unity experienced with his mother. This instinctual drive was alienated when the desire for Lili became the signifier for the original union; it was further alienated when the desire to drink replaced the desire for Lili.

This process illustrates a fundamental point of Lacan's: that one becomes further and further alienated from one's true desire as it is replaced by successive signifiers. Desire is born by the suggestion of filling in the gap, the possibility of negating the lack. All of the objects of one's desire are but a reminder of some experience of pleasure long past which approximated total union and gratification. On the basis of a few experiences of pleasure experienced by the child in contact with its mother, desire is born. These experiences are represented in the unconscious by ideational representatives of the instincts, also known as elementary signifiers of desire. The process by which they are

inscribed in the unconscious will be described in a while. These elementary signifiers will direct the desire towards certain objects which are associated in some form with the original object of pleasure. This process defines the particular manner in which the individualized objects of desire are determined for each person.

Leclaire has given as an example five possible elementary signifiers of someone's desire in his article, "La réalité du desire," summarized by Lemaire. These signifiers, which he terms "elements of pure singularity," are characterized by an absence of any logical connection to one another:

- the smell of a woman's neck on the way back from a walk;
- the acidulated edge of something sweet;
- the modulation of a voice;
- a beauty spot or mole;
- the fullness of the hand as the ball is caught.

(Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 163)

The desire of such a person might well be directed towards his lover's neck as he searches again for the beauty spot that he noticed on his mother's neck after having come back from a walk. Thus the original desire becomes increasingly alienated from the original object as it is replaced by various signifiers according to the principles of metaphor and metonymy. The desire is expressed in the condensations of the signifiers and it is displaced from one signifier to another. This process can occasionally unfold in reverse as free association supplies the

successive signifiers which have served to alienate the original desire.

Leclaire gives as an example the possibility that the individual with the aforementioned elementary signifiers could become obsessional and spend hours looking for the hole for a bolt he found lying on the floor of his car. Free association around the symptom would reveal the following signifying succession: bolt (boulon)--spot (bouton)--neck (cou)--beauty spot (grain de beauté). The original desire was displaced to the neck by contingent association then to spot by associative meaning. The similarity in sound between spot (bouton) and bolt (boulon) occasioned the displacement which resulted in the symptom. In this manner, the unconscious discourse is formed by signifiers which serve to alienate one's true desire (Lemaire, 1970/1977).

As to the question of how particular signifiers become representatives of the instinctual drive and then "fixed" in the unconscious, Leclaire has an answer for it too:

I put it forward that a signifier (in the order of the unconscious) can be called a signifier only in so far as the letter which constitutes one face of it necessarily refers back to a movement of the body. It is this elective anchoring of a letter in a movement of the body which constitutes the unconscious element, the signifier in the true sense of the word. The signifier is as much body as it is letter, it has a somatic and palpable aspect.

(Quoted in Lemaire, 1970/1977, pp. 144-5)

The "letter" referred to in this quotation is the signifying aspect of the elementary signifier which exists as part of the unconscious discourse. This letter becomes fixed, Leclaire states, by an anchoring in the kinesthetic experience of the body. The anchoring of the signifiers occurs around an experience of pleasure or pain which is marked by a sensation of difference. The body is presented as one large erotogenic zone, more accurately, many possible erotogenic zones. Pleasure or joissance (French word for pleasure with sexual connotations) is defined as the sensation of difference experienced as a shift to either more or less tension. An erotogenic zone occurs at a site where there is exceptional sensitivity to sensual difference:

The erotogenic zone appears to be defined as a site in the body in which the syncope of a difference remains marked and in which the gap of pleasure opens, lips of a mouth, lids of an eye, exquisitely and sensibly different points of an epidermis on a secret shore.

(Leclaire quoted in Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 146)

The development of individual differences in preferences for one erotogenic zone over another has its roots in the early mother-infant interaction. Leclaire maintains that the "inscription in the body" of an erotogenic zone develops from the other projecting a sexual value onto the particular site. To illustrate the manner in which an erotogenic zone is opened up, Leclaire gives a possible example:

Imagine the softness of a mother's finger as it "innocently" plays with the exquisite dimple at the side of the neck, and the baby's face illuminated with a smile. One could say that, with its loving caress, the finger is imprinting a mark in this hollow, opening up a crater of jouissance, inscribing a letter which seems to fix the almost imperceptible immediacy of the illumination.

(Quoted in Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 146)

The fixing of the letter of the signifier is inseparable from the experience of jouissance which accompanies it. The development of the erotogenic zone is thus parallel to the inscription of the signifier in the unconscious. Leclaire describes the erotogenic zone as a gap (béance), an opening of sensation where tension is annulled. The letter that fixes this gap should be distinguished from the object that closes it. The letter is a signifier which contains and expresses the desire whereas the object of desire is that which holds the promise of closing the gap. The promise is bogus, however, as

Every object of desire, every object of alienating identification will reveal itself to be necessarily ephemeral and destined to be supplanted because it is incapable of stopping up the lack inscribed in the subject from the start. (Lemaire, 1970/1977, p.175)

The Death Drive

Turning now to the second theoretical issue addressed by Leclaire, the Lacanian conception of the death drive will now be discussed. To introduce his thinking on the death drive, Leclaire reports a second dream of Philippe's, "of a considerably later date than

that of the unicorn":

Someone (a boy of about twelve years old, it seems) has just slipped with one leg into a hole. He is lying on his side and shouts very loudly as if he were seriously injured. People (I am one of them) rush to see where the wound is: but nothing shows, either on his knee or his leg; all they find is a slight scratch on his foot, on the side of the heel, resembling a long, large comma, and which doesn't even bleed. He must, then, have hurt himself on an object hidden in the hole: people look for it, thinking of a rusty nail; actually it looks more like a bill-hook.

(Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1972, p. 142)

The theme of this dream, the unconscious desire, appears to be a wish for castration. As this would seem to be antithetical to the intentionality of the libidinal drives, how is it to be explained? Leclaire asserts that this dream of castration reveals the death drive as the "matrix of desire and as essential support of the castration complex."

Philippe's associations focus on a facial scar present on his forehead which was the trace of a serious childhood accident. He received the wound in a struggle for assertion with an older boy. He subjectively experienced the injury as catastrophic and he happily retreated to the welcoming arms of an overprotective mother. As an adult, the scar on his forehead had the significance of a mark of preferential treatment and a sign that he was his mother's favorite son.

For our subject nothing indicates security and unshakable shelter (consolation, fortress, and impasse) better than the scar, the trace of a mother who received him with love; but even more than

security, the scar signifies today that he was loved with a passion.

(Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1972, p. 170)

This significance of the scar, however, hides that which went before it. Prior to being received by a comforting mother, Philippe was shaken by an injury which threatened his corporeal unity. The scar now masks the wound which is only suggested in the dream, never seen. Associating to the hook-cut of the dream, Philippe reveals the castration theme as he speaks of amputation, tetanus, and decapitation. It is this threat to unity which was later covered over in the arms of a loving mother that comprises the significance of the trace, the scratch on the heel which hides the wound.

Leclaire identifies this trace as an elementary signifier, an ideational representative of the instinctual drive. The drive represented, however, is not libidinal; for that only followed, in Philippe's experience, the anchoring of the signifier with the physical injury. The drive represented by this elementary signifier is the death drive, Freud's forbidden instinct initially labelled as the ego instincts. Leclaire's definition of this drive is unique:

The death-drive is that radical force,...which surfaces in a catastrophic or ecstatic instant, at the point where the organic coherence of the subject in his body appears for what it is, unnamable or inexpressible, swoon or ecstasy, shouting its appeal for a word to veil and sustain it.

(Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1972, p. 143)

The moment at which all tension disappears, at the realization of desire, whether in orgasm or in the dropping off to sleep of the sated infant--it is at this moment that the death drive surfaces. At this threat to organic coherence, one is preserved only by a signifier which serves to mask the void and maintain unity.

The death instinct is the ecstatic void met with by the subject in pleasure or in pain, and from which the subject is preserved only by the letter (not merely a linguistic term but a mnemonic trace whose form may vary), which appears in order to support his organic and psychical coherence. The death instinct is the attractive "zero" around which the subject gravitates, the antimony of the "one," which is also the subject when he has been able to maintain himself in consciousness with the help of some letter. (Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 167)

Lemaire relates this surfacing of the death drive to the process by which the letter of the elementary signifiers are inscribed in the unconscious. The letter which supports coherence is the same as that which later gives rise to desire. A gap is opened in the experience of pleasure or pain and through this gap, the death drive surfaces. The letter that maintains consciousness serves to fix the gap and preserve the moment.

Leclaire gives some examples which are related by Lemaire (1970/1977, p. 149). After striking one's head against a hard surface, one element which becomes figural in consciousness prevents one from fainting. It could be the scent of honeysuckle which stands out and thereafter retains the significance of maintaining internal

coherence. Likewise, a boy climbing a rope who is surprised by a sudden orgasm may find that only the feel of the rope in his hand keeps him from falling at the moment of pleasure. The letter is fixed at the moment of the difference between pleasure and pain. It is singled out only by chance as it is present when the death drive surfaces. In these two cases, the smell of honeysuckle and the feel of rope in one's hands suddenly assume a significance they did not possess before. In the language of desire, they have achieved a prominent status from which libidinal elaborations will emanate.

The death drive, thus conceived, constitutes a fundamental force in the development of the individual. Leclaire connects this force with the development of language, the organization of the libidinal drives, and foundation of the castration complex:

Thus the death-drive surfaces without ever being seen. But we already perceive...that it constitutes the "bedrock," the foundation of the castration complex, that it allows--as indescribable and strictly unquantifiable limit--the development and the organization of the sexual drives, and that finally...it imperiously gives rise to the development and structuring of language. (Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1972, p. 144)

Its association with the castration complex has already been delineated in connection with the amplification of the bill-hook dream. To establish the connection with libidinal drives, an alternative interpretation of Leclaire's notion is in order.

As a drive, the death drive is defined in energetic

terms which emphasize its dynamic nature as an energy or a force. Leclaire seems aware that this depiction is not entirely accurate as he does refer to the death drive at times in different terms: "the death drive...is manifest as a radical and immobile force, or, better yet, as the opposite of a force, a void" (Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1972, p. 170). From a structural perspective, the death drive has been discussed in this study before this point, in the context of the lack which preceeds the development of desire. This fundamental lack is the same as the death drive which surfaces at moments of pleasure or pain. It is the death drive, as a lack, which founds the libidinal drives in so far as instinct is predicated upon lack or absence.

The death drive also serves as the force behind the organization and development of language. In a process to be described in the next chapter, the letters which serve to support the coherence of the individual by masking the surfacing of the death drive lead to the development of language in the individual. These ideational representatives of the death drive form the initial structure of the self as an individual entity within a symbolic order. More about this later.

Conclusion

Before his final discussion of this dream, Leclaire introduces a symptom which came up during Philippe's

associations to his dream. This symptom of the "grain of sand" provides the final elements necessary for a full analysis.

Philippe related that he did not like the beach while associating to the dream elements of sand and going barefoot. He recalled several memories of painful experiences which occurred while he was young and at the beach. Many of them had to do with the theme of cutaneous sensitivity: the feel of hot sand against his skin, cool sand against his body, sand burning the soles of his feet, and walking on a hot plate of zinc which had been heated by the sun. As an adult, Philippe did not like being on the beach as it represented for him having sand everywhere; in his hair, teeth, and ears. The most irritating circumstances for him would occur when, after a careful cleaning, only a single grain of sand remained, for instance, in his shoe. This "symptom of the grain of sand" was reported as a more or less mastered obsession which could at times give rise to heightened anxiety or considerable irritation. Philippe's sensitivity was the origin of a favorite fantasy: that he possessed insensitive, invulnerable skin and feet that were "hard as horn [corne]." The wish behind this fantasy seems rather clearly to be a wish to defend against castration. The desire may then be articulated as a desire to mask the void of the death drive as it rises in anxiety or irritation over a single grain of sand.

The symptom of the grain of sand provides the lacking information with which the interpretation of the unicorn dream may now be completed. Leclaire's first attempt at an interpretation remained on the level of need as he described the purpose of the dream as the satisfaction of the need to drink, thereby putting off the moment of awakening. The wish of the dream as expressed on a dynamic level was later interpreted as the desire for libidinal union with Lili. With the added information from the bill-hook dream and the grain of sand symptom, yet another interpretation may be proffered which is effectively symbolized by the unicorn of the dream.

The mythical unicorn is a half-deer, half-horse which has an analytic significance of exposed, unadulterated virility. It wears a phallus of horn, fully exposed, on its forehead and is captured only by a virgin who provides a lap for it to lay its head to sleep. In this sense, the unicorn is the very realization of Philippe's desire, as it is revealed by the analysis of the bill-hook dream and the grain of sand symptom. From the point of view of its legend, the unicorn is that which has mastered the death drive and need never fear castration. It wears a phallus exposed and proud and is invulnerable to the hunters who wish it dead. It too is vulnerable to desire, however, as it allows itself to be caught by a virtuous virgin.

From a linguistic perspective, the unicorn may also be said to be the metonymy of Philippe's desire. The unicorn refers back not only to its legend, but also to the fountain where Philippe mastered his thirst, to Lili as a focus for Philippe's libidinal desire, and to the horny calloused feet that would protect Philippe against his fear of castration. In linking the "li" of Lili and her bed and the "corne" of the invulnerable feet, the unicorn ("licorne") connects Philippe's libidinal desire to mask his fundamental lack. The word condenses within it the unconscious signifying chain made up of a few of Philippe's elementary signifiers: LILI-beach-sand-skin-foot-HORN [CORNE]. Although this discourse of the unconscious is inarticulate as it stands, with the elaboration of Philippe's associations, it has been seen to contain the significance of the whole of the preceeding discussion. It is through the analysis of such unconscious signifying chains that one's true desire becomes known.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

Language and the Unconscious

The Lacanian thesis which links language and the unconscious may be stated quite simply: Language is a symbolic order which exists prior to the individual subject. This order structures the development of the individual subject and structures his unconscious as well. The subject's entry into this symbolic order is what gives rise to the unconscious. In the development of the individual subject, the acquisition of language is what gives birth to the unconscious.

The Symbolic Order

Lacan emphasizes the primacy of the symbolic order. The symbolic order is more than just the rules of grammar which dictate proper language use. As the Lacanians employ it, this concept refers to the laws and patterns of language, society, and culture which exist without reference to any specific individual. This organization of laws and symbols has been long in the making. It contains the very essence of civilized life and social relations in the traditions which have been carried on from generation to generation. The young child is one without much history. As an infant, he manifests little

organization in contrast to the complexity of adult functioning. He is dependent on what already exists for his very existence. In the process of growing older, the child learns the laws and roles of the culture in which he is raised. In the latter stages of this process the child plays an active role, voraciously assimilating knowledge of the world around him. Initially, however, the child is a passive recipient of that which is thrust upon him. The pre-existing patterns of the symbolic order will impose a definite structure on the child's development: "This is the point of insertion of a symbolic order that pre-exists the infantile subject and in accordance with which he will have to structure himself" (Lacan, 1966/1977, p. 234).

The symbolic order of language and social organization is made up of interdependent signs which are bound together by specific laws. This order of symbols is made up of signifiers, "differential elements, in themselves without meaning, which acquire value only in their mutual relations, and forming a closed order" (Sheridan, 1977, p. ix). As signifiers, they refer to something beyond themselves, the signified, but do so through the mediation of the whole body of signifiers. This is one way of saying that the order of language is a closed system, highly interrelated but independent and without a direct link to what it is to which it refers. In other words,

language reproduces reality but is not of the same order of reality as that which it reproduces.

This point is highly significant as it introduces a basic function of language, that of mediation. By naming an experience, one is able to achieve some distance from the immediacy of the event. One is able later to reproduce it in his mind and then reflect upon it. Man's capacity for symbolizing his experiences in a manner which is independent from the lived reality is what renders him capable of abstract thought. Able to reflect upon his experiences, Man becomes aware of himself and his world in a manner quite unlike that of unreflective animals. This achievement is attained only at a certain cost, however. The distance achieved by entrance into a mediating order of symbols is also an unbridgeable gap between the word and the thing. The truth that is available to one in the immediate realm of experience is lost when it is mediated by the realm of symbols.

This perspective provides a new understanding of "the primacy of the symbolic order." As mentioned earlier, entrance into the symbolic order means being shaped by it as well. The individual becomes caught up in an order of symbols and mediating signifiers which distances him from his immediately lived experience. The truth that is known by actual experience becomes further and further removed by symbolic reference. One, in fact, is alienated from his

truth as he is shaped by this independent order. The paradoxical result is that one becomes aware of himself and the world by allowing himself to be taken over by an independent order.

The effects of the child's acquisition of language and entry into the symbolic order may be said to be three-fold. In the first place, through its function as mediator between subject and object, language establishes the subject as a distinct entity. Able to symbolize reality by replacing the experience with a signifier, one is able as well to symbolize himself and gain distance from his own experience. He is thus able to locate himself as a subject distinct from his surroundings. Self is distinguished from not-self; one's interior is distinguished from exterior. Self is separated from others. This effect, labelled "the constitution of the subject," establishes awareness of self and representation in the discourse of language through use of the word "I."

Awareness of self brings with it the splitting of the subject. This, the second major consequence of the accession to language, is labelled by Lacan, the Spaltung. With the power to represent himself in a separate order of being, one is divided into a self of experience and a self of discourse. The subject of discourse is a product of the symbolic order. As one assimilates and is assimilated by the order of language, he increasingly identifies

with the subject of discourse, the "I" which is a stand-in for the self of experience in the order of signifiers. One is split, divided, because he is excluded from the order of signifiers while at the same time represented in it.

The register of the signifier is established because a signifier represents a subject for another signifier. It is the structure of all the formations of the unconscious and it also explains the primal division of the subject. Being produced in the place of the Other (the symbolic), the signifier causes the subject to arise there, but at the cost of becoming fixed. What was ready to speak there disappears, being no longer anything more than a signifier.

(Lacan quoted in Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 71)

The third major effect of the entry into the symbolic order is the birth of the unconscious. The substitution of the word for the thing creates a realm of experience separate from that of consciousness. The awareness of self gained through reflection is limited to the symbolic order. The level of existence of this self is limited to the conscious discourse. In the process described as primal repression, a language is born which can be distinguished from that of the conscious discourse. This unconscious discourse gives voice to the self that is lost through the alienating and mediating effects of the symbolic order. This process will be examined in great detail before too long. First there will be a presentation of Lacan's paradigm for the child's accession to language.

The Cotton-Reel Game

Much has been made over the story of the cotton-reel game recounted by Freud in the first few pages of Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920/1955). Yet another interpretation is to be added to the list as Lacan sees in this tale a model for the child's replacement of the lived experience by a symbolic signifier. The game is treated as paradigmatic of entry into the symbolic order. For this reason, Freud's original telling of the tale will be extensively quoted before commenting on the contents.

The account concerns Freud's grandson who was eighteen months old at the time. Freud was staying with the child's parents when he had the opportunity to repeatedly observe what he decided was the boy's first game, invented by the child himself.

The child was not at all precocious in his intellectual development. At the age of one and a half he could say only a few comprehensible words; he could also make use of a number of sounds which expressed a meaning intelligible to those around him. He was, however, on good terms with his parents and their one servant-girl, and tributes were paid to his being a "good boy." He did not disturb his parents at night, he conscientiously obeyed orders not to touch certain things or go into certain rooms, and above all he never cried when his mother left him for a few hours. At the same time, he was greatly attached to his mother, who had not only fed him herself but had also looked after him without any outside help. This good little boy, however, had an occasional disturbing habit of taking any small objects he could get hold of and throwing them away from him into a corner, under the bed, and so on, so that hunting for his toys and picking them up was often quite a business. As he did this he gave vent to a loud, long-drawn-out "o-o-o-o," accompanied by an expression of interest and satisfaction. His mother and the writer of the

present account were agreed in thinking that this was not a mere interjection but represented the German word "fort" [gone]. I eventually realized that it was a game and that the only use he made of any of his toys was to play "gone" with them. One day I made an observation which confirmed my view. The child had a wooden reel with a piece of string tied round it. It never occurred to him to pull it along the floor behind him, for instance, and play at its being a carriage. What he did was to hold the reel by the string and very skilfully throw it over the edge of his curtained cot, so that it disappeared into it, at the same time uttering his expressive "o-o-o-o." He then pulled the reel out of the cot again by the string and hailed its reappearance with a joyful "da" [there]. This, then, was the complete game--disappearance and return. As a rule one only witnessed its first act, which was repeated untiringly as a game in itself, though there is no doubt that the greater pleasure was attached to the second act. (pp. 14-5)

Freud's interpretation of the game focused on the child's renunciation of satisfaction through assumption of active mastery. He reasoned that since the child likely experienced his mother's departures as painful, by actively repeating the experience with the cotton-reel, he was able to achieve some compensation through mastery. This "compulsion to repeat" becomes evidence for the child learning to master his environment through speech.

In contrast, Lacan interprets the game as significant for its illustration of a child's accession to speech through the replacement of the lived experience of maternal presence and absence with a successive series of signifiers (cotton-reel; "o-o-o-o" and "da"; "fort" and "da"). Rather than, like Freud, viewing this as evidence for increased mastery, Lacan sees in it the alienating effects of the symbolic order:

The function of the exercise with this object [the cotton-reel] refers to an alienation, and not to some supposed mastery, which is difficult to imagine being increased in an endless repetition, whereas the endless repetition that is in question reveals the radical vacillation of the subject. (Lacan, 1973/1978, p. 239)

This alienation begins the instant the child replaces the experience with a signifier. In the attempt to master his deprivation, the child inadvertently generates desire:

The moment in which desire becomes human is also that in which the child is born into language.

We can now grasp in this the fact that in this moment the subject is not simply mastering his privation by assuming it, but that here he is raising his desire to a second power. For his action destroys the object that it causes to appear and disappear in the anticipating provocation of its absence and its presence. (Lacan, 1966/1977, p. 103)

The child's game originated from a state of passive privation, lack, absence. His mother, to whom he was greatly attached, was not present and he had no guarantee of her return. It may be hypothesized that the child experienced this fact subjectively as pain, despair, fear, anguish, panic--not separate affective states but one grossly overwhelming emotional experience which was distinguished only from its opposite: joy, satisfaction, pleasure, happiness, ecstasy which accompanied maternal presence. These states were experienced passively as changes in mood over which the child had no control. Some measure of control is achieved at some point in a fantasy situation, when the child imagines his mother leaving and then shortly thereafter returning. Her absence then presence is initially symbolized in the absence and return

of the cotton-reel, later in the "o-o-o-o" and the "da" of the child's verbalizations. It is through the attempt at mastery that the child accedes to language:

Through the word--already a presence made of absence--absence itself gives itself a name in that moment of origin whose perpetual recreation Freud's genius detected in the play of the child. And from this pair of sounds modulated on presence and absence...there is born the world of meaning of a particular language in which the world of things will come to be arranged.

(Lacan, 1966/1977, p. 65)

Language gives the child a semblance of control over his environment, the illusion of mastery. It is to be noted that it is within the field of the symbolic order that mastery is exercised, not the realm of the signified reality. The child controls the cotton-reel but not his mother's presence.

The game in which the child plays at making an object disappear from his sight in order to bring it back once more, and at the same time modulates the alternation of distinctive syllables, manifests the determination man receives from the symbolic order.

Man devotes his time to deploying the structural alternative in which presence and absence take their call from one another.

It is in the moment of their conjuncture, the zero point of desire, that the object comes under the seizure which, annulling its natural properties, subjects it to the conditions of the symbol. This game provides an illuminating insight into the individual's entry into language, which superimposes the determination of the signifier on that of the signified.

(Lacan quoted in Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 168)

The cost of the increased sense of mastery and determination is greater detachment and distance from the lived experience. The presence and absence of the mother are replaced by successive signifiers, each of which is

more autonomous and more distantly related to the experience itself. The first signifier was the disappearance and reappearance of the cotton-reel. At this level, the symbolization is not technically linguistic as verbalization has not occurred. Already, however, a signifier has replaced a signified creating a split in experience. The movement to language occurs when the two phonemes O and A ("o-o-o-o" and "da") come to symbolize the disappearance and reappearance of the reel. These two elements are only symbolically linked to the original experience of maternal presence and absence and have significance only in the child's personal symbolic code. The separation between conscious discourse and unconscious discourse is effected when the significance of O and A is replaced by the conventional signs "fort" and "da." At this level, the signifier is but a pale reflection of the original signified experience.

The Oedipus

In what appears to be a contradictory theoretical move, Lacan has provided another model for the child's entry into the symbolic order in his radical interpretation of the Oedipus complex. This stage of development is viewed as carrying the significance of the initial socialization and normalization of the child. The function of the Oedipus is described as that of sublimation--renouncing the desire to be everything to the mother and accepting limited reality by identifying with the law of the father.

The child realizes that he is the third member of a family and is still in the making. He accepts the laws and rules of society and culture as the means by which he will achieve his ultimate desire. By this process he becomes a true member of society.

Lacan has outlined three periods in the development of the Oedipus. The initial phase is characterized by a fusional relationship between mother and child. In this mode, the child wishes to be everything to his mother. He wishes to be what the mother desires and become indispensable to her. To this end he merges with the object of her desire and becomes a mere extension of her. As Lacan puts it, he is the desire of his mother's desire and, for Lacan, what the mother most desires is what he calls the phallus. So the child identifies with the phallus to be everything to the mother. Apart from this identification, he has no identity or subjectivity. He is a "lack," not yet a subject, not yet aware of himself as a distinct entity. He lacks a place in the symbolic exchange of society and his relationships are characterized by fusion.

The second phase initiates the advent to the symbolic through the vehicle of the father. If the mother indicates to the child that he can indeed satisfy her desire and be everything to her, then there is no push to move beyond a fusional relationship with the mother. But if the mother indicates, through her relationship with the child's

father, that the desire to be the phallus is not possible, then the child begins to move into the Oedipus. This is the introduction of the mediator to the two party relationship. The father, as the agent of the symbolic, is the representative of the laws of society in the Oedipal triangle. This function of the father is a symbolic one and different from the other forms that his relationship with the child may take. This metaphorical role Lacan terms "Name of the Father" or, more abstractly, "paternal metaphor." Its function is to introduce mediation and a law of limitation so the child will sublimate his unrealistic desires and begin the process that will make him a member of society. The action is one of deprivation in that the father deprives the child of the object of his desire and he deprives the mother of her desired object. Metaphorically, this is the enactment of the incest prohibition which many regard as fundamental to the structure of society. Developmentally, it initiates the interruption of the dual relationship by a third party, the other.

The third phase is the completion of this transition and the resolution of the Oedipus. If the father is recognized by the mother as a representative of "the Law," then the stage is set for the child's identification with the father. Symbolic castration occurs in the separation from the mother and the child identifies with the father who "has" the phallus. The child passes from the register

of "being" (being an all-powerful phallus) to the register of "having" (having a limited but legitimate desire). Successful resolution of the Oedipus conflict means the acceptance of castration, acceptance of lack, renouncing omnipotence, and accepting a law of limitation. By accepting the Law of the father, one acquires a Name and a place in the family constellation. He becomes a member of society and receives a signifier for himself in the symbolic order. He has taken a major step in becoming socialized and in so doing has entered the symbolic order of language, culture, and mediated relationships.

Resolution of the Oedipus depends on successful repression--the child's repression of his ultimate desire. This desire is represented in Lacanian theory by the concept of the phallus--not the penis, but an abstract signifier for the impossible identity, the "fata morgana" (Harold Fine, Personal Communication), complete satiation, total union with mother, the ultimate realization of desire. In the pre-Oedipal stage, the child wishes to be the phallus. In other words, so as to insure his mother's presence and complete support, the child seeks to be that which can best gratify her. He hopes to make himself indispensable. The child gives up this desire only if the mother, through her relationship with father, indicates that it is not possible for the child to be the phallus. This original desire is then repressed and replaced by

the wish to be like father as one who has the phallus.

The desire for mother is replaced by a symbol for it, the Name-of-the-Father, in the process known as primal repression.

Object (a)

As a model of the child's entry into the symbolic order, Lacan's interpretation of the Oedipus is to be understood in general terms as more metaphorical than literal. Lemaire points out that a child learns to speak well before the transition from dual to mediated relationships has already begun. Claude Stein, a Lacanian analyst, believes that a form of renunciation of desire for the mother has occurred before the onset of the Oedipus in the child's attempt at mastery over the frustration occasioned by his mother's absence (Cited in Lemaire, 1970/1977). Assuming a universality of the type of process described in the cotton-reel game, Stein believes that a precursor of the paternal metaphor is evident in the child's symbolization of the experiences of presence and absence or repletion and emptiness. Complete renunciation and replacement by a symbol may be said to occur at the time of the Oedipus when normalization and socialization occurs.

Renunciation of one's original desire can thus be said to occur the moment the child replaces his wish with a substitute signifier. Crystallized in a signifier, the child's desire becomes alienated in demand. The real

object of instinctual need is lost in the primal repression with the result that the subject continually seeks to fill the gap. The various objects pursued by the subject will all fail to satisfy as demand is never really concerned with the satisfactions for which it appears to call.

Because it is supported by the unconscious desire for the lost object, demand is eternal and not concerned with any specific object in a specific stable manner.

Lacan subsumes under the abstract signifier, object (a), the various replaceable objects which serve as a focus for desire. Object (a) is the lost object, that which in the advent to the symbolic order is lost to signification. "Object (a) is, then, the cause of desire, its irreparable absence engenders the eternity of desire and its incessant flight from one signifier to another" (Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 174). At an even more basic level, object (a) refers to the lack experienced in the first separation which gives rise to the desire to fill it. As the object which promises to fill this gap, it is inseparable from the phallus, the signifier of the impossible unity. In the symbolic order, object (a) is the representative of the object of lack which gives rise to the metonymic coursing and eternal movement, the insatiable striving of the human condition.

The creation of object (a) is inseparable from the constitution of the subject just as the movement from

lack to desire is the same as the child's accession to language:

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.... If it is true that the signifier is the first mark of the subject...then it is in the object to which the opposition is applied in act, the reel, that we must designate the subject. To this object we will later give the name it bears in the Lacanian algebra--the petit a. (Lacan, 1973/1978, p. 62)

Fort! Da! It is precisely in his solitude that the desire of the little child has already become the desire of another, of an alter ego who dominates him and whose object of desire is henceforth his own affliction.

Thus the symbol manifests itself first of all as the murder of the thing, and this death constitutes in the subject the eternalization of his desire. (Lacan, 1966/1977, p. 104)

This process is structured according to the metaphor of the Oedipus along the lines of the prototypical cotton-reel game. The advent to the symbolic order creates the subject as a distinct entity while splitting him between a self of discourse and a self of experience. This insures the eternalization of his desire in the creation of the object (a). It is this same process, seen from another perspective, which creates the unconscious in the action which is the subject of the next section, primal repression.

Primal Repression

Freud's Position

Freud had little to say about the origin of the unconscious; however, he is definite on the point that it

occurs sometime after birth--it is a created state--and the means by which it is created is that of repression:

For Freud, the first split between the unconscious and the system Pcs.-Cs. comes about through the action of infantile repression. The Freudian unconscious is constituted--even if the first stage of repression (primal repression) may be considered mythical; it is not an undifferentiated form of experience.

(Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967/1973, p. 475)

The Freudian texts distinguish two types of repression. Repression proper is known as secondary repression or after-expulsion. This is the more familiar form of repression in which drive derivatives are kept from consciousness by a double action: a rejection by the preconscious and an attraction from the unconscious. This conceptualization requires that the unconscious already exist as it is unsuitable for explaining its origin. This problem led Freud to describe a second type of repression, primal repression, which serves to establish the unconscious as a system.

Freud's principal statement on primal repression is as follows:

We have reason to assume that there is a primal repression, a first phase of repression, which consists in the psychical [ideational] representative of the instinct being denied entrance into the conscious. With this a fixation is established; the representative in question remains attached to it.

(Freud, 1915a/1957, p. 148)

Several points need to be acknowledged about this formulation. First, it is ideational representatives, the mental representatives of the drives that not only make up the primal unconscious but also constitute it. That is,

they are involved in both content and process as the contents of the primal unconscious and as the means by which it is created. Second, Laplanche points out that the phrase "representative of the instinct being denied entrance into the conscious" implies that the object of primal repression was never conscious. Since it was not unconscious either as the unconscious system was not yet in existence, "we have to admit a sort of mythical primitive state in which the differentiation of the preconscious and unconscious systems does not yet exist" (Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1977, p. 159). Third, with the "denial of entry into conscious," a fixation is established which afixes the instinct to the representative. Thereafter, that particular mental representative will be inscribed in the unconscious with its associated emotional charge. Last, the repression is accomplished by anticathexis only: "Anticathexis is the sole mechanism of primal repression" (Freud, 1915b/1957, p. 181). The constitutive energy of primal repression could be thought of as a repulsion from the preconscious-conscious system, except this system does not yet exist. Laplanche solves this difficulty by conceptualizing the anticathexis as originating in a primordial distinction:

All the energy of both the preconscious and the unconscious systems comes from this original cleavage, as one can imagine that a negatively charged particle of electricity and a positive one could be formed by splitting from a void of energy.

(Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1972, p. 160)

Primal repression is the first stage or type of repression which establishes the primal unconscious of ideational representatives. Secondary repression operates on mental derivatives that bear some association to the ideational representatives present in the primal unconscious:

The second stage of repression, repression proper, affects mental derivatives of the repressed representative, or such trains of thought as, originating elsewhere, have come into associative connection with it. On account of this association, these ideas experience the same fate as what was primally repressed. Repression proper, therefore, is actually an after-pressure. (Freud, 1915a/1957, p. 148)

The primal unconscious is to be distinguished from the unconscious created by secondary repression. That which is primally repressed is of a different quality than the objects of secondary repression. The primal unconscious is almost outside of the field of psychoanalysis in the sense that it lies before thought and before language. Its origin may be said to be mythical or beyond conception in that it stands at the very beginning of things. Freud devotes most of his attention to the repression which is more properly psychoanalytic, repression proper. Nonetheless, he was aware of the existence of another realm, contained within what he called the unconscious, but not quite proper to it: "The repressed does not cover everything that is unconscious. The unconscious has the wider compass: the repressed is a part of the unconscious" (Freud, 1915b/1957, p. 166).

Lacan has not elaborated a detailed description of

his conception of the process of primal repression. Nor has he commented in more than general terms on the connections between the origin of the unconscious and the acquisition of language. Nonetheless, his writings do establish a superstructure, a general framework from which inferences may be made. This theory has been articulated in the preceeding pages. In addition, many of his followers who may be call "Lacanian" have attempted explanations to establish connections within the superstructure. In particular, an effort has been made to reformulate the Freudian statements on this topic in terms of the Lacanian paradigm. In what follows, the Lacanian framework will again be described. Then the specific contributions of his followers will be detailed in such a manner as to highlight what may be called a Lacanian theory of the origin of the unconscious.

Lacan's Position

Lacan associates the origin of the unconscious with one's entry into the symbolic order. Language forms the condition for the unconscious. The unconscious is formed as a consequence of the mediating effects of replacing a symbol for a lived experience. One of these consequences Lacan terms the Spaltung, the necessary division between what one experiences and one's representation for that experience. More specifically, the accession to the symbolic order results in a division between what one is and

what one believes oneself to be, between a self of experience and a self of discourse, between an "I of existence" and an "I of meaning." It is this division which creates the unconscious:

"I am what I think," therefore I am: divide the "I am" of experience from the "I am" of meaning. This splitting must be taken as being principle, and as the first outline of primal repression, which, as we know, establishes the unconscious.

(Lacan quoted in Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 77)

Prior to the child's advent to the symbolic order of language, he may be said to have no unconscious. The first substitution of a signifier for an experience, however, creates a gulf which henceforth can not be bridged. In the cotton-reel game it is the replacement of the experience of the mother's presence and absence by the action of throwing away the reel which may be said to have engendered the unconscious. This action constitutes the primal unconscious and division between signifier and signified. The successive replacement of signifiers ("o-o-o-o" and "da" then "Fort" and "Da") occurred according to the mechanism of secondary repression, serving to further the division and distinction between the conscious and unconscious discourse.

The structure of the Oedipus describes the process of repression. The original desire for mother is repressed in the renunciation of desire and its replacement by the Name-of-the-Father, the paternal metaphor. The original demand is lost in the primal unconscious and is

replaced by various signifiers (object (a)) which only further alienates one's desire and enlarges the gulf of the original Spaltung. This conception places one's true desire on the side of the unconscious, that which is signified in all of one's signifiers. Thus, what remains of the most truthful part of a person is to be found in the repressed.

Laplanche's Position

Laplanche has detailed a two-stage process of primal repression which serves to introduce the subject into the symbolic universe and create the unconscious. The first stage is the introduction of division or difference in the child's subjective state. In this condition, symbolization in terms of opposition is possible but there is no fixed relation between signifier and signified:

At a first level of symbolization, the network or web of significant oppositions is cast onto the subjective universe; but no particular signified is caught in any single mesh. What is simply introduced, along with this system coextensive to experience, is pure difference, scansion, the bar: in the "fort-da" gesture, the edge of the bed.

(Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1972, pp. 161-2)

The second stage of this process fixes a connection between signifier and signified through the mechanism of metaphor. As described in an earlier part of this study, Laplanche makes use of Lacan's formula of metaphor to account for the process of repression. The second stage of the process described here is the substitution of the

S' for the S which occurs in metaphor. This action, Laplanche asserts, is what really creates the unconscious by connecting a specific signifier with a particular experience. Elementary signifiers become caught on specific meshes of the net introduced in this first movement. This has the effect of fixing the signified instinct to key signifiers. With this fixation, the instinctual world is anchored to the symbolic world and external reality is ordered into stable dichotomies.

Laplanche arrived at this particular conceptualization while engaged in the attempt to account for the existence of any degree of dependable relationship between the system of signifiers and the system of the signified. His conception of primal repression allows him to posit that the existence of elementary signifying chains create a ballast which fixes at given points the free-flowing primary process world of the signified to the stable symbolic world of the signifier. Lemaire has demonstrated with considerable discussion that Lacan is opposed to this notion of a fixed relation between signifier and signified at any level (1970/1977, pp. 96-131). At the same time, however, he has not proposed an alternative account of the phenomenon that Laplanche was trying to explain.

Leclaire's Position

Leclaire indicated his disagreement with Laplanche's conception of primal repression in a footnote contained

in the article expousing Laplanche's views (Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1972). Leclaire views primal repression as occurring in the first stage of Laplanche's conception and thus as not structured like metaphor. Laplanche maintains that both stages are necessary and related to Freud's distinction between the two types of repression. This is not technically correct since Laplanche views both stages as necessary to primal repression. A more understandable explanation would be that it allows him to account for primal repression with his conception of metaphor.

Leclaire's view, then, has the unconscious established with the first movement, the introduction of difference, rather than later with the substitution of signifiers. This does conform more closely with Freud's distinction since secondary repression requires that the unconscious already exist. Lemaire asserts that Leclaire's position puts him out of the reach of Lacan's criticisms as there is no necessary fixation of the signifier to the signified. She argues that if primal repression consists only of the establishment of a parallelism between opposed signifiers and differentiated experience, then technically there is no fixing of signifier to signified. Secondary repression, in substituting one signifier for a previous signifier is just creating one of many possible paths by which the repressed may return. She illustrates with an example:

If O and A are the first opposed signifiers to fill in the instinctual béance (gap), and if Fort and Da are the S' substituted for the previous S by secondary repression, then the instinctual appeal of renewed maternal presence could make its way into consciousness by way of the Fort as easily as by the Da, since, in Leclaire's view, O is not strictly bound to the instinct of lack and A is not strictly bound to the appeal for presence. (Lemaire, 1970/1977, pp. 125-6)

What this example seems to ignore is that if O and A are the first opposed signifiers which come to represent maternal presence and absence, then a fixation has occurred even if it is not structured rigidly as one signifier to one side of the opposition. The association of the lived experiences with the pair of signifiers creates a fixation of sorts, establishing a relation between signifier and signified. Thus, Lemaire's exemption of Leclaire from Lacan's criticisms seems unjustified.

In another part of the same article, Leclaire clarifies his position on the process by means of which a signifier becomes associated with a signified. Recalling that according to Freud it is through a process of fixation to a representative that the drive is introduced into and is present in the unconscious, Leclaire summarizes his understanding of the birth of the unconscious as resulting from the "capture of drive energy in the web of the signifier." In the case of Philippe, the phrase "I'm thirsty" became a signifier for the drive because it concretized in the realm of the symbolic order an experience which was subjectively felt in the realm of the instinctual drive.

Leclaire introduces an intriguing but unelaborated explanation for why particular signifiers happen to be singled out to be repressed and constitute elementary signifiers of the primal unconscious. The phrase "I'm thirsty" was significant not only because it signified Philippe's desire to drink deeply of another in a dual, fusional way, but, as noted earlier, it also connoted in an ambiguous manner Lili's thirst which was teasingly directed towards Philippe. This thirst, which Lili usually directed towards her husband, has the significance of a sexual desire which not only introduces a mediated, Oedipal situation but which also adds an erotic quality to the original mother-child relation. This suggests that those signifiers which constitute the elementary unconscious are ones which intersect and connote both pre-Oedipal relations of dependence and Oedipal relations of sexuality. This would place primal repression as occurring during the Oedipal transition. Note the parallel to Lacan's depiction of the birth of the unconscious as occurring in the child's accession to language modeled after the structure of the Oedipal complex.

Addressing himself to the question of the energy specific to the unconscious, Leclaire asserts that it is the death drive which gives birth to the unconscious:

What is the specific energy allowing the anti-cathexis necessary to primal repression, the true "creator of the unconscious"?...The specific energy is the fact of the death-drive precisely in so far as it is manifest

as a radical and immobile force, or, better yet, as the opposite of a force, a void, for example, which is only related to libidinal drives in the sense that it founds them. (Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1972, p. 170)

This proposition can best be understood by translating energetic terms into those of structure. Leclaire does this in the aforementioned quotation speaking of the death drive as a void. The Lacanian thesis proposed that before he has acceded to language, the child is but a lack, a blank. It is only with his accession that he becomes a subject, a distinct entity, because this entity is a creation of the symbolic order. What lies before the acquisition of language and a name thus may be compared with a void, pure emptiness.

Just as the child with the cotton-reel game begins to acquire a sense of determination, of structure, and mastery of his world, so it is that with the acquisition of language the void known as the death drive is masked, covered over, replaced by a signifier.

Doubtless we are able to understand that from the day "I'm thirsty" or simply "Choif" could replace this inarticulate scream, Philippe began to master something in the order of the ineffable. At the same time as he took on in this way a fragment of language, his primary unconscious was born together with this first masking of the death drive.

(Laplanche & Leclaire, 1966/1972, p. 169)

It is this which allows Leclaire to state that the representatives of the drive which constitute the primal unconscious are above all representatives of the death drive. They are the signifiers which first fill in the

void which then constitutes the subject as a structure, a presence in contrast to an absence. It is representatives of these signifiers, the signifiers of a signified that are repressed according to the mechanism of secondary repression. It is around these secondary signifiers that what is called desire comes to be structured. It is these secondary signifiers which together make up language and, more generally, the symbolic order itself.

Stein's Position

A point of view on primal repression which appears agreeable with all of those just presented is that of Claude Stein as it is described in Lemaire's book. It was noted previously that Stein objected to the notion that the unconscious is structured by the Oedipus only after it has been formed and this is according to the mechanism of metaphor (i.e. secondary repression). Primal repression, according to Stein, is originally structured around the "phantasy of the primal scene":

The phantasy of the primal scene is the imprint, as it were, upon which the Oedipus will be structured. Precipitated into the unconscious by primal repression, this phantasy can be named by the Name-of-the-Father, as it is none other than the phantasy of the desire of the mother.

(Stein quoted in Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 89)

According to this view, primal repression occurs with the symbolization of the child's experience of desire for his mother. Subjectively this is experienced as either repletion or emptiness, as absence or presence. In the

example of the child with the cotton-reel game, these two experiential states were replaced by signifiers which served to designate the experience. The elementary structure of the unconscious, then, is found in a pair of linguistic elements denoting positive and negative accomplishment of desire. Later, the Oedipus complex will complete the subject's entry into the symbolic order.

Stein holds that the elementary unconscious is composed of phonemes or groups of phonemes. These later go together to make up words and then phantasies which exist in unconscious status but are accessible to analysis. For the most part, the elementary unconscious is radically inaccessible. Lemaire states that Leclaire is in essential agreement with Stein on these points with one addition. Leclaire asserts that the first representatives of the instinct are not only phonemes but may be any experience of sensory difference: "the language elements are reduplicated by visual, coenaesthetic, tactile and olfactory impressions in the form of sensory experiences of difference" (Leclaire quoted in Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 143). These impressions of sensory difference are fixed or inscribed in the unconscious in the same manner in which the phonemes are repressed and they carry the same initial significance concerning the realization of desire.

Lemaire's Position

To complete the list of contributors to the Lacanian theory of primal repression, Lemaire's conception will now be described. While addressing the issue of primal repression, Lemaire is concerned with the distinction between the conscious discourse and the unconscious discourse. She agrees with the thesis outlined by Stein whereby the instinctual experience is replaced by elementary phonemes in primal repression. The phonemes O and A thus assume a personal significance for the child related to realization of desire for the mother. At the same time, Lemaire points out, these phonemes relate to the concepts "gone" (Fort) and "there" (Da) in the child's developing conscious language system. When the child first starts to learn language, therefore, it is possible to observe both a personal, autistic language as well as a conventional, consensual language:

I think for my part that, at the source of language, signifiers with a strictly personal content reflecting the profound psychical experience of the young child mingle with signifiers completely free of any psychical or traumatic taint. (Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 105)

With the advent of secondary repression, the first truly linguistic signifiers are installed in the unconscious. With each repression, the repressed signifier may be both conscious and unconscious. It is conscious in the sense that it is a term in conventional language. It is unconscious in its personal significance as it relates

to the individual's own language of desire. Thus with each fixation of a signifier in the unconscious, simultaneously the "same" signifier is inscribed in consciousness. The two signifiers differ radically in function although superficially they may appear the same. Lemaire would contend, thus, that even at the level of primal repression, a distinction exists between the conscious discourse and the unconscious discourse. The former consists of the means by which an individual installs himself in the symbolic order as a subject. The latter speaks the truth of the individual in the language of desire.

Summary

Before closing this section a summary in general terms of the preceeding is in order. This summary may be said to constitute a Lacanian theory of the origin of the unconscious. There will be some points with which Lacan would surely differ, yet the conception as a whole, having been created within the Lacanian camp, is sufficiently steeped in the Lacanian paradigm as to warrant the label.

The origin of the unconscious is to be found in the child's entry into the symbolic order as depicted in his acquisition of language. It is this process which establishes the subject as a distinct entity and splits the individual into a self of experience and a self of the symbolic order. This is the same process which creates the unconscious through the mechanism of primal repression.

Although there are differing notions as to what precisely constitutes primal repression, its essence lies in the child making a connection or association between a lived experience of desire and a symbolic signifier for that experience. As more and more emphasis is placed on the signifiers, the signified experience is lost--repressed, as it were, in the unconscious.

The elementary or primal unconscious is thought to be composed of phonemes or sensory impressions which possess considerable significance in the individual's language of desire. These elementary signifiers are organized according to a basic binary logic relating to the successful or unsuccessful realization of desire. With the advent of secondary repression when representatives of these elementary signifiers are repressed, additional levels of unconscious structure are created with multiple intersections and associative connections. This "dynamic unconscious" is composed of chains of signification which are accessible to analysis. Investigation reveals "a kind of complex network of signifiers through whose intermediary desire is alienated and diverted into eternal sublimations" (Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 173). The primal unconscious, for the most part, is inaccessible.

The Lacanian theory of primal repression falls within the Freudian field and specifies, to a degree much greater than Freud, the process leading to the creation of

the unconscious. While Freud only suggests that a state exists prior to the separation of the preconscious and the unconscious systems, the Lacanians definitively assert that the unconscious does not exist before the child's advent to language. What Freud described as ideational representatives of the instinct, the Lacanians translate as elementary signifiers of the unconscious. The fixation which joins the instinct to the Freudian terminology is the Lacanian connection between the signifier and the signified. And Freud's anticathexis which energizes primal repression becomes the force of the death drive or void which lies before structuralization. In the next chapter some implications of these and other Lacanian conclusions will be examined.

CHAPTER III

THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

The Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real

Lacan has provided another framework within which it will be necessary to situate the unconscious in his ontological categories of the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real. These three orders of being provide a vantage point for examining the subject structurally, in a manner different from that allowed by a functional or dynamic point of view. The Symbolic order has already been introduced. This is the realm governed by language or, more particularly, signifiers in which the subject acquires an identity and relations to his surrounding culture.

The Symbolic order is the domain of psychoanalysis:

The concepts of psychoanalysis are to be grasped in a field of Language, and its domain extends to the point that a function used as an apparatus of display, a mirage of consciousness, a segment of the body or of its image, a social phenomenon, a metamorphosis of the symbols themselves can serve as signifying material for what the unconscious subject has to signify.

This is the essential order in which psychoanalysis is situated, and I shall call it henceforth the Symbolic order. (Lacan quoted in Wilden, 1968, p. 124)

The Real is the largest category, comprising all that is real for the subject. It is the most difficult to define as it may never be directly experienced: "The experience of the Real presupposes the simultaneous use of two correlative functions, the Imaginary function and

the Symbolic function" (Leclaire quoted in Wilden, 1968, p. 92). Its relation to the other two orders will be addressed further on.

The topic of central concern at this point is the third order, the Imaginary. This register is separate from and yet related to the two other orders of being. It is a subset of the Symbolic and yet is qualitatively different in form and structure. The same may be said for its relation to the Real. Lacan uses the term "Imaginary" in a specific and technical sense. It is not simply the opposite of what is real but is related to the realm of images. The Imaginary is a preverbal register of specific spatial and visual dimensions:

The Imaginary is a world of bodies and organs which lacks a phenomenological center and a privileged point of view,...whose essence lies in the frequent shifts of the subject from one fixed position to another,...a uniquely determinate configuration of space--one not yet organized around the individuation of my own personal body, or differentiated hierarchically according to the perspectives of my own central point of view--yet which nonetheless swarms with bodies and forms intuited in a different way, whose fundamental property is, it would seem, to be visible without their visibility being the result of the act of any particular observer. (Jameson, 1977, pp. 354-5)

This spatial field is a very subjective space without a ground. The Imaginary is subjective in the sense that it is in this realm that the child is submerged before acceding to the objective, shared reality of the Symbolic. In this field one is captivated by the image in a dual relationship without recourse to mediation. The

dual relationship of the Imaginary is based upon an identification with the image of a counterpart (a double). This imaginary relation is what characterizes relationships contracted by the ego.

The foregoing should become clearer with additional discussion. A difficulty involved in describing the Imaginary realm lies in the fact that as it is constituted prior to the acquisition of language, verbal concepts are particularly inadequate for delineating its range. The understanding of this Lacanian concept relies heavily upon an intuitive appreciation for its essence. Thus, speaking of it in terms designed to bring out its visual and spatial qualities is deliberate in hopes of producing a resonance within the reader relating to his own preverbal experience. It is in this spirit that the following definition is proffered.

That is Imaginary which, like shadows, has no existence of its own, and yet whose absence, in the light of life, cannot be conceived; that which, without power or distinction inundates singularity and thus escapes any truly rational grasp. That is Imaginary which is irremediably opposed or which is indistinctly confused, without any dialectical movement; the dream is Imaginary...just as long as it is not interpreted.... No symbol can do without Imaginary support.

(Leclaire quoted in Wilden, 1968, p. 92)

The Mirror Phase and Birth of the Ego

Another approach to an understanding of the Imaginary may be sought in an investigation of its origins. According to Lacanian theory, entrance into the Imaginary

and the constitution of the ego are both thought to occur during the phase of development identified by Lacan as the mirror phase. The mirror phase is defined in Laplanche and Pontalis' The Language of Psychoanalysis as:

According to Jacques Lacan, a phase in the constitution of the human individual located between the ages of six and eighteen months. Though still in a state of powerlessness and motor incoordination, the infant anticipates on an imaginary plane the apprehension and mastery of its bodily unity. This imaginary unification comes about by means of identification with the image of the counterpart as total Gestalt: it is exemplified concretely by the experience in which the child perceives its own reflection in a mirror.

The mirror phase is said to constitute the matrix and first outline of what is to become the ego.

(1967/1973, pp. 250-1)

The mirror phase corresponds roughly, from a developmental point of view, with what Freud called the onset of primary narcissism. The psychological import of this occurrence is the anticipation of unification concurrent with the ongoing experience of subjective fragmentation. The process is thought to occur as follows.

The human infant is born before there is complete maturation of his neuromuscular systems, thus the first few months of life are characterized by motor incoordination and physical helplessness. This relative immaturity in the motor sphere is in contrast to the infant's already developed capacity to recognize forms and make field-form differentiations. The mirror phase is the term used to designate the moment when the infant perceives in the image of his mother or friend, or in his own mirror image, a form

which suggests his own potential unity. The infant is thought to identify with this image, resulting in the simultaneous formation and alienation of the self. This is explained by the contrast between the "jubilant" recognition of the self as "out there" and the internal subjective experience of oneself as fragmented and chaotic. The first appearance of a self, thus, is experienced as external to oneself and in contrast to one's subjective state. This paradox initiates a lifelong dialectic of identity between alienation and subjectivity. The ambivalent status of this achievement is captured by Evans:

While the formation of the self and the phenomenon of self-consciousness unify the subject in respect to his former state (the autoerotic stage of le corps morcelé or the fragmented body), they also split the subject in the moment of its own specular capture. (1979, p. 395)

The mirror phase marks the entry of the infant into the Imaginary order as well as the beginning of the constitution of the self. This first crystallization of a self is based upon an image perceived as external to the subject. Thus, it is said that the first constitution of the self is as "an other." It is based on a fundamental misrecognition that unity (ergo realization of desire) can be achieved "out there." The relationships initiated by the mirror phase are essentially narcissistic. Although two parties are involved (child and image), no differentiation is made between them, thus the significance of the mirror metaphor.

The initial constitution of the self as exterior to itself and based upon a misrecognition initiates a line of development of selfhood which is essentially alienating. The self first constellated in the mirror phase as ego becomes more properly human in the subject that is constituted by the Symbolic, yet the fundamental character of fictitiousness remains. Lacan's conception of ego is in marked contrast to that of ego psychologists who Lacan unremittingly attacks. In contrast to the view of ego as an agent of mastery, integration, synthesis, and adaptation, Lacan has revived a far more worrisome conception of the ego which is implicit in Freud's papers on narcissism and on mourning and melancholia. This perspective views the ego as derived from a dialectic of narcissistic identifications with external images, perpetually threatened by its own otherness to itself. Lacan views the ego mastery that ego psychologists promote as the mastery in a dialectic of master and slave. The implications of this view are enormous. Just in the realm of analytic practice, the ego must be profoundly mistrusted because it is unable to distinguish the person's own desires from the desires of others. As Turkle puts it, "The ego is the carrier of the neurosis and allying with the ego is like consorting with the enemy" (1978, p. 54).

The alienation of the self occurs through an

identification with an external "other." This captivation by an image subjects one to control by the other. Lemaire writes, "Every human action, even the most altruistic, ultimately derives from a demand for recognition by the other, from a wish for self-recognition in some form or other" (1970/1977, p. 180). As one is fashioned in reference to another and obliged to wait for recognition from the other, the entire range of aggressive, violent behaviors characteristic of Man can be seen as due to one's subjugation to the other.

The Subject

Whereas the ego is said to be constituted in the Imaginary, the carrier of selfhood indigenous to the Symbolic is the subject:

The ego is not the subject, it is closer to the persona, to appearance, to a role than to consciousness or subjectivity. The ego is situated on the side of the Imaginary, whereas subjectivity is situated on the side of the symbolic. The ego is the site of the subject's imaginary identifications.

(Leclaire quoted in Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 72)

During the passage through the Oedipus when the child officially accedes to the Symbolic, the secondary identification with the parent of the same sex appears to free the child from the dualistic relations by introducing mediation. In a sense, this is true as the subject gains a degree of freedom. Yet, at the same time, this step only serves to solidify the essential alienation of the self as it now seeks the realization of its desire in forms even further

removed from the source, but more agreeable and acceptable to society. The identification of the self with the subject of the Symbolic furthers the loss of his individual truth as he is assimilated by the larger order.

This process was described earlier as the Spaltung which initiates a split in the constitution of self. Progressive identifications of the individual with subjects of the Symbolic, Lacan terms "Splitting," which signifies the successive splintering of the self which occurs when one fashions oneself for another. One identifies with the signifier rather than the signified. The subject in the Symbolic is the "I" which is a stand-in for the self of experience. But this subject is not substantial, it is only a signifier within a realm of signifiers, a locus in a network of symbols:

The subject is a locus, the locus of a set of conditions, the place in which these conditions are knotted together and actualized. With the dissolution of the usually accepted unities of discourse--the subject, the object of study, the book, the life--and the rewriting of history as a discursive dispersion, the subject becomes merely an empty place in the discourse which may be indifferently adopted by a locutor. The subject, then, is not defined in empirical terms, either psychological, physiological, behavioral or other, but rather is a requirement of the discourse, the place, as it were, left vacant by the discourse, a place which may be occupied by any being capable of saying I. (Funt, 1973, p. 393)

The implications of this view are profound. With the progressive alienation of the self and the misrecognitions of signifier for signified, one becomes convinced of the reality of what is essentially an illusion. What one

takes to be real is but a set of symbols and what one takes to be one's essence is but an empty place in the discourse. In this view it is the Symbolic order that is primary, not the integrity of the individual. The subject he takes himself to be is not really even a bona fide element in the Symbolic. For the subject is represented by signifiers and the signifier is what represents the subject for another signifier:

A signifier is that which represents a subject. For whom?--not for another subject, but for another signifier. In order to illustrate this axiom, suppose that in a desert you find a stone covered with hieroglyphics. You do not doubt for a moment that, behind them, there was a subject who wrote them. But it is an error to believe that each signifier is addressed to you--this is proved by the fact that you cannot understand any of it. On the other hand you define them as signifiers, by the fact that you are sure that each of these signifiers is related to each of the others. And it is this that is at issue with the relation between the subject and the field of the Other.

(Lacan, 1973/1978, pp. 198-9)

Negation

What supports the individual in his tenacious hold on the illusions of autonomy and self-determination? The answer is what Lacan calls "the most constant attribute of the ego," Verneinung or negation. Verneinung is a manifest form of the misrecognition which begins in the mirror stage leading to the constitution of the ego and the progressive alienation of the subject. It continues as an essential form of the ego's function, the systematic denial of reality:

What we have been able to observe is the privileged way in which a person expresses himself as the ego; it is precisely this--Verneinung, or denial....

Our view is that the essential function of the ego is very nearly that systematic refusal to acknowledge reality which French analysts refer to in talking about the psychoses. (Lacan, 1953, pp. 11-2)

Verneinung involves a negation of experience, a denial of the manifest reality. Recalling the earlier discussion of primal repression, it is precisely in this action of negation--the denial of the lived experience of maternal presence and absence--that gives rise to the initial primal repression and substitution of a signifier for a signified experience. Quoting A. deWaelhens on primal repression, it is:

The act whereby the subject--or, to be more precise, he who will by this act constitute himself as "subject"--withdraws from the immediacy of a lived experience by giving it a substitute which it is not, no more than the subject is the lived experience, and which will constitute the real as the real, the symbolic as autonomous and the subject as subjectivity.

(Quoted in Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 85)

Primal repression, thus, becomes possible only with the subject negating himself and the experience only to replace them with a substitute. The same action occurs during the mirror phase when the infant negates his subjective experience in favor of an external substitute. In this sense, the significance of the mirror stage for the development of self is the same as that of the cotton-reel game for the relation of self to other. They are descriptions of the same process from different points of view.

The history of the individual is viewed by Lacanians as a series of negations and replacements of one's conception of self and the objects of one's desire (object (a)). The negation of one signifier of self and its replacement by another describes the process of repression which gives form to the subject's unconscious. This same process is described as splitting, the alienation of one's truth. It is for this reason that Lacanians view truth as residing in the unconscious rather than in the alienating signifiers which further distance one from his truth. It is in this sense that "the unconscious is what the 'I' was in the successive moments of the history of its division" (Lemaire, 1970/1977, p. 124). The unconscious is that part of myself which was negated in my individuation. The unconscious is not what I hold myself to be, but the Other whose voice is heard as the discourse of the Other. As Freud put it,

All acts and manifestations which I notice in myself and do not know how to link up with the rest of my mental life must be judged as if they belonged to someone else: they are to be explained by a mental life ascribed to this other period.

(Freud, 1915b/1957, p. 169)

The Three Orders of Being

By this rather circuitous route, the discussion returns again to Lacan's three registers of being. The question raised at the beginning of this section had to do with where to place the unconscious within this theoretical breakdown of reality. Unfortunately, the

disappointing answer seems to be that there is no really satisfactory straightforward way in which to respond to this question as the unconscious as formulated by Lacan does not neatly fall into any one of the three categories. It is not the Real, Imaginary, or Symbolic--in fact, in a certain respect, it is all three. Perhaps because Lacan has been nonspecific and ambiguous in his use of this concept, elements of all three orders of being may be seen in the Lacanian unconscious. Each of these orders will again be reviewed, from a more structural vantage point this time, and attention will be paid to their contribution to the various conceptualizations of the Lacanian unconscious.

The Real. The Real is a paradoxical order that is defined as being both that which is left over when one eliminates the Symbolic and the Imaginary as well as being the class which contains both the Symbolic and the Imaginary. It is everything that is real to the individual yet it can not be directly experienced. This paradoxical nature results from its being ontologically beyond verbal categories; that is to say, the Real has an expanse beyond that of the Symbolic while at the same time all of the Symbolic partakes of the Real. In this sense, the Real is a sort of basic unit of reality, an essence which is present in all things but which cannot be isolated or symbolized. The Real is also spoken of as that which is

not symbolized, as though it exists in potentia, being capable of symbolization under the right circumstances.

The child presumably exists in the Real before the accession to the Imaginary, yet at this level of reality, there is no individual consciousness yet sufficiently differentiated so as to be able to apprehend the Real. A form of awareness comes with the Imaginary but genuine reflectiveness is available only with the Symbolic. Although differences occur at the level of the Real, there is not sufficient differentiation nor the capacity for representation at this level to permit direct apprehension. Thus the Real can only be intuited as that which forms the ground for the Symbolic and Imaginary.

The Real is evident in those conceptualizations of the unconscious which focus on it as a negative category, that which is unsymbolized. This aspect of the unconscious is not individual and specific to the person except when differences between individuals are compared. More generally, this unconscious is more foreign, "beyond our ken," far removed from the repressed dynamic unconscious of psychoanalysis. Nonetheless, allusions to this quality of unconsciousness may be found in both Freudian conceptualizations as well as those peculiar to the Lacanian group.

The Imaginary. The Symbolic and the Imaginary are both subsets of the Real in the sense that they are comprised of that which is Real. Their purview is more limited than the Real yet they are both more highly organized than the Real. The Imaginary is an aspect of the Symbolic, a subset in the sense that it is a form of symbolization. It is organized differently from that which is properly called the Symbolic thus differs in form and relation.

The Imaginary is the realm of dawning awareness where one is aware of difference but not yet capable of a privileged point of view. This world is peopled by self-objects in dual, mirroring relationships where similarity is interpreted as identity and difference is viewed as opposition. The logic peculiar to this realm is a bipolar, either/or categorization where one is either for you or against you. The metaphor of container and contained is particularly apt for this domain as the fundamental relationship is one of outside to inside.

According to Lacanian theory, the individual first enters this realm through the mirror phase when a specular identification is made with the image of another. The presence of the Imaginary is first evident in the child's playing with the relationship between presence and absence as well as a fascination with mirror-images (Hall, 1972). The Imaginary gives form to the first constellation of a

self, the ego. This ego marks the initial alienation of the essential truth of the individual as expressed in the pristine unity present before the discovery of difference. When the child discovers that a difference exists between self and world, in the Imaginary this becomes an opposition. Developmentally, the mirror phase appears to be a necessary phase of symmetrical complementarity in the relationship between mother and child. From the perspective of the Symbolic, however, the dual relationship of the Imaginary is constricting and illusory because of the lack of mediation or reference to a ground.

Regarding the relation of the Imaginary to the unconscious, descriptions of Imaginary space are highly congruent with the dimensions of the dream, the vision, the hallucination, and other classic unconscious phenomena. Although he does not specifically state it, it appears that Lacan would concur with placing the ontological status of the dream and other nonconscious, illogical mental products within the field of the Imaginary. Yet it must be remembered that, as Freud said, the dream is not the unconscious. Thus, these so-called products or manifestations of the unconscious do not necessarily reside in the unconscious. Furthermore, they do not imply that the Imaginary order is the unconscious.

The Imaginary may be said to be the unconscious only in the sense that it comprises an initial, primordial

symbolization of reality. As this pattern is replaced by the more properly Symbolic symbolization in normal development, the Imaginary experience may be lost to the individual except under nonwaking conditions. These primal valorizations of reality (primary structures) which enlightened our first experiences in this world as a subject are replaced, repressed by more differentiated, objective, neutral categories. The higher degree of structuralization in the Symbolic reorganizes the elements which went in to make the Imaginary which becomes lost to awareness and no longer conscious.

The Symbolic. The child properly enters the Symbolic order in the Oedipus transition which provides mediation to the dual relationship and adds another dimension to the two dimensional perspective of the Imaginary. Objects are viewed more objectively and "realistically." One acquires a privileged point of view and place in the symbolic matrix. No longer are there only categories of binary opposition, but shades of grey become perceptible. Either/or is transformed into both-and.

The Symbolic is the realm of the signifier and, as was explained earlier, where there is a signifier there must somewhere be a signified. It is in this sense that the Symbolic is related to the unconscious, as signifiers which become part of the unconscious discourse or as the signified to which the signifiers allude. The unconscious

as a discourse of the Other is an unconscious of the Symbolic as comprised of previous signifiers, all the "I"s that one took himself to be in the course of his history. The Freudian dynamic unconscious of the repressed is also properly a Symbolic unconscious as it is composed of representatives which carried a conscious significance prior to their repression. All representations of the unconscious as a discourse or realm of language necessarily imply an interpretation in terms of the Symbolic. It is these forms of the unconscious that are the most familiar as their structure parallels that of the everyday world.

Analog and Digital

Anthony Wilden (1972) has provided an interesting perspective on the Lacanian theory of development. Taking a model from communications theory, the analog-digital relation, Wilden maps out the child's acquisition of language as a transition between two different forms of communication. Briefly, prior to the accession to the Symbolic the child is immersed in purely analog relations. The acquisition of language marks the emergence of a new patterning of reality, the digital. Full accession to the Symbolic involves integrating both modes in a balanced relation. The use of this model permits one to interpret the phenomena related to the acquisition of language--the constitution of the subject, the Spaltung, primal

repression--in terms different from those used by Lacan. Moving out of the Lacanian paradigm generates perspective and an appreciation of the general utility of the theory.

The Model

The analog-digital distinction was first recognized in the field of cybernetics. It has recently been found to be particularly apt for describing different forms of communication. The distinction is based on a classification of types of computers. At this point in history, there are only two fundamental classes of computers. No matter what the make or model, a computer will be either an analog or a digital computer. An analog computer computes via an analog between real, physical, continuous qualities and another set of variables (Wilden, 1972, p. 155). Any form of measuring which employs continuous functions can be called analog--e.g. a slide rule or a clock. A digital computer computes by discrete steps and employs discontinuous scales. Examples are a calculator, an adding machine, an abacus, and one's fingers. These two different methods of calculation give rise to significant differences in logical form.

Since the analog computer uses continuous linear quantities to represent other quantities, there are no gaps in the system. The digital, on the other hand, depends on gaps to distinguish its discrete steps, thus, they are essential to the system. Likewise, the analog

computer has no true zero whereas the zero point is essential to the digital. Other differences include the absence of negative quantities in the analog whereas negative quantities are possible in the digital. Analog representations are relatively imprecise; digital representations are precise. The digital computer operates by its on/off properties which are based on a logic of "either/or." The analog computer, employing only positive, continuous quantities and having no zero, operates according to a logic of "more or less."

These differences in logical form result in consequent differences in function. Wilden describes the prime distinction between the function of the digital and that of the analog as the differences between denotation and connotation (1972, p. 164). Human beings use the functions of both modes in communicating with others. The digital mode is denotative and involves the sharing of facts and information. The analog mode is connotative, suggestive, and speaks more to relationship, the process rather than the content. Language and speech is largely digital; verbalization and symbolization involve the digitalization of the analog. Without the digital, one could not talk about the analog. Translation between both modes is both necessary and essential in most types of human communication. Since they are of different logical types, transition between modes results in certain costs

and benefits. Translating from analog to digital involves a gain in information but a loss of meaning whereas the opposite process has a reverse effect (Wilden, 1972, p. 168).

Emergence of the Digital

Wilden asserts that we are not born with the facility to use digital communication but that it is a process which emerges over time. The emergence of the digital in the development of the child is regarded as the same as the process by which the child learns to speak the language of the culture. The analog mode is thought to be innate, the communication form of nature and, thus, the "natural" language of Man. In the growth process the child learns to represent on another level his analog relationships and the digital mode is born. A particular analog difference is singled out, distinguished from all the rest, and then re-presented in digital form in terms of an opposition. This introduction of a second level to communication which was bound to concrete, stimulus-bound forms frees the subject from the immediate and allows him to communicate about his communication. A second reality is now available, made up of digital signs which speak about but are not of the analog continuum. This process describes the entry into the Symbolic order via the Imaginary. Wilden describes it in terms of Freud's example of the cotton-reel game.

Some time prior to the advent of the cotton-reel

game, the child discovers difference. Lacan places this discovery at birth with the first separation from the mother. Subsequent separations serve to reinforce this elemental distinction between presence and absence. At this level, this distinction is not yet an opposition, as Wilden is quick to point out. The child discovers opposition only at the advent of the mirror stage, so prior to that, presence and absence are only a binary relation in the analog continuum. This analog difference involves no distinct boundaries, rather it is a distinction of logical types. In other words, they are not opposed, for absence is like a "figure" on the "ground" of presence. Furthermore, as different logical types, presence and absence are not comparable; thus, either may assume figural status at different times.

What is introduced here is a distinction between two kinds of difference. Analog differences are differences in magnitude, frequency, distribution, pattern, or organization. Digital differences are either distinctions or oppositions composed of discrete elements with well-defined boundaries (Wilden, 1972, p. 169). To be distinguished or opposed, analog differences must first be digitalized in a language of discrete elements. In the case of the child playing with the cotton-reel, the analog difference of presence and absence is expressed initially in the action of throwing away the toy. At this stage,

digitalization has not occurred, the action representing the difference is still within the analog continuum. It is not until the "o-o-o-o" and "da" are paired with the action of throwing away that the first stages of a digital mode begin to emerge.

The appearance of the phonemes O and A in parallel with the relation of presence and absence represents a transition from an analog mode of communication to a digital mode. The phonemes are not truly digital in that the relationship between them is arbitrary and not formally that of an opposition. Yet they do re-present on another level the analogical difference in terms of a discrete distinction. The O and the A thus represent the emergence of the discrete element. They form an analogous connection with the presence-absence difference and thus represent a step in the emergence of digital communication. They are not signifiers, however. True digitalization is not fully accomplished until the O and the A are replaced by the "Fort" and the "Da."

Implicit in the foregoing is a distinction between two levels of digitalization. Wilden describes these levels as that of the signal and sign versus the level of the linguistic signifier. First level digital messages are on the level of the signal or sign. Like the O and the A, all first level digital messages represent an analog difference but have no inherent relationship among

themselves. All that may be said to exist is an arbitrary pairing of parallel orders. At the second level more freedom is available. The linguistic signifier can not only label a specific difference as distinct but it can also replace the analog in form and function. At this level, true metacommunication (messages about messages) is possible.

With the replacement of O and A with "Fort" and "Da," true digitalization arrives. At this level the discrete element not only represents the analog difference but it also has an autonomous existence separate from that of the analog continuum. Thus, the digital linguistic signifiers "Fort" and "Da" represent the analog difference presence-absence. In addition, however, the same signifiers stand in relation to one another as the concepts "there" and "gone" which have significance and meaning in relation to all other digital signifiers. In this manner, the digital exists in its own right and, as a function of this autonomy, is able to replace the analog in form and function.

In a previous section of this study it was noted that in Lacanian theory there are three main effects of the child's acquisition of language and entry into the Symbolic order. These were identified as: the constitution of the subject, the splitting of the subject (Spaltung), and primal repression. The foregoing has examined how the analog-digital model may be applied to the child's

accession to language as revealed in the example of the cotton-reel game. It remains to be seen how this model enlightens the present understanding of the effects related to entry into the Symbolic.

The Symbolic and the Digital

Lacanian theory has it that the child does not become a subject until he enters the Symbolic order. Prior to that, following the mirror phase, the child is constituted as an ego in dual Imaginary relationships with the world. Self and world are not yet differentiated from one another. The child relates to self-objects by projecting himself into them. Although it was stated that self and world are not yet differentiated, some differentiation does exist. Although the child is not yet aware of himself as a distinct entity, he is able to distinguish between different states and has some crude awareness of "me" versus "not me." This is the level of the Imaginary, where distinctions are in the form of oppositions and differentiation is limited to binary relations.

This level of representation appears to be congruent with what Wilden described as the first level of digitalization where distinctions exist, but only in relation to the binary relations of the analog. This is the level where the child has associated the phonemes with maternal presence and absence in a fixed and unflexible manner. When the child replaces the phonemes with linguistic signifiers,

the second level of digitalization has been achieved and, along with it, entry into the Symbolic order. By this same act he constitutes himself as a subject.

Digitalization of the analog involves the introduction of a boundary or frame into an analog continuum. In the case of the example, the analog difference presence-absence is singled out, distinguished as a distinction, and then re-presented on another level. Such an act of distinction always involves two frames rather than just one: that of the subject as well as the object.

The introduction of such a boundary into the perceptual field by the perceiving subject always involves at least one other frame or boundary: that which constitutes the perceiving subject himself. The subject introduces a desired closure into a continuum, which distinguishes a certain "part," and by the same act he constitutes himself as distinct in some way from the environment he perceives.

(Wilden, 1972, p. 174)

Although Wilden never spells out the way in which the subject becomes distinct, it is clear that the very act of employing the digital requires a subject function. Whereas in the analog there is no subject, in digital relations it is essential--a subject is either directly acknowledged or assumed. It is this quality of the digital that permits reflection and self-awareness as the individual is able to represent himself as a subject.

This capacity to represent oneself in the digital results in a "splitting of the subject" which Lacan terms the Spaltung. In the Lacanian theory, with the accession

to the Symbolic, a split develops between a self of experience and a self of discourse. The self of discourse is the "I" which serves as a signifier for the self of experience in the order of signifiers. One is divided because he is both excluded from as well as represented in the order of the Symbolic.

In terms of the analog-digital model, this is saying merely that the analog can never be fully represented in the digital. Since the digitalization of the analog requires that one distinguish one quantity among many so as to represent it as a discrete element, much of the richness of the analog is lost when represented in the digital:

To explain, literally to lay out in a plane where particulars can be readily seen. Thus to place or plan in flat land, sacrificing other dimensions for the sake of appearance. Thus to expound or put out at the cost of ignoring the reality or richness of what is so put out. Thus to take a view away from its prime reality or royalty, or to gain knowledge and lose the kingdom. (Brown, 1972, p. 126)

Lacan's Spaltung is the realization that since the subject of digital knowledge can never fully represent the subject of analog knowledge, there will always be a disparity or split between these two levels of being.

The third major effect the Lacanians attribute to the entry into the Symbolic is the primal repression which gives birth to the unconscious. The concept of primal repression was reviewed earlier in the light of contributions made by various adherents to Lacanian doctrine.

Freud's statements on this mechanism were found to be greatly elaborated upon by the Lacanian group with the result of clarifying what was previously obscure. Further enlightenment will result from interpreting it in terms of Wilden's model.

Freud stated that primal repression is a process whereby a drive is denied entry into consciousness by fixing it to a mental representative which then constitutes the primal unconscious. This rather difficult and obtuse statement becomes clearer when the terms of Freud's mechanical model of consciousness are translated into the structural language of analog-digital. The drive may be understood as a relation existing within the analog continuum of experience. The fixation of a drive to a mental representative is the same as the fixing of a relation between an analog meaning and a discrete element. In other words, the digitalization of the analog creates the boundary between the two systems.

Freud's process of primal repression corresponds neatly with Wilden's first level of digitalization. A relationship between an analog meaning and a digital signification is established, creating a barrier between two systems. This is related to Laplanche's first stage of primal repression where symbolization in terms of opposition is possible and the universe is divided into binary relations. Likewise, Leclaire's notion of primal

repression as "the capture of drive energy in the web of the signifier" is an expression of the fixation of meaning that occurs when analog meaning is digitalized. Stein's elementary unconscious of phonemes can be related to the realm of the first level digitalization. When the second level of the linguistic signifier replaces the first level sign, a new relation is constituted between analog and digital. As the child becomes more involved in the language of the Symbolic, the language of the first level, Lemaire's unconscious discourse, is no longer used--replaced (repressed) by the second level signifiers. Primal repression marks the transition between one mode of experiencing and another. With the advent of the Symbolic subject and his world of linguistic signifiers, the private language of the sign and the analog realm of undifferentiated drive become no longer relevant--modes of experience supplanted by another level of being.

The Unconscious is Structured Like a Language?

In the previous sections of this study several different threads of Lacanian theory have been spun, perhaps with the result of creating quite a tangle in the reader's mind. If so, this section might help to sort them out. Lacan's theory is difficult to keep straight because each aspect is not an isolated element but intensely inter-related with all other aspects of the theory. Add to this

the fact that the theory is being developed and constantly refined, often without specifically relating the revision to what is revised, which only serves to increase the confusion of one trying to make sense of it. In this section, some of the strands of the Lacanian web will be reiterated in terms of how they relate to a structural model of development.

The model to be developed is original but may be said to have roots in the Lacanian paradigm since Lacan often resorts to mathematical analogies to develop his views. For instance, in what is likely a reference to the type of structure to be described shortly, Lacan has talked about teaching his pupils to count up to five only with much difficulty (1972, p. 190). Here, the reader will be expected to count up to three which is much easier. What will be counted is not integers but dimensions. What will be helpful to this counting is a well-developed capacity of visualizing in spatial terms.

Most people would accept that Man is not born with the ability to perceive and think in the same manner that he can as an adult. One of the many differences between the world of the child and the world of the adult is in its spatial qualities. The three dimensional world of the adult is a product of development, a capacity achieved by the growing organism. There is evidence that three dimensional perception is only a recent acquisition of the species.

Take, for instance, the fairly recent (in evolutionary terms) appearance of perspective in painting. It is not such a far leap, then, to assume that the world of the child is not one of three dimensions.

The hypothesis of this section is that one of the lines of development for the growing individual is the change in the spatial quality of his phenomenological world from a void of no dimensions to an "objective" reality of three dimensions. This line of development proceeds from the zero dimensional space of the point to the one dimensional space of the line. From the line, development proceeds to the two dimensional reality of the plane and, from the plane, to the space of the solid. This geometric conception of phenomenological reality emphasizes formal characteristics of development and, thus, applies to the structuralization of subject and object over the course of time. The changes in dimension reflect fundamental shifts in structure affecting the subject's view of his place in the world. The process described is actually one of differentiation--of both the self and reality.

This model relates nicely to the various courses of development described in Lacanian theory. Each of the characterizations of space correspond to the different orders or registers of being. The transitions between domains correlate with critical periods of development.

Wilden's analog and digital model fits in nicely as well, as will be demonstrated. Before proceeding further with this model, however, the various themes to be included within it will first be briefly reviewed.

Development of the Self

Lacan's theory of the development of a concept of self as differentiated from the rest of the world is at a stage that only begins to outline the complexity of this subject. Essentially only three phases are described. The first stage is largely alluded to in references about the "totality of being" that exists prior to differentiation. This is the "truth of the subject" which exists prior to separation, prior to alienation via representation in a signifier. At this state of selfhood there could be no reflective awareness but a type of "instinctual awareness" could presumably exist.

With the differentiation which comes with separation, the self begins to be constituted as alienated from its truth. This stage is inaugurated during the mirror phase when the child takes an image as a representation for himself. The self which is thus constituted is one without true reflectiveness. He knows himself only through another in a dual relation without reference to any external standard. This ego, the first differentiation of self, through the process of its delineation sacrifices

the truth inherent in the totality present prior to differentiation.

The third phase of selfhood is achieved during the accession to the Symbolic order which is officially induced in the Oedipus. This self is the subject, a product of the Symbolic order. It is more differentiated than the ego which preceeded it and more realistic in constitution in the sense that its relationships are mediated and it knows its place. At the same time, however, the subject is even more alienated from the individual's truth than the ego since it is only a signifier in an independent order. Although it refers to its truth through a chain of signification to the signified, the subject as signifier shares no reality with the self of phase one. In its essence, it is but an empty place in the discourse.

Development of the Unconscious

Lacan and his followers have also provided a line of development for the concept of the unconscious. The unconscious follows a pattern of development similar to that experienced by the self with even less specific delineation from Lacan. Although the varieties of the unconscious have been touched upon previously and will be developed later on, it will be useful here just to note the contribution of the types of repression to the development of these states.

Freud always associated repression with the unconscious so it is not out of keeping that he would associate the origin of the unconscious with a primal repression. The Lacanians have greatly developed this concept and accorded it a place in development around the same time that elementary distinctions and differentiations begin to occur. Although no one specifically says it, there is enough evidence in the literature to support placing primal repression around the same time as the mirror phase since the latter marks the individual's first distinction or differentiation of self. The primal repression consists of the replacement of lived experience by a substitute for it. In the case of the mirror phase, the lived truth of the child is replaced by an image. In the case of Freud's grandchild, the experience of the mother's presence and absence is replaced by phonemes. These initial substitutes are not signifiers but signs, a distinction which will be elaborated later. The act of replacement serves to create the first unconscious, consisting of the lived experience before differentiation.

Freud distinguished primal repression from secondary repression which was actually an after-pressure requiring an already existing unconscious. The process of secondary repression is described by the Lacanians as structured like a metaphor: one signifier replaces another signifier or sign. This action involves true signifiers and takes

place in the realm of the Symbolic. Secondary repression, thus, becomes possible only with the Oedipus which announces the child's assumption as a subject in the Symbolic. The initial secondary repressions which replace the signs with signifiers create a second unconscious consisting of the signs of primal repression. Another form of unconscious is that consisting of just linguistic signifiers replaced during one's sojourn in the Symbolic. Three forms of unconscious are thus discernable in the Lacanian paradigm, centering around two types of repression.

Development of Reality

Lacan structures the various lines of development in his theory around his three ontological order: the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic. The Real exists prior to the other two, is reasonably undifferentiated, and is not capable of being known through direct apperception or reflective awareness. The self prior to the stage of ego is thought to exist in the Real but at this level it is not distinguishable from other contents. The mirror phase marks the beginning of a new order of being, the Imaginary. The Imaginary emerges with the first distinctions as the realm of the ego and its mirroring relationships. The Imaginary does not replace the Real, rather, it supplements it by adding another level or dimension of experience. The Symbolic as a realm of experience becomes available during the Oedipus. The Symbolic

provides a representation of the self in the form of the subject who has a point of view and a perspective on things. The Symbolic adds another dimension to the experience of the existing two.

Analog and Digital

Wilden's theory of communication forms closely follows the developmental lines just described. The undifferentiated analog continuum is continuous but at some point certain differences can be discerned. These differences are ones of more or less and do not involve distinguishing or differentiating discrete elements from the rest. The emergence of the discrete element marks the beginning of a new form of patterning, the digital.

At the first level of digitalization the sign represents the analog difference in an opposed, discrete fashion. The sign is limited to an arbitrary correspondence with the analog relation, however, and bears no relevance to other signs of the same level. With the advent of the second level of digitalization, true representation is possible with signifiers which refer both to the signified and other signifiers as well. This form of digital can replace the analog relationship in both form and function.

The Model

Returning to the model of this section, what can be said about the experience of a space of no dimensions?

Such a space is paradoxical in that without dimension, it has no extension. Yet, by definition, space is extension. This space, then, the space of a point, is without dimension, both nothing and everything, empty and full. Although it proves easier for the Western mind to conceive of this space as an empty void, the Eastern Buddhists refer to it as Suchness, filled with everything and not empty at all. The contradictions inherent in describing it reflect the difficulty in conceptualizing space without differentiation. Yet this is the experience of the child prior to separation, before differentiation of perception and thought has begun to occur. This space is fully within the order of the Real, in Lacanian terms. It is the realm of pure analog, in Wilden's terms, before difference is discerned.

From the impossible paradox of the point, development proceeds to the space of the line. This, the beginning of structure, occurs with the discovery of difference, thus opening up a new level of experience. This elemental differentiation makes possible binary relationships of more or less. From the point of view of a point on a line, there are only two sides to reality--the left and the right or forwards and backwards. Relations between points are in terms of more or less. Still within the realm of the Real, the field of one dimension corresponds to the experience of lack in Lacan's theory of desire. At this

stage, separation has been experienced and absence has been felt. Subjective reality is made up of analog differences of presence-absence or satiation-hunger. Still within the analog range, there is no differentiation of self or object. Reality is experienced as vague impressions of affective color without specific images or perceptions and certainly no thoughts or symbols.

It is only with the entrance into two dimensional space that the qualities of the spatial field begin to resemble that of three dimensional reality. From the realm of the line one enters that of the plane. The experience of the plane is similar to that of the line in the sense that only two states may be discerned. The difference is that in the plane the differences can be distinguished and opposed. For example, to establish a difference in a plane one need only draw a circle. This action distinguishes two distinct states--that within the confines of the circle and that without. No other alternatives are possible, only in or out, contained or not contained, within or without.

According to Lacanian theory, the transition from one to two dimensional space is effected via the mirror phase and primal repression. In the mirror phase the self is first differentiated as a digital sign in relation to its environment. In other words, the self is constituted as a circle in a plane, a distinct entity in its field.

Primal repression occurs with the emergence of first level digitalization. The analog differences of one dimensional reality are replaced by first level signs. This is the realm of the Imaginary with its dual relationships and binary logic. As the earlier descriptions of Imaginary space make clear, this spatial form differs in fundamental ways from three dimensional reality. From the perspective of a third dimension, the space of the plane looks flat, shallow without depth. Yet from the point of view of one within the two dimensions, things appear much different due to the lack of a fixed point of view. Like in a dream where the usual considerations of space and time do not apply, the experience of one within two dimensional space is not restricted to that of a fixed place in space and time. Without the dimension of depth, images or events of two dimensions may appear to be condensed and meaning easily displaced from one figure to another. This is so because of the "collapse" of one of the dimensions of everyday reality. Several meanings which would be separate along the third dimension coalesce in one image in the second degree space.

Two dimensional space bears an interesting resemblance to Klein's paranoid-schizoid position. Due to the particular qualities of the form, the relations within are those of the container and the contained with the processes of introjection and projection describing transitions

between states. This is the space of splitting and projective identification which can be described in terms of structural characteristics. Splitting is the lack of the third dimensional perspective which enables one to put things in perspective. Classification is in terms of either/or and objects are either for me or against me. Projective identification is identification with the outside rather than the inside. Of the two possible points of view in the space of the plane, projective identification is an identification with that other than what marks the self.

The transition from two dimensional space to three dimensional space marks the move from the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive position. Ambivalence is introduced as issues are no longer black and white, but may be seen to vary according to different points of view. One becomes capable of assuming another's point of view and objects can be seen to exist in their own right without reference to one's own personal perspective. In this sense, the shift is akin to the move from a Ptolemaic to a Copernican universe. The earth ceases to be the center of the universe and is seen to be just another planet revolving around a sun.

As has been repeatedly emphasized, three dimensional space adds perspective and depth. The square in the plane becomes a cube in three dimensions. Perspective assumes a

relatively fixed point of view, an achievement attained during the Oedipus when one discovers his place among the Symbolic order. Within the three dimensions of the Symbolic, the self is constituted as a subject, a self representation which permits reflective awareness. Lacan's conception of the Symbolic emphasizes that it is an order of symbols and signifiers. These elements, then, refer to realities of a different (lower) level and this is their only reality. In other words, the three dimensional space of the Symbolic is illusory in that it does not exist in itself but only in reference to something else. From this something else it is autonomous and distinct but as a system as a whole it is but a transducer, important only for its qualities as a bridge.

The transition to the three dimensional perspective occurs during the Oedipus with the advent of secondary repression and the potential for second level digitalization. This level permits the replacement of analog relations by purely digital relations. The replacement of one level of experience by another is one way of describing repression. Another way of accounting for repression is that rather than being an active process, it is but a byproduct that results from the digitalization of the analog. The process of digitalization occurs with the progressive differentiation of self and world which occurs in the natural course of development. Increased

differentiation involves the perception of boundaries in a continuum where technically no boundaries exist. The substitution of the digital map for the analog territory is bound to be imperfect because of the lack of complete correspondence between the two systems. There will always be points where the digital does not correspond since there are no gaps or holes in the natural analog world. As the digital depends on gaps, there will never be a perfect matching with the analog continuum.

In this sense, what is repressed is that which is not represented by the digital sign or signifier, that which is lost in the translation. With the imperfect match between systems, there is bound to be something lost in transition. The richness of the analog can be represented in the digital but never completely. Thus, with each stage of differentiation, with each new achievement in digitalization, something is lost. It is in this sense that one can talk about different forms of the unconscious which result from shifts in levels of structural development.

Forms of the Unconscious

According to the model under discussion, there are four possible forms of the unconscious which would differ in structure, one from the other. The first is an unconscious constructed of no dimensions. This would be what is lost with the discovery of difference and accession to

one dimensional reality. Lacanian theory describes this unconscious as the pristine unity that exists prior to separation. With the first rent, the discovery of difference, this world is lost forever. The Lacanian theory of desire places this form of the unconscious at the mythical beginning of desire, later signified in the phallus.

With the achievement of two dimensional reality, a new form of unconscious is created of that which was lost in the transition. This is the unconscious composed of those aspects of lived experience which do not become represented in first level digitalization. This is an unconscious of the Real structured of one dimension. This is the unrealized, that which can not be symbolized or is not symbolized in the individual's development.

A third form of the unconscious results when second level signifiers replace first level signs. Those aspects of elementary symbolization which are not represented in the linguistic signifiers comprise this form of the unconscious. This is an Imaginary unconscious, structured in two dimensions. It is composed of the elementary signifiers, one's first digital representations. This is Freud's primal unconscious and Lemaire's unconscious personal discourse. It is largely inaccessible to analysis but can be discovered at the roots of one's chains of signification.

A fourth and last form of the unconscious results

not from a transition to another dimension of experience but from the continual shifts of experience which occur in the Symbolic. With increasing differentiation in the three dimensional reality, old signifiers are constantly replaced by newer, more differentiated ones. That which is lost in the translation makes up a fourth form of unconscious: Lacan's unconscious discourse, Freud's repressed unconscious. This is a Symbolic unconscious, structured in three dimensions. This is the discourse which interrupts the conscious discourse through the gaps inherent in signification. It is this form of unconscious which is structured like a language as it was, in the individual's past, part of his conscious vocabulary. Thus the question posed by the title to this section may be answered in the affirmative, with the understanding that it comprises only one of the different forms of the unconscious.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This survey of the different forms of the Lacanian unconscious would not be complete without some reference to some of Lacan's more recent formulations. Much of the material for this study was taken from secondary sources which relied heavily upon Lacan's Écrits. Even though these studies have been published within the last several years they are already dated since Lacan's thinking has moved considerably beyond the points they were interpreting. In this sense, this study too is dated; however, the direction in which it moves seems to be in keeping with Lacan's more recent formulations.

Part of the problem lies in the large gap between the time between French publication and the subsequent English translation. The translation of Écrits: A Selection was published in 1977 but the most recent essay included was published in France in 1961. The reference above to "more recent formulations" must be taken relatively, then, since the most recent English translation of Lacan's work, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, published in 1978, is composed of transcripts of seminars which Lacan delivered in 1964. It is upon this work that the focus will now be directed.

One of Lacan's "Four Fundamental Concepts of

Psychoanalysis" is the unconscious and in this work he speaks more lucidly than usual of the nature of his conception of this concept. One of the directions in which his thinking has moved as demonstrated in this book is in terms of a focus on the relation between the subject and the unconscious, particularly the phenomenological experience of the unconscious. As the following selections will demonstrate, this direction is one that is full of potential for both theoretician and clinician. These selections also provide an additional perspective on the model of development presented in this study. Lacan refers at several points to different forms of the unconscious that were delineated earlier. They will be presented with only minimal comments.

Concerning the constitution of the unconscious, Lacan uses the authority of Freud to justify a conception of the unconscious as that which is refused:

[Speaking of Freud] What does he now tell us about the unconscious? He declared that it is constituted essentially, not by what the consciousness may evoke, extend, locate, bring out of the subliminal, but by that which is, essentially, refused. (1973/1978, p. 43)

its ontological status is pre-ontology, before being and nonbeing:

The gap of the unconscious may be said to be pre-ontological. I have stressed that all too often characteristic...of the first emergence of the unconscious, namely, that it does not lend itself to ontology. Indeed, what became apparent at first to Freud, to the discoverers, to those who made the first steps, and what still becomes apparent to anyone in analysis who spends some time observing what truly belongs

to the order of the unconscious, is that it is
neither being, nor non-being, but the unrealized.
(pp. 29-30)

Trying to place it in a theoretical context is as difficult
as holding on to it in real life.

Ontologically, then, the unconscious is the elusive--
but we are beginning to circumscribe it in a structure,
a temporal structure, which, it can be said, has
never yet been articulated as such. (p. 32)

Experientially, the unconscious presents as discontinuity,
vacillation.

Discontinuity, then, is the essential form in which
the unconscious first appears to us as a phenomenon--
discontinuity, in which something is manifested as a
vacillation. (p. 26)

This need to disappear, Lacan terms the pulsative function.

I have constantly stressed in my preceeding statements
the pulsative function, as it were, of the unconscious,
the need to disappear that seems to be, in some sense
inherent in it--everything that, for a moment, appears
in its slit seems to be destined, by a sort of pre-emp-
tion, to close up again upon itself, as Freud himself
used this metaphor, to vanish, to disappear. (p. 43)

The vacillation of the unconscious is experienced by the
subject almost invariably as surprise.

The unconscious is always manifested as that which
vacillates in a split in the subject, from which
emerges a discovery that Freud compares with desire--
a desire that we will temporarily situate in the
denuded metonymy of the discourse in question, where
the subject surprises himself in some unexpected way.
(p. 28)

It has that indefinable something that touches us,
that peculiar accent [of]...surprise, that by which
the subject feels himself overcome, by which he finds
both more and less than he expected.

To resort to a metaphor, drawn from mythology,
we have, in Eurydice twice lost, the most potent
image we can find of the relation between Orpheus
the analyst and the unconscious. (p. 25)

EPILOGUE

The Story of Orpheus and Eurydice

The very earliest musicians were the gods. Athena was not distinguished in that line, but she invented the flute although she never played upon it. Hermes made the lyre and gave it to Apollo who drew from it sounds so melodious that when he played in Olympus the gods forgot all else. Hermes also made the shepherd-pipe for himself and drew enchanting music from it. Pan made the pipe of reeds which can sing as sweetly as the nightingale in spring. The Muses had no instrument peculiar to them, but their voices were lovely beyond compare.

Next in order came a few mortals so excellent in their art that they almost equaled the divine performers. Of these by far the greatest was Orpheus. On his mother's side he was more than mortal. He was the son of one of the Muses and a Thracian prince. His mother gave him the gift of music and Thrace where he grew up fostered it. The Thracians were the most musical of the peoples of Greece. But Orpheus had no rival there or anywhere except the gods alone. There was no limit to his power when he played and sang. No one and nothing could resist him.

In the deep still woods upon the Thracian mountains
Orpheus with his singing lyre led the trees,
Led the wild beasts of the wilderness.

Everything animate and inanimate followed him. He moved the rocks on the hillside and turned the courses of the rivers....

Where he first met and how he wooed the maiden he loved, Eurydice, we are not told, but it is clear that no maiden he wanted could have resisted the power of his song. They were married, but their joy was brief. Directly after the wedding, as the bride walked in a meadow with her bridesmaids, a viper stung her and she died. Orpheus' grief was overwhelming. He could not endure it. He determined to go down to the world of death and try to bring Eurydice back. He said to himself,

With my song
I will charm Demeter's daughter,
I will charm the Lord of the Dead,
Moving their hearts with my melody.
I will bear her away from Hades.

He dared more than any other man ever dared for his love. He took the fearsome journey to the underworld. There he struck his lyre, and at the sound all that vast multitude were charmed to stillness. The dog Cerberus relaxed his guard; the wheel of Ixion stood motionless; Sisiphus sat at rest upon his stone; Tantalus forgot his thirst; for the first time the faces of the dread goddesses, the Furies, were wet with tears. The ruler of Hades drew near to listen with his queen. Orpheus sang,

O gods who rule the dark and silent world,
 To you all born of a woman needs must come.
 All lovely things at last go down to you.
 You are the debtor who is always paid.
 A little while we tarry up on earth.
 Then we are yours forever and forever.
 But I seek one who came to you too soon.
 The bud was plucked before the flower bloomed.
 I tried to bear my loss. I could not bear it.
 Love was too strong a god. O King, you know
 If that old tale men tell is true, how once
 The flowers saw the rape of Proserpine.
 Then weave again for sweet Eurydice
 Life's pattern that was taken from the loom
 Too quickly. See, I ask a little thing,
 Only that you will lend, no give, her to me.
 She shall be yours when her years' span is full.

No one under the spell of his voice could refuse him anything. He

Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
 And made Hell grant what Love did seek.

They summoned Eurydice and gave her to him, but upon one condition: that he would not look back at her as she followed him, until they had reached the upper world. So the two passed through the great doors of Hades to the path which would take them out of the darkness, climbing up and up. He knew that she must be just behind him, but he longed unutterably to give one glance to make sure. But now they were almost there, the blackness was turning gray; now he had stepped out joyfully into the daylight. Then he turned to her. It was too soon; she was still in the cavern. He saw her in the dim light, and he held out his arms to clasp her but on the instant she was gone. She had slipped back into the darkness. All he heard was one faint word, "Farewell."

(Hamilton, 1942, pp. 103-105)

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