

# How to End a Lacanian Analysis

*OR How to 'Come' to Forbidden  
Fruit*

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The paper explores a number of Lacanian ideas that the author has found to be clinically useful. These ideas include traversing the fundamental fantasy, the notion of objet a and the sinthome. The paper particularly focuses on the notion of desire and jouissance, as it is the economy of these that is at stake in the structure of the three forms of psychopathology recognised by Lacan viz psychosis, neurosis and perversion. It is also a change in the economy of desire and jouissance which is hoped for as a byproduct of a Lacanian analysis, the main purpose of which is analysis itself. The paper explores these concepts and shows how they relate to one another in clinical work.

This paper was largely impelled by my own need to clarify for myself those aspects of Lacan's theory that I personally find clinically meaningful. I was encouraged in this endeavour by several colleagues who also found themselves drawn to Lacan, but who felt as I did, somewhat defeated by his deliberate obscurantism.

Systematising some of Lacan's ideas by organising them around the clinical issue of what may be at stake in a Lacanian analysis, in one sense goes against Lacan himself for whom such systematisation is an anathema. However, in the current climate of reclamation of Lacan by clinicians, from his adoptive family in the academy, such a project seems to have its place. For many Lacanians, this paper will seem an oversimplification, doing violence to the complexity and nuance of Lacan's concepts, especially as these have evolved over time. For some non-Lacanians it will have failed to make his work accessible and applicable enough to be useful. However, as in the case of Goldilocks and the three bears, it may for some be just right' or at least 'good enough' to be of relevance.

Perhaps in reading this it might be important to acknowledge the perspective from which I wrote it, which involved a greater identification with the position of analysand than that of analyst. Thus implicit in this paper are questions pertaining to what it might mean to embark on a process that involves traversing the fundamental fantasy' and exploring that which ignites desire (*objet a*) and thereby finding one's unconscious points of enjoyment beyond the pleasure principle, rather than seeking eg. an alternative emotional experience, or uncovering archetypes and complexes or actualising the self. However, while these were my background questions, this is not an experiential paper as such, but is rather an attempt to unpack the concepts Lacan

introduced to communicate his thoughts about the practice of psychoanalysis. Once again let me reiterate that in systematising Lacan's thoughts I am going against both his style and his intention. Lacan's style as *How to End a Lacanian Analysis* already noted is infamously obscure and indeed it was deliberately so, as Lacan believed we should struggle with his writing and with his views in order that we should learn something. Modesty was not his strong point! This belief was informed by his notion that learning takes place in the process of the digestion of material, not simply its ingestion, and this requires intellectual work.

However, not everyone may be prepared to put in the considerable effort of digestion required to savour a meal that may be both rich and substantial, but as some would point out, translates inevitably into the end product of shit. Bear in mind, however, that this latter comment would not be something to which Lacan himself would be averse. It is the very antithesis of a Lacanian analysis, that the analysand would identify with, and take over as gold, the views of the analyst. This is especially so, given his views on the constitution of the subject and his related idea that it is the destitution of the subject that occurs in the process of an analysis, which returns me to the title of this paper.

## **Destitute(d) but Coming to Forbidden Fruits**

I have entitled this paper 'How to End a Lacanian Analysis or How to Come to Forbidden Fruits', for while the stated aim of an analysis is an analysis, nevertheless it is an alteration in the economy of jouissance and desire which is hopefully its byproduct. This idea is based on the notion that neurosis implicates an acceptance of prohibition in regard to the original love object, but involves remaining locked in a crisis of satisfaction (Fink, 1997). Thus neurotics have accepted a barring of free access to the primary caretaker but not without a negative residue which keeps them unsatisfied, most particularly at the level of sexual satisfaction.

However, in order to understand the notion of the economy of satisfaction and desire to which a Lacanian analysis pertains we need first to consider Lacan's views concerning the constitution of the subject as these views are inextricably linked with the purpose of the analysis. In regard to the subject perhaps the most important aspect of Lacan's work is his belief that we are of necessity constituted in misrecognition. We are initially misrecognised because we are born desired (or not) as the case may be. In either circumstance misrecognition is inevitable, as we are perceived by the other through a particular lens.

Later we will come also to misrecognise ourselves as we jubilantly embrace the image of ourselves that we see in the mirror (Lacan, 1948). It is an image of completion, at odds with a lived experience of incompleteness. Later still, our misrecognition of ourselves, and beyond this a lack of access to ourselves, will be compounded as we enter language and become barred subjects, that is subjects who have a conscious and an unconscious (Lacan, 1953). From that point on we will both have access to and express only a fraction of that which we live. Or to put it in Lacan's (1960) terms we will become subjects of the statement, subjects who inevitably will always be less than subjects of the enunciation. Furthermore we will be subjects split between truth and knowledge. As barred subjects we will 'come' to conscious fantasies without understanding their

link to the unconscious.

Furthermore, even when we do become aware of aspects of our unconscious fantasies we will fail to see their function in screening off from us our real enjoyments and our real satisfactions (Fink, 1997). It is only by traversing our most fundamental fantasy, that the nature of our enjoyment of the drives is revealed to us.

It is important to note however that the purpose of seeing through these layers of misrecognition is not in order to actualise a real self as such, or to find an absolute truth, as these do not exist for Lacan, who in this sense is a postmodernist. Rather the purpose is simply that of understanding ourselves in a particular way. However, this involves accepting that this understanding is in itself transitory and illusory, given that, subject to the drives, the impossibility of the Real, and ultimate unknowability of the Other, we are always and ever in flux.

Nevertheless as a byproduct of such an understanding, evanescent though it may be, it is likely that there will be some reordering of the economy of our desire and our enjoyment. There will be some refiguring of the cause of our desire ie of *objet a* or of that which sets desire in motion. Furthermore there will be some acceptance of the *sinthome*, ie the particular organisation of our form of enjoyment.

Of what benefit however, is such a reordering when, on an individual level cure is not on offer and on a social level adaptation is not only not on offer but is in a certain sense an anathema. However, despite this it does seem as though there is indeed something on offer after all, if we persist in seeing through our misrecognition, or *maya*, or illusions in regard to the self and the world—to use the Buddhist term. What is on offer is the subjectivation of our desires or the ability to own desire. Perhaps even more accurately, what is on offer could be described as the development of the capacity to position ourselves more clearly in regard to a knowledge that desire is inevitably the desire of the Other. Given the origin of desire, subjectivation cannot really change this fact *per se* but it allows us to position ourselves differently. Thus we come experientially to understand that what we see as most intimate to ourselves, (*viz* our desires and enjoyments and their organisation into a coherent sense of self) is in fact ‘extimate’ to us to use Lacan’s (1948) term. Or to put it differently these most intimate matters do not arise solely from within but are given to us from the outside, detoured through the discourse of the Other, thus they are extimate to us, the foreign or alien within us.

The byproduct of this experiential understanding is to become desirous in our own right but without the cost of totally renouncing satisfaction and enjoyment, bearing in mind that satisfaction and enjoyment are not exactly equivalent. In other words the pay off is a better economy or balance of that which is between our *jouissance* or enjoyment and our desire, constituted as desire is by lack and by that which is forbidden. To put it bawdily we can come to forbidden fruit more of our own choosing. We can enjoy our enjoyment and still keep alive some relationship to the law, language and kinship (the register of desire and the Symbolic) but in a manner that neither keeps us in a crisis of satisfaction (as it does the hysteric and the obsessional) nor keeps us driven beyond the pleasure principle (as it does the pervert). We can both lay our own *jouissance* bare, and bear to have our own desires, in the face of the desire of the Other. But what is desire, *jouissance*, the Other in a Lacanian sense and how do we come to be constituted in misrecognition?

## Misrecognition

At the first level of misrecognition, Lacan, like Althusser, recognises our interpolation into the discourse of the Other which later becomes the Other within ourselves, that is the unconscious. From birth we are spoken through the discourse of the Other and as such we enter language and become barred subjects, ie subjects with an unconscious. For Lacan (1964) the Ucs is constituted as an effect of language as it is language that establishes that which we need to repress.

In speaking of our initial interpolation into discourse, it is a *sine qua non* that this interpolation is shaped from the outset by a host of hopes, aspirations, thoughts and fears, spoken through language, idiosyncratic to our kinship lines but fed by class, race, ethnicity etc as our families themselves are spoken through the discourse of the Other. They too were born desired and as such misrecognised. The little others to which we as human infants are subject are themselves constituted via the discourse of the Other.

Thus Lacan (1953, 1960) recognises from the outset that for each human infant there will be a tension between lived experience and the response of the mother refracted through language but also through the voice, and the gaze, all of which will be employed by the mother/primary caretaker. How to End a Lacanian Analysis to connect with this lived experience. However, her best efforts notwithstanding, the child will be traumatically impacted by a certain missing of his lived experience as it is folded into a discourse which of necessity comes from the outside. Thus from the start the child will be subject to signifiers which will respond to, but will also direct, redirect and shape experience as it is both lived out through the body and shapes how the body itself is lived.

In this regard Lacan would have no difficulty with Nietzsche's ideas that consciousness is a 'consequence of corporality, bodily forces, social and survival strategies that have forgotten their own history' (Grosz, 1990, p. 1). For Lacan the ego is a product, both of the internalisation of the image and an imaginary projection of the body. The ego maps the body's psychosocial meaning. The imaginary anatomy of the body is organised, not by biology, but along the lines of parental and familial signification including fantasies about the body, private and public (Grosz, 1990). This psychical anatomy is usually at odds with the body in bits and pieces' (Lacan, 1948) which is the lived experience of the child. It is, however, an experience which the child himself eschews in the mirror stage as he jubilantly embraces the wholeness of his mirror image and this constitutes another moment of misrecognition.

However, prior to this moment of misrecognition in the mirror stage, as has already been indicated, we are already interpolated into the discourse of the Other, including the submission of the body to the signifiers of the Other, with a resultant division of the body along particular lines (Grosz, 1990) which reflect parental fantasies steeped as these in turn are in the discourse of the Other. This is the first moment of misrecognition and as indicated is not without trauma. Apart from the fact that the discourse of the Other is of necessity always given from the outside and as such is an imposition on the infant, the presentation of the discourse of the Other inevitably involves the Other of the other, the unconscious of the (m)other (note, there is no Other of the Other), the Real of the other, her jouissance. The baby is thus interpolated, not only into the discourse of the Other but is imprinted by the Real of the other, the (m)other's points of trauma, her jouissance as well as his own.

All of this the infant idiosyncratically elaborates. Furthermore in Lacanian terms, it must be remembered, that even were the mother to approximate perfect attunement, this in itself would

be a problem of a different kind. It is a given of human existence in Lacan (1964) that it is in a lack of being whereby being exists. A lack of lack translates not into perfection but into psychosis. In rather more crude terms, if the caretaker disallows the infant the experience of lack either in herself or in himself, she forecloses on his attempts to grow and develop. Growth depends on a desire to fill this lack. Thus she forecloses on his agency and his developing subjectivity. Furthermore it is important to note that for Lacan (1948) discordance in human relations is inevitable. Nevertheless the degree of discordance and dysfunctionality of the parents does have an impact and imprints the child's relationship to the Real and jouissance.

But what is meant by the Other, the Real, and jouissance?

## The Other

According to Nobus (1998) the term Other is the most complex one in Lacan's work. It must be distinguished from other with a small 'o' which refers to others in the sense of others like me. The little other is both the counterpart and the specular image. It is inscribed in what Lacan has called the imaginary register or the world of identification and the image. In this register the other is the other with whom I identify and compete and whom I rival, but in a sense this other is not really other to me but somehow the same, the one like me, the one with whom I identify. In this sense the other, the extimate to me, is also intimate and the intimate and the extimate interweave and intertwine, affecting my relationship to myself and others.

The register of the big Other is the symbolic order of law, language and kinship. It is radical alterity which transcends the illusory otherness of the imaginary. This alterity, unlike imaginary otherness, cannot be assimilated via identification. It can be embodied in a person but this meaning is secondary to the meaning of the Other as the symbolic order of law, language and kinship. It is this order which mediates the relationship between subjects via the social pact (Nobus, 1998). Essentially then the Other is not a small other (i.e. a person) but is a locus. It is a locus in which speech and the transmission of the law originates, that is, it is the locus of discourse.

The Other may initially be embodied in the mother but it is not her per se that is at stake, given that the Other which is within her will exceed her (Nobus, 1998). Thus in any one human being, as in (m)other, there is an Other which speaks through her or him. Language, the law, kinship speak through the mother but exceed her, as that into which the infant is interpolated, but which will also exceed him. However, how the mother speaks and how the Other speaks through her will be dependent on how she herself has negotiated her own relationship to jouissance, her relationship to the drives which pertain to the Real of her body as well as her own idiosyncratic mode of entry into the symbolic order.

Entry into the symbolic order for all of us is contingent on the assumption of castration or limitation of jouissance which presses on our relationship to *objet a* or the cause of our desire.

Thus each mother's relationship to her baby will be dependent on her own acceptance of limitation. How she speaks will also reflect her patterns of identification, that is her imaginary relations. Her infant will be exposed to and respond to these relations, as mother and baby exist in a circuit which is only broken by the introduction of the parental function, that is, the No/

Name of the father. It is this function which protects baby and mother from the excessive demands of each on the other. It does this by keeping the mother, child and signified phallus (i.e. that which the mother desires) at the appropriate distance from one another in what Lacan terms the ternary relationship. The father in Lacan thus functions not as a third term but as a fourth term. This fourth term is that paternal function which rescues the baby from imprisonment within the mother and from fusion with her. This function operates in regard to all members of the Oedipal triangle and the father himself has to agree to be regulated by it.

The paternal function acts however, in at least two ways. Firstly it puts in place a no or a limit but in addition, it names a desire of the mother's beyond that for her baby. These two moments, namely putting in place a no and naming the mother's desire, have implications for the internal structure of the developing subject (as elaborated by Fink, 1997). If neither is in place the individual is likely to move toward the structure of the psychotic. Without limit, there is lack of lack and no sense of subjectivity develops. If only the no is in place, but the naming of the mother's desire outside of the circuit of mother and baby is incomplete, the move is likely to be toward the structure of perversion. If both are in place but the individual remains stuck in regret and nostalgia for the forbidden object, the individual is likely to founder in a crisis of satisfaction and to be mired in a neurotic structure (Fink, 1997). However, all this occurs in regard to an individual who himself or herself participates in an idiosyncratic elaboration of what is received via the presence, the partial presence, or absence of the paternal function. But more of this later.

At this point I move instead toward an exploration of the notions of *jouissance* and its relationship to desire, as it is a change in this economy that is likely to be a byproduct of a successful Lacanian analysis, if not its purpose.

## **Jouissance and its Relationship to Desire**

The term *jouissance* has multiple meanings in Lacan's work. It pertains to pleasure and the sexual and in his later work it is linked with pain, pleasure in pain, pain in pleasure. This notion of *jouissance* shows the influence of Bataille (Nobus, 1998), in that *jouissance* is connected with the death drive, a seeking of pleasure beyond the pleasure principle. This ties in with Bataille's view of the erotic as the realm of violence which borders on death itself (Nobus, 1998). It is excessive and it can be compared at another level to mystical experience.

To be caught up in *jouissance* is to be caught up in the death drive which of necessity implicates the body. Indeed in certain of his works, Lacan (1964) depicts *jouissance* as bodily substance which is drained away through entry into the Symbolic order and the embracing of the social pact. It is the remainder of *jouissance* that permeates the erogenous zones while the *jouissance* that has been sacrificed deposits itself in the super ego (Lacan, 1964 in Nobus, 1998).

The manner in which both mother and father (or their substitutes) are internally organised with respect to their *jouissance* inevitably impacts on the child. Yet for all of us, in Lacan's terms, *jouissance* must be refused, or at least the full expression thereof must be refused so that it can be reached on what has been termed the inverted ladder of the law of desire. The refusal of full *jouissance*, so that it may be reached on the inverted ladder of desire may be illustrated via the myth of Odysseus (Whitebrook, 1996).

Odysseus when he hears the sirens' song, sacrifices a modicum of his *jouissance*, in order to fulfil his desire to reach Penelope and home. He lashes himself to the mast and thereby may sail close enough to the sirens' song to be enticed by its pleasure but not to be devoured by it, as too close a proximity would convert that which ignites desire (*objet a*) into that which devours in passion (*das Ding*). Thus Odysseus may be seen as an example of a subject who has successfully balanced *jouissance* and desire. This is a difficult task indeed.

But what is *objet a* and how is it constituted—an important question, to which I will return, after discussing the issue of entry into language or symbolic castration, as this determines whether we will move onto the inverted ladder of desire or not i.e. whether we will become neurotics who languish on this ladder or perverts who favour *jouissance* over desire and who risk encounters with *das Ding*, or psychotics who founder in the coils of the Real and don't enter the Symbolic at all (Fink, 1992).

Should *jouissance* be insufficiently refused, relinquished or renounced by either parent the difficulty for the child is compounded as we shall see later in regard to Lacan's three diagnostic categories psychosis, neurosis and perversion. But at this point it may be useful to explore further the inverted ladder of the Law of desire, to come to understand how desire relates to *jouissance* and other reference points in Lacan's work, reference points like demand and need.

Firstly in regard to desire and *jouissance*, one way of conceptualising this is via absence and presence. Desire longs for that which is absent and is killed off by satisfaction, although it quickly resurrects itself as it is in its nature to metonymically alight upon this and that and to metaphorically desire this in the place of that in an endless chain of signifiers of the desire of the Other, for desire is the desire of the Other.

*Jouissance* enjoys what is present, but not simplistically in the mode of satisfaction. *Jouissance* is more in the mode of pleasure beyond the pleasure principle and is imbricated with the death drive. In regard to desire, desire may be ignited by a wish for *jouissance* or alternatively there may be *jouissance* in desiring. If *jouissance* is of the body, desire is of the Other (Lacan, 1964). That is to say the subject desires from the point of view of another. The subject desires what the other has or else desires to be the other.

Desire, however, arises in interrelationship with need and demand. The interrelationship between need, demand and desire implicates the Lacanian (1953) orders or registers of the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic.

## The Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic

In the briefest terms possible, the Real for Lacan is the realm of brute reality of the body, the physical. It is the realm of the impossible, the beyond of symbolisation and in this sense the realm of trauma. In regard to need, given the biological aspects of the Real, need pertains to this register.

The Imaginary for Lacan is the world of relationship between ego and the small other. It is the

world of identifications and of the image. It is the register that is inaugurated in the mirror stage. In this register the individual is preoccupied with or is in a mode of captivation by image (Lacan, 1948). It is thus the realm of competition, rivalry and aggression over resources, prestige and the opposite sex. It is also the realm of demand, beginning with the caretaker/child relation where there is a request for that which satisfies the need, but also feeds the image beyond need, in a demand for love.

This demand for love cannot be satisfied by any particular object. It is thus an endless demand based on a wish for unconditional love: to be all for the other and to commandeer all the other's resources. It is the realm of all-consuming dual relationships and it is an interruption of this relationship which the paternal function inaugurates and which allows a position to be taken in the symbolic order and outside of the dyad and the imaginary order. This position in the symbolic order is a metaposition from which one can step outside of the dyad and become disembedded. It is also the place which allows symbolic exchanges between subjects so that it is not only the subject (including the subject as embodied) which is required by the other. There can be instead some symbolic exchange.

In regard to disembeddedness, it is via speaking that we become capable of this and it is via our entry into language that we gain access to Lacan's third register viz the Symbolic order. This entry into language is not as simple as it appears. It is not only the acquisition of language that is at stake. It is instead a capitulation to the limitation of symbolic castration that language imposes. It is an acceptance of the father's no, or the name of the father, as the anchoring point that is required.

By anchoring point or *point de capiton* (Lacan, 1956) is meant the point in the signifying chain at which 'the signifier stops the otherwise endless movement of signification' (Lacan, 1953, p. 303) and thereby produces the necessary illusion of a fixed meaning. Each child needs to have some sense that certain relations and meanings are fixed, not endlessly arbitrary and capricious. For Lacan it is the no of the father which anchors meaning and regulates relations. This no is linked to jouissance given that it is the jouissance of the mother and child which is cut across by the no of the father, a no which henceforth will signify precisely that, a blocking of full access of each to the other. But equally it serves as a limit on the father himself.

It is this anchoring point that the psychotic lacks. In schizophrenic word salads, this lack of an anchoring point is vividly demonstrated at the level of language and the relation between signifier and signified (Fink, 1997). It is also demonstrated in unfinished sentences, showing the missing links in the chain of signifiers as well as in neologisms which show a felt inadequacy of conventional words to express the psychotic's inner world (Fink, 1997). However beyond these manifestations in speech what is really at stake is the absence of an anchoring point, which results in particular relationship to the other. The other without this anchoring point is experienced as a big Other whose demand is not experienced as limited but rather as unlimited, autocratic, arbitrary, and capricious.

Returning then to the issue of language, it would seem that it is not just the capacity to speak, that connects us with the Symbolic order in which relations are regulated by the Law with particular reference to Oedipal dynamics. It is not just the mimetic capacity to speak which institutes this (Fink, 1997). It is something else entirely. It is the acceptance of the father's no as an anchoring point. It is the acceptance of symbolic castration, or limitation on jouissance which inaugurates this.



# Symbolic Castration: Neurosis, Psychosis and Perversion

In symbolic castrations and in the move to desire there is an acceptance not only of the no of the father, the barring of the subject from the jouissance of the mother but there is also an acceptance of the father's naming of himself as the object of the mother's desire (Fink, 1997). However, the exact nature of her desire remains shrouded in mystery, an enigma. It raises a question, but over and above this mystery there is also an awareness that the father's barring of the subject's access to the mother is limited. It is only this woman, not every woman, to whom one is denied access. In fact accepting the paternal function involves not only prohibition but an authorisation or even a prescription to seek one's own partner (Rodriguez, 1999).

In Lacan's work symbolic castration applies to both males and females, and it is only acceptance of this that paves the way both to desire and to the establishment of the unconscious. In Lacan's work (1957–58) as described by Evans (1996) there are three aspects to castration or three forms of lack to be negotiated. The most controversial lack is called privation which involves female castration. Privation involves the perception that the mother is lacking something viz the penis, but in fairness to Lacan he does speak in this regard of an imaginary lack in the Real (Evans, 1996). In fact the Real lacks nothing and it is only in the Imaginary that the presence of a vagina can be construed as the absence of a penis.

Using more neutral terms perhaps one could say that what is perceived by the child is that the mother is often distracted from him. This observation is translated into a sense that the mother lacks something and that her focus is not only on the child but on something else. Should the child not come to a perception of privation or lack in the other, his entry into the subject position and desire is severely compromised. Lack of lack fails to instantiate the question: What does the other want? Instead it allows a fantasy that the other and oneself are complete, in a circuit sufficient unto itself, from which the name of the father is foreclosed and in which each may be all for the other but without differentiation of each from the other, i.e. a state of psychosis. It is only if the child is enabled to perceive privation or lack in the other that his desire to fill this lack is set in motion. The child then tries to embody what might fill this lack for the other and tries to assume the position of the imaginary phallus. This assumption however, impinges on subjecthood as in the attempt to be all for the other and reciprocally to commandeer all the other's resources the child is never fully there where he is present, nor fully absent where he is not'. His being is in an all consuming preoccupation with filling the lack in the other.

This position is clearly an enthralling one but being held in thrall has its perils and constrictions, if this thralldom is not cut across via the paternal function as it operates in symbolic castration. However, even within thralldom there is frustration both in regard to what the other offers and what one attempts to be for the other. At this stage it is not only need satisfaction which is at stake but a demand for love which can never be fully satisfied. Whatever one is given, there is something left unsatisfied, as the demand for love can be endless.

Equally the child senses his own limitations in regard to his attempts to be the imaginary phallus. That is he experiences frustration, a real lack in the imaginary. He is in reality not up to the task

he has assumed in the imaginary. However, through an acceptance of this limitation mediated by the paternal function he begins to look farther afield outside of the circuit of the mother-child relationship.

This paves the way for symbolic castration, where the father names himself as the imaginary phallus, that which the mother desires. In this moment the child has to accept that in the symbolic order, his own place is not that of the imaginary phallus. His father occupies that place. Thus what is accepted is a symbolic lack in the Imaginary. What is gained in this, however, is the place the child does occupy in the symbolic order and that is rightfully his. There is also an awareness of the father acting within the law to limit his, the father's own jouissance and desire, to make a place for the child within the social pact and to authorise and to prescribe that the child find a partner of his own (Rodriguez, 1999).

It is this acceptance of Symbolic castration which accomplishes the barring, the subject as an effect of language and establishes the unconscious and the circumstances from thenceforth of a subject of the enunciation who will always be more than the subject of the statement and in whom there will always be a split between truth and knowledge (Lacan, 1960).

As already indicated, the psychotic who does not perceive privation or lack in the other, and where the name of the father is foreclosed has no sense of the reality of limit. Thus the psychotic finds himself subject to lack of lack, i.e. subject to the Real and to invasion by jouissance, a jouissance he has not sacrificed.

The pervert on the other hand senses lack but will have no question regarding what might fill it. He knows the answer: it is himself including his body which can accomplish this and this is accomplished not within the Law but within an alternative law that he himself instates. Jouissance is seemingly in transgression of the Law but paradoxically this transgression signals a negotiation of the Law, and in a circuitous manner acts to install the Law, albeit that this knowledge is disavowed (Fink, 1997). The pervert, it would seem, accepts the no of the father and acknowledges privation but does not accept the name(ing) of the father as the imaginary phallus for the other (Fink, 1997). This acceptance of the no but not the name(ing) allows disavowal (i.e. I know that I am prohibited in regard to my mother but as that which may fill this lack has not been named I can retain the belief that it is I who may do so).

The neurotic on the other hand accepts the father as the imaginary phallus but still questions exactly what it is that might fill the mother's lack (Fink, 1997). He will renounce much jouissance, but will be besieged by multiple questions and will be mired in a morass of nostalgic regret. These questions of the neurotic will inform both the construction of what Lacan has called *objet a* as well as the fundamental fantasy, which is traversed in a Lacanian analysis. In considering the notion of the fundamental fantasy and *objet a* it is hard to know which to describe first, given that the fundamental fantasy is the fantasy of the subject in relation to *objet a*. But on balance I think it is better begin with the notion of *objet a*.

## *Object a*

*Objet a* is a difficult concept to describe, not least of all because it is Janus-faced. On the one hand it encapsulates our fantasy of who we are when we imagine that we fascinate the Other. On the other hand it is that which sets in motion our desire i.e. it encapsulates the conditions under

which we ourselves will be fascinated. In regard to the first meaning of *objet a* what is at stake is how we incarnate what we imagine fascinates the Other. Our incarnation of *objet a* will be based on our very early answers to the question ‘what does the Other want of me? What does the Other desire?’ Furthermore we will answer this question by observing what it is that captures the other’s interest with intensity (Sebel, 2004) and as there is some confusion between self and other, that which interests the other will come to be that which interests me.

For the young child these objects are likely to be the objects found only when they are already lost. They are likely to be objects around which the partial drives circulate. Thus they will be for example, the breast, the faeces, the voice, the gaze. These objects (eg. the breast) are initially experienced as belonging to the child himself. It is only when the object is lost (i.e. when the mother removes the breast) that the child becomes aware that the breast does not actually belong to him and therefore is a lost object, and as a lost object is also an object of desire, both to himself, and as he imagines it, to his mother. A similar situation pertains in relations to the faeces, the voice, the gaze, and it is these objects that Lacan believes we will attempt to incarnate in *objet a*. More accurately, we will attempt to incarnate in *objet a* the trace of jouissance originally attached to these lost objects, a jouissance which itself was lost at the point of symbolic castration.

It might sound strange that we might try to incarnate something abject as in faeces or shit for example. But certainly mothers of babies are very preoccupied with shit, and shitty behaviour does seem to get a rise out of the other (Sebel, 2004). Given this, why would we not incarnate shit in the particular ways that seem to capture the jouissance of the other? Why would we not fold into *objet a* all those constructs of speech and meaning evidenced by the Other that seem to be caught up in our lost objects, including shit. Bear in mind that each individual’s *objet a* will be deeply idiosyncratic, despite some common ingredients. These common ingredients will pertain to the fact that for all of us, certain objects (the breast, or the faeces, or the voice, or the gaze) intrinsically implicate both our jouissance and that of the Other. Jouissance is always on the side of *objet a*, as *objet a* is a composite of traces of lost gratification. Despite these common ingredients, each individual will incarnate these lost objects and their traces in an idiosyncratic manner.

However, incarnate in each of us, *objet a* will be that which in the subject is more than he is (Zizek, 1998). It is our secret treasure, our agalma, as Lacan calls it (1960–61). It is the recognition of this agalma that is a byproduct of a successful analysis. However, this recognition entails the realisation that the agalma or secret treasure is not anything other than that which provides some sort of fantasmatic consistency to our being (Zizek, 1998). In other words, the agalma or our secret treasure, i.e. that which is in us which is more than ourselves, is actually nothing at one level, but everything at another level, precisely because it provides some sort of fantasmatic consistency to our being. It is the incarnation that supports our sense of subjectivity in relation to the Other (Zizek, 1998).

*Objet a* is not only that which I incarnate, that which I imagine I am when I fascinate the Other, but it is also the incarnation of the conditions under which my own desire will be ignited. In this sense *objet a*, when I imagine I encounter it outside of myself, is the cause of my desire. That desire is not a force in search of a previously specified object. Rather it is a force to be ignited by, or set in motion by, an encountered object which maps onto *objet a*, residing as *objet a* does, in the unconscious.

Whilst Freud did not use the term *objet a*, he did indirectly write about it as it appeared in, and

was imbricated in the fantasy of the Wolf Man (Zizek, 1998). For the Wolf Man, that which set his desire in motion consisted of 'a woman viewed from behind on her hands and knees and washing or cleaning something on the ground in front of her' (Zizek, 1998, p. 91). However, it is important to note that both *objet a* and the fantasy which supports it constitute and are constituted by external circumstances. When external circumstances are sufficiently similar to map onto our internal *objet a*, our desire will be set in motion. This occurs in a reverberation of feedback loops implicating both the past and the present.

When desire is set in motion we then imagine the person who ignites it to be our ideal. We distort reality to maintain our fantasy, which is perhaps why the state of being in love may be said to be a state of madness. This having been said, we can now move on to think through the notion of the fundamental fantasy.

## The Fundamental Fantasy

The fundamental fantasy adds something to *objet a*. In the fundamental fantasy we see ourselves in relation to *objet a*, when we imagine the Other being fascinated by us (Zizek, 1998). If a woman's desire comes into being because a man looks at her in a particular way, the fundamental fantasy will stage her relationship to this look, i.e. to *objet a*. Her fundamental fantasy will bring together, in the same scene, the man's look and herself being seductive, or dismissive, or responding in some other way in regard to the look, while also being in the gaze of the Other (Zizek, 1998).

We stand in a particular position in regard to *objet a*, when we project the fundamental fantasy into the here and now. As we stand in this position, we expect the other's desire in the present to coincide with the Other's desire as we have historically construed it to be. However, the fundamental fantasy reconstitutes our desire ever afresh in the present despite its link to the past. As it brings our desire into being, it also hides something. It hides and conceals from us our points of *jouissance*, or enjoyment beyond the pleasure principle (Fink, 1997).

Katrine Libbrecht (1998) suggests that the fundamental fantasy can be considered as having at least two sides. The first is the side of the subject, which is also the side of speech and conscious desire. The second is the side of the *objet a*, which is also the side of *jouissance* leading to the experience of the drive, bearing in mind that it is the drive circulating around the lost object that constitutes *objet a* as it leaves its trace.

One effect of traversing the fantasy in a Lacanian analysis is that it institutes a separation of desire and the drive. To put this more accurately, we are better able to differentiate our points of enjoyment from the desire of the Other. Fink (1997) offers examples of the way that fantasy both constitutes desire and conceals our points of enjoyment. In regard to the fundamental fantasy, Fink states that the obsessive person views himself as a whole subject, not as someone who is unsure of what he is saying or what he wants. Thus the obsessional does not see himself as someone who is subject to lack, or as someone who has an unconscious. There is a refusal to acknowledge dependence on the other. Thus energy is invested in attempting to maintain a fantasmatic relationship with the cause of desire that is dependent on no one. This explains the obsessional's predilection for self-sufficient masturbation. If he does happen to be sexually involved with others, he regards them all as exchangeable. The individual qualities of each

partner are denied. Not any one of them can become a particular cause of sexual excitement. Instead each partner is transformed into a mother figure, and thus not an object of sexuality.

Another way of describing the fundamental fantasy of the obsessional has been offered by Verhaege (2004), who indicates that the obsessional's fantasy is that his life will begin only when his partner, to whom he gives all but himself, dies. At this point he will be enabled to find his real object of desire, which for the obsessional is always an unattainable woman. However, as Fink (1997) points out the obsessional's fantasy keeps him screened off from understanding the enjoyment he experiences in frustration in the sphere of the Other.

The hysteric, on the other hand, places all her energy in making herself into the object of the Other's desire so as to master it (Fink, 1997). She wishes to fulfil all for the Other who is the desiring subject in her fantasy, and not herself. While the obsessional's desire is impossible, the hysteric's is unsatisfied. Once again this works both ways, for much as she might keep her partner unsatisfied even while stimulating desire, it is a characteristic of the hysteric that she herself suffers from frigidity (Fink, 1997).

Having spoken this far of the fundamental fantasy of the neurotic, what of the pervert? Once again the fundamental fantasy involves a paradox. At the first level, in regard to eg masochism, pleasure seems to reside in going beyond the bounds of mainstream-condoned vanilla sex, transgressing the limits, breaking the law. But we find when examining some of the more mundane scenarios of masochists, that their preoccupation with installing the law is evidenced by their fascination with uniforms and insignia of the law (Fink, 1997). A fuller discussion of this, like that of the psychoses, is beyond the scope of this paper. The paper's focus is on analysis, and analysis is not possible in regard to psychosis, with a question mark left over perversion.

This question mark pertains, because given that perverts are happier than most with their lot, they seldom present for analysis. So we turn to the neurotic, as it is to them that the discourse of analysis applies as distinct from the discourse of the university or the discourse of the master.

In speaking of the discourse of analysis, Lacan (1972–73) indicates that it is the analyst's task to attempt to move from the position of the subject supposed to know to a semblance of *objet a*, or that which sets desire in motion, in order to allow an experiential understanding of the fundamental fantasy as it is reconstructed via speech in the present.

In regard to techniques, those of scansion, punctuation and oracular speech are commonly used. For example, a session may be interrupted (ie subject to scansion) at a particular point to underline an issue, direct attention to it or provoke thought (Fink, 1997). In general terms however, Lacanian interventions aim to avoid consolidating one interpretation or meaning by opening up the possibility of multiple meanings, especially unintended or unconscious ones. That is, the interventions of the analyst are aimed at provoking the analysand's desire for an analysis of the unconscious (Fink, 1997).

It is this analysis of the unconscious which ultimately underpins the traversal of the fantasy, and the destitution of the subject, via an experiential understanding of the layers of misrecognition of the self and a reordering the economy of desire and jouissance to be more compatible with the preservation of life, given jouissance's implication in the death drive. In this regard, the subject who has traversed his fantasy is one who now lives out the drive but this does not mean being a 'non-stop pleasure machine. Rather it means that desire stops inhibiting the subject from

obtaining satisfaction' (Fink, 1997 p210). With respect to this matter of the drive and jouissance it would also be seen as a mark of a successful analysis that there is an acceptance of the sinthome (Fink, 1997). This acceptance implies the antithesis of the resolution of the symptom, the sinthome represents the unique emblem of our jouissance, 'a kernel of enjoyment immune to the symbolic' or 'an invasion of the symbolic order by the subject's private jouissance' (Evans, 1996 pl90). It is an acceptance of this which marks a successful analysis.

We come by this acceptance alongside an acknowledgement of its complement. Illusory as it is, some fundamental fantasy is required for subjective consistency. It is this subjective consistency which allows us to keep enough distance from *objet a* and thus to prevent its transfiguration into *das Ding*. This is the case even as we traverse the fantasy and are rendered destitute by it. Thus at the end of this paper, as perhaps at the end of an analysis, we return to our starting point. For in the moment of traversing our fundamental fantasy, we are already in the process of unconsciously constructing a new way of maintaining some illusion of subjective consistency.

Illusion is what we live by. The best we can do is momentarily to see through it and to know it as we flee before ourselves to our vanishing point, even as we try to grasp ourselves. But perhaps the illusion we would do best to see through at this point is the one perpetuated by Freud (1937) in *Analysis Terminable and Interminable*. We cannot terminate analysis even though we may end this particular analysis. What we have seen we cannot unsee and once we are barred, truth will ever evade us as we remain always both more and less than who we are.

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