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# JACQUES LACAN AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

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compilation of data demonstrates brilliantly that a revolution has been going on since the 1960s in the United States in the study of young infants. This revolution constitutes a shift from considering the infant "a passive organism who was the object of forces which determined development" to mapping out the capabilities, as well as the limits, that infants do have.[53]

Despite all this, in current Anglo-American psychological and psychoanalytic *theory*, perception is usually equated with consciousness; memory, cognition, and ego development are seen as "late" occurrences; and the unconscious remains largely synonymous with the instinctual. While Klein believed that the infant cannot distinguish between fantasy and non-fantasy and while Spitz concludes that the newborn had no faculty of perception, representation, or volition, Lacan has indirectly related the actively busy and mimicking infant of American empirical studies to perception and cognition theories. He has made identificatory fantasies, interactions with others, and the effects of language causative in mental development and reality conception.[54] The neonate's first response to the world is to record representations of that world in a series of fantasmatic images that build bridges between its "helplessness" or boundarylessness and the outside world in order to ensure its survival.[55] From this perspective, an infant's capabilities are not innate manifestations of intelligence (a static concept), but evidence of biostructural deficiency—a lack of self-sufficiency—and of the infant's consequent dependence on objects in its gradual mastery over inadequacies in motor skill and identity. It is senseless, therefore, to accuse Lacan of ignoring the outside environment, as did Melanie Klein, for he makes initial dependence on that environment a permanent and enveloping dynamic in perception and intentionality.

After the transition to the mirror stage, the infant more obviously identifies and interacts with the primary caretaker, whose *imago* is introjected as a perceptual totum. During the six- to eighteen-month period, the child also learns to recognize an image of itself in a mirror, often in jubilation (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 18). The identification with a *Gestalt* of his own body is paralleled in the infant's relating to the mother's *imago* as if it were his own. The mother is introjected as *objet a* (a desired object), which, in this context, Lacan terms a representation of one's own *Gestalt*. In Schneiderman's words: "He takes it upon himself. He puts the image on, or as Lacan would say, he assumes it as his own" (*Returning*, p. 4). In 1949 Lacan described "the function of the mirror stage as a particular case of the function of the imago . . . [its purpose] to establish a relation between the organism and its reality . . . between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt*." The early identification with a *Gestalt* is a biological (natural) phenomenon. But this early identification also constitutes the first alienation for an infant, a split between outer form (big and symmetrical) and an inner sense of incoherence and dissymmetry. Lacan places this split at the heart of human knowledge (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 5). Human beings will forever after anticipate their own images in the images of others, a phenomenon Lacan refers to as a sense of "thrownness" (akin to Heidegger's theory of the human subject).



In linking pre–mirror- and mirror-stage identifications to the development of cognition, Lacan stresses that pre-mirror experience submerges the infant unawares into its surroundings. Mirror-stage identifications entail the *discovery* of difference, and the concomitant experience of awareness or delimiting alienation. I have adapted Lacan's use of Gottlob Frege's philosophical mathematical logic to symbolize the transition to the mirror stage by designating the infant as having passed cognitively from 0 to 1. The jubilation of the infant discovering itself in the mirror—which comes from the assumption of a kind of mastery over the preceding lack of coordination—occurs because its mirror image is fixed like a statue, the symmetry of which apparently reverses the baby's form by contrast with the turbulent movements that animate it (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, pp. 2, 18). The first subjective human knowledge, therefore, comes from a fascination with the human form, which an infant perceives to be an ideal unity. Mirror-stage identification with an external image of the human form both symbolizes the acquisition of a mental permanence and also marks the subject's destined alienation away from the naturalness of spontaneous fusion and toward a cultural dependency.[56] Society and language further widen a gap for which means must then be devised to paper it over.

As stated above, the idea that infant and mother seem fused during the early months of life is far from new. The psychoanalyst Margaret Mahler, among others, has commented at length on dependency and separation.[57] More recently, the child development researcher Burton L. White has said: "By the time a child is two years of age, and often much earlier, he will have established a very elaborate and detailed social contract with his primary caretaker. I personally believe that contract is relatively hard to subsequently alter or modify against its established direction. I think that what children acquire in that first two years is the first set of social skills and attitudes they will begin

to use with all people" (*First Three Years*, p. 128). White here comes close to describing the mirror stage, but without really understanding it. The originality of the fusion theory belongs to Klein, who created it, and to Winnicott and others, who—in Efron's words—"tamed it into a psychoanalytic description of what happens in infancy" (Efron, "Psychoanalytic Theory," p. 10). The theory of fusion with the mother is, in fact, object-relations theory. But Lacan can never be accused of simply appropriating a theory of "two body psychology," which he considers as erroneous as a "two ego psychoanalysis." The infant takes the mother to be its own anchor or center (Frege's 1), but this fusion is not static. Lacan considers it an ongoing source of intrasubjective, existential conflict in the here and now. This conflict is played out around issues of presence/absence and recognition dynamics. There is never a period of prefusion or defusion from the (m)Other, therefore, since she is psychically represented at first (zero to six months) in relation to fragmented images or objects of Desire, and then—as a whole object—becomes the source of one's own body image. At the end of the mirror stage, she is repressed as the primordial pivot of Desire in one's unconscious. In this connection she acts as the mediator of Law in reference to the Father's Name.

In *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* (1976) Dorothy Dinnerstein described an interdependence of mother and child according to which the infant's first self is actually the mother's self. She views individuality as breaking away from the mother and neurosis as falling back into her purview.[58] Lacan added the step of making the effects of this first invasion the source of a primordial unconscious. Later the mother's Desires and words are transformed by the substitutive, displacing nature of primary-process laws, and *eo ipso* are not directly available to consciousness. Lacan, thus, subverted the apparent symmetry of the self's double in the mirror. For underlying any sense of mirror-stage symmetry through identification with the human totum there flows a piecemeal system, a network of fragments and part-objects, which first served to symbolize a void during the pre-mirror stage. To sum up so far then: infants lack physical coordination in the first six months of life despite well-developed visual capacities. Lacan located this pre-mirror experience as the source of the common fantasy or dream of a fragmented body. A compensatory identification with whole forms follows in the subsequent mirror stage (six to eighteen months), and this establishes a feeling of unity. Such unity is, nevertheless, imposed from without and consequently is asymmetrical, fictional, and artificial. Lacan explodes the supposed "unity" of the neo-Freudian ego as a tenuous illusion. His mirror stage must, therefore, be understood as a metaphor for the vision of harmony of a subject essentially in discord.



It follows that the drama of the mirror stage moves from a sense of insufficiency to one of anticipation, but not ultimately to one of unity. The mirror-stage structure will disrupt the seeming autonomy and control of the speaking subject later in life. Lacan theorized that adults will always be caught up in the spatial lures of identification with their *semblables*. They will perceive reality in terms of successive pre–mirror- and mirror-stage fantasies, which extend from the fragmented body image (recuperable in dreams, paintings, drug experiences, or psychosis) to a *Gestalt* of the whole body, and finally to the assumption of a subjective armor—the alienated identity whose rigid structure will mark a subject's entire mental development (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 4).[59] But though the mirror-stage experience of localization of the body signals the beginning of a sense of identity, this unity has been found *outside* and, accordingly, the destiny of humans is to (re-)experience themselves only in relationship to others.

In 1936 Lacan gave a paper entitled "The Mirror Stage" at the fourteenth International Psychoanalytic Congress in Marienbad, Czechoslovakia. Taking this alleged bibliographical ghost as her starting point, psychoanalytic critic Jane Gallop has written an essay "Lacan's 'Mirror Stage': Where to Begin?" (see note 33, above). Indeed one might well "begin" with Lacan's 1932 dissertation and its study of feminine paranoia and narcissism, and then proceed to the obvious influence of object-relations theory on Lacan's thought. One might even imagine this "unseen" paper describing the fusion between infant and mother as a "looking-glass phase" of development.[60] From a bibliographical point of view, however, Lacan's first paper on the mirror stage is thought to pose a problem. In Sheridan's translation of Lacan's *Ecrits* one reads in a bibliographical note that an English translation of the 1936 mirror-stage paper appeared in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 18 (January 1937), under the title "The Looking-glass Phase" (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. xiii). Upon looking in the journal in question, Gallop found under the title "The Looking-glass Phase" simply the words "J. Lacan (Paris), The Looking-glass Phase." "There is no version, not even a summary of the paper," says Gallop, "although the other papers from the Congress are summarized" (Gallop, "Lacan's 'Mirror Stage,'" p. 119).

Carrying her researches further, Gallop discovered in Lacan's 1966 edition of the *Ecrits* a footnote in the introductory essay to part II

("De nos antécédents"), where Lacan says that he did not deliver the mirror-stage text for the report of the 1936 Congress (p. 67n). Gallop concludes that there is no published version of the original article on the mirror stage and follows this deduction with an analogy to the difficulties of beginning to work on Lacan's teachings. "Now my point is not really or not simply to be fastidious about chronological order, but rather to point to some difficulty around the question of where to begin, some slight confusion about the 'beginning' of the *Ecrits*, some trouble about where (and how) to begin reading Lacan" (Gallop, "Lacan's 'Mirror Stage,'" p. 119). The answer is to be found, however, in the same passage (*Ecrits*, 1966, p. 67n).

The note on page 67 of the *Ecrits* refers the reader to pages 184–85 of the same edition.[61] In 1946 Lacan opened a conference on "psychogenesis," recounting his psychiatric days at the hospital Bonneval. In the report entitled "Propos sur la causalité psychique" he spoke of his mirror stage, saying it would be better to call it the "mirror phase." He then recounts a story of having given a paper on this topic to the 1936 Congress in Marienbad, at least up to the point coinciding with the beginning of the tenth minute of his presentation when Ernest Jones, presiding, interrupted him. The implication is that Lacan was not permitted to continue, or chose not to go on. He does say, however, that some Viennese colleagues gave his ideas a warm welcome. Later, in his 1966 introduction to part II of the *Ecrits*, Lacan referred to the Marienbad experience as having taken him, and those accompanying him, to the heart of a technical and theoretical resistance within international psychoanalysis. The invention of the mirror stage constituted a problem that would become more and more evident (*Ecrits*, 1966, p. 67). Earlier, in 1946, Lacan had told those attending the conference on psychogenesis that the essence of his mirror-stage paper (that he had not given to the Marienbad Congress for publication) was to be found in some lines of his article on the family, which had appeared in 1938 in the *Encyclopédie française*. Henri Wallon, whose own work on the family had helped Lacan shape his mirror-stage ideas, was the director of the volume in which Lacan's article appeared (*Ecrits*, 1966, pp. 184–85). This probably explains why Lacan chose to unveil his mirror-stage theory in this particular publication, instead of with the Marienbad collection. It also explains a bibliographical riddle that has stymied successive commentators.

By 1949 Lacan's ideas on the mirror stage were fully recorded in the essay "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience" (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, pp. 1–7).



In other words, the mirror stage plays a major role in forming the basis of mentality. When a child stops trying to possess or be the object in the mirror at around eighteen months of age, the specular subject of identification has turned into a social one. Or, to quote Schneiderman, the mirror stage ends when the child can recognize that its parents are not entirely responsive to inarticulate demands (*Returning*, pp. 4–5). I would suggest an additional reason that eighteen months marks an epiphanic developmental moment. Having mastered motor coordination, infants are no longer preoccupied with spatial location of the body. It seems logical that their psychic energy could better be placed in coping with the next sequential task required by their surroundings: that of mastering the "foreign" language that has pervaded their ethos for eighteen months, but in whose social "communications" they do not truly participate. In Chapter 5 we shall consider Lacan's hypothesis that the mirror stage comes to a close with the entry of the Oedipal conflict and gradually gives rise to the coherent use of language. Instead of treating images as if they were real, the post-mirror child begins to represent them in words and so passes from a state of "nature" to one of culture and language (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 98). Symbolic (i.e., differential) elements—the ability to name things—replace Imaginary ones (i.e., images) in an identificatory reshaping of the subject. The imagistic and fantasmatic subject of identifications continues, nonetheless, to coexist (in a double inscription) with the subject of language and cultural codes throughout life.

Lacan's mirror stage has been misconstrued by literalist attempts to render it inseparable from the experience thereby implied: an infant's recognition of its own shape in the apparatus of a mirror.[62] Lacan never intended to link the appearance of a human ego to a looking glass, nor even to the fact that—like Narcissus—an infant could see its reflection on the surface of a body of water. The scenario of the infant at the mirror is the index of something that has always occurred, with or without that apparatus: The mirror serves as a metaphor and a structural concept at the same time that it points to a crucial experience in psychic development. The Lacanian commentator Anika Lemaire says that by viewing the process of humanization in mirror-metaphor terms Lacan eschews the problem of ethnological and historical relativity in favor of a formalizable mathematics of the subject.[63] Our identity evolves in a paradoxical context, then, out of a feeling of Oneness, which is really made up of two beings (*le trait unaire*).[64] Nevertheless, Lacan said that this "little reality" (*ce peu de réalité*), the spatial captivation or fixation

by the mother's *imago,* determines humans as already alienated from other beings in all later endeavors (Sheridan, *Ecrits,* pp. 3–4).

A feature that distinguishes the end of the mirror-stage drama is that "Cain and Abel" jealousy by which the infant identified with its mother is envious to the death of *anyone or anything* that threatens the union (Sheridan, *Ecrits,* p. 5). Many commentators including St. Augustine have provided support for Lacan's description of primordial jealousy. In the French analyst's view, when the infant symbiotically bound to its mother wishes away the threat to this symbiosis (Frege's 1) and yet angrily blames the intruder, the confusion of the two moments gives rise to the paranoiac structure of the ego. Henceforth, aggressiveness is basic to the makeup of the ego and reappears as resentment, feelings of inferiority, and in other manifestations. Ernest Becker has described the exhibition of jealousy in sibling rivalry as "all-absorbing, relentless, a critical problem which reflects the basic human condition."[65] His observation that sibling rivalry extends beyond childhood is not new, nor are Lacan's theories on interdependency. Lacan's originality lies in his claim that the dynamic of mirror-relation identification is the intrasubjective route not only to personal conflict and misunderstandings but also to an organized, unconscious mode of perception, to adult fixations, Desire, a reality discourse, and human bonding. Lacan need not seek prototypes for human behavior in turn-of-the-century myths such as mechanistic energy, an instinctual id, collective archetypes, presymbolic sensorimotor sequences (Jean Piaget), or the "selfish" gene. As stated above, any infant bears traits of its biological and genetic inheritance, but these characteristics are activated and developed in a pre-existing context of images and language—in already elaborated social situations—and in this sense they can only be called secondary. The subject formed by pre–mirror- and mirror-stage identification is so individual and personal, indeed, that Lacan has called it the *moi* (the o' in Schéma L).

## Narcissism and Identification

The history of psychoanalysis has been, at least in part, the history of efforts to uncover ever more primitive sources of psychic development.[66] In his attempts to clarify Freud's views on narcissism and identification, Lacan has found the sources of psychic being in earlier stages and in more concrete places than did Freud. Havelock Ellis first attached a psychological sense to the word narcissicism in 1898 in reference to autoeroticism or any other form of sexual expression excited in the absence of another person. Freud first used the term in 1910 with reference to the Greek myth to mean psychic energy directed toward one's own ego. In an effort to explain the object choice (sexual libido) of male homosexuals, he said that they indirectly and narcissistically loved themselves as the mother had loved them (Laplanche and Pontalis, *Vocabulaire,* p. 261). This explanation presented more problems than solutions. What is there that is sick or lethal in self-love? Why, in fact, did Narcissus die?



In the Daniel-Paul Schreber case (1911) and in *Totem and Taboo* (1913), Freud viewed narcissism as an intermediary stage between autoeroticism and object love. According to this scheme, there were three love stages in sexual evolution: autoeroticism, homosexuality, and heterosexual or object love. In 1914 he published "On Narcissism: An Introduction," in which he described the role of libidinal investments—love for self and other—in the ensemble of psychoanalytic theory.[67] By adumbrating a principle of conservation of libidinal energy, Freud established the idea of a balance between an ego libido (self-love or narcissism) and object libido (love for other or sexual choice) through which the one enriched itself at the expense of the other (Laplanche and Pontalis, *Vocabulaire,* p. 261). But the investment balance of narcissism's libidinal energy might shift. He saw the ego in psychosis, for example, as disinvesting the other (object) and consuming the whole charge.[68] After "Mourning and Melancholia" (1916)—in which he broadened the concept of narcissism to include identification with the lost object—Freud was to evolve a distinction in his 1920 topology between primary and secondary narcissism. Indifferentiation of ego and id and a total absence of object relations were said to characterize primary narcissism. This was found in newborns, psychotics, or those in mourning or depressed. But in secondary narcissism, the ego was actively differentiating itself from the id by its adaptive function, and through identification with others (Laplanche and Pontalis, *Vocabulaire,* p. 262). In "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego" (1921), he referred to the narcissistic investment in self as an "ideal ego," and the objects toward whom ego libido flows as "ego ideals."

Having looked at love in terms of identification with the chosen sexual partner(s) in "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" (1905), Freud had reduced it to two types: (1) narcissistic love based on self-identification with a person one would like to be or to resemble, and (2) anaclitic or attachment love based on an object choice or a person one would like to have. Freud saw the narcissistic type as immature or regressive, because these individuals love someone who is either

what they once were; what they would like to be; or someone once a part of themselves. The mature or anaclitic type is said to be genitally differentiated: a man of this type loves the woman who feeds him, while an anaclitic woman loves the man who protects her (parental substitutes). Freud further hypothesized that—insofar as women have ill-defined ego boundaries—they are more prone to narcissistic love than men (see Chapter 5). When, in "Mourning and Melancholia," Freud added the idea that narcissism is a factor in depression (i.e., identification with the deceased beloved could impoverish the ego), he had established the Freudian principle that has become the basis for a contemporary psychoanalytic theory of internalized object relations.

During the period of profound modification of his system around 1920, Freud did not abandon his 1914 notion of a narcissism contemporaneous with the formation of the ego through identification with others. He stressed, instead, the primary and secondary differences. One of the difficulties that Lacan has found with Freud's idea of primary narcissism—a state which would find its prototype in intrauterine life and be reproduced later in sleep—is that this standpoint implies a newborn has *no* perceptive opening on the exterior world. The logical impasse is obvious: How does one bring a monad enclosed in and upon itself to the progressive recognition of others? Laplanche and Pontalis have also pointed out the problem of using the term narcissism to discuss a state of nondifferentiation between ego and id, since no specular or identificatory relationship exists (*Vocabulaire*, p. 264).

Freud's terms describing identification are not any more constant than those depicting narcissism. The psychoanalytic critic Jim Swan has expressed the opinion that the development of all Freud's theories records his struggle with the contradictions in the concept of identification (see p. 7). One may find at least three types of identification in Freud's texts. In primary identification, the original, pre-Oedipal link to the mother is connected to the oral stage. Later Freud designated the Oedipus complex as a secondary identification, made by introjecting the *imago* of the same sex parent. In his 1914 article Freud's focus on identification in sexual object choice found its primacy in the relationship to the mother. In 1921 he advanced the idea in "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego" that there is a presexual identification with the father, which is the prototype of later group ideals and identification with a leader (*SE*, vol. 18). In this article he says: "Identification is known to psychoanalysis as the earliest expression of an emotional tie with another



person. It plays a part in the early history of the Oedipus complex. A little boy will exhibit a special interest in his father: he would like to grow like him and be like him, and take his place everywhere" (*SE*, 18:105). But, third, in "The Ego and the Id" (1923), the pre-Oedipal infant does not distinguish sexually between mother and father: The first identification here occurs with both parents, not just the father.[69] Again, in the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933), Freud compared identification with the oral-cannibalistic incorporation of another person—reaffirming the oral pre-Oedipal link to the mother in primary identification.[70] In this way he retained the idea that mature or secondary identification is masculine (active and independent) as opposed to feminine (passive and dependent). The picture is confusing, then, because we see identification functioning at pre-Oedipal and Oedipal stages, and alternatively as an active, passive, or reciprocal process.

New interpretations of the roles of narcissism and identification in human behavior have for some time created a forum for theory and debate. Object-relations theorists (Klein, Winnicott, Michaël Balint, Edith Jacobson, and others) have stressed the processes of identification and differentiation in self-other relations. Here the child-mother relationship is central to a developing sense of identity. The psychologist Erik Erikson sees identity as a complex series of developmental interactions between a person and the environment.[71] The literary critic Norman Holland bases his arguments for making meaning in reading dynamics on an "identity theme."[72] The term is borrowed from Heinz Lichtenstein's 1961 article, in which an identity principle was suggested as a replacement for Freud's death instinct.

Currently, object-relations narcissism is at the center of a psychoanalytic debate between the American-based analysts Heinz Kohut (d. October 1981) and Otto Kernberg. Both men have sought to ascertain the origins of narcissism and how to treat the "disorder." While Kohut saw primary narcissism as an arrest occurring in normal developments—a confused, shifting sense of self—Kernberg views it as a defense against dependency, rage, and envy, and has elaborated the concept of the "borderline personality."[73] Although both men treat narcissism as potentially pathological, Kohut has striven to humanize narcissism, whereas Kernberg retains a more conservative Freudian picture of narcissistic disorders as inseparable from Oedipal problems. A summary of Kohut's influence has declared: "Narcissism has long been viewed as a negative, self-serving emotion which alienates others and keeps the self from fulfillment. In current psy-

chological theory, narcissism is being perceived as a natural consequence of early neglect, and an empathic attempt to experience other objects as extensions of the self in order to reintegrate them with the nuclear self."[74] Kohut defined the primary narcissistic self as grandiose and exhibitionistic and proposed that it subsists as an archaic *imago* underlying the secondary narcissism through which an infant identifies with its parents. The self thus portrayed is an imaginary structure in the mind, and the ego is the agency of reality. If the original mothering (primary narcissistic process of mirroring) was extremely bad, the adult may later manifest fragmentation of both body and self-image. If there was early insufficiency in parent idealization or secondary narcissism—identification with positive self-objects—the adult may display "object hunger"—the unfulfilled search for satisfaction in relationships. Kohut's goal as analyst was to respond warmly and empathically to an analysand, in an effort to help him or her unite the nonintegrated or repressed (isolated, split-off, disavowed) aspects of the grandiose self into the adult personality or "reality ego."[75] In this way he hoped to transform archaic narcissism into realistic goals and self-esteem (Kohut, *Analysis*, p. 192).

In one sense Lacan was more conservative than either Kernberg or Kohut, who both linked narcissism to identification. Like Freud, Lacan saw the narcissistic "investment" of objects and identification (object libido) as different phenomena, although not in a seesaw libidinal balance (as Freud wrote in 1914). Unlike Kohut or Kernberg, Lacan did not consider narcissism as pathological per se. Instead, he presented narcissism as the irreducible and atemporal (spatial) feature of human identity. Rather than attribute the persistence of narcissistic wounds in an adult to "bad" mirroring or insufficient parental idealization, Lacan located narcissistic difficulties in a lack of psychic separation from the (m)Other and the resultant incapacity to submit to the metaphorical reality principle: the Law of the Name-of-the-Father, or the Oedipal structure. The key to his theory goes back to the idea of prematuration at birth. Because there is an inherent "lack" in being, narcissism is the necessary assumption of an *alien* ego, taken on in the erotic captivation of the infant by the image of the other. During the mirror stage the infant wants to possess the mother because she provides an object of constancy and continuity that do not reside within. Hence, *identification* with a particular object provides the narcissistic kernel of any identity that will contain a mixture of "bad" and "good" objects or effects. But this identification is secondary; the drive toward object orientation as a means of compensation is primary. Still, just as the earliest form of the narcissistic ego subsequently reflects the paradise of a child's first loves, any *moi* will be elaborated throughout life by added layers of love objects who serve as ego ideals and are chosen in the image of early relinquished objects, even those one might consider "bad."



By rejecting Freud's idea of autoeroticism (primary narcissism) and extending the scope of his concept of secondary narcissism, Lacan made identification the means by which an ego (o') is formed and narcissism its foundation. In "The Ego and the Id" (1923) Freud described the character of the ego as "a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes and [which] contains the history of those object choices" (*SE*, 19:29). But, Freud maintains, a healthy ego, ideally, will fend off those influences. According to Lacan, because Freud lacked our current knowledge about ethnology and the role of mimesis in animal behavior, he abandoned his insights about the importance of narcissistic identification in ego development. The pre-mirror, fantasmatic merging with images is what Lacan has called primary identification; his secondary identification is the mirror-stage fusion with others as objects (Freud's secondary narcissism). Lacan therefore views Freud's secondary narcissism, with its attributes of permanence as manifest in ego ideals (others), as the basic process of humanization, as well as the cornerstone of human interrelations. It lies at the heart of all social exchange—well in advance of that marriage exchange out of which Lévi-Strauss would construct society.

The critic Anthony Wilden has pointed out that by reinterpreting Freud's concept of ego ideals as the alter ego of the *moi* Lacan was led to make "more and more explicit statements derived from the Kleinian observations of children" (*LS*, p. 267). Lacan thought that by pushing back the limits within which we can see the subjective function of identification operate, Klein showed us the primacy and centrality of the body as the real and fantasmatic origin of identification and symbolization (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, pp. 20–21). But the prespecular body to which Lacan refers has no sense of its boundaries. Here the "objects of Desire" (sucking, excrement, the voice, the gaze) loom as the primary imagistic and sensual matrices that will help the neonate orient its body in the world. Lacan's dynamic picture replaces Klein's static one with the fluidity or flux of perceptual experience and stresses again the link between object incorporation (or fusion) and man's specific prematuration. By postulating a phase of structuring prior to Klein's conception of internalized good and bad, of whole- and part-objects, Lacan emphasized the crucial impor-

tance of the ambiguity of inside/outside, boundary/non-boundary distinctions which underlies the process of introjection and projection itself.[76]

But, according to Laplanche and Pontalis, Lacan's subject of pre-mirror primary identification has its prototype, even before Klein's stress on objects, in the ego of Freud's "The Id and the Ego," where the ego is first and foremost a body ego or projection of a surface, as well as a surface entity (*Vocabulaire*, p. 81). Indeed, in refutation of those critics who consider that Lacan ignores biology and sexuality, one must heed Lacan's repeated insistence that *being* is above all body (*Séminaire* XX, p. 127). By this, however, Lacan does not mean instinctual stages, impersonal drive, or witness of a parental sexual scene. In moving primary narcissism away from Freud's solipsistic notion of it, Lacan redefined this as the corporal image that the subject evolves of itself. It follows, therefore, that every person has already been libidinized from the start of life.

A coefficient of this primary eroticization of the body is aggressiveness. While many students of human behavior consider aggressiveness innate, Lacan finds it to be one more proof of a pre-mirror building up of identity from the outside. Aggressive intentions are linked to the earliest *imagos* of body disintegration, well in advance of mirror-stage identification with a totum. "There is a specific relation here between man and his own body that is manifested in a series of social practices—from rites involving tattooing, incision, and circumcision in primitive societies to what, in advanced societies, might be called the Procrustean arbitrariness of fashion" (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 11).[77] Lacan has located the reappearance of prespecular fragmentary images—such as bursting, dismemberment, and so forth—in the play of children between two and five years of age, and later in dreams, fantasies, painting, and poetry, as well as in sadistic crimes and perversions. In his review of Lacan's thought, Wollheim has described Lacan's theory of aggressiveness as "the infant's reaction to early mirror-derived images of its body. . . . Aggression is the infant's response to the tensions, threats, and, above all, confusions attendant upon primary identification" ("The Cabinet," p. 39). Wollheim is confusing primary identification and the mirror stage here. In the first six months of life the infant is unaware of a specular relationship to the world. Only with the secondary identification of the mirror stage are archaic images and effects of primary identification linked to mirror recognition dynamics. From the start of mirror-stage awareness, aggressiveness or "infant rage" seems to me to be a response to loss of constancy or continuity (i.e., psychic potency). Later in life aggressiveness will become a reaction to the loss of self-esteem or prestige.



After the mirror stage, aggressiveness is more specifically related to separation/recognition dynamics and is at the base of the paranoiac structure of the human subject. Herein Lacan has made a leap from his early work on the phenomenology of experience to what he calls a formula of equivalence: the equivalence of aggressiveness as a part of the libido and paranoid states. Aggressiveness can harken back to primary, corporal narcissism, then, or can be a coefficient of secondary narcissism that functions by secondary identification with others (ego ideals). Secondary narcissism permits a person to form a libidinal relationship to the world in general (*Séminaire* I, p. 144). It also serves to appease aggressiveness through narcissistic identification: self-love displaced onto an-other.

This picture may become somewhat clearer after a brief look at Lacan's four patterns of psychoanalytic narcissistic transference, which Martha N. Evans has described in an article in the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* (1979). First, an analysand identifies with the analyst in terms of his or her own identity. The emphasis is on likeness and the analyst is perceived as a counterpart (like Kohut's twinship transference). Second, the analytic confrontation aims to reactivate the mirror-stage splitting, that is, to break down the ideal unity or mirror *imago* that Lacan equates with secondary identification and that was initially counterposed between six and eighteen months to the boundaryless, disconnected sense of body and experience of the pre-mirror stage. In this phase of transference, the analyst is cast as an ideal by the analysand and identified with the Other(A) which, as Schneiderman points out, Lacan has described as the "supposed *subject* of knowing" (*Returning*, p. vii). Evans compares this second stage to Kohut's idealizing transference. In the third stage the ideal image of the analyst should be seen as an illusion, the realization of which parallels a disintegration of the analysand's supposition of "knowing." This, Lacan metaphorically terms "death," for the unified *moi*—the subject of narcissism or the ideal ego—gives a person a sense of "self" cohesion. Any unraveling of the strands that went into weaving that identity as a conviction of "being" causes a de-being of being: a sense of fragmenting.

The primordial *moi* is the scaffolding of individuality that was formed through primary identifications with images, objects, and others as a strategy of defense: to block the apprehension (splitting sensation) which comes from the difficulty of situating the infant body in the world. Secondary—i.e., mirror-stage—identification

brings an intimation of unity and continuity via the human *Gestalt*. When the other (analyst) reflects an ideal unity—supports one's *moi* identifications—the narcissistic slope of the *moi* is gratified. When the ideal is shattered, the avatar of aggressiveness arises and shows itself in projected blame, disenchantment, intimations of fragmentation, and so forth. The goal of aggressiveness here is to protect the *moi* from perceiving the tenuous fragility of its own formation. Lacan has frequently drawn attention to the danger implicit in any disintegration of the *moi* by reason of its close relationship to death; the *moi* is a point of *recoupement* between the common discourse of everyday speech (in which a subject is caught and "alienated") and his or her psychological reality (*Séminaire* II, pp. 245–46). The insistence of the *moi* on retaining its (fictional) unity of individual perception constitutes what psychoanalysts call resistance. From another perspective, however, one might call this stubbornness a survival insistence (the repetition which Lacan has placed "beyond the pleasure principle").

The fourth stage entails recognition of the *moi's* source in the Other(A). The French psychoanalyst Moustapha Safouan has said the nicest definition one can give the end of analysis is "death's death," for it is a matter of an invitation to live beyond that which fixed one in the identical (Schneiderman, *Returning*, pp. 166–67). "Knowledge" or recognition of the unconscious is the path to relative cure or symptom relief. The transference is not really, then, to the analyst, who only serves as a guide to the learning of the signifiers in the Other's discourse: the analysand must learn the alienness of the Other(A). The speaking subject (*je*) conveys the identity drama of the *moi* (Who am I? How do others see me?). But inasmuch as "saying" and "being" are not the same things, ineffability dwells at the level of consciousness. Clarity and "truth" reside in the unconscious Other(A), where the discrete articulations of one's identity exist as "pure signifiers" concerning birth, love, procreation, and death. The unconscious meanings attached to these signifiers appear at the surface as hieroglyphics. Even though an analysand may, therefore, at one stage take the analyst to be her or his alter ego (specular ego ideal), the other in the mirror can never be a relationship of identity, but merely a dialectical experience of resemblance and hence a replay of mirror-stage discordance. In this context, narcissism and identification emerge as clearly different functions (actually at war) for, as Wilden points out: "It is always a question of each trying to take the other's place" (*LS*, p. 168). Others give identificatory shape



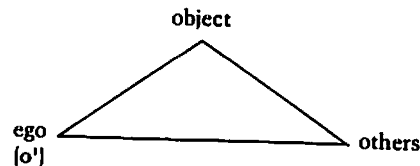
to a *moi* that, paradoxically, seeks the meaning of its own alienation through others' (ego ideals) and in language. If an analysis is to succeed, then, aggressiveness (that is, negative transference) *must* occur, since it is the initial "knot" of the analytic drama (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 14).

Tension, anxiety, conflict, ambiguity, and oscillation characterize all human behavior. They have their explanation in the nonpeaceful coexistence of the specular *moi* of narcissism, aware of but divided from the Other(A) from which it was formed, and forced to verify itself through others, despite the Real flux and instability of human response amid changing patterns of identifications and events. This quest is undertaken, moreover, through the indirect and yet further alienating path of language. Lacan's *moi* is most appropriately a narcissistic structure, then, since Narcissus died of his failure to embark on the quest for alterity (i.e., Echo).[78] "I have succeeded there where paranoia fails," Freud said, a statement which Lacan interprets to mean that when the subject's roots in the Other(A) become apparent, an opening can be made through the speaking *je* by which one can interrogate the paranoid—i.e., dialectical—instance of knowledge which inhabits us. Narcissism therefore holds the personality together, but its negative effects of alienation, rivalry, grandiosity, and aggressiveness can only be perceptually mediated in the realm of Real event. At such times, the social subject of consciousness may glimpse the movements of the narcissistic subject of identity, briefly rendering it an object of awareness. It is fitting, then, that Lacan should describe his analytic praxis as a space in which to induce a controlled paranoia: "What I have called paranoiac knowledge is shown . . . to correspond in its more or less archaic forms to certain critical moments that mark the history of man's mental genesis, each representing a stage in objectifying identification" (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 17).

Lacan views secondary identification with others as a replay of primary identification with the mother. The former is, in consequence, an intentional mechanism for objectifying the narcissistic *moi* both in its primary and secondary characteristics. As stated at the outset, Lacan's picture of narcissism is more comprehensive than those theories which make it only a pathology. We have also seen that it provides a conceptual link between fragmentation and unity, between relationships and language. And this makes any use of language dialectically charged and dependent on an out-of-sight meaning system. In this way, Lacan's theory obviates the contradictory

contentions of Freud that (1) narcissistic love is felt toward someone who represents what the lover once was, and (2) mature love is felt toward parental substitutes. These views would make all relational love rigidly role bound and necessarily out of step with current thought in the human sciences. Even Kohut's picture of primary narcissism as reflected in "object hunger," isolation, dependency, or low self-esteem—in opposition to realistic self-esteem—is less descriptive of a "character disorder" than typical of any human person's propensities under certain kinds of stress. Lacan, of course, has a theory of neurosis that we shall duly consider (Chapter 5) and here narcissism does play a role, insofar as neurosis entails an imbalance between the subject and the Other(A). But in Lacan's epistemology one can never be "rid" of the narcissistic *moi*, or integrate it into a whole "self," since this would be tantamount to being rid of the source of identity. It would also be tantamount to being rid of any active unconscious in the sense that the *moi* points "beyond" to its own formative (and informative) origins. One can, however, become intermittently aware of one's own *moi* and its role in recognition dynamics and thus gain a measure of freedom in psychic distance from the Other(A). One can rarely *not* depend on others, however, to validate one's narcissism and point the way to the "truth" in the Other(A).

Answering Freud's quandary about the source of energy at the service of the reality principle, Lacan replaced Freud's biological concept with "narcissistic passion" (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 21). The goal of this energy is the interaction with others, which is intended to assure the *moi* of its value. In *Séminaire* XI (p. 219), Lacan described the object of love (its aim or goal) as identification with the object (person) of love. To be desired is the object of love, more basic than the desire to be "made love to" (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 19).




But because the *moi* does not reflect upon itself, it does not know that its goal is recognition: in other words, that to be desired is the libidinal object, not a person per se (*Séminaire* XI, p. 220). Elsewhere Lacan points out that a child does not depend so much on its mother, as on her love (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 198). In such a context Desire derived from lack (*manque-à-être* or want-of-being) elicits Desire as exchange. Consequently, others function as screens onto which the identity drama is projected ("I am . . .") via the "play" (*jeu*) of prestige, bearing, shame, rivalry, and so on—the supposedly insignificant stuff of everyday life (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 307). But though Lacan sees natural maturation as dependent on a cultural mediation (via the pacifying function of ego ideals), others alone cannot terminate or resolve the identity quest (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, pp. 5–6). The identity question is endlessly repeated as a circular message from the Other (A) discourse ("I am. . . . Am I not?") to the Other(A), via the other. This process is constantly "in play" in the order of the Real. From such a perspective, any psychoanalytic theory that hypothesizes ideal "ego mastery" through genital (object) love or integrative "wholeness" is simply a self-deluding myth, a compensatory fiction of ontological wholeness (*Séminaire* XI, p. 216). The "I" can achieve a certain balance and harmony through love. But in the Lacanian intrasubjective dynamic between the *moi* and the Other's Desire and their refraction through the distortion of language and via the intersubjectivity of relationship, this balance will be like the eternal ebb and flow of the sea.[19]



The philosopher Paul Ricoeur has stressed that Freud's concept of narcissism points to the drive that exists in place of reflection (the *Cogito*). Generally speaking, Lacan developed this theory, calling narcissistic knowledge and endeavor a false or aborted *Cogito* (Wilden, *LS*, p. 527). In other words, "truth" does not lie along the paths of introspection or reflection. By viewing narcissism as the force behind human drive, but by locating its fuel in the Desire to be desired or for *recognition*, Lacan taught that *cognition* (as a philosophical dilemma of mind) is governed by narcissism and Desire. Thus, given the scope of Lacan's theory, it would be an error to equate thoughtlessly his narcissistic *moi* with Kohut's grandiose, archaic self, since the two psychoanalysts conceptualize the human subject quite differently. There is no whole "self" in Lacan's epistemology. Kohut depicted the "self" as an image or structure in the mind, whereas for Lacan the *moi* is one of the constituents of mind (Kohut, *Analysis*, p. xv). Although it is also the source of grandiosity and infantile identity fixations, Lacan's *moi* is far more than an infantile, archaic form. As the kernel of identity and subjectivity, Lacan's *moi* builds a bridge to others, plays a role in governing intentionality, and is the purveyor of one's view of reality within one's conscious life, as well as the agent of drive (*Trieb*) (see Chapter 2). Moreover, while Lacan does not abandon drive theory—although he reinterprets it—Kohut

does. Lacan's *moi* is, therefore, dynamically engaged, but Kohut's archaic "self" is a static entity buried in a remote past. Kohut never succeeds in defining this archaic "self," nor does he link it to effects other than parenting (mirroring). Whereas Kohut equates the mother with the archaic mirror image, and the father with the later idealized self, Lacan refused to view the psyche's formation in terms of a simplistic, A gives rise to B causality, explaining it instead in terms of mathematics and symbols. The early mother is internalized as the source of one's own narcissism, prior to the acquisition of individual boundaries, while the father's subsequent, symbolic role is that of teaching these boundaries—he is a limit-setter. As a result, the father is later both feared and emulated, since his presence has taught the infant about laws and taboos. Structurally speaking, woman becomes identified with sameness, and man with difference. It is to a more exhaustive discussion of the Lacanian *moi* that we must now turn.

## The *Moi*

As the unconscious subject of identifications and narcissism, the *moi* assumes a place of privilege over the speaking subject, rendering the latter opaque and discontinuous. Lacan has said that his own return to the unconscious ego as center and common measure is *not* implied in Freud's discourse. On the contrary, the further the reader advances in the third stage of Freud's oeuvre (after 1932), the more the conscious ego is portrayed as a mirage or a sum of identifications (*Séminaire* II, p. 244). By emending this Freudian line of thought and by rendering the identificatory ego unconscious—i.e., unaware of itself—Lacan went beyond the notion of a synthesizing ego function and beyond the proverbial pleasure principle to what actually is "beyond": the common discourse where the *moi* (a composite of ego) shows up as repetitive themes (*Séminaire* II, p. 244). In his 1957–58 Seminar Lacan elaborated this theory. It has been published as the essay "The Subversion of the subject and the dialectic of desire in the Freudian unconscious" (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, pp. 292–325). But Lacan's picture of the *moi* is not easy to grasp, in part because he makes no behavioral separation between conscious and unconscious surfaces, although the conscious and unconscious are fundamentally separate and belong to different orders. One cannot therefore simply dismiss the *moi* as the unconscious and the *je* as consciousness, because both participate in both systems.

Some commentators have tried to clarify these ambiguities by a chronological presentation of Lacan's evolution or by a source study



of thinkers who have influenced him.[80] But to "understand" Lacan, one would actually do better to immerse oneself in the hermetic, baroque style which he has purposely created as a metaphor of his thought. The subject of reality reconstruction or subjective perception—the *moi*—is elusive, kaleidoscopic, and evanescent, whereas the subject of meaning and speech—the *je*—seeks to "translate" the *moi* while adhering to cultural stipulations. To convey this idea of two modes of meaning fighting to occupy the same space, Lacan frustrates his interlocutors by stylistically holding meaning in suspension, instead of appeasing their human propensity for unity, resolution, and easy answers.[81] When *Cogito*-style definitions are just out of reach, Lacan finds his intended effect in a kind of pointillism in which intellect, affect, knowledge, and so forth are simply means for coping with a split in the subject and the resultant insatiable Desire (*manque-à-être*), which destines humans to be questing, lacking creatures.

As the nonverbal agent of specularity and identifications, the *moi* leads the game of human interaction. But it is essentially in an unstable posture. Subjects reconstitute themselves for each other, Lacan says, by exchanging ego (*moi*) through language (*je*) as symbols. Paradoxical though it may sound, Lacan's *moi* is therefore structured and not chaotic, dependent and not independent, human and not biological, intentional and not aimless. But it is inherently paranoid because, given the specular logic peculiar to it, the *moi* can only experience itself in relation to external images and to the gaze of others. It follows, therefore, that the *moi* cannot be reduced to its first lived experience. It began as a dialectical structure and, throughout life, each metamorphosis and successive identification with others again challenge its delimitations (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, pp. 19–20). It is possible therefore to say—another paradox—that the subject's identity is both fixed and continually *en jeu*. Put another way, the two major aspects of the *moi* are (1) the formal stagnation or fixation of feelings and images, which constitute the subject and its objects (others) with attributes of permanence, identity, and substantiality; and (2) the inherent gaps, ambiguities, and scars in the *moi*, which surface in the speaking subject and throw its apparent, although illusory and contradictory unity into question (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 17). It is comprehensible from this perspective that adult maturation will not depend on innate (i.e., genetic or neurological) and instinctual (i.e., oral, anal, genital) developmental sequences, but on the cultural mediation of others (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, pp. 5–6). Whether a person clings rigidly to early identity fixations or gains enough in-

tellectual or mental distance to observe and modify them will determine the history of that person's life.

The structuring of the elemental *moi* in the pre-mirror and mirror stages has already been discussed. The precise manner of this structuring can be subsumed under two general principles: the gaze (*regard*) and what Lacan calls "scripting" (*l'écriture*). Scripting is the effect of language, made up of voice, sounds, and the phonemic chain. It leaves traces, tropes, and figures—perceptual residue—the impact of which combines with visual matter and identifications to fix an unconscious text that transcends *moi* fixations and delimitations. Although both the gaze and the voice are intangible and abstract, they are palpably material in their effects (the fifth dimension now discovered by mathematicians) and in the associations they catalyze in the infant. Lacan's originality lies in his proposition that the gaze and voice are assimilated as part-objects (*objet a* or mental representations) even before they are connected to the mirror-stage experience of identification (where the voice and gaze are attached to particular persons). Woven into a primordial representational layer, the gaze or voice can later return in dreams, art, or psychosis—or in other experiences in which the *moi*'s unity is unraveled—as disembodied fragments. In such situations the gaze is disconnected from the eye as seeing and the voice from hearing. They become, in other words, silent witnesses to a solipsistic discourse: the pre–mirror-stage infant gazes, stares, explores with its eyes—and the gaze itself is among the objects or images that it takes in. "In our relationship to things," Lacan says, "as constituted by the path of vision and ordered in the figures of representation, something glides, passes, transmits itself from stage to stage, in order always to be in some degree eluded there—It is that which is called the *regard*" (*Séminaire* XI, p. 70). Existentialist philosophers demonstrated that the *regard* is always "out there." Lacan connects it to dreams and shows that it is also always "in here": the gaze of the Other(A).

In his First Seminar (1953–54) Lacan described the dream as a way of remembering one's relationship to objects; a sign of exhaustion of regressions, and thus a threshold to the Real; a sign, therefore, of restructuring one's relationship to objects. To know the *moi* (the exceedingly difficult task of seeing one's subjectivity as an object), one must be taught to read backward in a topological (spatial) sense, but in the immediacy of present time. In this Seminar Lacan seemed mostly preoccupied with an idea of the dream as a manifestation of the reconstruction of a subject's story *in the present*, a temporal re-



writing of history (p. 20). In the dream the rewriting refers to the gaze, which Lacan finds in the place of the unconscious code: the Other(A). We should recall that the human subject was prefigured in primordial forms, even before its physical objectification in the dialectic of mirror-stage identification with the mother, and before language conferred on it its communicative function as a speaking subject in the wide world. The purest testimonial to this is in dreams where objects appear in an enigmatic text. In the dream the "I" shows its component parts, shows that it has always already been somebody. In putting forth this theory, Lacan answers Maurice Merleau-Ponty and other phenomenologists who claim that we have no right to "guess at" the subjective—which we cannot quantify and on which we cannot reflect. Distinguishing between the visible and the invisible, Merleau-Ponty wonders how we can comprehend that alter ego, the "other than me who is the reflected I reflected on, for myself who reflects."[81] Lacan's answer is that one can only grasp elusive fragments and that the "strange contingency" (his phrase) is not between the visible and invisible, but in a disintegration of unity in the subject.

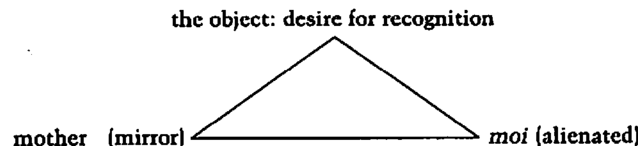
In the dream a person is no longer subjected to the *regard* of the conscious world, which can offer comfort, judgment, seduction, and so on. Instead, the gaze of the Other(A) both sees and shows, ensuring that the subject does not grasp itself as it does in conscious thought. Awake, one is such-and-such for others; asleep, one is such-and-such for no one. Lacan interprets this to mean that the primitiveness of the *regard* is marked in the dream, where the roots of identity and essence are linked to seeing as gaze rather than seeing as eye, and therefore show themselves as prior to intersubjective (mirror-stage) imperatives (*Séminaire* XI, p. 72). When Tchoang-tseu dreams that he is a butterfly, for example, he seizes some root of his own identity: what he *was*, what he is in his essence, and that through which he is Tchoang-tseu. Awake, he is Tchoang-tseu for others; asleep, a butterfly for no one. Asleep he does not wonder if, when he is Tchoang-tseu awake, he is not a butterfly in the process of dreaming. Viewed in this way, dreams are the home of the primordial source of being in terms of anteriority and narcissism (*Séminaire* XI, pp. 72–73). But dreams are not the unconscious; they are distortions of a Real unconscious (Other) part of being as it regresses to the level of perception.

But how can one really believe that a *moi* exists? Wilden has cited Leclaire's description of the *moi*'s function as formation, informa-

tion, deformation (*LS*, p. 171). Lacan teaches his interlocutors that the *moi reveals* itself in the present speaking through the *je* (the S of Schéma L) by which it is not recognized (*Séminaire* XX, p. 108). It is more enlightening, then, to ask *toward whom?* a discourse is directed, since characteristic intersubjective modes of the *moi* in adult relations are identificatory. These latter are spontaneous fusions or aversions that cause the *moi* to slide frantically (*glissement*) in its rejection or acceptance of the other, or sometimes in an ambivalent alternation. In its intrasubjective relationship to the Other(A), *moi* discourse is that dimension in experience which is reflected in Desire, boredom, confinement, revolt, prayer, sleeplessness, and panic. "It" or this Other-thing "thinks rather badly, but it does think. For it is in these terms that it announces the unconscious to us: thoughts which, if their laws are not quite the same as those of our everyday thoughts, however noble or vulgar they may be, are perfectly articulated" (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, pp. 192–93). Elsewhere Lacan says: "One can see to what the language of the ego [*moi*] is reduced: intuitive illumination, recollective command, the retorsive aggressivity of the verbal echo. Let us add what comes back to it from the automatic detritus of common discourse: the educative cramming and delusional *ritornello*, modes of communication that perfectly reproduce objects scarcely more complicated than this desk, a feed-back construction for the first, for the second a gramophone record, preferably scratched in the right place" (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 139).

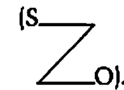
## The *Moi* in Its Field of Relations

We have said that narcissism and aggressiveness are correlatives in Lacanian thought.[83] They first make up the formal structure of the mirror-stage *moi* in a presubjective period (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, pp. 19–20). Prior to speech and the birth of subjectivity the *moi* has become characterized by conflict and tension because it depends on specular recognition from another for its own existence and perpetuation. In consequence, the primordial coalescence of the *moi* occurs in a state of aggressive rivalry, which may be formalized as follows (from Wilden, *LS*, p. 173).






Given this state of aggressive conflict, it is hardly surprising that Lacan found Hegel's so-called master/slave dialectic useful in describing his *moi*. The truth Lacan found in this dialectic was a radical description of the human subject's aggressiveness. Lacan's Schéma L sets out the intra- and intersubjective dialectic of narcissism and aggressiveness in terms of identificatory interaction between (1) the *moi* and the Other(A), and (2) the *moi* and others. In Hegel's master/slave conflict the struggle revolved around pure prestige: the slave's goal was to become the master by cancelling him out; the master only remained such in reference to a slave who must by definition be interminably defeated (Wilden, *LS*, p. 79). The French analyst equated Hegel's master with the Lacanian Other(A)—the locus from which the subject speaks and desires throughout life, but in a distorted translation of Other(A) data (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 198). Viewed in this way, the *je* is an object of the Other's discourse




Coextensive with language, yet desiring from within, the *je* mistakenly thinks it can represent its own totality by designating itself in a statement (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 315). This is the pertinence of the master/slave model: the speaking subject is oppressed from within by Other(A) messages as well as by identity fixations of the *moi*. The latter is paradoxically fashioned in reference to—and in rivalry with—its own Other(A), but obliged to wait for recognition and judgment from others in the world outside. Man is, therefore, inclined to a whole range of aggressive behavior: from envy and jealousy, persecution mania, identification with an aggressor, and truly aggressive acts, to mortal negation of self or other (Lemaire, *Lacan*, p. 181).

Freud described conflict as arising from the libidinal push for pleasure/gratification up against the demands of reality. But Lacan placed an intrinsically conflictual, frustrated, and potentially paranoid subject at the surface of language. "This ego," Lacan says, "whose strength our theorists now define by its capacity to bear frustration, is frustration in its essence. Not frustration of a Desire of the subject, but frustration by an object in which his Desire is alienated and which the more it is elaborated, the more profound the alienation from his *jouissance* becomes for the subject" (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 42). By "this ego" I interpret Lacan to mean *moi*, which as an object of the Other—not a subject of speech—is limited to a few nar-

cissistic fixations and aggressive coordinates. Lacan's *moi* was originally constituted by an identification with another as whole (body) object in the mirror stage. Gradually acquiring an "identity," the *moi* is a narcissistic subject that is perpetually threatened by its own Otherness to itself. Rather than the agent of strength it assumes itself to be, the subject is victim of the illusion of strength. Logically enough, Lacan saw Hegel's struggle to the death between master and slave as the ultimate theory of aggressiveness in human ontology: the admission that death is included in the narcissistic *Bildung*. But because the speaking *je* is weighed down by "messages" from the Other(A) and limited by *moi* objectifications, it is too involved in acting out this drama at the level of relationship to be aware of its own subjugation. In any specular interaction between persons, instead of finding mastery—a neo-Freudian, synthesizing function of the ego—we see that any *moi* (o') constitutes others, its objects (o), by a law of imaginary reduplication and—sadly enough—in a relation of hostile exclusion that structures the dual relation of o' to o' (i.e., between the *moi* of person A and person B). Lacan says that this apportionment never constitutes even a kinetic harmony, but is established on the permanent "you or me" of a war (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 138).

In strict contradiction to Anglo-American trends in the study of ego psychology, which proclaim the ego to be infinitely pliable, adaptable, or capable of synthesis and integration, Lacan depicts the *moi* as a formal, limited, and irreducible structure. Seen in this light, the *moi* conforms with the register of any person's experience. It *can* for this reason be fixed in a formalism based on recognition needs and their resultant narcissistic and aggressive intentionality (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 21). Made like an onion, the *moi* is geometrical and spatial. It is constituted by layers of successive identifications or fusions, by which it then constitutes reality and its objects (*Séminaire* I, p. 194). In conscious life the *moi* appears as persona, role, or appearance rather than as consciousness or even subjectivity. While adhering to language, the *moi* makes implicit demands for response and recognition, in which statements of opinion and manifestations of knowledge are inverted questions of identity posed to the Other(A) via the other ("Who am I really? What am I to/of you?"). The dialectic nature of all dialogue parallels this evocative aspect of language use. In Lacan's epistemology, the *moi* ensures that there is always more in language (an insistence or intentional pressure) than what is being said. The *moi* makes any form of discourse as overdetermined as does the dream or neurotic symptom.

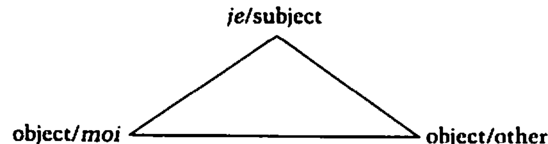


The passionate organization of the *moi* is in direct proportion to its function of providing cement to being and of assigning value to words and experiences. In this sense it is roughly equivalent to what we normally call emotions and hence the source of dogmatism, pretension, grandiosity, and so on. One may, therefore, look at Lacan's *moi* as a nexus of unifying and moralizing tendencies. The Lacanian psychoanalyst Octave Mannoni has written an essay on the *moi* as source of belief and mystification. Hypothesizing its reflection in the commonplace phrase "I know . . . but all the same" (*Je sais . . . mais quand-même*), he points out that the issue of belief raises the problem of the *moi*'s paradoxical connections to truth.[84] The adult subject of meaning and speech (*je*) "knows" there is no Santa Claus or Easter Bunny, but most people want their children to believe in them "all the same." Why? The fantasies and myths of childhood make up *moi* identificatory truth, but they can only be justified—i.e., retained and reintegrated—through one's children. The original source or *raison d'être* of these fantastic myths would be explicable by societal efforts to understand the mysteries of being, as well as the genesis of humankind. By this criterion Lacanian *savoir* is the sum of prejudices which composes a person's knowledge.[85] But "knowledge" here refers to the Other's discourse—the Real *subject* of knowing—or *le savoir supposé sujet*—which forms the foundation of any conscious knowledge. Everything emanates from the Other(A) in the sense that this discourse feeds into *je* language as a kind of eternally active subterranean emitting station, which sends out to others, in inverted form, the messages about individuality that it wishes to receive. The reflection of one's own *moi* from others is a virtual reflection and, in this sense, the human subject is a circular body that remains always equal to itself (*Séminaire* II, p. 282).

According to Lacan, ego psychologists err by taking the *moi* (what they call the ego) to be a reality or something integrative that holds the planet (i.e., person) together. Instead, he says, it is others in Real situations who enable the *moi* to reconstitute itself continually. These others, therefore, hold the human subject together by their recognition and reflection. We cannot make the error of reducing Lacan's *moi* to some whole or unified culmination of the preverbal stage, then. The French critic Julia Kristéva has drawn attention to the *moi* as an amalgam that surfaces in adult life to sow difference, fragmentation, and discontinuity in a language-unified field. Lacan himself has stressed that the *moi* exists on two different planes: that of the mirror (o), and the one which he calls the "wall of language"

(*je*) (*Séminaire* II, p. 255). Because of the "wall of language," there is no transparent image of identity or reflexivity in oneself but instead a relationship of profound Otherness (*Séminaire* II, p. 276). Beyond the "wall of language" a person is captive of mental images that also block vision of "who" one is. Beyond the mirror—others—and beyond language, Lacan located the void (or emptiness) beyond the image.[86]

The relationship between *moi* and *je* calls into question the issue of "truth," much as their source in the Other(A) has led Lacan to a critique of the source and function of knowledge (*savoir*). In Lacan's thought "truth" is not to be found in the place of traditional knowledge—facts, theories, history—for these merely contain so many ever changing doxa, socioconventional codes, and interpretations of events. "Truth" is to be found, in part, in the *je*'s recognition of the fictional structuration of the *moi*. The *moi* inserts itself as the affective dimension in language and relationship, becoming recognizable as an object, principally in terms of repeated identity themes. When the *je* is thrust into suspension or vacillation (that is, when unified meaning is moved aside), the *je* can de-objectify itself by objectifying its own *moi* (*Séminaire* XI, p. 223). The dialectical symbolism by which Lacan characterizes this dynamic construes the *je* in reference to a two-object topology: (1) its own *moi* as object, and (2) the other of relationship as an alter ego which leads back to the Other (with whom a subject unconsciously "communicates").




Paradoxically, as soon as the *je* disengages itself from the *moi* and sees its alien source in the Other(A), the *moi* assumes the status of a mirage and gradually becomes no more than one element in the object relations of a subject (*Séminaire* I, pp. 218, 229). The key to relative psychic health and self-knowledge lies in the direction of *je* de-objectification from *moi* fixations. Such distance can bring symptom relief and some degree of "truth." In the ideal analysis, or in the ideal analyst, the *moi* would be absent. But this ideal remains virtual, says Lacan, for there is no subject without a *moi* (*Séminaire* II, p. 287).

Lacan has modified phenomenological and psychoanalytic concepts of object relations by differentiating and restating the three modes of human relationships: subject/object; object/object; subject/subject (Wilden, *LS*, p. 175). By dividing the subject into two meaning systems—that of relationships (objects) and that of language—Lacan can speak of the being of language (*je*) as the non-being of objects (*moi*). The *moi* reflects the objectifications in personality and also objectifies others, i.e., perceives others in terms of its own mnemic representations and creates them in its own image. It follows, then, that Lacan will portray the speaking *je* as outside the object (*Séminaire* I, p. 218). The *je* may, nonetheless, apprehend its own *moi* in fragments and in objects, in nonsense, dreams, witticisms, and so forth (*Séminaire* XI, p. 192). In this way, the *je* can learn, can differentiate, can restructure its *moi* (which is merely a relation in a system), and can gain a measure of freedom.



Lacan therefore refuses existentialist or phenomenological (metaphysical) conceptions of subjectivity, with their implicit departure from the postulate of a human nature. There is no human nature, Lacan says, neither collective nor innate. But there is structure and process; and these are universal and formalizable. The French philosopher Jean-Marie Benoist concludes, after Lacan, that "the image of the individual conceived as an independent subject, a source of meaning, finds itself relativized, the term of a relation, an element interdependent on others, in the web of a network. At the heart of each structure, some behaviors of alliance and relationship find themselves determined or rather conditioned by a code and its underlying rules—which signifies that the subject does not choose them, even within the framework of a fundamental or original choice that the existentialists called the 'project'" (Benoist, *Révolution*, p. 117). The speaking, conscious *je* of existentialist choice and phenomenological perception is, by Lacanian standards, delimited by unconscious Desires and *moi* narcissism and, therefore, a fettered subject that only possesses the illusion of autonomy and of infinite access to choice and comprehension.

Freud's celebrated formula—translated into English as "Where id was, there shall ego be" (*Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*)—is usually interpreted to mean that psychic health and integration consist in replacing the pleasure principle (id) by the reality principle (ego). Lacan has recast this formula to read: "Where the *moi* was, there shall *je* place itself" (*Là où c'était, peut-on dire, là où s'était, voudrions-nous faire qu'on entendît, c'est mon devoir que je vienne à être*) (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, pp. 128–29). In other words, *je* (S) has become aware of its broader dimensions. As stated earlier (p. 12),

Lacan says the *Ich* must be where the *Es* was (*Séminaire* II, p. 288). Consequently, if one were to reduce Lacan's *moi* to Freud's id and assume that psychoanalytic cure lay in eradicating the subject of identity in favor of that of speech, one would miss Lacan's basic point. It is true that the *je*'s ultimate and total refusal to recognize the alien and fictional nature of the *moi* (which it represents) can result in lack of individuation, psychic pain, and—at the limit—lead to mental illness or suicide.[87] But such truth is difficult to reach, since the *je*, even when in doubt, believes itself to be one and the same as the persona or role that actually betrays the presence of a *moi*.

Throughout his text, Lacan denounces the common illusion that identifies the conscious self with the knowledge conveyed from the unconscious Other(A), and then attributes to the conscious subject a reality in the order of being (Lemaire, *Lacan*, p. 180). For the "true" subject—albeit fictional—is not centered in the perception/consciousness system nor organized by the reality principle. Instead, what the conscious subject takes as its own autonomous perceptions is a function of denial and misrecognition (Sheridan, *Ecrits*, p. 6). Lacan located "being" in language, and nonbeing on the side of objects. Beyond the (neo-Freudian) ego is an unconscious subject of "truth" which speaks, unknown to the speaking *je*, and to the alienated, objectified *moi*. This subject is the Other(A), which Freud recognized in the death instinct. Lacan joined the Other(A) and the death instinct by his concept of the phallic injunction to separation (and ensuing loss) (*Séminaire* II, p. 204). Lacan once described the locus of a tendency toward suicide as residing in the Imaginary knot that constitutes the *moi*, thus relocating Freud's death drive within the heart of narcissism itself (Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 186). Thus separation, being, and repetition all play their role in Lacan's dynamic reformulation of Freud's concepts of ego, the death drive, and a literal splitting of the subject (*Ichspaltung*).

## The Superego

Before concluding our remarks on the *moi*, we must consider Lacan's interpretation of the Freudian supergo. What was to become the superego started out as the censor in Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). Its mission was to deceive the ego by cutting off forbidden parts from consciousness (*Séminaire* I, p. 220). In his post-1920 topology Freud claimed that the more the instincts (id) were repressed, the more moral, severe, and demanding the superego would become. But psychoanalytic clinical experience as reported in the United



States has not validated Freud's notion of the superego. As we saw, Lacan has recast Freud's second topology—id, ego, superego—to make narcissistic passion one source of human drive. But, having collapsed the Freudian id and ego into the *moi*, and extended the id into the realm of unconscious Desire, what does Lacan do with the superego? He makes it the structural mechanism by which the identificatory *moi* is repressed as an ideal ego and the social *je* formed, and thus a part of both subjects. Klein postulated a superego functioning in an infant as early as three or six months. Because Klein saw the infant as fused with the mother (experienced as a collection of good or bad part-objects), any threat of separation from her supposedly provoked sadistic fantasies of vengefully destroying her. In Klein's view a tendency toward alternating guilt and reparation provided the kernel of a superego at this early stage.[88] In my understanding of Lacan, there is no infant sadism per se, but only the experience of building into a "self" via identification with objects, first through passive fusion, and then through active identification. Perception and identification make the human subject a representational composite from its genesis. By reinterpreting introjection and projection, Lacan explained how part-objects constitute a primordial unifying lining to perception, but paradoxically reveal the inherent disunity of the ego's construction. Lacan also replaced Klein's theory of sadistic fantasies with a theory regarding infant efforts to master incompetence and helplessness via identification with objects. It would not make sense from his perspective to place "intentional" guilt and reparation in the earliest infant experience. Instead, the kernel of a superego is formed concomitantly with psychic separation from the mother at the end of the mirror stage (eighteen months of age).

Freud first portrayed the formation of the superego as correlative of the decline of the Oedipus complex. Renouncing the satisfaction of Oedipal desires, and startled by the forbidden, a child transforms his or her libidinal investment in the parents to an identification with them and interiorizes the incest interdiction. The result is the formation of a superego, which judges or censors in relation to the ego (Laplanche and Pontalis, *Vocabulaire*, pp. 471–72).

In the framework of his second theory of psychic apparatus (after 1920), Freud used the term *Ich Ideal* (ego ideal or *idéal du moi*) to reflect the aspect of the personality resulting from the convergence of narcissism (idealization of the ego) and identifications: first to the parents, later to their substitutive replacements, and finally to collective ideals. Earlier, in his 1914 article "On Narcissism," Freud had made a connection between the ego ideal and censorship, in which

1978, at the Center for the Psychological Study of the Arts at the State University of New York–Buffalo.

36. Robert Weiss, *Experience of Loneliness: Studies in Emotional and Social Isolation* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT University Press, 1974). Cf. Zick Rubin, "Seeking a Cure for Loneliness," *Psychology Today*, Oct. 1979, pp. 85–86 especially.

37. Efron, "Psychoanalytic Theory," pp. 28, 29, 30. Cf. Daniel Yankelovich and William Barrett, *Ego and Instinct—The Psychoanalytic View of Human Nature—Revised* (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 393–94; Ernest G. Schachtel, *Metamorphosis: On the Development of Affect, Perception, Attention, and Memory* (New York: Basic Books, 1959), pp. 117, 127, 159.

38. Sheridan, "The direction of the treatment and the principles of its power" (1958), in *Ecrits*, p. 246.

39. Efron, "Psychoanalytic Theory," pp. 5, 37. Cf. Friedrich Brock, *Haut-, Tiefen- und Labyrinthorgane*, vol. 1 of *Bau und Leistung unserer Sinnesorgane* (Bern: Francke, 1956).

40. In accordance with Laplanche and Pontalis, Jeffrey Mehlman has written that Lacan did not see the incipient ego as a product of evolution through oral, anal, and genital stages, but as a corporal entity, a privilege of the "edges" (*bords*). Mehlman, "The 'Floating Signifier': From Lévi-Strauss to Lacan," *Yale French Studies* 48 (1972): 18.

41. Michèle Montrelay, "The Story of Louise," in Schneiderman, *Returning*, pp. 82–83.

42. Serge Leclaire, *Psychanalyser: Un essai sur l'ordre de l'inconscient et la pratique de la lettre* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1968), p. 72; see chap. 3 especially.

43. Serge Leclaire, *On tue un enfant* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975), p. 88.

44. Sheridan, "Subversion of the subject and dialectic of desire in the Freudian unconscious" (1960), in *Ecrits*, p. 315. See also "Commentary on the Graphs," ibid., pp. 333–34.

45. Michel Grimaud, "Psychologie et littérature," in *Théorie de la Littérature*, a collective work presented by A. Kibédi Varga (Paris: Picard, 1981), p. 258.

46. Jody Gaylin, "Don't Stick Out Your Tongue at a Newborn," *Psychology Today*, Dec. 1977, pp. 24, 26. Cf. also *The Competent Infant*, 3 vols., ed. Lois Murphy, Joseph Stone, and Henrietta Smith (New York: Basic Books, 1978); Leslie B. Cohen and Philip Salapatek, *Infant Perception*, 2 vols. (New York: Academic Press, 1975); Richard N. Aslin, Jeffrey R. Alberts, and Michael R. Petersen, *Development of Perception*, 2 vols. (New York: Academic Press, 1981); Michael E. Lamb and Lonnie R. Sherrod, *Infant Social Cognition* (London: Erlbaum Association 1981); Jay Belsky, *In the Beginning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

47. Efron, "Psychoanalytic Theory," p. 22. see Victor Smirnoff, *The Scope of Child Analysis* (New York: International Universities Press, 1971), pp. 95–96.



48. Efron, "Psychoanalytic Theory," p. 22. See Joanna Steinberg, review of four books on childhood and infancy in *Psychology Today*, Aug. 1977, pp. 94–99. See also Aidan Macfarlane, *The Psychology of Childbirth*, Harvard University Press series, The Developing Child (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977).

49. Efron, "Psychoanalytic Theory," p. 22. See L. P. Lipsett and H. Kaye, "Conditioned Sucking in the Newborn," *Psychonomic Science* 2 (1965): 221–22; L. P. Lipsitt, H. Kaye, and T. N. Bosak, "Enhancement of Neonatal Sucking through Reinforcement," *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 4 (1966): 163–68.

50. Efron, "Psychoanalytic Theory," p. 22. See Tina Appleton, Rachel Clifton, and Susan Goldberg, "The Development of Behavioral Competence in Infancy," in vol. 4 of *Review of Child Development Research*, ed. Frances D. Horowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 156.

51. Efron, "Psychoanalytic Theory," p. 23. See Michael Lewis, *The Origins of Intelligence: Infancy and Early Childhood* (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1976), p. 54.

52. Efron, "Psychoanalytic Theory," p. 24; Lewis, *Origins of Intelligence*, p. 54.

53. Efron, "Psychoanalytic Theory," p. 25; Appleton, Clifton, and Goldberg, *Review of Child Development Research*, pp. 102–3.

54. René Spitz, "Metapsychology and Direct Infant Observation," in *Psychoanalysis—A General Psychology*, ed. R. M. Lowenstein (New York: International University Press, 1966).

55. Child development researcher Burton White has written: "We know for certain that the newborn human literally cannot survive without a relationship to a more mature, more capable human. I am talking here about simple survival. A newborn baby is helpless. Physical survival is impossible unless somebody provides for him." White, *The First Three Years of Life* (New York: Avon Books, 1978), p. 127.

56. For an important study of the case of the "wild child" (*l'enfant sauvage*) from a Lacanian viewpoint regarding the role of identification in ego formation, see Octave Mannoni, "Itard et son sauvage," in *Clefs pour l'imaginaire on l'Autre scène* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1969), pp. 184–201.

57. Margaret Mahler, Fred Pine, and Anni Bergman, *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant: Symbiosis and Individuation* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), p. 44.

58. Dorthy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Malaise and Human Malaise* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 111.

59. One might compare Wilhelm Reich's concept of "character armor" without which there can be no self. In 1952 (in a letter included in *Reich Speaks of Freud*) Reich declared that it was dangerous to try to dissolve character: "'You see, the armor thick as it is and as bad as it is, is a protective

device, and it is good for the individual under present social and psychological circumstances to have it. He could not live otherwise.'" Quoted by Frederick Crews, "Anxious Energetics," in *Out of My System: Psychoanalysis, Ideology, and Critical Method* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 159.

60. Lacan's concept of the dialectical quadrature of the human subject would, nonetheless, invalidate object-relations claims such as the one made by psychoanalyst Heinz Lichtenstein "that the relation between mother and infant does . . . represent an inner state of oneness, in which there is no differentiation between the infant's I and the mother." Lichtenstein, "Identity and Sexuality: A Study of Their Interrelationship in Man," *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association* 9 (1961): 194.

61. Jacques Lacan, "De nos antécédents" (1966), *Ecrits*, 1966, p. 67; see also "Propos sur la causalité psychique" (1946), ibid., pp. 184–85.

62. Samuel Weber wonders why Lacan ignored a remark of Freud's that would seem to anticipate his own theory of the mirror stage. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) Freud told the story of a small child who learned to make himself disappear in a mirror, accompanying this action with the sounds "baby o-o-o-o!" My guess is that Lacan wished to forestall the one-to-one connection between his own conception of the mirror stage and an *actual* mirror, which this anecdote might suggest. Weber, "The Divaricator: Remarks on Freud's *Witz*," *Glyph* 1 (1977): 25.

63. Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. David Macey (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 81.

64. Lacan's use of the *trait unaire* concept refers to the French word *le trait d'union*, meaning "hyphen," and evokes the infant/mother symbiosis where two beings are connected as one synthesis by such symbolic hyphens as language, the voice, the gaze, and so on. But mother and infant are indeed separate. This perceptual confusion has, predictably, given rise to both object-relations theory, which stresses the sameness of mother and infant, and sociological theories, which emphasize the links between self and society. Examples of excellent sociological treatises are George H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), and Solomon E. Asch, *Social Psychology* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1952). Lacan departed from the two-way static transparency between sociological concepts of self and society (or between infant and mother, or between self and language) by splitting the subject. His thought accounts for the introjection of mother, society, and language, but reveals the "self" as a dialectical, opaque, dynamic, transformational quadrature.

65. Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1973), pp. 3–4. See also White, *First Three Years*, pp. 125–26, for a well-phrased discussion of sibling aggressiveness toward an infant by a sibling of up to three years older.

66. Jim Swan, "*Mater* and Nannie: Freud's Two Mothers and the Discovery of the Oedipus Complex," *American Imago* 31 (Spring 1974): 57.

67. In *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis* (note 3, p. 67) Laplanche writes that Freud decided his essay "On Narcissism" (*SE*, 14:83–84) was incomplete, if not monstrous, and rapidly discarded it.



68. In *Vocabulaire* (note 12, p. 262) Laplanche and Pontalis point out that Freud owed his idea of withdrawing the libido from the object (other) back to one's self to Karl Abraham, who had advanced this theory in 1908 in a discussion of *dementia praecox*.

69. Freud, "The Ego and the Id" (1923), *SE*, 19:31.

70. Swan, "*Mater* and Nannie," p. 8. See Freud, *New Introductory Lectures*, *SE*, 22:63.

71. Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963).

72. Norman N. Holland, "Human Identity," *Critical Inquiry* 4 (Spring 1978): 451–70, especially p. 467.

73. For a concise discussion of Kohut and Kernberg, see Susan Quinn, "Oedipus vs. Narcissus," *New York Times Magazine*, Nov. 9, 1980, sec. 6, pp. 120–31. See also Moustapha Safouan, "The Apprenticeship of Tilmann Moser," in Schneiderman, *Returning*. This essay discusses Moser's book *Years of Apprenticeship on the Couch* and examines the reasons for the failure of Moser's analysis, which was conducted in line with Kohut's theories by one of his students.

74. From a brochure entitled "International Imagery Association and the *Journal of Mental Imagery* present 5th American Imagery Conference," at Chicago (Oct. 8–11, 1981) and New York City (Nov. 12–15, 1981).

75. Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, no. 4 in the monograph series The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child (New York: International Universities Press, 1971), pp. 147–48.

76. In an incorrect interpretation of Lacan, Wollheim ("Cabinet of Dr. Lacan") writes: "He says next to nothing about . . . mechanisms like introjection, projection, projective identification, which later psychoanalysts have carefully and fruitfully distinguished" (p. 44). Lacan's mirror-stage theory and his concept of the Imaginary order are based on these very concepts. But unlike Melanie Klein and other object-relations theorists, Lacan viewed these processes as dialectical and dynamic in response to man's fetalization. See Chap. 4 herein for a detailed discussion of the transformational processes that function to create and then operate a "self."

77. See Karen E. Paige and Jeffrey M. Paige, *The Politics of Reproductive Ritual* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). See also Bruno Bettelheim, *Symbolic Wounds* (New York: The Free Press, 1954). Bettelheim and the Paiges view primitive sexual rituals as male efforts either to imitate the female or to claim their power over the female reproductive capacity. Could the rituals not be literal, symbolic attempts to interpret the meaning of sexual difference by valorizing those *different* parts of the body?

78. The classic source for the Narcissus story is Ovid's account in *Metamorphoses*, Book III.

79. Sheridan, "The direction of the treatment and the principles of its power." Lacan stressed the interminable aspect of psychoanalysis, a view in

keeping with his theory that the subject is permanently involved in the realization and writing of its own dialectical story. Just as Freud had begun to write the solution to the "infinite" analysis, Lacan writes, he died (p. 277).

80. Anthony Wilden's excellent translator's notes to Lacan's essay, "The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis," occupy pages 91–156 of *The Language of the Self*. The notes chronicle those thinkers who influenced Lacan.

81. Henry W. Sullivan, *Tirso de Molina and the Drama of the Counter Reformation* (Amsterdam: Rodopi NV, 1981). In a discussion of the theater of the Golden Age in Spain (the *comedia*), Sullivan defines the baroque as "the artistic representation of an internal conflict caused by the irreconcilable claims of monolithic belief and irresistible doubt competing for the same metaphysical 'space'" (p. 124).

82. The philosophical reverberations surrounding the issue of topology between Lacanian thought and Merleau-Ponty's writings were suggested to me by James Glogowski in a letter of Aug. 31, 1981 (p. 1). See also Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 203.

83. In the translator's preface of *Returning*, Schneiderman writes: "The French *aggressivité* has been rendered by Sheridan as 'aggressivity.' Unfortunately this word does not appear in any dictionary that I have been able to find, and thus I have chosen the word 'aggressiveness,' which is commonly used in the English language. The reader will have no difficulty in distinguishing 'aggressiveness' from 'aggression,' since the former refers only to intended aggression or an aggressive attitude" (p. vii).

84. Octave Mannoni, "Je sais bien, mais quand-même," *Clefs pour l'imaginaire ou l'Autre scène*, pp. 9–33.

85. Shoshana Felman, "La Méprise et sa Chance," *L'Arc* 58 (1974): 44–45.

86. "Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre VII: L'éthique de la psychanalyse" (Mar. 1960), unpublished.

87. In *On tue un enfant* Leclaire describes the "miraculous infant" or *moi* as a "primordial unconscious representation where the wishes, hopes and nostalgias of everyone are knotted together more densely than in any other place. . . . There is for everyone always a child to be killed, a grief to be continually made and remade out of a representation of plenitude" (p. 12). The translation is mine.

88. John Arnold Lindon, "Melanie Klein, 1882–1960: Her View of the Unconscious," in *Psychoanalytic Pioneers*, eds. Franz Alexander et al. (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 370.

89. An interesting empirical study pointing to the early interiorization of the mother was reported by Bridget Romana in "Lights! Camera! Interface!," *Psychology Today*, Nov. 1981, p. 22. Romana describes a study reporting that two-year-olds left in an unfamiliar playroom played more, stayed longer, and explored more, if they had a clear photograph of their mother to hold.

90. Cf. Lacan, "Position de l'inconscient au congrès de Bonneval reprise de 1960 en 1964" (1966), in *Ecrits*, 1966, pp. 829–50.



91. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962).

92. Jonathan Culler, "Prolegomena to a Theory of Reading," in *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 56.

93. James Glogowski, "Four Graphs of Jacques Lacan," p. 5, unpublished paper.

94. In a letter to me (Aug. 13, 1981), Stuart Schneiderman describes the Lacanian ego as "the most resolute enemy of desire" (p. 2).

95. In a letter to me (Aug. 31, 1981) James Glogowski raises the issue of Merleau-Ponty's revolutionary conceptualization of topology as non-Euclidean (1959) and of Lacan's use of topology to describe the structures of the unconscious. Glogowski points out Merleau-Ponty's use of the Greek words for *ego* and *nobody* and stresses the problematic posed by Lacan in which the "I" is both somebody and nobody.

96. Quoted by Norman O. Brown, *Life against Death* (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), p. 106.

97. Ronald D. Laing, *Self and Others* (New York: Random House, 1969), passim.

98. In "Lacan and the Discourse of the Other" Anthony Wilden points out that Lacan's reinterpretation of the *Fort! Da!* in Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is a radical one. Lacan did not relate this phonemic opposition directly to the specific German words but, instead, to the binary opposition of presence and absence in the infant's world (p. 163).

99. See Gerald E. Wade, "The 'Comedia' as Play," in *Studies in Honor of Everett W. Hesse*, ed. W. C. McCrary and José A. Madrigal (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press for the Society of Spanish & Spanish-American Studies, 1981), pp. 173–74. See also Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950), and Donald Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (New York: Basic Books, 1971).

## Chapter 2. Lacan's Four Fundamental Concepts

1. In *Séminaire* XI Lacan taught that psychoanalysis is a science because its object of study—the unconscious—can be ascertained through observation and analysis of repetition, regression, transference, and the *objet a* of Desire.

2. Frederic Jameson, "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan: Marxism, Psychoanalytic Criticism, and the Problem of the Subject," *Yale French Studies* 55/56 (1977): 338–95, especially the discussion of the triadic complexities of Lacan's three orders.

3. *Modern Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Leo Salzman and Jules H. Masserman (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), p. 174.

4. Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961), p. 35.