

**NIDA LACAN STUDY AND READING GROUP: January Seminar**

## **Lacan and the Logic of Fantasy**

*Date: Wednesday 24 January 2018.*

*Time: 6-8 pm*

*Location: Tutorial Room, No.3, NIDA, 215 Anzac Parade*

*Reading:*

*Seminar-XIV: The Logic of Fantasy: Session:1, (16 November 1966; and session 2 (23 November 1966).*

*Unpublished version of this seminar is translated (unauthorized) by Cormac Gallagher*

In Freudian psychoanalysis, fantasy (phantasy) is postulated as a fictional and psychic event (like dream) produced for the fulfilment of a repressed or unresolved unconscious wish. In his essay, "Writers and Day-Dreaming," Freud emphasizes that the 'unsatisfied' wishes are the essential driving force behind the construction of fantasies. This driving forces in the unconscious motivates the imaginative and creative capacity of the consciousness for the formation of euphoric dramas as a support for the animation of wishes. He sums up the unresolved wishes into two categories, 'egoistic or ambitious' and erotic. All wishes are unsatisfied or satisfied infantile experiences, which are invariably correlated with the infantile memories. Repression, and defence mechanism structure distortions and fictitious aspects of the fantasies. Even symptoms are seen by Freud as structured fantasies.

For Lacan, on the other hand, fantasy was an imaginary drama, a *mise-en-scene* for desire, where the desirer plays the roles of an observer and a protagonist at the same time. He devoted a year-long *Seminar- XIV: The Logic of Fantasy* (1966-1967) for investigating fantasy. At the beginning of the seminar, he outlines the logic of fantasy in terms of a pseudo-mathematical formula:

$$\$ \langle \rangle a$$

In the formula,  $\$$  stands for the barred subject, the lozenge  $\langle \rangle$  in mathematics means 'smaller than' or 'greater than' and  $a$  symbolizes the object petit  $a$ . The status of this object  $a$  as the object cause of desire, according to Lacan, is 'constructing the logic of fantasy'. The object  $a$  is in similar relation of 'smaller than' or 'greater than' with the Other. In the meantime, fantasy support the real and real provides the core for a fantasy. Fantasy knows what the Other wants and it offers the things that the Other wants. This also explains Lacanian statement that fantasy provides the answer for the question of the Other *Che Vuoi?*

The object  $a$  in fantasy is associated with the detachable parts of the body like the breast, look, voice, etc. The imaginary drama that fantasy stages brings drives into the realm of the subject's desire. Each fantasy has a circuit in which desire is changed into drive and drive into desire. The relation of barred subject with object  $a$  brings about an imaginized relation of the subject with the drive. Lacan emphasizes in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* that in relation to the barred subject and object  $a$ , the drives come into play

with in fantasy. This means that the original fantasy or in Freud's sense, the 'primary fantasy' itself represents drives.

The role played by drives in fantasies is an interesting and less unexplored area of Lacanian theory. Zizek in his *The Plagues of Fantasies* highlight this issue:

Fantasy is the very screen that separates desire from drive: it tells the story to (mis)perceive the void around which drive circulates as the primordial loss constitutive of desire. In other words, fantasy provides a rationale for the inherent deadlock of desire: it constructs the scene in which the *jouissance* we are deprived of is concentrated in the Other who stole it from us. (PF, p.32)

Fantasy stages the subject's desire and offer him the *jouissance* by means of the object *a*. As a cut in the real, object *a* belongs to the real and this status connects it to the locus of Other. In pervasion, the above formula is reversed where the place of the subject is occupied by the object *a*.  $a \diamond \$$

In our January seminar, we will discuss Lacan's theory of fantasy.

Fantasy is an illusory scene in imagination that distort the original fantasy and also the original reality. Lacan compare the scene of fantasy as a frozen scene in a film which is designed to avoid the showing of a traumatic scene. The scene of fantasy is a defence which veils castration and also a defence to sustain desire. The distortion in fantasy is a compromise. As such the whole fantasy is a signifying structure and thus the image as a signifying structure.

Desire and drive become mutually bound up in fantasy. Desire stands on the way of the satisfaction of the drive.

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