

April Seminar 2021

NIDA LACAN STUDY AND READING GROUP

Due to Coronavirus restrictions, we will continue our seminars online until further notice. I will send members copies of the texts of the monthly seminars. New members, please contact us by the email: Ehsan.Azari@nida.edu.au

Three Forms of Identification

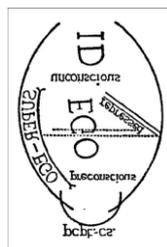
The Seminar V: Formations of the Unconscious. XVIII

Dr Ehsan Azari Stanizai

Lacanian study of the unconscious by its structure and formations in *Seminar V: Formation of the Unconscious* that we are reading between the lines is deeply enmeshed in the Freudian multiple theoretical texts about the unconscious—the cornerstone of psychoanalysis. In this session, he declares his remaining sessions of the seminar a dedication to probing Freud’s theoretical discoveries in the 1920s known as ‘the second topography.’ In his second topography, Freud dispensed with his primary topographical division of the human psychic system—conscious (Cs), preconscious (Pcs), and unconscious (Ucs)—into a new structural division: ego, superego, and id. In the second topography, the borders between his divisions are porous, interdependent, and in a ceaseless conflict. Repression plays a vital role in the division of the ego and the id by its persistence as Freud writes:

The ego is not sharply separated from the id; its lower portion merges into it. But the repressed merges into the id as well, and is merely a part of it. The repressed is only cut off sharply from the ego by the resistances of repression; it can communicate with the ego through the id. We at once realize that almost all the lines of demarcation we have drawn at the instigation of pathology relate only to the superficial strata of the mental apparatus. (Freud, 1991, 362)

After this brief introduction, Lacan commences his discussion by focusing on three modes of identification that Freud outlines in the seventh chapter of *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. The three types of identification charted by Freud were: “(i) The primal form of the emotional tie with the object; (ii) the repressive replacement for an abandoned object-choice; (iii) in the absence of any sexual cathexis of the other person the subject may still identify with him to the extent that they have some trait in common (e.g., the wish to be loved) owing to displacement, identification in such a case will occur in regard to some other trait (hysterical identification),” (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1988, 207).



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Lacan identifies this classification of the psychic system, reveals the unconscious as structured by speech, and the topology that draws it is a ‘spatial schema.’

The famous schema in the shape of an egg, where you imagine you can intuit the relations between the id, the ego and the superego. In it you see an eye and a sort of pipette entering into the substance that is supposed to represent the superego. It is a very useful schema, and has precisely the inconvenience of representing topological things through spatial schemes. (Lacan, 217, 401)

Showing the limitation of Freud's schema, Lacan argues that it provides spatial spots for each element different in its development from, say, organs in the body. Each of these organs finds its support through identification. The id is an organ from where the ego is protuberant in the shape of an eye. There will be glued to the superego when dealing with these organs, the id, and the ego. Lacan rephrases the Freudian tripartite identification that Laplanche and Pontalis delineate: (i) the original emotional ties with the object; (ii) the second identification, which is the essential identification that arises in a returning manner as a substitute for a libidinal link with the object introjected in the ego. In the meantime, the second identification is problematic for the ambiguous relationship of the ego with the object. Problems of the inverted Oedipus complex [erotic relation with the same-sex parents and hatred of the opposite ones] also arise from such a relationship. The object of libidinal connection becomes the object of identification in some cases, as we explored in previous sessions with Dora's case history. In the analysis, this question arises that how does the subject loves and identifies with the same object? This question is similar to the phallus, especially the opposition between having or being the phallus. The conversion of libidinal link with an identification suggests regression on the part of the subject. The regression in psychoanalysis refers to a reversal to an earlier stage of the subject's development, like oral and others. As Lacan says, "I articulate it by suggesting that it's the choice of signifiers that give an indication of regression. Regression to the anal stage, with all its nuances and varieties, even to the oral stage, is always the presence of regressive signifiers in the subject's discourse" (Lacan, 2017, 403)

It is essential to explain the two forms of identifications by focusing on the subject's need. The investment in the object begins in the id [Freud spells out the id as the primitive reservoir of excitation, a chronological anterior to the ego that comes from the unconscious, partly integrated into the ego and partially remaining as an inaccessible part of the human psychic system controlled by a timeless pleasure principle]. As the need, the id "perceives the prompting, pressures and erotic tension as needs, which clearly show that the id puts itself forward as being quite ambiguous," (403). Each demand finds two prospects; the first is that demand for satisfaction of a need that must pass through the 'defiles' of expression in language. Second, in the existence of the signifier, not its articulation, lies an unconditional demand for love, a demand which is addressed to the Other. Before an object can be loved in an erotic sense, the eros [in Freud the life-force and sexual instinct] of the object is part of the need. This need is part of the demand which is a demand for love. The language dispenses the needs in terms of signifiers to satisfy the need and order for unconditional love. In other words, the demand for satisfaction of the need within itself has another demand for love. Lacan applies these two lines as the line of transference in analysis and the line of suggestion. This schema replicates the complete graph of desire where two lines or two vectors, the unconscious and conscious, showed horizontally as the lower and upper vectors. The complete graph of desire appears in *Écrits* and *Seminar VI: Desire and Interpretation of desire*. These two lines are one but with two implications—transference and suggestion. The schema draws it as two different lines, and Lacan sees this division as a topographical requirement. Lacan uses Freudian terms of transference and suggestion as interdependent.

In clinical analysis, the analysand attributes the knowledge to the analyst, for he thinks the analyst has the answer. The suggestion is a specific response to the attribution of the knowledge to the analyst. The so-called knowledge of the analyst implies the position of the analyst vis-à-vis the analysand. The analysand gives this position to the analyst, which does not mean that the analyst knows. The analyst transmutes the transference to an analysis of suggestion. For Freud, the best example of how transference transforms into suggestion is hypnosis. A possible suggestion is a potential transference in the background of the relation between the analyst and the analysand. In other words, the transference is itself the analysis of suggestion. The ground for suggestion lies at the level of demand that imposes itself on the subject.

This demand does not lack variety. What are these demands? How are we to situate them? It's interesting to take stock of them at the start, for there is enormous variation. There really are people for whom the demand to be cured is there, insistent at every moment. Others, more informed, know that it's to be deferred till tomorrow. There are others who are there for something other than for the demand to be cured, they are there to find out. There are those who are there to become analysts. But what is the importance of knowing the place of demand, given that the analyst, even if he does not respond to demand, responds to it simply by virtue of the fact that he is instituted, which is constitutive of all the effects of suggestion? (404)

Lacan argues that transference is the seizing of power by the analyst in the course of analysis. As soon as the analyst thinks he knows all, the analyst takes that position. Thus, transference as the affective arrest of the analysand caters to the signifying articulation different from the demand. The demand symbolizes the Other as well as the demand for love. That will bring the object as the erotic object that turns into the subject's target. The identification that takes the place of this target object, according to Freud, replaces the loved object, is regression [a return to an earlier stage]. The lines of suggestion and transference are the ambiguous part of this session, but it is clear that its use and implication are vital for the practitioners of analysis.

Along the therapeutic process, one thing that resists is desire. Lacan means by this a desire to sustain the desire, so the divided subject. If the human subject "is no longer a divided subject, he is mad. He remains a divided subject because there is a desire," (407). That is neurosis that sustains desire. The force of desire quantitatively varies among neurotics. Analytical experience reveals that people who have the same sort of neurosis happens to be gifted with different talents. The variety of symptoms in clinical experience indicates that each of these symptoms demonstrates one obsessional neurosis, for example. This obsessional neurosis lies somewhere different from the quantitative aspect of desire. The obsessional neurotics will need to see the analysts in a peculiar time when they face troubles in placing their desire in a strong, sustainable position. Their age may be in their forties or fifties. In other words, the decline of desire in the obsessional plays a decisive role in their despair to find a way to deal with their desire.

The first form of identification happens when one builds the original ties with an object—the identification with the mother. Another form of identification is a regressive identification with the love object. The demand is unconditional for love, and this opens the need for the existence of signifiers. Without the signifiers, the possibility for love seems not to exist. Lacan further explains how the resistance of unconscious desire places a mark in analysis and elsewhere. This point that resistance occurs is what Lacan calls to action or a human action that Freud termed *vergreifen* (to make a mistake).

Nevertheless, human action here means bungled action and misperformance that Lacan uses to formulate them as the metaphor of crossing the river Rubicon. The anecdote that Lacan compares the emergence of a bungled action is Julius Caesar's crossing the river in 49 BC. Roman law forbade the crossing of the river without specific permission. In an intricate passage, Lacan states that the involuntary action *vergreifen* happens when a marker of the unconscious desire burst into the surface of consciousness.

Moreover, we never see anything but this, which makes it quite difficult to define acting out clearly. In a certain sense, it's an action just like any other, but one that stands out because it's brought about by our use of the transference. (410)

In both 'action' and 'acting out,' the central issue brings the past event into the present. When the event is repressed from the consciousness, it returns as a mistaken action *vergreifen*. And when it is forgotten, the subject repeats it as acting out. All these faults are related to the resistance of desire. In analysis, such faults appear and reappear, and when the analyst explains this to the patient as regression, he/she often doesn't agree. It is here that analysts suggest that there is resistance at work. That is the way an analyst "plays the card of suggestion," (Ibid). Resistance also has its value for the subject, for he/she attempts to articulate desire in an inappropriate manner, which Freud calls 'transference-resistance.' With resistance, the subject maintains the line of transference open. In the second identification, regression gives way to the distraction with signifiers. The transference occurs in a deteriorating way that the analyst tries to satisfy. That leads to frustration on the part of the analysand in the course of treatment.

In line with the Freudian classification of the identification as was listed at the outset, Lacan introduces the third form of identification with someone who may not be an object of sexual drive for the subject. A hysterical identification is an example of this form. A hysteric faces a deadlock in desire. The only way for a hysteric to access her own desire is to identify with someone that she finds her with the same desire problem. For the obsessional, on the other hand, the same happens but in different ways. Identification here occurs at the level of fantasy where the barred subject identifies with an imaginary object, the object a, [$\$ \ll a$]. This relationship brings satisfaction to the subject but with no sexual drive involved. On the other hand, the obsessional subject becomes a support for something else. That is a relationship with an imaginary object that changes the subject into what Lacan calls 'a puppet of fantasy,' but a puppet of the unconscious fantasy. In this way, the subject salvages his desire from a downfall and falling into neurosis. In analysis, this happens with an obsessional who tries to sustain his relevance to his desire by identifying with various imaginary objects. The subject attempts to deliver false solutions to his desire by distancing from the object and introjecting the object in the analyst's room. The obsessional enters the analyst's room in a bid to "discover castration for what it is, that is, as the law of the Other. The Other that is castrated. "For the reasons that have to do with his mistaken implication in this problem, the subject feels that he himself is threatened by this castration at a level that is so acute that he can't come near his own desire without feeling its effects. What I am saying is that the horizon of the Other, the big Other as such, distinct from the little other, is tangible in this observation at every turn,"(413). The obsessional desire shows itself in the analysand's discourse by signifiers that produce the signification of castration of the Other and the subject himself.

In conclusion, Lacan begins this session with his key theoretical perception that the formations of the unconscious shape the underlying structure of all types of neurosis. Then, he opens the path of arguments with Freud's evolution of the human psychic system in his career, known as the first and second topography. The second topography that Freud draws a tripartite division to the psychic system, namely id, ego, and superego. Then Lacan illuminates, clarifies and

reshapes the notion of identification and its three forms in Freud. Finally, in a psychoanalytic clinical experience, Lacan defines and shows the three forms of identification, (i) the ties with the original object of love—the mother; (ii) by way of regression to the earlier stages of the subject's development; (iii), identification with a plethora of imaginary objects or part objects. We might learn from Lacanian clinical observations here that an analyst is not just imposing on the analysand certain theory-oriented commands during an analytical session. The coach is a battleground between the analyst and analysands where each is playing their own desire. The cure may arise when the analysand understands this.

Notes:

Freud, Sigmund, (1992), *On Metapsychology of Psychoanalysis: the Penguin Library: Volume II*, tr. James Strachey. ed. Angela Richards, Penguin Books, London.

Lacan, Jacques, (2017), *Seminar V: Formations of the Unconscious*, tr. Russell Grig, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Laplanche and Pontalis, (1988), *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, tr. Donald Nicholson-Smith, intr. Daniel Lagache, Karnac, London.