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MODERN WESTERN DISCOURSE ON THE SUBJECT

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ABSTRACT

Modern Western Discourse on the Subject

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The purpose of this thesis is to explore the modern Western discourse of the subject. This thesis will trace the roots of the modern Western discourse on the subject from the Enlightenment era, which saw the subject as being autonomous, rational, stable, and self-constitutive. It will contend that the Hegelian subject was the culmination of the notion of the modern Western subject. Lacanian psychoanalysis will be used to show how this fictitious feature is constituted by the Oedipus story and how it works. This thesis will show that the modern Western politics was based on this fictitious subject, exemplified by Hegelian subject, Freud’s ego and masculine subject, and Lacan’s moi and speaking subject, and it will examine psychoanalytic feminists such as Kristeva and Irigaray in order to find alternative notions of the subject. Finally, this thesis will present the politics of symptom based on the subject of the Real.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

[T]he living Substance is being which is in truth Subject, or, what is the same, is in truth actually only in so far as it is the movement of positing itself, or is the mediation of its self-othering with itself. This Substance is, as Subject, pure, simple negativity, and is for this very reason the bifurcation of the simple; it is the doubling which sets up opposition, and then again the negation of this different diversity and of its antithesis [the immediate simplicity]. Only this self-restoring sameness, this reflection in otherness within itself—not as an original or immediate unity as such—is the True. It is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual. (Hegel 1977: 10)

The subject is born insofar as the signifier emerges in the field of the Other. But, by this very fact, this subject—which was previously nothing if not a subject coming into being—solidifies into a signifier...by being born with the signifier, the subject is born divided. The subject is an emergence which, just before, as subject, was nothing, but which, having scarcely appeared, solidifies into a signifier. (Lacan [1964b]: 199)

The term “subject” does not occupy a prominent position in the modern sociology, where it was displaced by other terms such as “individual” and “agency”, but modern sociology actually took the modern Western notion of the subject as its theoretical basis.

The terms “individual” and “agency” are sociological versions of the philosophical term “subject.”

The term “individual” has its roots in modern Western world view, especially in the
Enlightenment view, which saw human beings as self-conscious, autonomous and stable. The essential difference between the Western premodern subject and the Western modern subject is that “the modern subject is self-defining, where on previous views the subject is defined in relation to a cosmic order” (Taylor 1975: 6). The modern human being as an individual is said to be “curious about the world, confident in his own judgments, skeptical of orthodoxies, rebellious against authority, responsible for his own beliefs and actions, enamored of the classical past but even more committed to a greater future, proud of his humanity, conscious of his distinctness from nature, aware of his artistic powers as individual creator, assured of his intellectual capacity to comprehend and control nature, and altogether less dependent on an omnipotent God” (Tarnas 1991: 282).

This view was characteristically theorized by Descartes, who saw human beings as thinking subjects without extension, and matter as extension without consciousness (Descartes 1984: 126-31). The Cartesian *Cogito* is “certain of itself by virtue of expelling all mundane content — the body, others, and the world — to the external realm of contingency and dubitability” (Williams 1992: 141). This “disengaged subject” has an innate capacity or reason which can take an objective attitude and look at the nature of things which are devoid of any subjective meanings (Taylor 1989: 143-58). Although its epistemology was different from the epistemology of rationalism, empiricism actually did not deny the capacity of the humans mind, which can comprehend the natural world outside of the human mind. Locke’s atomistic mind implies that it can faithfully represent things as they actually exist outside it: “our understanding of things is constructed out of the building blocks of simple ideas” (Taylor 1989: 166).
The Enlightenment as the synthesis of rationalism and empiricism elaborated on the notion of modern subjectivity mentioned above, introducing the new notion of objectivity which was mechanistic in its sense of depending on efficient causation only. The anthropology of Enlightenment was characterized by the amalgam of two notions of the subject: "the notion of self-defining subjectivity correlative to the new objectivity; and the view of man as part of nature, hence fully under the jurisdiction of this objectivity" (Taylor 1975: 10). The self-defining subject was correlative to a disenchanted world which is contingent, whereas man as part of nature opened the possibility of human studies by way of the same method of natural science. The subject is free, but influenced by the causation law of the natural world.

These two views were actually contradictory, but "reinforced each other in support of atomism, an atomic science of nature matching a political theory whose starting point was the individual in a state of nature" (Taylor 1975: 10). The atomic science of nature of the times saw the world as the locus of contingent correlations, which are usually called general principles or laws, to be traced by observation. The modern sociological theories based on this Enlightenment synthesis of rationalism and empiricism had a strong belief in reason and scientific objectivity. Humans are primarily rational beings who act on the logic of efficiency and rationality, and therefore, human behavior can be scientifically studied, predicted, and, most importantly, controlled. So can society be the same because it consists of humans and has no structural attributes. Rationalism emphasized autonomous reason which takes an objective attitude toward the nature of things, and empiricism also assumed that knowledge can be objective and that it can agree with
external reality (Saiedi 1993: 24).

In sum, the modern sociological theories based on the Enlightenment assumed that: 1) the subject is autonomous, rational, and stable and also acts rationally and consistently; 2) objects of study (including human behaviors) can be objectively known by the subject; 3) the adequacy of knowledge is judged according to the correspondence of human’s cognition and reality; and 4) knowledge or science as an instrument of social progress comprehends, predicts, and controls the objects of studies for human welfare. This set of theses starts from the notion of the subject as an autonomous and rational individual and ends with the promise of human welfare. The modern sociological theories based on the Enlightenment promised to eliminate all kinds of prejudices and mystification replete in human nature, society, and history (Horkheimer and Adorno 1993). They would enable mankind to establish a social order in accordance with the true principles of nature and history. Yet, miserable experiences of World War I, II, the nuclear devastation of Japan, environmental pollution, etc. in the twentieth century betrayed this rosy promise (Harvey 1990; Dickens and Fontana 1994).

The term “agency” emphasizes man’s capacity of constituting himself as well as the world. The modern sociological theories based on this notion of subject directly stemmed from Romanticism. According to Romanticism, the human being is a producer as much as a product of society (Shalin 1986). This view is intimately interconnected with the organic view of man and society. Unlike the Enlightenment, Romanticism refuted a dualistic view of the human being: “mind and body, reason and intuition, and subjective and objective nature are one and indivisible” (Seidman 1983: 57). Following the
Aristotelian anthropology in which adequate human life is a fulfillment of an idea, the Romanticists saw human life as the realization of a purpose which the subject can recognize as his own. The reason why man can recognize a purpose as his own is that man is endowed with a soul or spirit. Man is an agency of a final cause, God, or the absolute spirit. He actualizes the purpose of his life which was given by a final cause, God or the absolute spirit. Each man has his own soul or spirit, and therefore, he fulfills his purpose in life by going his own way. When man recognizes the purpose in his life as his own, freedom and necessity do not contradict each other any more.

Man is characterized by his wholeness within himself, uniqueness, and freedom, which is possible only in the process of his communion with society. Romanticism saw human beings as set in a larger natural order, often conceived as a providential order with which they should be in harmony. The Romantic vision of the individual is a unitary organism rather than an atomistic machine of the Enlightenment. In this world, man is not a fragmented unit which has a specific function, but a microcosm. In Romanticism, man's freedom does not contradict the social order: "To be a romantic, we can say, is to believe that freedom can coexist with necessity, diversity with unity, and self-determination with social order" (Shalin 1986: 89).

Romanticism strongly believed in man's reason, which is formed and limited by culture and history, and it also valued man for his imaginative and spiritual aspirations, his artistic creativity, and his emotional depth. The Romantic notion of reason results in a specific epistemology different from the empirical epistemology. Unlike the Enlightenment's theoretical reason, Romantic reason always appears in concrete culture; it
creates the culture and at the same time is created by it. Therefore, knowledge is mediated by human practice from which a new objectivity can be established. The world is a realization of human reason, and new objectivity refers to the correspondence of the human practice and the world. For example, Kant, a forerunner of Romanticism, proposed that the problem of the mind-world correspondence can be solved by the active mind which shapes and forms objective knowledge (Tarnas 1991; Saiedi 1993). This knowledge will bring human beings freedom and self-realization, namely progress.

In sum, modern sociological theories based on Romanticism assumed that: 1) the subject is self-constituting (free and autonomous) by way of constituting society; 2) the objects of human studies can be known by the subject; 3) the objectivity of knowledge is achieved by human practice, namely, the unity of a human’s action and humanized reality; and 4) knowledge as an instrument of social progress understands and controls the objects of studies for human freedom. This set of theses starts from the notion of subject as self-constituting and ends with the promise of human freedom. The modern sociological theories based on Romanticism promised to eliminate all kinds of oppression and domination replete in the human mind, society, and history. They would enable mankind to establish a social order in accordance with the true nature of human beings, i.e., freedom. Yet the collapse of the USSR gave evidence that this rosy promise failed.

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1 Also, Romanticism emphasizes the limitation of reason; it argued that life, reality, humans, and society cannot be adequately understood through rational means. In this respect, Romanticism can be characterized as non-rationalism (Saiedi 1993). But it cannot be argued that it denied the creative power of reason. It is important to note that Romanticism, like Enlightenment, strongly believed in man’s power.
Fragmentation and alienation rather than organic unity within, which are prevalent in Western societies, also challenge the promise.

Now, we encounter the crisis of the modern Western subject. Of course, the crisis of subjectivity was conceived by the Counter-Enlightenment thinkers such as Nietzsche, and therefore, some could think that this is not really a new crisis. But it cannot be denied that the sense of crisis becomes more apparent in these times called the postmodern era. On the political level, this sense of crisis reflects the loss of Western hegemony over other countries, and at the intellectual level, it reflects the lack of self-confidence of the Western thinkers (Bauman 1987). Poststructuralism especially is an articulation of Western thinkers' doubts about the modern mode of reading and writing human, society, and history, which was based on the autonomous subject. According to this reflection, the way the (male) subject constructs his (phantasmatic) identity as an autonomous subject is similar to the way the canons organize their authority by constructing others female and non-Western people) as screens upon which authorial desire (of the modern Western white males) is projected and displaced (Clough 1992).

Sociology has been relatively reluctant to accept these poststructuralist arguments about the crisis of representation and deconstruction of the subject. From a historical viewpoint, it seems to be because sociology is a product of modernity: “sociology’s capacity to define modernity is limited by sociology itself being a product of modernity...A residual positivism in the discipline would probably prefer to avoid the hermeneutic confusion of sociology being part of that which it seeks to understand, and perhaps for this reason sociologists have been slow to enter the current intellectual debate over the proper
usage and importance of notions of modernity, modernism, and post-modernism” (Frank 1987: 295).

This paper sprang from the discontent about this situation. It aims to trace the root of the crisis in the modern Western notion of subject. In this paper, the term “subject” does not presuppose a human essence, nor does it depend on the transcendental presupposition. Like Michel Foucault, I consider the subject to be a social or discursive effect (Foucault 1977; 1980). According to Foucault, discourse has the constitutive power of organizing the real world because it is connected to the complicity of the will towards knowledge and power. The subject is not the source of meaning, power or action, but a discursive construct: “the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformation” (Foucault 1977: 28). Therefore, the notion of the subject has its own history; each discourse produces its subject and its subject reproduces the discourse and itself. Of course, discourse is interwoven with the social and material apparatus to practice it. Foucault examined the social and material apparatus of discourses such as prisons, schools, hospitals, and asylums, through his genealogical method,

but I am mainly interested in the internal structure of discourse itself and its history. In other words, my first interest is to analyze the modern history of the Western discourse on the subject.

Modern Western subjectivity has fostered a distinctive type of individualism: “one which treats the ego as the center not only of theoretical cognition but of social-political
action and interaction” (Dallmayr 1981: vxi). I am convinced that the ego as the center of theoretical cognition refers to Enlightenment subjectivity while the ego as the center of social-political action and interaction indicates Romantic subjectivity. The modern Western notion of the subject was formed through the process of synthesis of these two subjectivities. “[M]odernity appears”, says Dallmayr, “characterized not only by its reliance on the cognitive epistemological ego but its concern with the practical, or acting, human subject” (Dallmayr 1981: 2). Cartesian disengaged reason is the extreme of the former and Fichte’s self-positing spirit is the extreme of the latter.

In this sense, the Hegelian subject, I think, is the culmination of the notion of the modern Western subject. The Hegelian subject is the infinite Spirit or Geist who realizes himself in matter and expresses his own purpose as well. This subject manifests himself in man, the finite spirit, and man as the subject realizes himself in matter and expresses his purpose as a vehicle of Geist as well. The realization of himself presupposes the complete knowledge of himself; without knowing himself, he can neither realize nor express himself. Knowing himself cannot avoid knowing others as mirrors of himself. Others might be other human beings as conscious beings or nature as a non-conscious being. Therefore, the Hegelian subject at this stage, the subject of desire, has a strong compulsion of knowing himself and others; without knowing himself and others he cannot express himself nor realize his purpose as a vehicle of the absolute Spirit. Other human beings as a vehicle of the absolute Spirit are the same. They aim to achieve mutual recognition, which is possible only when each subject knows himself and the other. For Hegel, knowing means conceptual knowing, namely rational knowing. Only the rational being can know.
only the rational being. In his dialectic of master-slave, Hegel starts from the Cartesian subject (I = I) and ends in the social subject who is recognized by the other social subject. In order to achieve this mutual recognition, the “I” as a rational being undergoes two negations: first, the “I” has to negate itself in order to desire and possess the difference of the other as a rational being; second, the “I” has to negate the unity of the “I” and the other to return to the “I.” The other also follows the same path. The reason why the “I” goes to the other is only for mutual recognition, but this recognition is always delayed. I am convinced that this movement rather results in mastering the other. The Hegelian subject has been a basis of modern Western politics. Marx discovered the revolutionary potentiality from this dialectic and displaced “master” and “slave” with “bourgeoisie” and “proletariat” (Kojeve 1969; Sartre 1956: 321; Hyppolite 1974: 172). Some modern feminists also changed “master” and “slave” into “men” and “women” (Millett 1970; Rich 1976; Easton 1987). The liberation movement of the Third World also changed the words into “imperialist” and “the colonized people.” But this is a logic of exploitation and mastering. This logic demands only self-consciousness as an entity separate from the unconscious and other desire different from Hegelian desire. I will call this Hegelian subject a modern Western masculine subject, who is characterized by the “conscious” desire of mastering others and masquerading himself as a pursuer for mutual recognition.

Hegel’s subject of desire functions the same as Freud and Lacan’s ego: the former tries to render the other the self-othering and the latter seeks to identify himself with the other reflected in his ego. Both of them live in the world of sameness where the other is

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2 For a discussion of different evaluation of this interpretation, see Arthur (1983).
negated. And Hegel's subject of recognition is similar to Freud's masculine subject or Lacan's speaking subject; it is distinguished by the "unconscious" desire of going back to the lost paradise in fantasy. According to Freud, every subject undergoes the painful experience of detaching himself from the mother who was considered as its own body by the subject. The formation of the masculine subject or the establishment of the identification with the position imposed by "the cultural" is a conscious striving to compensate for the loss of the love-object, the mother, but it never expunges the (unconscious) memory of unity with one's own mother. This memory constitutes the unconscious desire, which is always activated by the pain of reality. The subject's unconscious desire is directed towards unity with its mother. Lacan further claims that the speaking subject or the unconscious can regain the unity with his mother only in fantasy. Thus I will call them modern Western masculine subjects. In chapter 2, I will examine these masculine subjects which are produced by Hegelian, Freudian, and Lacanian discourses.

Many feminists such as Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva show us that Western discourse is characterized by its masculine structure of narratives in which women are defined as others. For them, psychoanalysis is a means to analyze the masculine narrative structure of Western discourse. Other feminists criticize them as dutiful daughters of Lacan, who is considered the master of masculine discourse (Grosz 1990: 150), but I think that they try to re-write the Oedipus complex, the symbol of masculine discourse. In order to evaluate Irigaray and Kristeva, we have to examine how Freud and Lacan work on female sexual identity, which is another name for the female subject, I think; they work
within the discourse of Freud and Lacan.

In chapter 3, I will argue that while Freud shows us how the discourse on female sexual identity is constructed under the privilege of the penis, Lacan tells us that it is a specific product of modern Western ocularcentric and phallocentric culture. Freud did not directly deal with the matter of the female subject; he was deeply imbued with male bias or phallocentric culture. His discourses aimed to produce only the male subject, but "unwittingly" produced new questions on female subjectivity. In my opinion, Freud seemed to feel that he discovered or produced the Oedipal logic, which constituted the human subject as well as the unconscious, as a "science." By contrast, Lacan made it clear that the Oedipal logic is not a science but a "discourse." Then, if the Oedipal logic is a kind of discourse, it could be re-written. Both Irigaray and Kristeva, in my view, clearly knew that the Oedipal logic is a discourse and tried to re-write it. In doing so, they made new discourses, which would produce a new subject different from the male subject. According to Irigaray, the new subject is women because they are ontologically different from the masculine subject. By contrast, Kristeva draws the new subject from the subject-in-process. Both man and woman have the possibility of becoming the new subject by practicing poetic language. This new subject is related to the subject of the unconscious (Freud) or the subject of the Real (Lacan).

In chapter 4, I will contend that the modern Western politics was characterized by the politics of identity and the politics of representation. While the former has been based on the Hegelian subject of desire, Freud's ego, and Lacan's Moi, the latter has been based on the Hegelian subject of recognition, Freud's masculine subject and Lacan's speaking
subject. As an alternative for those politics, I will present the politics of symptom which aims to change something at the level of the symptom.
CHAPTER 2

DISCOURSE ON MASCULINE SUBJECT

(A) Hegel: Conscious Desire of Mastering Others Delays Mutual Recognition

For Hegel, the subject has two related dimensions: a rational animal (a living being who thinks) and an expressive being (a being whose thinking always and necessarily expresses itself in media) (Taylor 1975: 83). The subject as a rational being recognizes an idea imposed by Geist or the final cause as his own. The subject as an expressive being externalizes and realizes himself in the matter: "man comes to know himself by expressing and hence clarifying what he is and recognizing himself in this expression" (Taylor 1975: 17). Therefore, the Hegelian subject is an embodied spirit. Through realizing himself he achieves his self-knowledge, the True; realization and knowing are inseparable.

The Hegelian subject has not his fixed essential nature; through expressing his purpose in life, he achieves his essence as a finite spirit. He is always in the process of movement in order to acquire the True. This implies that the Hegelian subject moves towards a certain direction, the True. The reason why the Hegelian subject can move is that he is a living substance: "the living Substance is being which in truth Subject, or, what is the same, is in truth actual only in so far as it is the movement of positing itself, or is the mediation of its self-othering with itself" (Hegel 1977: 10). Only the living substance can
move because it has its own contradiction. God as the universe cannot move because it is
the eternal sameness with itself. God as the universe cannot present the True as the
movement of reflecting itself into itself. By contrast, the subject as the living substance
can posit the True as the subject as well as the movement of reflecting itself onto itself.

"This Substance", says Hegel, "is, as Subject, pure, simple negativity, and is for this very
reason the bifurcation of this simple; it is the doubling which sets up opposition, and then
again the negation of this indifferent diversity and of its antithesis [the immediate
simplicity]" (Hegel 1977: 10).

According to Hegel, the True is a closed, circular world, which is achieved by the
subject as a self-restoring sameness: "It [The True] is the process of its own becoming, the
circle that presupposes its end and its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only
by being worked out to its end, is it actual" (Hegel 1977: 10). Therefore, the Hegelian
subject travels towards a definite end, knowing the whole processes of its travel. The
meaning of the process of its travel is one of the essential moments of achieving the True.
Put another way, each process consists of the whole process of achieving the True.
Therefore, the Hegelian world of the True consists of the necessary moments: "each
moment is necessary; and furthermore, each moment has to be lingered over, because
each is itself a complete individual shape, and one is only viewed in absolute perspective
when its determinateness is regarded as a concrete whole, or the whole is regarded as
uniquely qualified by that determination" (Hegel 1977: 17).

Only the Spiritual can move because it knows the whole process of its own
movement toward the True. The travel proceeds from in-itself to for-itself. Where the
world of in-itself is one of the sense-consciousness, the world of for-itself is one of self-consciousness. The unified world of in-itself and for-itself is one of the Spiritual. Hegel's purpose is to trace this travel from in-itself to for-itself: "It is this coming-to-be of Science as such or of knowledge, that is described in this Phenomenology of Spirit" (Hegel 1977: 15). From the viewpoint of civilization, this is to describe the process of being constituted in culture. But, from the viewpoint of subjectification, which is expressed as "socialization" in role theory of sociology, each single individual who is at first sense-consciousness develops into the subject of a given society. In the role theory of American sociology, each individual becomes a member of a given society through socialization. In my opinion, Hegel "sociologically" proposed the problem of "socialization" or "subjectification", but he solved it "philosophically" or "ideally."

In Phenomenology of the Spirit, Hegel begins his first chapter by naming it "Consciousness." More clearly stated, he starts from "consciousness." Before becoming the subject, the human is "already" consciousness which has not yet contents. Hegel does not explain the genesis of consciousness. Therefore, consciousness is transhistorical; it has no genetic history. In the beginning, consciousness is pure negativity without having any contents. This aspect of "Consciousness" is similar to the Cartesian Cogito. For Hegel, as an heir to the Enlightenment, consciousness as a capacity of conceptual reasoning is the peculiar feature of the human being. For Hegel, man as a conscious being is an apex of the hierarchy of beings (Taylor 1975: 80-87). But, Hegel as a successor to Romanticism also thinks that consciousness is always consciousness about something (Williams 1992). Therefore, consciousness is said to contain two moments of knowing

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and the objectivity negative to its subjective knowing. In other words, consciousness contains the activity itself and the objectivity opposite to that activity; knowing is always to know what it is. As a result, there is disparity between them in consciousness: "The disparity which exists in consciousness between the 'I' and the substance which is its object is the distinction between them, the negative in general" (Hegel 1977: 21).

Then we come to ask: where does the force to objectify "I" come from? Is "I" who sees the "I" as an object the same as the "I" who is seen as the object? To the first question, Hegel answers "ideally": "Consciousness...is explicitly the Notion of itself. Hence it is something that goes beyond limits, and since these limits are its own, it is something that goes beyond itself" (Hegel 1977: 51). Consciousness as "I" who sees the "I" as an object is not genetically explained, but defined transcendentally. This consciousness is originally supposed to go beyond itself. Without this idealism, the travel of the Hegelian subject to the True cannot begin. With this idealism, Hegel answers the second question: "consciousness is, on the one hand, consciousness of the object, and on the other, consciousness of itself; consciousness of what for it is the True, and consciousness of its knowledge of the truth" (Hegel 1977: 54). Therefore, "I" who sees the "I" as an object is the same as the "I" who is seen as an object; the latter is actually "something that is the in-itself only for consciousness" (Hegel 1977: 55). Both of them, namely, the Cartesian subject and the social subject, are dialectically integrated in consciousness. But Hegel does not explain to us how the Cartesian subject is generated, and he demonstrates how it becomes integrated into the social subject, using the dialectic of master-slave.
Consciousness is its knowledge of itself as well as its object. They are in the process of dialectical movement through which a new and true object called “experience” appears. Hegel, therefore, calls consciousness the Notion of itself, which means the movement of knowing. What is important here is the nature of the object of consciousness. The object is the in-itself as well as the being-for-consciousness of this in-itself. The latter is a secondary object, which is the reflection of consciousness onto itself. The first object as the in-itself is altered for consciousness. Every object “ceases to be the in-itself, and becomes something that is the in-itself only for consciousness” (Hegel 1977: 55). Hegel contends that the inquiry of consciousness (“the Science of the experience of consciousness”) is also one of the real or historical world because consciousness contains consciousness itself as well as its object. From the viewpoint of Hegel, the development of consciousness is the same as one of the real world.

Let’s summarize the things discussed thus far: 1) Hegel presupposes consciousness as the movement of knowing; 2) consciousness contains its two objects, itself and the object for consciousness; 3) the disparity between the two objects of consciousness instigates the dialectical movement of consciousness toward the world of the True, where appearance becomes identical with essence. In my opinion, Hegel’s dialectics is based on the transcendental assumption of consciousness as the movement of knowing. Why should consciousness know itself and its object? What forces consciousness into compulsion to know itself and its object? In what follows, I will demonstrate that consciousness’ compulsion of knowing is propelled by the notion of the human being as a vehicle of Geist. Knowing itself and its object leads to its realization as a finite spirit in
media, namely, others. If we follow Hegel's dialectic, this will be accomplished only when mutual recognition is achieved. But mutual recognition is always delayed; rather, domination and submission prevail. I will examine why this paradox appears.

Now, let's follow the travel of Hegelian consciousness. The first objects of consciousness belong to the world of sense: "The knowledge or knowing which is at the start or immediately our object cannot be anything else but immediate knowledge itself, a knowledge of the immediate or of what simply is" (Hegel 1977: 58). Consciousness only knows what is, and therefore, it achieves sense-certainty that something is. But sense-certainty is not true certainty because it depends on time (now) and space (here). The I's sense-certainty can differ from another's sense-certainty because the first I occupies different time and space from another I. When the I "sees" a tree, the I has a sense-certainty that a tree is. But another I can have other sense-certainty: "I, this 'I', sees the tree and asserts that 'Here' is a tree; but another 'I' sees the house and maintains that 'Here' is not a tree but a house instead. Both truths have the same authentication, viz. the immediacy of seeing, and the certainty and assurance that both have about their knowing; but the one truth vanishes on the other" (Hegel 1977: 61). When the I turns its sight, a tree disappears and the I's sense-certainty also vanishes. But the fact that the I sees itself remains. A tree or a house that the I sees is the universal because it really designates "Here" and "Now". Anything can be seen by the I, and therefore, the concrete objects disappear but "This" belonging to "Here" and "Now" remains. In this sense, Hegel opposes realism and empiricism which assert that the existence of external objects has absolute certainty and truth.
Sense-certainty develops into perception because the "I" realizes that sense-certainty actually comes from I's consciousness. The difference between sense-certainty and perception is as follows: "Immediate certainty does not take over the truth, for its truth is the universal, whereas certainty wants to apprehend the This. Perception, on the other hand, takes what is present to it as a universal" (Hegel 1977: 67). For perception, both 'I' and the object are universal. While the object of sense is the This ("the sensuous world"), the object of perception is a determinate Nothing, the Nothing of the This ("the supersensible world"). Nothing negates the This, but also preserves it because Nothing is the negation of the This: "Our Nothing, as the Nothing of the This, preserves its immediacy and is itself sensuous, but it is a universal immediacy" (Hegel 1977: 68). Why Nothing is a universal immediacy is that the This is mediated and negated by consciousness. From a sensuous being the object turns into a universal, but this universal is essentially conditioned by it because this universal originates in the sensuous. Therefore, this universality, called "the absolute universal", cannot remain identical with itself, from which the universality splits into the extremes of "singular individuality" (the One of properties) and "universality" (the Also of the free matters).

The absolute universal is in the process of double movement: from universality to singular individuality, which is the expression of Force, and in turn from singular individuality to universality, which is Force proper. Through this movement, the absolute universal purges the antithesis between the universal and the individual and becomes the object of the Understanding: "there now opens up above the sensuous world, which is the world of appearance, a supersensible world which henceforth is the true world, above the
vanishing present world there opens up a permanent beyond” (Hegel 1977: 87). For Understanding, everything is at first a Force, which is nothing but the concept, the thought of the sensuous world. Force is the reflection of this world back on itself or its reflection in consciousness. Therefore, the world of Understanding is one of law. At first, phenomena, which belongs to the sensuous world, and law, which belongs to the supersensible world, seem to be opposites, but they identify with each other in the thought of “infinity.” Infinity is the universal life of the absolute which remains as itself in its other and reconciles the one and the many. At that moment, consciousness of the other has become a consciousness of itself in the other. In its object, consciousness reaches itself; in its truth, it is self-certainty, self-consciousness: “It is true that consciousness of an ‘other’, of an object in general, is itself necessarily self-consciousness, a reflectedness-into-itself, consciousness of itself in its otherness” (Hegel 1977: 102).

At last, consciousness reaches the stage of self-consciousness. Consciousness as a pure negativity, at first, tries to know the sensuous world external to itself, and then seems to achieve sense-certainty. But this sense-certainty proves to be false because the sensuous thing is only a universal. Thus, consciousness moves toward the stage of perception, in which I’s consciousness as well as its object are the universal. But, this universal splits into two extremes of singular individuality and universality because it originated in the sensuous world. Force, which instigates the double movement (externalization and internalization), enhances consciousness from the sensuous world (the world of phenomena) to the supersensible world (the world of laws). The opposition between them is solved in infinity, where each extreme is the precondition of the other’s
existence. Consciousness of an “other” or object in general equals self-consciousness or consciousness of itself in its otherness. In the stage of self-consciousness, “What the object immediately was in itself — mere being in sense-certainty, the concrete thing of perception, and for the Understanding, a Force — proves to be in truth, not this at all; instead, this in-itself turns out to be a mode in which the object is only for an other” (Hegel 1977: 104).

If all objects are only for an other, in-itself is equal to for-itself. Only self-consciousness is in-itself as well as for-itself:

If we give the name of Notion to the movement of knowing, and the name of object to knowing as a passive unity, or as the ‘I’, then we see that not only for us, but for knowing itself, the object corresponds to the Notion...For the in-itself is consciousness; but equally it is that for which an other (the in-itself) is consciousness; and it is for consciousness that the in-itself of the object, and the being of the object for an other, are one and the same; the ‘I’ is the content of the connection and connecting itself. Opposed to an other, the ‘I’ is its own self, and at the same time it overarches this other which, for the ‘I’, is equally only the ‘I’ itself (Hegel 1977: 104).

Self-consciousness is the reflection out of the being of the world of sense and perception, and is essentially the return from otherness. This movement of self-consciousness is activated by the desire for achieving the unity of self-consciousness with itself. Therefore, “self-consciousness is Desire in general” (Hegel 1977: 105). Self-consciousness has double objects: the immediate object and itself. Unlike the object of sense-certainty and perception, the immediate object of self-consciousness is a living thing, Life. Self-consciousness learns through experience that the object is independent. In another word, the object of self-consciousness is also another self-consciousness.

According to Hegel, self-consciousness, before ascending to the stage of mutual
recognition, is the desire in general to achieve its own certainty through superseding other self-consciousness. Nothing except other self-consciousness can give certainty to self-consciousness because it is not a living thing, Life: “self-consciousness is thus certain of itself only by superseding this other that presents itself to self-consciousness as an independent life; self-consciousness is Desire” (Hegel 1977: 109). Thus, self-consciousness tries to destroy other self-consciousness: “Certain of the nothingness of this other, it explicitly affirms that this nothingness is for it the truth of the other, it destroys the independent object and thereby gives itself the certainty of itself as a true certainty, a certainty which has become explicit for self-consciousness itself in an objective manner” (Hegel 1977: 109).

In my opinion, the “desire” of self-consciousness follows a logic of exploiting and mastering others. It is similar to Hobbes’s natural human being; Hobbes’s natural man suffers perpetual and restless desire for power because power is the essential requirement for felicity, self-interest (Hobbes 1955). It is also similar to Freud’s reality-ego or ego-instinct whose principal function is self-preservation: “the reality-ego need do nothing but strive for what is useful and guard itself against damage” (Freud [1911]: 18). The travel of consciousness from sense-certainty to the desire of self-consciousness is activated by the will to master others although it is embellished as a stage toward the True, the unity of consciousness with itself in other.

But the movement does not end here because the I’s self-consciousness is faced by another self-consciousness. Hegel’s dialectic needs two subjects, or two self-consciousness; the self-consciousness of the ‘I’ can be recognized only by ‘another’ self-
consciousness: "Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged" (Hegel 1977: 111). Hegel calls this movement of self-consciousness "the process of Recognition." The I demands another I to recognize the first I (I's value) as its value. So does another self-consciousness. This process of recognition involves two directions: "Self-consciousness is faced by another self-consciousness; it has come out of itself. This has a two-fold significance: first, it has lost itself, for it finds itself as an other being; secondly, in doing so it has superseded the other, for it does not see the other as an essential being, but in the other sees its own self" (Hegel 1977: 111). While the first movement refers to the loss of itself, the second movement designates the supersession of other. The reason why the I loses itself is to supersede other: this is a circular movement. This is a movement of seeking "the death of the other": "the relation of the two self-conscious individuals is such that they prove themselves and each other through a life-and-death struggle. They must engage in this struggle, for they must raise their certainty of being for themselves to truth, both in the case of the other and in their own case" (Hegel 1977: 113-14).

Why should two self-conscious individuals struggle against each other? Because they want their certainty of being for themselves to be the truth. Why should self-consciousness achieve its certainty? For the True, in which "I" that is 'We' and 'We' that is 'I'" (Hegel 1977: 110). At last, the pursuit of the True turns out to be a main mechanism of justifying the exploitation of others. The pursuit for the True results in a paradoxical situation. Therefore, the movement of exploiting and mastering others must be changed to the stage of mutual recognition in which I is We and We is I. How does
Hegel explain this transition from exploitation to mutual recognition?

Hegel explains the process of recognition through the story of the so-called master-bondsman. In the beginning, there is inequality between a master and a bondsman, "Since to begin with they are unequal and opposed, and their reflection into a unity has not yet been achieved, they exist as two opposed shapes of consciousness; one is the independent consciousness whose essential nature is to be for itself, the other is the dependent consciousness whose essential nature is simply to live or to be for another" (Hegel 1977: 115). The "I" desires the other because the other is a difference, but as soon as the "I" achieves its desire, the difference of the 'other' self-consciousness disappears. This result is a paradox because the "I" desires the other's difference. This is a destiny of the master. The master's self-consciousness cannot be recognized by the slave because the difference of the slave is already negated by the master. But the slave increasingly discovers that he has a self-consciousness during the process of "work" or labor. The object of work, nature, is different with the slave, but he externalizes himself onto the object and overcomes the difference. Yet, the product of the slave's labor is enjoyed by the master. At this time, the slave realizes that the force of overcoming the difference of nature is his own:

Through work...the bondsman becomes conscious of what he truly is...Work...is desire held in check, fleetingness staved off; in other words, work forms and shapes the thing. The negative relation to the objects becomes its form and something permanent, because it is precisely for the worker the object has independence. This negative middle term or the formative activity is at the same time the individuality or pure being-for-self of consciousness which now, in the work outside of it, acquires an element of permanence. It is in this way, therefore, that consciousness, qua worker, comes to see in the independent being [of the object] its own independence (Hegel 1977: 118).
At this moment the real dialectic of the master and slave starts. Hegel explains the development of self-consciousness as the division of self-consciousness (stoicism, skepticism, and the unhappy consciousness), the development of reason from the unhappy consciousness, and the advent of absolute knowledge.

The pivotal point is what drives the transition from desire to recognition. As the dialectic of master-bondsman shows, two self-consciousnesses at the stage of desire risk their lives in order to satisfy their desires. Therefore, struggle and opposition is unavoidable; two self-consciousnesses have their immediate self-certainty (I = I). This immediate self-certainty is nothing but a conscious, rational understanding of himself; that is a Cartesian Cogito. This self-consciousness is, if we use Sartre's term, the ego or "reflective consciousness" (Sartre 1957). But, faced by another self-consciousness, the I's self-certainty trembles. Therefore, the I tries to reduce another I to self-othering, which means to the I's projection of his self-certainty to another I. Another I also does the same thing. If the first I succeeds, another I is degenerated into a thing without consciousness, and vice-versa. In the process of struggling, two self-consciousnesses come to know that their persistence in their immediate self-certainties would result in the other's death as well as in the nullification of possibility of recognition from the other conscious being. At this moment, the two self-consciousnesses are ready to desert their immediate self-certainties and to let the other be. Butler says that "otherness is surpassed every time that one self-consciousness discovers the Other not as a limit to freedom but as its very condition" (Butler 1987: 86). At last, the stage of mutual recognition appears. Williams summarizes as follows: "The self must 'return' to itself out of its 'othered' state, by winning itself in
the other’s recognition. This return to self out of otherness is not simply a restoration of the original self-identity qua abstract immediate identity. Rather the original self-certainty is enlarged and enriched by the other’s recognition. But this enriching return to self is possible only if the self in turn releases the other and allows the other to go free” (Williams 1992: 149). According to Hegel, this is a “necessary” development of human history.

But this “logical reasoning” is just a way to explain the transition from desire to mutual recognition. The I’s realization that other’s difference is a precondition of fulfilling the I’s desire for recognition logically leads to I’s giving-up of I’s immediate self-certainty. In this explanation, I’s rational reasoning is assumed to be directly connected to action.

Yet, I think that Hegelian dialectics contains an intrinsic obstacle to this. First, Hegel argues for the hierarchy of being; he degenerates other beings that do not have consciousness into lower beings. Only man is conscious; man is most characterized by his consciousness. Although Hegel does not think that man is a simple sum of consciousness and matter, he narrows life into abstraction and nature into things without consciousness. Hegel starts from consciousness, excluding other aspects of the human psyche. Second, this logic demands only self-consciousness as an entity separate from the unconscious and nature. For Hegel, self-conscious means that a human being is able to “authentically” know and express himself and further realize himself in others. But self-consciousness is a second construct, or more precisely, a fictitious construct. In this sense, Hyppolite and Sartre are important. Hyppolite’s notion of time informs us that the subject cannot avoid the temporal basis of its identity. Butler summarizes as follows: “For Hyppolite, time constitutes human reality as an ek-static enterprise, a mode of permanent self-
estrangement. Living in time, human beings are necessarily other to themselves, not only because they cannot inhabit memory and anticipation at once, but because time itself is necessarily beyond their control; indeed, time is less a human creation than the necessary limit on all human creativity, the inevitable transience of all human creations" (Butler 1987: 82). Whenever the subject reflects on his consciousness and gains his self-consciousness, his self-consciousness is estranged by uncontrollable time. Sartre further contends that consciousness can never become self-consciousness except in the imaginary: “consciousness never becomes self-consciousness, but remains ontologically estranged, overcoming this estrangement only through the momentary enchantments of desire’s imaginary satisfaction” (Butler 1987: 97). Third, therefore, the I’s self-consciousness cannot totally grasp “life” because life is always more than self-consciousness. In other words, the I’s self-consciousness or the I’s conscious self cannot totally grasp its life nor other’s life. Fourth, the I’s self-consciousness has a strong “compulsion” of consciously knowing itself as well as others, which is brought on and exacerbated by its failure to totally grasp itself and others. The I’s self-consciousness strives to achieve more inclusive self-consciousness or identity by virtue of negating others. Fifth, the I’s self-consciousness tends to reduce others to self-thering or self-sameness; the I’s self-consciousness cannot tolerate something other than consciousness. Therefore, the I always returns to itself out of “self-thering”, not other itself. This is not a world that Hegel intended to bring about: Hegel originally holds that the I return to itself out of other itself, not self-thering (Williams 1992: chapter 7). This world is not characterized by mutual recognition, but domination and submission. Without deserting his conscious
pursuit for rational knowledge of himself as well as others, the Hegelian subject of desire cannot arrive at the stage of mutual recognition.

Another way to explain the transition from desire to mutual recognition might be the "contract of egoistic individuals." This is a Hobbesian way. According to Hobbes, the original condition of man was that of a creature living in a state of nature, in which he was in constant conflict with his fellows. He lived in a perpetual state of fear. For each man, surrounded by his enemies, death is more likely than felicity. Therefore, every man surrenders some of his natural right in order to pursue his own felicity. The rights surrendered by each individual (to pursue their own self-interest as if they were alone in the world) are transferred in the form of a contract or covenant: "I transfer to X my natural right to the free exercise of my will and authorize him to act on my belief on condition that you make a similar transfer and give a similar authority" (Hobbes 1955: xxxviii). The fundamental force that drives each individual to surrender his natural right is his self-interest. But this is far away from the Hegelian world of mutual recognition.

An alternative way I want to propose is the deconstruction of the Hegelian subject of desire. The Hegelian subject of desire has to realize that he is strongly obsessed with a compulsion of "consciously" knowing himself as well as others. He has to admit that it is impossible to completely know himself and others. This demands the deconstruction of the Hegelian subject of desire. In fact, Hegel suggests that the subject of desire trembles when he is faced by another subject of desire. But even if the subject of desire is deconstructed, it cannot achieve mutual recognition. The failure of achieving mutual recognition in Hegel's master-slave dialectic can be explained in psychoanalytic terms.
In “Independence and Dependence of Self-consciousness: Lordship and Bondage”, Hegel states as follows:

Self-consciousness is faced by another self-consciousness; it has come out of itself. This has a twofold significance: first, it has lost itself, for it finds itself as an other being; secondly, in doing so it has superseded the other, for it does not see the other as an essential being, but in the other sees its own self (Hegel 1977: 111)

These paragraphs can be read as they explain the process of “projective identification.” The term “projective identification”, introduced by Melanie Klein, refers to “a mechanism revealed in phantasies in which the subject inserts his self — in whole or in part — into the object in order to harm, possess or control it” (Laplanche and Pontalis 1973: 356). The first self-consciousness projects its ego onto other self-consciousness and then, identifies its ego (projected onto the other self-consciousness) as its own. Ver Eecke also points out: “the other is not constituted as another self-consciousness. The other is only constituted as a projection of the self-consciousness that the first consciousness has not yet become of in itself” (Ver Eecke 1983: 121). The important thing is here that its ego, according to Lacan, is modeled on its imago or other’s imago, the process of which always leaves remainders. Thus, the process of projective identification always presuppose the splitting of the subject: the ego and the remainders. As a result, self-consciousness cannot be totally aware of itself; it is alienated. The first self-consciousness is reduced into its part, the ego and the other self-consciousness into self-othering of the first self-consciousness, not other itself: “the first [self-consciousness] does not know itself, but on the contrary it has falsely discovered itself in another being and therefore has founded itself as another being” (Ver Eecke 1983: 121). From the beginning, in this
sense, Hegelian dialectic, which aims to establish mutual recognition, is destined to failure.

The next paragraph can be also read as an explanation of the process of “introjection.”

It must supersede this otherness of itself. This is the supersession of the first ambiguity, and is therefore itself a second ambiguity. First, it must proceed to supersede the other independent being in order thereby to become certain of itself as the essential being; secondly, in so doing it proceeds to supersede its own self, for this other is itself (Hegel 1977: 111).

The term “introjection”, which is introduced by Sandor Ferenczi, generally refers to the process that “in fantasy, the subject transposes objects and their inherent qualities from the ‘outside’ to the ‘inside’ of himself” (Laplanche and Pontalis 1973: 356). This is the process of regaining the projected ego from the self-othering.

What the processes of projection and introjection mean is that they are fictitious processes proceeded in fantasy, presupposing the self-alienation. Therefore, Hegel’s dialectic of two self-consciousnesses is from the start far away from the mutual recognition. As it will be clear in the chapter on Lacan, the dialectic based on the fictitious ego or the self-consciousness alienated from itself results in only the world of sameness where the other should be negated and mastered. When this ego is deconstructed, the subject of recognition is divided from the subject of desire and it takes the position imposed by the cultural as its own. This is another alienation. The alienated subject of recognition strives to acquire its recognition from others in the circuit of the social system, but it can recognize the alienated other subject and be recognized by it. The true mutual recognition is, therefore, impossible. Hegel’s subject of recognition is a floating subject who always begins to travel in order to achieve mutual recognition.
Speaking in terms of Lacanian psychoanalysis, the subject of desire is the ego and the subject of recognition is the speaking subject. The subject of desire lives in the world of sameness where the imaginary unity with the other maintains. On the contrary, the subject of recognition lives in the circuit of signifiers where it strives to regain, in fantasy, the lost unity.

The subject of desire or the ego cannot achieve his conscious self-consciousness; it functions on the basis of imaginary identification, namely self-estrangement. Ver Eecke says, "Inasmuch as Lacan claims that the synthesis achieved in the mirror stage is a foundation, a basis for further syntheses (or identifications), Lacan’s theory presents us with a view of man in which an unconscious, alien identity is the basis of any further psychological development. Within such a framework, the Hegelian dream of conscious self-possession is radically impossible" (Ver Eecke 1983: 126). The subject of recognition or the speaking subject also cannot achieve mutual recognition; it is an alienated existence in/by way of language. Elliott points out as follows: "With the introduction of the symbolic...Lacan argues that mutual recognition is absolutely unobtainable since the Other introduces an uncertainty, and interminable shifting, into language" (Elliott 1992: 138).

Hegelian politics originally aimed to secure the independent individual who is in harmony with the social order, and which has been the basis for modern Western politics as well as the politics of anti-colonial nationalist movements in the Third World. The independent individual requires freedom, whereas the social order needs necessity. Hegel solves the freedom-necessity problem by proposing a society in which the differences of individuals are overcome. In this society, "I" is "We" and "We" is "I." This society
would be based on the mutual recognition of individuals. Human history will be complete in this society. Marxist politics as a modified heir of Hegelian politics has tried to achieve this goal all over the world. But, unfortunately, the advent of the truly free society is always delayed.

We may characterize the modern era as one of imperialism and colonialism. All civilizations were defined as others by Western civilization. Western civilization based on the capacity of the human subject (actually, the Hegelian subject of desire) negated other civilizations in the name of the truth. World Wars I and II suggest that this Hegelian subject of desire is destined to destroy humanity as well as nature. Another Hegelian subject, the subject of recognition or the speaking subject emerged in the process of the liberation movement of the Third World. The Western subject was forced to recognize that the Third World is also another subject, which opened neo-colonialism. Both of them strove to achieve mutual recognition, which is destined to fail; they in fact strove to regain, in fantasy, the lost imaginary unity.

Therefore, we need to find alternative notions of the subject. In my view, psychoanalysis, especially Lacanian psychoanalysis, can be the starting point. That is why we have to re-read Freud.

(B) Freud: Unconscious Desire of Regaining the Lost Paradise

When I connect Hegel with Freud, I take the ego as the connecting link. I think that Hegel’s subject of desire has the same function as Freud’s “ego.” Hegel’s subject of desire is characterized by the facts that: 1) it disguises itself as an independent and
autonomous substance; 2) in order to survive it needs other subjects of desire as matter which should be consumed by it; 3) it represses and negates others in the name of self-certainty or self-sameness. In similar ways, Freud's "ego" is distinguished by the fact that: 1) it masquerades itself as an autonomous and masterful agency; 2) it tries to unify, homogenize, and organize itself as well as others; 3) it represses the unconscious wishful impulses which would generate unpleasure in the human psyche and resists the endeavor of the repressed unconscious to become conscious. If we consider Hegel's subject of desire or Freud's ego as a subject, the discourse of this subject is characterized by the conscious and intentional discourse: "From the viewpoint of the self or ego, 'I' runs the show: that aspect of us that we call 'I' believes that it knows what it thinks and feels, and believes that it knows why it does what it does" (Fink 1995: 4). But, according to Freud, there is some other kind of discourse stemming from the unconscious, which is unintentional and unconscious discourse. Therefore, Hegel's subject of desire or Freud's ego cannot completely know what it thinks and feels, nor why it does what it does.

Freud's metapsychology or topography of the mental apparatus tells us that the ego cannot represent the subject. The ego is not a pregiven entity. The ego emerges from id and plays a fundamental role in making the masculine subject who identifies himself with the position imposed by the social code or the Oedipal logic in Western culture. In what follows, I will demonstrate that the psyche cannot be the same as the conscious or Hegel's consciousness, that the human psyche consists of systems of psychical apparatus, and that each system is always in conflict. After that, I will illustrate that in Western culture the so-called Oedipus complex has been a maker of the unconscious wishes as well.
as the masculine subject, and that this masculine subject, who conceals his unconscious
desire for regaining the pre-Oedipal dyadic relation with his mother, has been considered
to be the subject.

1. Metapsychology: Two Models of Mental Apparatus

In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), Freud says, “a dream is a (disguised)
fulfillment of a (suppressed or repressed) wish” (Freud [1900]: 194). When we read this
statement, we come to ask the following: why should a dream fulfill its wish only in a
disguised form? Why should dream’s wish be suppressed or repressed? Who suppresses
or represses a dream’s wish? If it is true that a dream’s wish is represented to
consciousness only in a disguised form, we cannot avoid admitting that there must be
another agency or area different from consciousness.

In order to verify the statement mentioned above, Freud analyzes a lot of dreams,
and at last provides the topography of human psyche. In chapter VII “The Psychology of
the Dream-Process”, Freud divides the mind into three areas — memory, the unconscious,
and the preconscious.
This topography indicates as well two temporary conditions connected with the operations of the psyche — perception and motor response (diagram 1 above).

According to Freud, all human psychical activity starts from stimuli and ends in the innervations (a certain energy is transported to a particular part of the body where it brings about motor or sensory phenomena) and therefore, human psyche has a sense or direction. To the left of the diagram 1, there is perception, which leaves a memory trace: “A trace is left in our psychical apparatus of the perceptions which impinge upon it. This we may describe as a ‘memory trace’; and to the function relating to it we give the name of memory” (Freud [1900]: 576). Here Freud distinguishes sensory (perceptual) from motor pole of the psychical apparatus. Our perceptions are linked with one another in our memory, which is called “association” by Freud. These perceptions are preserved in our memory, and they are transferred into the conscious by some moments. Memory traces which are not repressed can enter into the area of the conscious without distortion, but memory traces which are repressed cannot enter into the area of the conscious without distortion. The unconscious, thus, is a part of the mind not accessible to consciousness except in disguised form. For the unconscious materials to enter into consciousness, they have to pass through the preconscious to the conscious: “it [the unconscious] has no access to consciousness except via the preconscious, in passing through which its excitatory process is obliged to submit to modification” (Freud [1900]: 580).

The movement of a stimulus from sensation to motility (discharge of excitations into the external world) is precisely structured by the form of the wish: the path of an impulse from passive reception to active expression is the wish-form. This wish always
strives to be represented, but in daily life some wishes cannot find their path to be represented because of censorship: “Experience shows us that this path leading through the preconscious to consciousness is barred to the dream-thoughts during the daytime by the censorship imposed by resistance” (Freud [1900]: 580-81). In the daytime, psyche apparatus has a “progressive” direction from perception to consciousness, but in the nighttime it has a “regressive” direction from consciousness to perception: “In regression the fabric of the dream-thoughts is resolved into its raw material” (Freud [1900]: 582). In the nighttime censorship decreases, and therefore, the wish can find its way of being represented.

What is important in this topography is that there is an unending dialectic of psychical conflict between repression and the surreptitious ways in which unconscious representations press toward expression (Elliott 1992: 16). To Freud, the human psyche is neither a transparent entity, nor a pacific state. It is always in the process of conflict. Human psyche has direction, but unlike Hegel who asserts that consciousness has only an ascending direction toward the True, Freud holds that human psyche has the two directions of “progression” and “regression.” In the regressive direction, the repressed unconscious tries to be represented in the area of the conscious, but it is thwarted by censorship. Then, who exercises censorship? According to Freud, resistance does. Who is the agent of resistance? In this article, Freud does not clearly answer this question. Later, in *The Ego and the Id* (1923) Freud says that the agency of repression and resistance is the coherent ego (Freud [1923a]: 8), but in this article he just says that resistance is exercised by endopsychic force (Freud [1900]: 308). The unconscious as a
psychical system deforms, disfigures, and disguises meanings and makes it something
unrecognizable in order to avoid censorship. Distortion is a global force through which
the unconscious transforms and produces psychical expression. This distortion is achieved
by four unconscious mechanisms: “condensation”, “displacement”, “consideration of
representation”, and “secondary revision” (Freud [1900]: chapter VI).

When Freud uses the topological metaphor of mental apparatus, he warns that we
do not have to hypothesize that the psychical systems are actually arranged in a “spatial”
order. In other words, we do not have to suppose that each system of psychical apparatus
has its fixed position. Each system of psychical apparatus is always in processes: “Thus
we are driven to conclude that two fundamentally different kinds of psychical process are
concerned in the formation of dreams. One of these produces perfectly rational dream-
thoughts, of no less validity than normal thinking; while the other treats these thoughts in a
manner which is in the highest degree bewildering and irrational” (Freud [1900]: 636).

Freud associates the unconscious with what he calls the “primary process” and the
preconscious with what he calls the “secondary process.”¹ The primary and secondary
processes represent two very different ways of responding to the pleasure principle.²

¹. In the Project for a Scientific Psychology of 1895, Freud already elaborated the
conceptions of the primary and secondary processes. Freud’s earlier researches were
based on the assumption of psychic energy. As an apparatus for mastering excitation, the
mind exhibits the double function of investment and discharge of quantities of energies.
On the one hand, the mind strives to completely discharge energies, which is called the
principle of neuronic inertia. On the other hand, the mind seeks constancy and stabilitly of
energy, which called the principle of constancy.

². In Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Freud defines the pleasure principle as follows: “The
pleasure principle...is a tendency operating in the service of function whose business it is
to free the mental apparatus entirely from excitation or to keep the amount of excitation in
it constant or to keep it as low as possible” (Freud [1920]: 76).
While the primary process seeks immediate gratification through hallucination (a "perceptual identity"), the secondary process traces a more circuitous route to gratification (a "thought identity"): "The primary process endeavors to bring about a discharge of excitation in order that, with the help of the amount of excitation thus accumulated, it may establish a 'perceptual identity' [with the experience of satisfaction]. The secondary process, however, has abandoned this intention and taken on another in its place — the establishment of a 'thought identity' [with that experience]" (Freud [1900]: 641).

In this explanation, the notion of "drive" is important. Freud defines "drive" as the mental representative of somatic impulse, which strives to discharge the quantity of excitation which it carries. According to Freud, the accumulation of excitations brings about unpleasure. Therefore, a drive strives to find its way of releasing its excitation; "within the primary system, this excitation remains 'freely mobile' — i.e. capable of infinite displacement in its search for discharge" (Silverman 1983: 68). On the contrary, the second process inhibits the dissipation of that excitation: "the second system can only cathect an idea if it is in a position to inhibit any development of unpleasure that may proceed from it" (Freud [1900]: 640). Then, can the second system completely master the first system? According to Freud, the answer is 'no':

3. Freud's term Trieb was translated as "instinct" by James Strachey, it is radically different from the common sense of instinct we have. Trieb refers to "an elemental impulse or striving that is radically unspecified with respect to its aims and objects" (Boothby 1991: 229). According Boothby, Freud distinguished the term Instinkt from the term Trieb: "What distinguishes Trieb from animal instinct is the greater latitude and openness to variation between the drive impulse and its mode and means of satisfaction" (Boothby 1991: 30).
...the primary processes are present in the mental apparatus from the first, while it is only during the course of life that the secondary processes unfold, and come to inhibit and overlay the primary ones; it may even be that their complete domination is not attained until the prime of life. In consequence of the belated appearance of the secondary processes, the core of our being, consisting of unconscious wishful impulses, remains inaccessible to the understanding and inhibition of the preconscious; the part played by the latter is restricted once and for all to directing along the most expedient paths the wishful impulses that arises from the unconscious (Freud [1900]: 642).

Although Freud says that the possibility is great that the secondary processes completely dominates the primary processes, the emphasis is put on the impossibility because the core of our being consists of unconscious wishful impulses. Then, what are the unconscious wishful impulses? According to Freud, the unconscious wishful impulses are not an innate instinct of our being; they are constituted during our infantile life. Thus, the unconscious wishful impulses have their history. Later, Freud explained the process of their constitution through the story of the Oedipus complex.

In his early topography of the human psyche, Freud demonstrates the human psyche as a dynamic process between the primary process and the secondary process. There is no unified, autonomous essence in the human psyche. In the first topography, there is no place allotted to the ego. Freud just hints that the function of the ego is an inhibition or a resistance. In the earlier text of Project of the Scientific Psychology, Freud conceptualized the ego as a negative structure. According to this earlier notion, the ego is "an essentially defensive, regulatory structure" (Boothby 1991: 53). In "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914), Freud confirmed that the ego is not a pregiven entity and its main function is negative. Freud argues, "it is impossible to suppose that a unity comparable to the ego can exist in the individual from the start: the ego has to develop"
The ego originates from the subject’s ability to take itself or part of its own body as a love object, which is called the primary narcissism. When this ego is in conflict with the subject’s cultural and ethical ideals, the ego shifts from the primary narcissism (the real ego) to the secondary narcissism (the ideal ego). The ideal ego is an effort to regain the primary narcissism where the subject thought itself all perfect. Thus the ego’s function is to maintain its sense of perfection. It repressed all that contradict its perfection. Freud says, “Repression...proceeds from the ego; we might say with greater precision: from the self-respect of the ego” (Freud [1914]: 50).

But, in his later topography of human psyche Freud is said to suppose the unified and autonomous agency, the ego. The so-called ego psychologists, who primarily accepted Freud’s later works, see the ego as an apparatus of regulation and adaptation to reality⁴. In The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence, Freud’s daughter, Anna, set the tasks of ego psychology as follows: “From the beginning analysis, as a therapeutic method, was concerned with the ego and its aberrations: the investigation of the id and of its mode of operation was always only a means to an end. And the end was invariably the

⁴ Grosz summarizes this view of the ego as follows: “1. the ego is a pregiven, natural, or innate faculty, the biological result of the interaction of psychical and social relations with the surface of the organism; 2. the ego is one ‘agency’ or system among a number of others which compete for gratification within the subject; 3. the ego is the ‘reasonable’ mediator intervening between antagonistic forces, arbitrating as an outsider between the demands of the id and the requirements of reality; 4. the ego’s specific form is a consequence of the neuronal impact of external impingements on the subject’s interiority. It also acts as a delegate for the id’s wishes. It is the agency guarding and supervising the pleasure-seeking id and a hostile, repressive reality; 5. the ego, as mediator or rational harmoniser of psychical conflict, is thus responsible for the ‘higher’ mental accomplishments of culture; 6. the ego functions to inhibit psychical impulses and/or the force of social custom. Its role is to modify both, inducing compromises between these antagonistic interests by inhibiting their strength or impetus” (Grosz 1991: 26).
same: the correction of these abnormalities and the restoration of the ego to its integrity” (Anna Freud, quoted in Frosh 1987: 87). American ego-psychologists, especially Hartman and Erikson, developed ego psychology by accepting Anna Freud’s account of the ego. According to this view, the ego is primarily a mediator between the demands of instinct and reality. In *The Ego and the Problem of Adaptation*, Heinze Hartmann equates the function of the ego with adaptation to reality. The ego possesses a “conflict-free sphere, a margin of independence from the clamoring of the id” (Boothby 1991: 35). In what follows, I will contend that the ego psychologists’ interpretation of Freud should be reinterpreted in regard to the whole contexts of Freud’s writings. In my view, the ego disguises itself as the unified and autonomous agency, but it turns out to be a split agency; internally, it includes the conscious and the unconscious, and externally, it is challenged by the repressed unconscious.

In *The Ego and the Id* (1923), Freud demonstrates the psychical apparatus in terms of intrasubjective relations among the superego, ego, and id. Because of the quotation below, many interpreters of Freud have considered the superego as the locus of repression, conscience, and reproach, the id as the locus of the repressed drives, and the ego as the mediator between the superego and the id.

The functional importance of the ego is manifested in the fact that normally control over the approaches to motility develops upon it. Thus in its relation to the id it is like a man on horse, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse; with this difference, that the rider tries to do so with his own strength while the ego uses borrowed forces. Often a rider, if he is not to be parted from his horse, is obliged to guide it where it wants to go; so in the same way the ego is in the habit of transforming the id’s will into action as if it were its own (Freud [1923a]: 19).
Many ego psychologists interpret the above quotation as evidence that the ego coincides with the preconscious and conscious. I doubt this interpretation because in this article Freud argues that parts of the ego are unconscious. We have to listen carefully to Freud’s own assertion. While Freud contends that the ego is “a coherent organization of mental process” (Freud [1923a]: 8), he also holds that “a part of the ego, too — and Heaven knows how important a part — may be Ucs., undoubtedly is Ucs” (Freud [1923a]: 9). According to Freud, the unconscious is timeless: “We have learnt that unconscious mental processes are in themselves ‘timeless’. This means in the first place that they are not ordered temporally, that time does not change them in any way and that the idea of time cannot be applied to them” (Freud [1920]: 31-32). If the ego includes together the conscious and the unconscious, how can we say that the ego is the coherent organization of mental process? How should we understand these contradicting statements?

First of all, we have to follow Freud’s own explanation. According to Freud, each individual is “a psychical id, unknown and unconscious, upon whose surface rests the ego, developed from its nucleus the Pcept. system” (Freud [1923a]: 17)

Diagram 2.

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As we see in the diagram 2, the ego is not sharply separated from the id; its lower portion merges into id. But the repressed is cut off sharply from the ego.

In this article, Freud says further, “We recognize that the Ucs. does not coincide with repressed; it is still true that all that is repressed is Ucs., but not all that is Ucs. is repressed” (Freud [1923a]: 9). In other words, the unconscious consists of the (repressed) unconscious and the (non-repressed) unconscious. The unconscious belonging to the ego is the (non-repressed) unconscious. Freud holds that the antithesis between the conscious and the unconscious is substituted for the antithesis between “the coherent ego” and “the repressed” which is split off from it. Now, we have to examine the process of genesis of the ego in order to understand the relationship between the ego and the repressed. Because consciousness is the nucleus of the ego, we first have to examine the genesis of the conscious.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud holds that consciousness arises from perception and functions as the shield against the external stimuli: “What consciousness yields consists essentially of perceptions of excitations coming from the external world and of feelings of pleasure which can arise from within the mental apparatus; it is therefore possible to assign the system Pcpt-Cs., a position in space. It must lie on the borderline between outside and inside; it must be turned towards the external world and must envelop the other psychical systems” (Freud [1920]: 26). Unlike Hegel, Freud does not see consciousness as an essential substance or pure negativity. According to Freud, external stimuli give rise to excitations in perception and leave traces which form the foundation of memory. While most traces sink into the system Ucs.
through the system *Pcpt-Cs.*, some traces become the sources of the origin of consciousness. Consciousness has its genetic history because "consciousness arises instead of a memory-trace" (Freud [1920]: 28).

Freud explains the function of consciousness as a shield against the external stimuli by exemplifying the living vesicle with its perceptive cortical layer: "its outermost surface ceases to have the structure proper to living matter, becomes to some degree inorganic and thenceforward functions as a special envelop or membrane resistant to stimuli. In consequence, the energies of the external world are able to pass into the next underlying layers, which have remained living, with only a fragment of their original intensity; and these layers can devote themselves, behind the protective shield, to the reception of the amounts of stimulus which have been allowed through it" (Freud [1920]: 30).

Consciousness is similar to the living vesicle's perceptive layer. Consciousness is constituted while it repeatedly receives external stimuli. The energies of external stimuli pass through the conscious and are preserved in id. But the accumulation of these energies generates the tension with the psyche, and these energies try to be discharged. The ego is differentiated from the id in the process of blocking these energies. Thus, the ego is the end-product of a long evolution of the apparatus of adaptation. Genetically, the conscious and the ego are constituted as the products of the gradual differentiation of the id resulting from the influence of external stimuli: "We were justified in dividing the ego from the id, for there are certain considerations which necessitate that step. On the other hand, the ego is identical with the id, and is merely a specially differentiated part of it...The Ego is, indeed, the organized portion of the id" (Freud [1926]: 97). Freud calls ego-
instincts death-instincts because the ego tries to maintain the static state of energies or to keep excitations as low as possible. Therefore, the ego tries to control all psychic processes. If we admit that control is possible only when the ego knows itself as well as other psychical agents, we come to understand why the ego has a strong compulsion to know everything.

Therefore, the ego fancies itself as an agency of repression as well as resistance. The ego tries to repress the energies which may generate unpleasure and resist the endeavor of the repressed unconscious to become conscious. The ego can be an agent of repression and resistance because 1) the ego is not separated from the unconscious and 2) therefore, the ego "knows" the contents of the unconscious. If the ego does not know the contents of the unconscious, how can it repress the unconscious wishes? But these same facts stated above prevent the ego from being an autonomous and unified agency.

Anxiety is the clear evidence of it. Until the 1920s, Freud held that anxiety is the energy of repressed libido. Anxiety is an alternative mode of releasing the instinctual.

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5. It is now evident that the compulsion of the Hegel's subject of desire to consciously know himself as well as others is the ego's compulsion.

6. In the earlier article, "The Unconscious", Freud already contended that the conscious has the same contents as the unconscious, but the mode of representation is different. "It strikes us all at once that now we know what is the difference between a conscious and an unconscious idea. The two are not, as we supposed, different records of the same content sifique in different parts of the mind, nor yet different functional states of catheisis in the same part; but the conscious idea comprises the concrete idea plus the verbal idea corresponding to it, whilst the unconscious idea is that of the thing alone" (Freud [1915]: 133 - 134). The term "idea" is same as the term "presentation". In "The Ego and Id", Freud confirms this argumentation: "I have already, in another place (in "The Unconscious"), suggested that the real difference between a Ucs. and a Pcs. idea (thought) consists in this: that the former is carried out on some material which remains unknown, whereas the latter (the Pcs.) is in addition brought into connection with word-presentations" (Freud [[1923]: 12).
energies denied expression by the secondary agencies of the psychic apparatus: "Refused discharge along preferred pathways, energies subject to repression undergo a transformation and are experienced in characteristic somatic reactions: shortness of breath, weakness, sweating, shaking, dizziness, etc." (Boothby 1991: 140). According to this view, without repression, there would not be anxiety. But this view failed to explain the infantile anxiety which occurs before the establishment of the superego as the agency of repression and conscience. In other words, it cannot explain why the infant has anxiety although there is no repression. After the 1920s, Freud argued that infantile anxiety stems from the prematurity of birth. Although the ego has defensive functions against internal and external threats, it cannot totally compensate for the lack of coordination of the body conditioned by the prematurity of birth. Anxiety, thus, is a signal of danger to the ego: "the long period of time during which the young of the human species is in a condition of helplessness and dependence...establishes the earliest situation of danger" (Freud [1926]: 154-155). This situation gives the infant the anxiety that its life is threatened: "Anxiety is the reaction to danger" (Freud [1926]: 150). Freud argued that it is the integrity of the ego which is threatened in anxiety. Anxiety gives a clear evidence that the ego cannot be an autonomous and unified agency: "The very possibility of anxiety testifies to the fact that the formation of the ego does not fully quell the infant's internal chaos" (Boothby 1991: 143). Therefore, instead of thinking that the ego is a reasonable mediator between the demand of the id and the demand of reality, we had better think that the psyche is always in the dynamic process of conflict. In fact, Freud's final formulation of the ego and the id recapitulated his separation of primary and secondary processes set out in his earlier work.
Project of the Scientific Psychology (Boothby 1991: 66).

So far, I have examined Freud's metapsychology. Freud's metapsychology is an abstract map of the human psyche and its mode of operation. Now, we have to study the concrete and historical contents of the human psyche in modern Western culture and its mode of operation. In other words, we have to examine the discourse which produces the conscious, the unconscious, and the ego in modern Western culture, the Oedipus story.

2. The Oedipus Complex: The Maker of the Masculine Subject

In my opinion, the so-called Oedipus myth is a male story which explains the mechanism of the constitution of the male subject. During all of his academic life, Freud continued to assert the universal validity of the Oedipus complex, but he never gave any systematic account of it (Laplanche and Pontalis 1973: 283). Therefore, we have to synthesize Freud's accounts of the Oedipus complex scattered in his works.

Although Freud already recognized the importance of the Oedipus complex in 1897 when he wrote Project of the Scientific Psychology, a more detailed account appeared in The Interpretation of Dreams (1900). In this article, Freud makes mention of the Oedipus complex, but he does not yet establish it as a main mechanism of constituting the unconscious wishful impulses in modern Western culture. After analyzing the wishes of dreams, Freud holds that dreaming is a piece of infantile life that has been superseded. Freud says that the chief part in the mental lives of all children who become psychoneurotics is played by their parents. According to Freud, being in love with the one parent and hating the other are among the essential constituents of the stock of psychical impulses which is formed at that time and which is of such importance in determining the
symptoms of the later neuroses. This early experience is not confined only to psychoneurotics, but it is a universal experience. Psychoneurotics are only distinguished by exhibiting on a magnified scale feelings of love and hatred toward their parents which occur less obviously and less intensely in the minds of most children.

Therefore, the Oedipal desire, in which a child loves the opposite sex parent and hates the same sex parent, constitutes most of the unconscious wishful impulses. But these unconscious wishful impulses contradict the (pre)conscious: "Among these wishful impulses derived from infancy, which can neither be destroyed nor inhibited, there are some whose fulfillment would be a contradiction of the purposive ideas of secondary thinking. The fulfillment of these wishes would no longer generate an affect of pleasure but of unpleasure; and it is precisely this transformation of affect which constitutes the essence of what we term 'repression'" (Freud [1900]: 643). This repression inhibits the expression of the unconscious wishful impulses, but libidinal drive, which always strives to release its excitements, accomplishes its expression in a disguised form called representation.

In this article, Freud does not connect the Oedipus complex with the forming of the masculine subject, but in The Ego and the Id (1923) he clearly holds that the Oedipus complex makes the masculine subject as well as unconscious desire. During the Oedipal stage, the ego plays a fundamental role in making the masculine subject through its identificatory function.

It would be useful to examine Freud's explanation of the psycho-sexual
development of boys. In the beginning, the male infant cannot distinguish himself from an object, other. Originally, he was a part of his mother, and therefore, he cannot distinguish himself from his mother. According to Freud, the male infant has an object-cathexis (investment) for his mother (which is originally related to the mother's breast and is the prototype of object-choice on the anaclitic model\(^7\)), and simultaneously has an identification with his father (Freud calls it a primary identification). In the early period of his life, his object-cathexis for his mother and his identification with his father do not contradict each other because he cannot distinguish himself from other: "At the beginning, in the individual's primitive oral phase, object-cathexis and identification are no doubt indistinguishable from each other" (Freud [1923a]: 23). Object-cathexis for his mother and identification with his father co-exist peacefully until the boy's sexual wishes in regard to his mother become more intense and his father is perceived as an obstacle to the fulfillment of those wishes. From this conflict, the Oedipus complex originates. The peaceful dyadic relations between the male infant and his mother is threatened by the third person, the father. When object-cathexis clashes with identification, the male infant is forced to desert his object-cathexis for his mother. The male infant's object-cathexis for his mother should be "painfully" given up because of his fear of castration. But he actually does not give up his object-cathexis for his mother; he just displaces it into the

\(^7\) In "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914), Freud classified the type of object-choice as anaclitic type and narcissistic type. In an anaclitic (literally, leaning-up-against) type, those persons who have to do with the feeding, caring, and protection of the child (usually mother) become his earliest sexual objects. On the contrary, in the narcissistic type the children seek themselves as the first love-object. Freud claims that especially those people whose libidinal development has suffered some disturbance, as in perverts and homosexuals, have taken as their model not the mother but their own selves (Freud [1914]: 44-45).
intensification of his identification with his father. The formation of the masculine subject, thus, is a product of the intensification of his identification with his father. But this identification cannot completely compensate the loss of the loved object, it is only a substitute for the loss. The loss of the loved object necessitates the introjection of other into the structure of the ego itself. Thus, the Oedipus complex structures the masculine subject (intensification of his identification with the father) as well as the unconscious desire of regaining the peaceful, dyadic relationship with his mother. The masculine subject emerges at the cost of losing his object-cathexis for his mother. The stronger the masculine subject is, the more intensive the unconscious desire is. The stronger the masculine subject identifies with the father (the position imposed by the cultural), the more he is challenged by the unconscious desire of regaining the lost dyadic relationship between the male infant and his mother.

(C) Lacan: Phantasmatic Sense of Wholeness, Completeness and Fulfillment

Lacan’s account of subjectivity starts from the assumption that the subject is split into the ego and the unconscious (the speaking subject). To Lacan, while the ego is intimately connected with the notion of fiction, the unconscious is structured like language. According to Lacan, the ego is a product of the “imaginary” or “primary” identification with the image outside of the subject. The speaking subject comes from the secondary identification with the position imposed by the Oedipal logic. The former is a tragic fate of the human subject, resulting from the ontological want of being⁸: “There is

⁸ Some Leftists influenced by Lacan consider this aspect as the sad fate of the subject in capitalist society, not the human condition in general (Turkle 1992: 79). But for Lacan it is an ontological condition of human beings.
something originally, inaugurally, profoundly wounded in the human relation to the world” (Lacan [1955a]: 167). By contrast, the latter is a specific product of modern Western culture; the speaking subject in modern Western culture is set up by the Oedipus Complex. The ego is characterized by the imaginary unity, which is achieved at the cost of the subject’s alienation from itself. On the contrary, the speaking subject is characterized by the endeavor to regain the peaceful, dyadic relation with the mother, the lost paradise, through fantasy. I will call the ego and the speaking the masculine subjects; while the ego strives for the world of sameness in which the other’s difference should be negated to become a component of it, the speaking subject seeks to regain, in fantasy, the lost imaginary unity in which the other is reduced to object a. Therefore, neither the ego nor the speaking subject, according to Lacan, is a true subject.

1. The Ego or Narcissistic moi

For Lacan, the primitive ego or the “specular I” is a fictitious effect of imaginary identification with its mirror image: “The fundamental fact which analysis reveals to us and which I am in the process of teaching you, is that the ego is an imaginary function” (Lacan [1954]: 193). In “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I” (1949), Lacan introduces the famous notion of the so-called mirror stage to psychoanalysis. In this article, Lacan opposes the philosophy of consciousness: “It [mirror stage] is an experience that leads us to oppose any philosophy directly issuing from the Cogito” (Lacan [1949]: 1). The ego as a subject is a product of fictitious identification with an imago: “We have only to understand the mirror stage as an identification” (Lacan [1949]: 2)

According to Lacan, the mirror stage, which occurs approximately between 6
months and 18 months of life, is a formative event in the development of the subject when the infant begins to recognize his image in a mirror. Lacan claims that the human infant is characterized by its prematurity at birth and organic insufficiency. Unlike other animals, human beings are not fully developed when they are born and sensory motor abilities are clumsy (Lacan [1949]: 4). The human body in the first months of human life is in the state of “a primal chaos of wholly unsymbolized somatic excitations” (Boothby 1991: 58).

According to psychoanalytic observations on the human infant, the infant tries to overcome these biological deficiencies by imaginarily identifying himself with his image reflected in the mirror. The human infant does not experience his own unity until it sees that unity in the Gestalt of his own image or in another human being. The imaginary is “half-rooted in the natural” (Lacan quoted in Boothby 1991: 28), and therefore, the imaginary identification with his mirror image can be said to be a scientific fact (Ver Eecke 1983: 115).

The monkey at the age of about six to eight months has a greater problem-solving ability than the human baby, but it does not show that it can grasp the meaning of a mirror image. When the monkey infant sees its image in the mirror, he tries to establish the reality of the image by looking behind the mirror. After verifying that nothing corresponds to the image, it soon loses interest in it. But the human infant “experiences in play the relation between the movements assumed in the image and the reflected environment, and between this virtual complex and the reality it reduplicates” (Lacan [1949]: 1). This activity shows an “ontological structure of the human world” (Lacan [1949]: 2).
Not only does this imaginary identification enable the infant to conceive himself as a unity, but it also results in a fundamental alienation: "The entire dialectic which I have given you as an example under the name of the mirror stage is based on the relation between, on the one hand, a certain level of tendencies which are experienced -- let us say, for the moment, at a certain point in life -- as disconnected, discordant, in pieces -- and there's always something of that that remains -- and on the other hand, a unity with which it is merged and paired. It is in this unity that the subject for the first time knows himself as a unity, but as an alienated, virtual unity" (Lacan [1954b]: 50). The human infant as the chaos of excitations or formless libidinal energies is channeled or narrowed into the Gestalt reflected in the mirror. In other words, the imago draws a specific energy from the infant, through which the infant fixes himself to the imago. The problem is that there always remains something which has not been drawn by the imago, which is the possibility of the Real. Anyway, this imaginary or primary identification gives the infant the "specular I" which will be later integrated into the "social I".

The human infant between the age of six months and two and a half years shows another characteristic, transivitism: "The child who strikes another says that he has been struck; the child who sees another fall, cries" (Lacan [1948]: 19). This phenomena means that the human infant cannot distinguish himself from others; he identifies with others. This imaginary identification includes a peaceful dyadic relationship with the other, especially his mother. Originally, the human infant was one with his mother, but he is now detached from her. The imaginary identification with his mother denies this separation from his mother.
According to Lacan, the mirror image is a first organized form in which the individual identifies himself, and therefore, this image organizes and constitutes the subject’s vision of the world: “the mirror-image would seem to be the threshold of the visible world” (Lacan [1949]: 3). In Lacan’s view, the ego is not a seat of agency but the seat of fixation and narcissistic attachment. Through this attachment, the subject has a sense of illusory unity, the ego, but the function of the ego is that of méconnaissance (misrecognition); upon the illusionary self-image, the ego attempts to make sense of the world around him (Fink 1995: 37).

Lacan’s proposition of the mirror stage has a revolutionary implication for traditional Western philosophy. The philosophy of consciousness based on the function of the ego is totally false: “But unfortunately that philosophy [the contemporary philosophy of being and nothing — I added] grasps negativity only within the limits of self-sufficiency of consciousness, which, as one of its premises, links to the méconnaissances that constitute the ego, the illusion of autonomy to which it entrusts itself” (Lacan [1949]: 6). If we define the modern project as a will to a totality as does Lyotard, for Lacan, the subject’s striving for the discourse of totality is paradoxically inevitable because the ego, which is formed during the mirror stage, keeps striving for imaginary wholeness or unity through a whole life⁹.

⁹ I am convinced, after reading Lacan, that this is a tragic fate of human beings. What political meaning does such a notion of the human being have? Louis Althusser, who integrates Lacan’s mirror stage into his theory of ideology, shows it well. According to Althusser, ideology is the imaginary relation of individuals to their real conditions of social existence: “All ideology represents in its imaginary distortion is not the existing relations of production (and the other relations that derive from them), but above all the (imaginary) relationship of individuals to the relations of production and the relations that derive from them. What is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of real
The imaginary or primary identification can be said to be an ontological fact characteristic of human beings. But this interpretation is just a half story which tells the process of the formation of the ego. Lacan explains the other aspect of this process by using the schema L.

\[ S: \text{subject} \quad (\text{Es}) S \longrightarrow \ldots \longrightarrow \text{a'' other} \]

\[ a: \text{autre (French), i.e., other.} \]

\[ a': \text{another autre. For example, mother.} \]

\[ A: \text{big other, i.e., the Symbolic} \quad (\text{ego}) A \longrightarrow \text{a'' Other} \]

So far, we have assumed that the human infant has a natural tendency to imaginary identification with his image reflected in the mirror. But in the schema L, the imaginary identification (the ego - the other) is "mediated" by the Other, especially the mOther (mother as the Other), who insists to the infant that the image in the mirror is him: "Yes, baby, that's you." Through repeatedly hearing that the image in the mirror is him, the infant recognizes the image as himself. This recognition brings pleasure to the infant, and he becomes fascinated by his image in a mirror: "Fascination is absolutely essential to the phenomenon of the constitution of the ego. The uncoordinated, incoherent diversity of the primitive fragmentation gains its unity in so far as it is fascinated" (Lacan [1954b]: 50).

Therefore, the child tries to control and play with this image, but actually he just earns the imaginary, not the real, mastery of his body. This imaginary mastery of his body relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of these individuals to the real relations in which they live" (Althusser 1971: 160). All human subjects are destined to live in a prison of ideology. Then, how is change possible? Althusser opposes the science, Marxism, to ideology, but this only reaffirms the epistemological privilege of science as a specific form of representation over any representation forms.
includes a fundamental alienation; the child only sees his form as more or less total and unified in an external image, in a virtual, alienated, ideal unity that cannot actually be touched. It anticipates his biological mastery, but it also structures his further relationship to reality, which is doomed to be alienating: “The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation — and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic — and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject’s entire mental development” (Lacan [1949]: 4).

What is important here is: before hearing that his parents told him, “Yes, baby, that’s you”, he was not fascinated by his mirror image. The first way in which he sees the object is “mediated” by (M)other. But as soon as the human infant recognizes the imago mediated by (M)other as his own, he becomes “alienated” in/by language or symbolically castrated. In other words, the human infant is “eclipsed” by the Other or the Symbolic order; he becomes the speaking subject in a circuit of a signifying system. In this sense, alienation is a fundamental condition of human subjectivity: “I identify myself in language, but only by losing myself in it like an object” (Lacan [1953]: 86). As soon as the human

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10 In Lacanian paradigm, there would be double alienations: ontological and symbolic alienations. Ontological alienation seems to come from the human being’s natural tendency to imaginarily identifying with imago outside himself. This alienation is intimately connected with the biological deficiencies of human being: the prematurity at birth and the uncoordination of motor sense. The ego tries to cover these deficiencies by virtue of imaginary identification. Symbolic alienation comes from the signifying system itself: the speaking subject always slips under or behind the signifiers. The speaking subject tries to regain the lost dyadic relation with the mother, but he is doomed to fail. Because “a signifier is that which represents the subject for another signifier” (Lacan [1960]: 316).
infant becomes eclipsed by the Symbolic, the subject becomes split into the ego and the unconscious or the speaking subject.

2. The Unconscious: the Speaking Subject

For the human infant to become a speaking subject, the dyadic relation between the human infant and the mother should be shattered. In modern Western culture, this shattering happens in the Oedipal triangulation and the agency of that shattering is the Name-of-the-Father. The Oedipal stage marks the moment when the human infant becomes eclipsed by language as well as when the unconscious is installed in the human infant.

The schema L is useful to explain this process. An imaginary vector, o-o', explains the ego's imaginary identification with the mother; the mother is taken as an object of the imaginary identification. The chaos of somatic excitement of the human infant is channeled into the mother. At this moment, the Oedipal crisis begins; the third term (the Name-of-the-Father or the representative of the Symbolic), inhibits and shatters the dyadic relation between the infant and the mother. In saying in terms of the schema L, the second vector of O-S, the symbolic axis, traverses, challenges, and smashes the imaginary vector of o-o'. As a result, the human infant is forced to lose the mother. This loss is compensated by the Name-of-the-Father, a representative of language; language transforms what is physically absent into what is symbolically present. At last, the human infant is ready to become the speaking subject.

For Lacan, to become the speaking subject means that the unconscious is installed in the subject. Lacan claims that "the unconscious is structured in the most radical way
like a language, that a material operates in it according to certain laws, which are the same laws as those discovered in the study of actual languages, languages that are or were actually spoken” (Lacan [1958b]: 234). This statement means that the relationship that exists among unconscious elements also exists in any given language among the elements that constitute it: “the unconscious is nothing but a ‘chain’ of signifying elements, such as words, phonemes, and letters, which ‘unfolds’ in accordance with very precise rules over which the ego or self has no control whatever” (Fink 1995: 9).

The statement “the unconscious is structured like a language” can be explained in two ways: genetically and structurally. First, we have to study how the unconscious is made or installed in the subject; according to Lacan, the unconscious is constituted during the time the subject enters into the Symbolic. Second, we have to study what the characteristic of language is.

In order genetically to understand this statement, we have to discuss the so-called “fort-da” game, which tells us the process of the infant’s entrance into language as well as the process of constitution of the unconscious. The so-called “fort-da” game is demonstrated in Freud’s writing, Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920).

[H]e [the little boy of one and a half] was greatly attached to his mother, who had not only fed him herself but also looked after him without any outside help. This good little boy, however, had an occasional disturbing habit of taking any small objects he could get hold of and throwing them away from him into a corner, under the bed, and so on, so that hunting for his toys and picking them up was often quite a business. As he did this he gave vent to a loud, long-drawn-out ‘o-o-o-o’, accompanied by an expression of interest and satisfaction. His mother and the writer of the present account were agreed in thinking that this was not a mere interjection but represented the German word ‘fort’ ['gone']. I eventually realized that it was a game and that the only use he made of any of his toys was to play ‘gone’ with them. One day I made an observation which confirmed my view. The child had a wooden reel with a piece of string tied...
round it. It never occurred to him to pull it along the floor behind him, for instance, and play at its being a carriage. What he did was to hold the reel by the string and very skilfully throw it over the edge of his curtained cot, so that it disappeared into it, at the same time uttering his expressive ‘o-o-o-o’. He then pulled the reel out of the cot again by the string and hailed its reappearance with a joyful ‘da’ [‘there’] (Freud [1920]: 13 - 14).

In this example, Freud tells us that the little boy plays this game in order to symbolize the absence and presence of the mother. Through the repetition of this game of presence and absence, he sought to separate himself from the mother. This game represents a symbolic mastery over the unpleasant fact of the mother’s absence; symbolization begins when the child gets his first sense that something could be missing.

In “The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychology” (1953), which is called the Rome Discourse, Lacan re-interprets this “fort-da” game with the linguistic model. According to Lacan, this game shows us the structure of the unconscious. Lacan reads this game as an allegory about the linguistic mastery of the drives; he associates this mastery with a signifying transaction by means of which the unconscious is established.

By this game the child learns to control his feelings about the presence and absence of the loved object, the mother. What is important here is that this game shows us the introduction of the language system into the child: “This is the point of insertion of a symbolic order that pre-exists the infantile subject and in accordance with which he will have to structure himself” (Sarup 1992: 183).

The infant as a chaos of somatic excitation has “need”, undifferentiated physical appetite, which should be satisfied for him to survive. It was the mother who satisfied the infant’s need, but the occasional absence of the mother risks the infant’s survival.

Through the “fort-da” game, the infant learns to substitute his need in linguistic terms and
to express it in language. Need is formulated in language, and becomes transformed into "demand". But demand is an alienated form of need; the infant’s need is always beyond his demand. At the price of this alienation, the infant maintains his dyadic relation with the mother. In this sense, the infant is not yet the speaking subject. The "fort-da" game tells us the moment that the infant enters into language. When the infant enters into language, need is distorted in the linguistic form of need, demand. This distorted need is the condition of the unconscious.

The structuration of the unconscious proceeds in the Oedipus triangulation where desire plays the main role. From the gap between need and demand, desire emerges: "Desire begins to take shape in the margin in which demand becomes separated from need" (Lacan [1960]: 311). Before the infant enters into language, the infant was one with the mother. Desire is one to regain this; the infant desires to be everything to the mother. In other words, the infant desires to be the object of the mother’s desire. But this desire is destined to be frustrated: "As a child tries to fathom its mother’s desire...it is forced to come to terms with the fact that it is not her sole interest (in most cases, at least), not her be-all and end-all" (Fink 1995: 50). Why the infant desire cannot be satisfied is that the infant as an alienated subject in language desires the mother as another alienated subject in language. Thus, this infant’s desire to be the object of the mother’s desire is superimposed on one to desire the mother’s desire; the infant comes to realize that the mother desires something beyond him. In modern Western culture, it is the Name-of-the-Father or the Phallus.

The Name-of-the Father functions as the agency of shattering the dyadic relation
between the infant and the mother. The infant's desire to be everything to the mother is
denied by the Name-of-the-Father. As a result, the infant becomes the speaking subject
whose position is defined by the Name-of-the-Father.

The process by which the infant becomes the speaking subject is the same as the
one by which the unconscious is constituted. The most important reason the infant deserts
his first love-object, the mother, during the Oedipal stage, is that he realizes that his
mother desires the Phallus. The infant always wants to be the sole object of his mother's
affection, but her desire is directed toward the Phallus. Therefore, there is a gap between
the infant's desire and his mother's desire. This gap results in the object a, which is the
remainder produced when the dyadic relationship (unity) with his mother breaks down.
While the ego strives to identify itself with the imago, the mother or, the nurturer, the
speaking subject or the unconscious desires the object a, which is a cause of desire, in
order to regain the dyadic relationship smashed by the Symbolic. But this regaining of the
unity with his mother can be achieved only in fantasy. Only in his relation to the object a,
the subject achieves "a phantasmatic sense of wholeness, completeness, fulfillment, and
well-being" (Fink 1995: 60). In this sense, the ego as well as the speaking subject are all
masculine subjects; the ego fixes itself to the imaginary unity and the speaking subject
strives to regain, in fantasy, the lost imaginary unity.

Then what is the characteristic of language for Lacan? In chapters 15 ("Odd or
Even? Beyond Intersubjectivity", 1955b) and 16 ("The Purloined Letter", 1955c) of
Seminar II, Lacan holds that the unconscious consists in chains of quasi-mathematical
inscriptions. While to Freud the unconscious mental processes are timeless and freely
mobile, to Lacan the unconscious has a syntax, a set of rules or laws. In order to verify that the unconscious has a syntax, Lacan exemplifies the game of “odd or even”: “You know the game, you must still have some memories of school. You put two or three marbles in your hand, and you put out your closed fist to the opponent, saying — Odd or even? I have, two marbles say, and if he says odd, he must hand one over to me, and so on” (Lacan [1955b]: 179). This game seems to be as totally random as the game of tossing a coin, but there is a series of relays with winning and losing.

Fink explains this games by exemplifying the game of tossing a coin, heads or tails (Fink 1995: 16-19). He marks heads and tails as + and -, and groups them by two, and makes three groupings as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
(1) & (2) & (3) \\
++ & + & - \\
- & - & + \\
\end{array}
\]

After that, he groups the result of tosses by overlapping pairs as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
2 \\
\hline
2 \\
++ - - + - - + \\
- - + - - + \\
\end{array}
\quad \text{Heads/Tails Chains}
\]

He reorganizes this chains as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
++ - - + - - + \\
1 2 3 2 2 3 3 2
\end{array}
\quad \text{Heads/Tails Chain}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
1 2 3 2 2 3 3 2
\end{array}
\quad \text{Numeric Matrix Category}
\]
From the chains above, we come to know that a category 1 set of tosses (+ +) cannot be immediately followed by a category 3 set (- -) because the second throw in a category 1 (+ +) is necessarily a plus, whereas the first throw in a category 3 (- -) has to be a minus: “We have thus already come up with a way of grouping tosses (a “symbolic matrix”) which prohibits certain combinations (viz., 1 followed by 3, and 3 followed by 1) (Fink 1995: 18). This is the basis of Lacan’s model of language, which teaches us about the symbolic order itself: “any machine [adding machine in cybernetics] can be reduced to a series of relays which are simply pluses and minuses. Everything in the symbolic order can be represented with the aid of such a series” (Lacan [1955a]: 185). Like the chains of this game, the unconscious as a language has a syntax which allows certain combinations and prohibits others. In other words, the chain of signifiers consisting of the unconscious remembers or keeps track of its previous components: “This keeping track of or counting constitutes a type of memory: the past is recorded in the chain itself, determining what is yet to come” (Fink 1995: 19).

Although someone overcomes a certain complex resulting from the traumatic event of childhood, for example the Oedipus complex, the complex has been recorded in the unconscious, i.e., the chains of signifiers. These Oedipal wishes inhibited by the father or the Name of the Father continues to try to be represented in the realm of the conscious. The ways in which they find to be represented follows the logic of language, metaphor and metonymy.

In “The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason since Freud” (1957),
Lacan inverts Saussure's notion of the arbitrariness of the sign by contending that the signifier has primacy over the signified in the creation of meaning. While for Saussure the sign is an arbitrary combination (or unity) of the signifier (acoustic image) and the signified (concept), for Lacan the signifier and the signified are two distinct and separate orders. As we see in the algorithm below, the signifier is over the signified and there is a fundamental separation, a bar, between them.

\[
\frac{S}{s}
\]

There is a fundamental "cut" or bar between the signifier and the signified. In the algorithm of S/s, for Saussure S refers to the signified and s refers to the signifier, but inversely for Lacan, S refers to the signifier and s refers to the signified. Lacan contends that the two realms of signifier and signified are never unified and the signifier S is superior to the signified s because s is the secondary and passive effect of S. The final, fixed meaning is impossible because of "an incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier" (Lacan [1957]: 154). The bar separating the signifier from the signified "resists signification" and "creates a real border...between the floating signifier and flowing signified" (Lacan in Borch-Jacobson 1991: 178). Borch-Jacobson argues, "every signifier becomes a 'floating' one (that is, as Levi-Strauss said of the singular 'zero symbol', 'empty of meaning'), and, like Noah's ark, it sails the floodwaters of the signified, without clinging to them" (Borch-Jacobson 1991: 178). Therefore, the statement that the signified is below the signifier does not mean that there is some opaque signified hidden behind signifiers, a deep structure. But there are also "anchoring points" (points de capiton), certain nodal points which stop the sliding signifiers and fix their meaning. This notion of
points de capiton denies Saussure’s notion of linearity of sign: “All our experience runs counter to this linearity, which made me speak once...of something more like ‘anchoring points’ (‘points de capiton’) as a schema for taking into account the dominance of the letter in the dramatic transformation that dialogue can effect in the subject” (Lacan [1957]: 154). There are some anchoring points to cross the bar of the Saussurian algorithm: metaphor.

After inverting the Saussurian model, Lacan analyzes Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams* in order to verify that the unconscious is structured like a language. In this book, Freud contends that condensation and displacement are a distorted mechanism through which dream-thoughts are represented in the area of consciousness. Put another way, the unconscious wish can appear in the area of consciousness through the mechanism of condensation and displacement. Lacan changes condensation and displacement into linguistic terms:

*Verdichtung*, or ‘condensation’, is the structure of the superimposition of the signifiers, which metaphor takes as its field, and whose name, condensing in itself the word *Dichtung*, shows how the mechanism is connatural with poetry to the point that it envelops the traditional function proper to poetry. In the case of *Verschiebung*, ‘displacement’, the German term is closer to the idea of that veering off of signification that we see in metonymy, and which from its first appearance in Freud is represented as the most appropriate means used by the unconscious to foil censorship (Lacan [1957]: 160).

As we saw above, Lacan conceptualizes that condensation and displacement appearing as the primary process in dreams operates according the linguistic law of metaphor and metonymy. Lacan identifies metaphor with “one word for another” of paradigmatic selection, which is expressed as follows (Lacan [1957]).
In this algorithm, \( f \) refers to function, \( S' \) to the signifier, \( s \) to the signified, \( \equiv \) to congruency (more or less), \( (+) \) to "the crossing of the bar — and the constitutive value of this crossing for the emergence of signification" (Lacan [1957]: 164). Metaphor is adding \( (+) \) something extra crossing the bar between the signifier and the signified, in other words, the bar which separates them is momentarily re-established. Lacan, therefore, calls this forging of meaning "anchoring points." This metaphor produces the effect of signification, which is proper to the poetic language. But due to the invasion of the metonymic chain caused by other signifiers, this meaning soon evaporates. Lacan identifies metonymy with "word-to-word connexion" of syntagmatic combination, which is expressed as follows (Lacan [1957]).

\[
\begin{align*}
  f(S'...S')S & \equiv S(-)s \\
\end{align*}
\]

In this algorithm, the left-hand side refers to a functional representation of the relation between two contiguous signifiers \((S'...S')\), namely that one signifier is displaced by another signifier according to their contiguity. The left-hand side \( S(-)s \) represents that the bar between the signifier and the signified remains, which prevents the signifier from corresponding to its elusive signified. In other words, it refers the relation between signifiers and a signified which does not transverse the barrier of censorship. This metonymy is the "empty intentionality" which anticipates its meaning in the process of unfolding its signifier's dimension before it (Borch-Jacobson 1991: 181-182).

Metaphor functions on the paradigm (the vertical set of signifiers substitutable for
each other), choosing signifiers according the similarity between words, not objects. By contrast, metonymy functions on the syntagm (the horizontal set of signifiers brought together), combinating signifiers selected according to the contiguity between words, not objects. Like this, Lacan equates Saussure's paradigm and syntagm with metaphor and metonymy, and he articulates that they operate on the principles of similarity and contiguity.

What is important here is that Lacan connects metaphor with the formation of the subject and metonymy with the subject's relation to objects. The human subject can become a subject only as far as he takes something else than himself, namely an other signifier, as his own signified: "When he says 'signified' Lacan thinks 'subject.' Lacan's whole theory of metaphor is a theory of the metaphor of the subject...: this subject can grasp himself only through metaphor -- that is to say, by missing himself -- precisely because he is signified by a signifier" (Lyotard in Borch-Jacobson 1991: 187). In other words, the infant before becoming the subject, who was one with the mother, realizes for the first time that the mother's desire is the desire for the phallus after the signifier of the Name-of-the-Father is imposed. At this moment, the signifier of the Name-of-the-Father displaces the mother's lack, which is the role of metaphor. The infant becomes a speaking subject only when he relates himself with this metaphoric signifier. This speaking subject desires the other to desire himself, but the other always desires other than himself. Therefore, there is a gap between them or their desires, from which the object a originates. The object a functions to remind the subject of the lost oneness between the infant and the mother. The object a is something fantasized that the other would have,
and by cleaving to it, the subject can sustain the illusion of wholeness. But this illusion soon breaks down; the object a is a substitute reminding of the lost oneness, a metaphor, but a real object. Therefore, the endless displacement from a object a to another object a, a metonymy, occurs.

3. The Subject of the Real

Then, is the human being only the fictitious ego or the speaking subject alienated in/by way of language? Is that all? Can’t we avoid the masculine subject? Most poststructuralists interpret Lacan with their own terms and conceptualize the subject as the holder of the subject-position. But Lacan’s notion of the subject is beyond it. Lacan’s psychoanalysis may seem to appear as if advocating pessimistic views about human beings, but it also presents possibilities of change which arise primarily from the notion of the Real.

Lacan’s notion of the Real is the most difficult concept to grasp among his three orders, i.e., the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. Jacques-Alain Miller, son-in-law of Lacan, periodized Lacan’s academic life into three phases: 1) 1950s through early 1960s, 2) 1964 through 1974, and 3) 1974 through 1981. The emphasis on the notion of the Real differs depending on these three phases. The notion of the Real during the first phase is conceptualized as “concrete and already full, a brute pre-symbolic reality which returns to the same place in the form of need, such as hunger” (Ragland-Sullivan 1996: 11). For a view to distinguish Lacan from poststructuralists, see Zizek (1989). According to Zizek’s interpretation of Lacan’s theory of language, there is no language without object. For poststructuralists, language is the self-referential movement of the signifier in a closed circle. By contrast, for Lacan there is an objective, nonsignifying reference to this movement, the object a.
The object of the hunger, such as mother’s breast or mother, as the notion of the Real is the object of the Real as well as the object of the Imaginary. This object is the absolute density, and therefore, does not exist as such in the visible empirical form. When the first object of drive pursues to satisfy hunger, the Real first manifests itself as the place of the hole constituted in the full space called being. The being was full of jouissance, which the object of the Real pursued. But the pursuit is destined to fail. Due to the fact that the experience of jouissance in the being can be thought to have existed after the fact, it did not in fact exist in the past. Thus, it only exists in fantasy or in dreams (Fink 1995: 94). This is the reason why Lacan called this the object of the Imaginary. The object of the Real pursues the impossible jouissance of Oneness. This pursuit is possible because of the object a, which is the remainder/reminder of the Real that caused the desire of the subject. Thus, the object a is the remainder of the Real as well as the imaginary object which always reminds the Real. The speaking subject obtains a fantasy of being full, not divided but unified, through object a.

The second phase of the Real is described by Lacan as “the traumatic material of unassimilated memories and meanings that blocks the dialectical movement of symbolization, blocks the route to exchanging one’s savoir with another person” (Ragland-Sullivan 1996: 197). The real resides at the points of impasse in language exchange, functioning to make signification possible. The real does not exist outside the signification, and thus, is not das Ding as the phenomenological sense which can never be reached. The real is the precondition that makes the chain of signification possible as a function of the link of the chain. The ontological identity cannot be achieved; the real
always returns as a subversive force and reminds of trauma in language. In other words, the trace of the real in language, or the symbolized real, returns as a subversive force in signification.

During the third phase, the concept of the real is developed while differences between the two sexes are explained. The male possesses the fantasy of completeness and wholeness through the phallus despite the fact that there does not exist an adequate signifier to represent the difference between the two sexes. However, the female cannot possess the same fantasy as the male does, because the female can be partially determined by the phallus, but not as a whole. The father's constraints against sexual desire for the mother functions for a man as a limit to his range of motion and pleasures, whereas the female can go beyond that boundary set by the father's constraints due to the fact that the female possesses a signifier unique to her.

This concept of the real is ambivalent. All human subjects want to have a relationship with the real; there was a jouissance in which the absence of the being was filled in such a relationship. Therefore, the human subject, especially the male subject, continues to seek oneness in fantasy. This original desire to have a relationship with the real manifests itself in a distorted seeking of oneness in fantasy by the human subject. On the other hand, the subject can encounter the real while seeking oneness in fantasy.

According to Lacan, the real is primarily related to the mother's body. The mother's body is the space of the real before becoming symbolized as well as the matrix to make

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12. The aim of Lacanian psychoanalysis is to introduce a further gap between the speaking subject and the object a, thus disturbing the fantasized sense of completeness, fulfillness, and wholeness (Fink 1995: 67).
signification possible. Temporally, Lacan’s real is associated with the relationship between child and mother prior to the mirror stage, in which only fullness of being without either alienation or gaps exists. For this reason, feminists concentrated their work on the pre-Oedipal stage.

Summary and Implication

Hegel’s subject of desire functions in the same way as the ego (of Freud and Lacan’s); its most important function is identification. The world in which this subject lives is the dyadic world of opposition, namely, identity and difference. Using a Lacanian term, this is the imaginary world where only love or hate exists. Hegel’s subject of desire tries to reduce the other to self-othering and Freud and Lacan’s ego seeks to identify itself with the other reflected in itself. Both of them disguise themselves as autonomous agencies. Just as Hegel’s subject of desire negates other’s difference in order to achieve its self-certainty, the ego represses the other (the unconscious) in order to secure its coherent “sense of self.” Both self-certainty of Hegel’s subject of desire and coherent sense of self are other names for “identity” which modern Western politics have tried to achieve. The “politics of identity” defines the other as a matter which should be negated and assimilated to “I”, not as an absolute difference. Therefore, the world of the ego is one of sameness where the other is reduced to self-othering.

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13 The term “politics of identity” does not directly related to the identity politics which prevailed in 1960s in the U.S. The politics of identity refers to the either/or logic that essentializes and substantializes individual/group natures.
There is another subject: Hegel's subject of recognition, Freud's masculine subject or Lacan's speaking subject. This subject recognizes that the other is a condition of his existence. Therefore, he desires that the other desires him. He also desires the other's desire. He wants mutual recognition, but he is destined to fail because he is the alienated subject in language as a signifying system. To Lacan, the speaking subject follows the same rule as language, which belongs to the Symbolic because it is structured like language. The speaking subject strives to achieve a phantasmatic sense of wholeness.

According to Lacanian psychoanalytic discourse, there is a true subject. It is similar to Freud's subject of the unconscious who manifests itself in daily life as a breach, an interruption in discourse and immediately disappears. It is not a subject of "presence", unlike the Cartesian subject who is every time he says to himself, "I am thinking." This is the subject of the real which is a matrix of signification as well as residing at the points of impasse in language exchange. The subject of the real is primarily associated with a woman. Thus, we now have to inquire into the feminine subject produced by modern Western discourse.

14. Freud's masculine subject is also a castrated subject by the father or the father's "No."
CHAPTER 3

DISCOURSE ON THE FEMININE SUBJECT

In modern Western discourse, the female is not a subject; the female is defined as an object, especially a sexual object of the male. The psychoanalytic discourse of Freud and Lacan also produces the male as a subject, and the female as a sexual object. Therefore, to the female, the problem of subjectivity is the same as one of sexual identity. I believe that there have been two general sexual identities, male sexual identity and female sexual identity subjugated to male sexual identity, in psychoanalytic discourse which, I consider to be a model of modern Western “discourse” (not necessarily in the historical real world), which denied and oppressed the existence of so-called abnormal sexual identities. We could just criticize that Freud and Lacan theorized the developmental psychology of man in general and woman in general, but we could read their texts “symptomatically”\(^1\), and project the formation of a new discourse on the female subject different from the modern, Western discourse.

\(^1\) The “symptomatic reading” was first used by Freud, who read dreams symptomatically in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. In social theory, Louis Althusser re-read Marx’s *Capital* with the method of symptomatic reading. Althusser says, “Only since Freud have we begun to suspect what listening, and hence what speaking (and keeping silent), means (*veut dire*); that this ‘meaning’ (*vouloir dire*) of speaking and listening reveals beneath the innocence of speech and hearing the culpable depth of a second, quite different discourse, the discourse of the unconscious” (Althusser and Balibar 1979: 16). Therefore, the
I do not think that Freud and Lacan assume an essential substance of "female sexual identity", but instead assume the historical category of it. This category is not an abstract and conceptual one, nor the "ideal type" of Weber. The category of "female sexual identity" has its context in the temporality (modern) and the locality (Western), and therefore, it is a concrete and historical category which came into existence by the modern, Western discourse. Freud characterized modern Western culture as ocularcentrism and phallocentrism, and discovered that this was constituted by the male discourse, the Oedipus story. Lacan re-wrote ocularcentrism and phallocentrism with the aids of structural linguistics and articulated the Oedipal logic as a specific logic of modern Western culture. In what follows, I will demonstrate that this general category of female sexual identity was a product of ocularcentric and phallocentric discourse in Western societies. Therefore, it is not an essential substance, but it is produced as a "reality" by modern Western ocularcentric and phallocentric discourse.

"symptomatic reading" is a method of reading the absence of (unconscious) problems and conceptions scattered in the problematic. According to Althusser, symptomatic reading is not a method to read the hidden truth behind objects as hermeneutics, but produces a new discourse. In other words, it is re-writing the existing texts.

2. The term "ocularcentrism" is borrowed from Martin Jay (1994). It can be said that modern Western culture is dominated by vision.

3. Interestingly, Luce Irigaray proposes an interpretation of Freud and Lacan similar to mine: "It is not a matter of naively accusing Freud, as if he were a 'bastard'. Freud's discourse represents the symptom of a particular social and cultural economy, which has been maintained in the West at least since the Greek...What Freud demonstrates is quite useful. When he argues -- for example, and according to a still organistic argument -- that women's sex is a 'lack', that castration for her amounts to her perceiving that she has no sex, he describes rigorously the consequence of our socio-cultural system. Lacan, using a linguistic schema, concludes likewise, and repeats the same process when he writes that woman is a lack in the discourse, that she cannot articulate herself...In some sense, this is not false (Irigaray 1977: 63 - 64).
According to psychoanalysis, female sexual identity is "consciously" achieved through the female’s identification with sexual "position" imposed by the cultural. Identity belongs to the conscious. Then, is this female sexual identity stable in ocularcentric and phallocentric culture? In Freud’s writings, there are a lot of women patients who suffer from neuroses, especially hysteria. They challenge the modern Western ocularcentric and phallocentric culture. The Oedipus story has negated and repressed the female sexual drives which were in flux in the pre-Oedipal stage, but they were not completely absorbed in the female sexual identity imposed by modern Western culture. Therefore, Freud produced new questions on female sexual identity: what are the characteristics of the pre-Oedipal stage; Does the female body have ontological differences from the male body? Lacan assigned an ontological privilege to vision by proposing the mirror stage which belongs to the pre-Oedipal stage. He also assumed a jouissance of the female which cannot be articulated under the ocularcentric and phallocentric culture.

Psychoanalytic feminists such as Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva have tried to rewrite the Oedipus story by “symptomatically” reading the absence scattered in this Oedipus story. Irigaray, who was influenced by Derrida’s deconstructionism, added logocentrism to ocularcentrism and phallocentrism and argued that the ontological difference of femininity could be a basis for escaping phallogocentricism. Kristeva also rewrites the Oedipus story by denying the privilege of sight in the pre-Oedipal stage.

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4. Especially Dora, Freud’s woman patient, is a good example of challenging the modern, Western, phallocentric culture. Freud confessed that this case history was the subtlest thing he had up to that point. See Freud [1905a].

5. The term “phallogocentricism” is also borrowed from Martin Jay, which means phallocentrism + logocentrism + ocularcentism.
Her notion of *chora* precedes specularization and is analogous to vocal or kinetic rhythm. Unlike Irigaray, both sexes can be the subject who disrupt the symbolic governed by the Law of the Father; they can try to change the thetic by activating the semiotic *chora*.

(A) Masculine Discourse on Female Sexual Identity

1. Freud: The Production of New Questions on Female Sexual Identity

Many feminists have blamed Freud for his biological determination of femininity, but I have a different opinion. By failing to explain the so-called riddle of femininity, Freud discovered the constitutive logic of modern Western culture and he analyzed it within the modern, Western culture. Therefore, Freud did not realize that he discovered the constitutive principles of modern, Western culture, and rather “unwittingly” produced new questions. Until he died, Freud suffered from the problem of the so-called riddle of femininity and tried to solve it. In later days, Freud felt that he solved the riddle of femininity. I also agree with his assertion of having solved it, but only within the phallocentric culture of modern Western society. That is his achievement as well as his limitation. In what follows, I will try to prove my assertion that Freud produced new questions regarding femininity.

(1) Analogous Theory

Freud seemed not to be interested in female sexuality until almost the 1930s, although most of his patients were women. But he was basically a scientist who kept revising his theories according to his observation of his patients. To Freud, female sexuality was not a unique phenomena different from the male one. In his early writing, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), Freud argues that both sexes have sexual
monism until puberty. Freud denies the assumption that infants do not have sexuality:

“One feature of the popular view of the sexual instincts is that it is absent in childhood and
only awakens in the period of life described as puberty. This, however, is not merely a
simple error but one that has had grave consequences, for it is mainly to this idea that we
owe our present ignorance of the fundamental conditions of sexual life” (Freud [1905b]:
39). While adult sexuality is genital, child sexuality is phallic and is characterized in the
oral, sadistic-anal, and phallic stages. Although Freud stresses the castration complex, he
does not introduce the Oedipus complex until this time⁶. Regardless of sex, there are
common characteristics of infant sexuality. Both male and female children think that
women as well as men originally had a penis, but that the former lost it by castration
(Freud [1905b]: 61). According to Freud, the differences in sexuality between the male
and the female do not appear until puberty.

Until 1923, Freud did not largely change his theory. In The Ego and the Id
(1923), Freud argues that the psycho-sexual development of girls is precisely “analogous”
to the psycho-sexual development of boys. Let me describe Freud’s explanation of the
psycho-sexual development of boys. At a very early age, the little boy develops an object-
cathexis (investment) for his mother, which is originally related to the mother’s breast and
is the prototype of object-choice on the anaclitic model. By contrast, his father is an
object of identification. Object-cathexis for his mother and identification with his father

⁶. In fact, Freud did discuss the Oedipus complex in his early writing, The Interpretation
of Dreams (1900), but he did not hold with firm confidence the importance of the Oedipus
complex until this time. But from the early writings, Freud keeps emphasizing the
importance of the castration complex. While the castration complex for a boy means an
anxiety concerning his penis, for a girl it means an envy of the penis.
co-exist peacefully until the boy's sexual wishes in regard to his mother become more intense and his father is perceived as an obstacle to the fulfillment of those wishes. From this conflict, the Oedipus complex originates. According to Freud, although there are two possibilities, an identification with his mother and an intensification of his identification with his father, in normal cases, the little boy's object-cathexis for his mother is given up because of his fear of castration. This way of dissolving the Oedipus complex permits the affectionate relationship with the mother. "In a precisely analogous way, the outcome of the Oedipus attitude in a little girl may be an intensification of her identification with her mother (or the setting up of such an identification for the first time) -- a result which will fix the child's feminine character" (Freud [1923a]: 27 - 28, my italics). Freud supposes that the earliest object-cathexis struggles with identification, for there are always object-cathexis for mother "before" identification with father. While the little girl maintains her identification with her mother, she has to detach herself from the first love-object, her mother; in other words, she has to change her love-object. Freud does not explain why the little girl has to detach herself from her mother; that is naturally supposed.

Freud claims that in both sexes the relative strength of the masculine and feminine sexual dispositions is what determines whether the outcome of the Oedipus situation shall be an identification with the father or with the mother. He supposes that both infants are originally bisexual. Until before this article, Freud just demonstrates that maleness signifies activity and femaleness signifies passivity, but in this article he explains that the difference between maleness and femaleness results from the way the Oedipus complex is
resolved. The identification with the father results in the formation of the super-ego. The super-ego consists of prohibition as well as precept (Freud [1923a]: 30). Only boys achieve identification with their fathers, and therefore, only boys have a strong super-ego. “The super-ego retains the character of the father, while the more powerful the Oedipus complex was and the more rapidly it succumbed to repression (under the influence of authority, religious teaching, schooling, and reading), the stricter will be the domination of the super-ego over the ego later on — in the form of conscience or perhaps of unconscious sense of guilt” (Freud [1923a]: 30). In this paper, although Freud deals with only the case of the little boy and does not say anything about the case of the little girl, we come to know that Freud implies that the little girl, who identifies with her mother, cannot have a strong super-ego.

In “The Infantile Genital Organization of the Libido” (1923), he also confines his object of study to boys. In this paper, Freud discusses the sexuality of little girls only in regard to the sexuality of little boys. He says that as far as the girl is concerned, sexualities are little known. Also, he holds that the little boy begins to despise women as soon as he realizes that women do not have a penis. Freud confirms the male values of society by saying that maleness signifies subject, activity, and possession of the penis while femaleness signifies object and passivity, but he does not explain why this phenomena appears.

In “The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex” (1924), Freud still emphasizes the significance of the castration complex. The dissolution of the Oedipal conflict in little boys is instigated by the castration complex. The little boy has the internal tendency of
masturbating (narcissistic interest in his penis), but this is inhibited by his mother, who threatens that if the little boy keeps masturbating, he would lose his penis. But this threat is not realized by the little boy until he “sees” female genitals. The little boy comes to remember his early experience of losing his mother’s breast, which was considered as a part of his own body. The little girl also has a castration complex. The castration complex of the little girl is instigated by her “seeing” the male’s penis. The little girl feels her clitoris inferior and compensates her deficiency with penis-envy. Instead of giving up her Oedipal desire for her mother (like the boy), the little girl turns away to her father in order to substitute for the penis. Therefore, the desire to have a child is the dynamic factor in the female Oedipus complex. But this desire for the penis is never accomplished; for the little girl, the Oedipus complex did not abruptly end. According to Freud, the little girl does not fear castration because she is already castrated. The absence of the fear of castration results in the weakness of the super-ego. In the boy, the castration complex results in the introjection of paternal or parental authority, but the little girl does not introject it because she lacks the castration complex.

In “Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes” (1925), Freud begins to question his theory of sexuality. Freud realizes that his earlier explanation of the psycho-sexual development of children was too simple, and now emphasizes the prehistory of the Oedipus complex, or the pre-Oedipal stage. Freud admits that the pre-Oedipal situation of the little boy is not well known, let alone one of the little girl. In the pre-Oedipal stage, both sexes are strongly attached to their mother. Boys have to detach themselves from their mother due to fear of castration. But why
should the little girl, who does not fear castration, detach herself from her mother? Freud negatively sees the little girl’s attachment to her mother in the pre-Oedipal stage because he believes that the little girl’s strong attachment to her mother is an obstacle in achieving normal heterosexuality. According to Freud, the little girl detaches herself from her mother because of her penis envy; her penis envy will be changed into the wish for a baby (substitute of a penis). To Freud, penis-envy is an almighty key to opening the riddle of femininity. According to Freud, because of so-called penis envy, the little girl gives up her clitoris’ masturbation, changes her love-object from the mother to the father and switches her genital organ from clitoris to vagina. We see here why so many feminists have called Freud a biological reductionist.

(2) Diverse Theory

In his 1931 article, “Female Sexuality”, Freud realizes that, for women, the pre-Oedipal phase is more important than for men. He recognizes that the first love-object for a woman is also her mother, and asks: why does a little girl find her way to her father? How, when, and why does she detach herself from her mother? Freud supposes some tasks must be completed for the little girl to achieve heterosexuality, which is normal female sexuality for Freud. Firstly, a girl has to give up her clitoris as a sexual organ and transfer to a new genital zone, the vagina (change of organ). Secondly, she has to change her original mother-object from her mother to her father (change of love-object). For Freud, only those who performed these tasks have real female sexuality; he thinks that the vagina is the true feminine organ and only heterosexuality is normal. Freud tries to explain these “real” tasks, but he seemed to fail, as I will show it in what follows. In fact, we do
not have to suppose these tasks for women. In my opinion, these tasks were compulsory demands for women, which were specific to modern, Western, phallocentric culture.

Freud claims that bisexual disposition in human beings is much stronger in women than in men; women have both the clitoris (penis equivalent) and the vagina (the true female organ), while men have only the penis. According to Freud, women have two stages of sexuality; the masculine stage of the clitoris and the female stage of the vagina. Freud recognizes that he has ignored that the clitoris as a masculine genital keeps influencing female sexuality even after the “successful” passing from the clitoris to the vagina. Also, Freud introduces new questions about the change of love-object: how does this transformation take place? How radical or how incomplete is it? In previous explanations, Freud does not doubt that the little girl feels inferior when she sees a penis, but in this paper he recognizes that there are many other possibilities: 1) she can turn her back on sexuality altogether; 2) she can cling in obstinate self-assertion to her threatened masculinity, which may result in a homosexual object-choice; 3) she can achieve an ‘ultimate normal’ feminine attitude in which she takes her father as love-object.

Although there are three lines of development, Freud devalues the first and the second lines. According to Freud, there is a fundamental difference of development between men and women; in women, the castration complex does not destroy but rather creates the Oedipus complex. “We should probably not err in saying that it is this difference in the inner relation of the Oedipus and castration-complexes which gives its special stamp to the character of women as a member of society” (Freud [1931]: 189). At this point, Freud seems to be embarrassed because the castration complex cannot explain
why the little girl has to turn away from her mother to her father. According to Freud, women do not feel fear of castration because they are already castrated. Then, where is the necessity of changing the love-object? This was Freud's problem. He was not able to consider that there was no necessity because his problematic consisted of a range of questions which already presupposed the necessity.

Instead of giving up his assumptions about female sexuality, Freud kept trying to explain why the little girl turns away from her mother. He enumerates many reasons: 1) the little girl is jealous of those whom the mother loves; 2) this relationship between the little girl and her mother has no real aim and therefore cannot be satisfied; 3) her mother forbids masturbation; 4) when the little girl feels the castration complex, she also despises the castrated mother and femininity in general; 5) the little girl blames her mother for not having given her a penis. But Freud says that the relationship between the little girl and her mother is ambivalent, and emphasizes that the female Oedipus complex is not the homologue of the male Oedipus complex, and the pre-Oedipal attachment to the mother plays an important part in the girl's development.

In "Femininity" (1932), Freud's arguments clearly show logical contradiction. He gradually realizes that a person, anatomically, is neither totally male nor female. He confesses, "All the while I am preparing to talk to you I am struggling with an internal difficulty" (Freud [1932]: 139). He recognizes that it is inadequate to equate masculinity with activity and femininity with passivity: "Even in the sphere of human sexual life you soon see how inadequate it is to make masculine behavior coincide with activity and feminine with passivity" (Freud [1932]: 143). From the biological perspective, femininity
is not characterized by passivity. Rather, the passivity of femininity is constructed by the influence of customs. Therefore, Freud wants to explain the social constitution of femininity: "psycho-analysis does not try to describe what a woman is...but sets about inquiring how she comes into being, how a woman develops out of a child with a bisexual disposition" (Freud [1932]: 144).

According to Freud, normal women have to develop out of a bisexual disposition to heterosexuality in which only the vagina is considered as a true sexual organ of women. Although he promises to explain such a development socially, he again uses the biological explanation of penis envy. He still says, "After all, the anatomical distinction [between the sexes] must express itself in psychical consequences" (Freud [1932]: 154). Castration complex and penis envy, which are based on anatomical difference, explain the riddle of femininity. Why did Freud betray his promise? In my opinion, he was not able to explain femininity sociologically; he already assumes socially determined femininity to be the normal or the natural. Unless he gives up this assumption about femininity, he could not solve the riddle of femininity.

(3) The Production of New Questions

Then, what is the fundamental assumption of Freud on femininity? In my opinion, it is the assumption that only heterosexuality is normal. According to this assumption, women's love-object has to be men and the genuine genital for women is only a vagina. The existence of women has meaning only in regard to the reproduction of babies. On the left, there is a bisexual disposition. On the right, there is a "normal" femininity. What matters is to ask why and how the transition from the left to the right happens.
The act of asking is to choose, and therefore, it already includes what can be answered and what cannot. Freud was not able to see outside the cultural context of his times. Instead of blaming Freud for his male bias, we have to read him “symptomatically.” The assumption that only heterosexuality is normal is not only Freud’s theoretical assumption, but also the compulsory demand of modern, Western male culture. Reading Freud, we come to understand modern Western culture and its logic.

What are the characteristics of this world Freud describes? First, Freud’s world is characterized by ocularcentrism. Only the visible exists and is privileged. Second, this ocularcentrism is directly connected with phallocentrism. The privilege of the penis comes from the privilege of sight. But, Freud does not explain why he gives privilege to sight among other senses. Again, this is a visible world; the invisible does not exist, if it exists, it is defined only by the visible. The vagina is invisible, so it does not exist; if it exists, it is defined only by the visible, a penis. All negative attributes were given to the invisible, femininity. Third, Freud’s world is also characterized by (re)production. Femininity has its meaning as far as it is connected into the (re)production of a new member of the world. Women’s libido was compulsorily directed towards only the function of reproduction by male culture. Therefore, only the vagina is the true female genital. Masturbation, which means an active action, of the clitoris, should be forbidden in this culture. As a result, the relation between the little girl and her mother which is beyond the aim of (re)production is erased in this world.

Then, what is the logic of constituting this world? That is an Oedipal story which has tremendous material effects. This story is not merely a story; it has a referent in the
actual world, the penis. Without the penis, there is no Oedipus story. In other words, the Oedipus story is only a male story. In this story, the female is (re)produced as a sexual object of the male. There is no position allowed to the female as the subject. According to Freud, one's identity is constituted in the process of the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. The little boy comes to identify with his father while maintaining his affectionate relationship with his mother. In a sense, he loses nothing; rather, he is guaranteed to share future power by his father. The little girl comes to identify with her (castrated, therefore impotent) mother while she has to give up her masturbation of her clitoris. She gains nothing; rather, she comes to hate her mother and is permanently caught with penis-envy. This story constructs the ocularcentric and phallocentric culture, and in turn is (re)constructed by it.

So far, we have described the characteristics of modern Western culture Freud described and its constitutive logic. According to Freud’s description, modern Western culture is based on biology (sight and penis) and superimposed by sociology (privilege of sight and penis). Freud assigned special status to sight without explaining why he did. Thus, this produces a new question about the status of other sensations. This question is later asked by Lacan’s mirror stage and the feminists’ emphasis on the pre-Oedipal stage which is characterized by a flux of sensations. This question is also directly connected with the question of the specific relation between the little girl and her mother at the stage of the pre-Oedipal and post-Oedipal stage. Freud argued that at the pre-Oedipal stage, the relation between the little girl and the mother is different from one between the little boy

7. Of course, the little boy is castrated by the father.
and the mother, but he did not explain what the difference is. After Freud, feminists have tried to explain it. Freud also described that since the Oedipal stage, female sexual identity seems to be unstable, but he was not able to explain why. This produces questions about the female body and the fragmental characteristics of modern Western male culture. After Freud, some feminists argued that the female body has an ontological difference from the male one and others emphasized that modern Western culture is a field of struggling of ideologies.

2. Lacan: The Oedipus Story as a Discourse

While Freud discovered the constitutive logic of modern Western culture, the Oedipus story, and gave it a scientific status, Lacan made it clear that the Oedipus story was a specific discourse in modern Western culture. If it is a discourse, it can be re-written. Re-writing the Oedipus story, Lacan articulated the ontological inevitability of visual representation (ocularcentrism) and its relation to the phallus (phallocentrism). Visual representation which first occurred during the mirror stage is the ontological basis for the primary identification with the idealized imago reflected in a mirror, and further influenced the secondary identification with the position whose value is determined by the relation to the phallus. The phallus functions as not only a designating mark of mother’s lack but also a remainder of the imaginary wholeness smashed by the Symbolic. While the male subject has a phantasmatic sense of wholeness by assuming that he has the phallus which would fill the mother’s lack, the female subject becomes a sexual object of the male subject by masquerading as the phallus, a desired object.
Like Freud, Lacan considers the phallus as the maker of sexual difference. The phallus breaks the dyadic relation between mother and child, and thereby constitutes the identity of a subject. While for Freud the phallus is a biological penis, for Lacan it is illusory, fictitious, and imaginary. The phallus exists in a kind of fantasy realm which merges desire with power, omnipotence, and wholeness. Lacan says, "the relation of the subject to the phallus is set up regardless of the anatomical difference between sexes" (Lacan [1958a]: 76). The important thing is that the illusory, fictitious, and imaginary feature of the phallus is based on the visual representation.

As we examined in chapter 2, Lacan argued that the human infant has a natural tendency to imaginary identification with its imago reflected in the mirror. It is an "ontological structure of the human world". Through visual representation, the human infant has the sense of its wholeness, the moi. At the mirror stage, the human infant is dominated by visual sensation, which is a scientific fact. Other animals also show the same phenomena, but their mechanism is fundamentally different. Only the human infant

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There are other differences between Freud and Lacan. The most important difference in accounting for female sexual identity between Freud and Lacan is as follows: Freud contends that only the female is castrated, but Lacan holds that both male and female are castrated the moment they enter into the Symbolic. Lacan also agrees that the first love-object in both sexes is their mother, and in the Imaginary order both male and female infants have the primal (imaginary) identification with their mother. But the intrusion of the third person, the Father, who represents the law of the Symbolic, represses the children's love-cathexis for their mother, and castrates both male and female infants; the giving-up of love-cathexis for their mother means being (culturally) castrated. Gallop explains this characteristics of castration well: "castration for Lacan is not only sexual; more important, it is also linguistic: we are inevitably bereft of any masterful understanding of language, and can only signify ourselves in a symbolic system that we do not command, that, rather, commands us" (Gallop 1985: 20).
identifies its image reflected in a mirror with the "idealization" of it. Without idealization of the identified object, there is no imaginary identification. This imaginary identification with the ideal-I alienates the subject from the real. The first object of identification is the human infant's own body, part of it, or the mother. At this mirror stage, the human infant maintains an undifferentiated dyadic relationship with its mother. Its mother is omnipotent to the human infant because she satisfies all its biological needs. This dyadic relation cannot be easily smashed; the mother is idealized.

In his article of 1958, "The Significance of the Phallus", Lacan extends the logic of the visual world to the symbolic world. As the so-called "fort-da" game shows, the child often suffers from pain due to the absence of its mother and tries to master the pain by articulating it as a form of language. As soon as the child articulates its need as a language, its need comes to be changed into demand. The child has to articulate its biological need as a linguistic form of demand because language compensates the loss of the mother (mother's absence). Demand is the consequence of subjection of the need to the regulation of language. To Lacan, language is first of all the system of "signifiers": "the signifier has an active function in determining certain effects in which the signifiable appears as submitting to its mark, by becoming through that passion the signified" (Lacan [1958a]: 284). Demand, which is a need articulated in language form, can never be satisfied because one signifier only signifies other signifiers. From this impossibility of satisfaction of demand, desire stems. The development of the child is ordered during the dialectic of the demand for love and the test of desire.

"Desire", Grosz says, "always refers to a triangle -- the subject, the other and the
Other. The other is the object through whom desire is returned to the subject; the Other is the locus of signification which regulates the movement by which this return is possible” (Grosz 1990: 80). The child (the subject) comes to realize that its mother (the other) desires the phallus of the father (the signifier of the desire of the Other), and it desires its mother’s desire, not its mother: “If the desire of the mother is the phallus, the child wishes to be the phallus in order to satisfy that desire” (Lacan [1958a]: 289). The phallus is not only a biological penis, but also the privileged signifier: “The phallus is the privileged signifier of that mark [the mark that the human is related as a subject to the signifier] in which the role of the logos [the order of signifiers — the symbolic order] is joined with the advent of desire” (Lacan [1958a]: 287). As far as the phallus is a signifier, it is subject to the law of the Other. In modern Western culture, the Other is a locus of the male discourse which defines women not-having-penis, a lack. Why is the phallus chosen as the privileged signifier among a lot of signifiers? Lacan explains, “It can be said that this signifier is chosen because it is the most tangible element in the real of sexual copulation and also the most symbolic in the literal (typographical) sense of the term, since it is equivalent there to the (logical) copula. It might be also said that, by virtue of its turgidity, it is the image of the vital flow as it is transmitted in generation” (Lacan [1958a]: 287, my italics). As this quotation shows, why the phallus is chosen as the privileged signifier is that it is most “tangible.” I interpret “tangible” as “visible.”

The visible characteristic of the penis overwhelms the imaginary unity with the mother brought by the visual sensation. In other words, the primary identification with the imago (the imagined, omnipotent mother, therefore, idealized mother) is eclipsed by the
secondary identification with the imago of the penis, the phallus (the imagined, omnipotent father, therefore, idealized father). The visible characteristic of the penis informs the human infant that the mother is lack of the penis. Through this realization, each sex begins to hold each position imposed by the Phallus. Therefore, the phallocentrism directly comes from the privilege of the vision; ocularcentrism is a basis for phallocentrism. In this sense, Lacan can be criticized as the master of the masculine discourse. For Lacan, there is an ontological bridge between ocularcentrism and phallocentrism. Phallocentrism seems to come from the ontological structure of the human being.

But this is a half story Lacan tells us. Phallus is originally based on the biological referent (the penis) and the ontological privilege of the sight. When the human infant realizes that the imagined omnipotent mother is in fact an alienated subject in language and she also desires the phallus, the phantasmatic signifier which seemingly satisfies her desire, it also falls into metonymic displacement of signifiers. The phallus as a signifier always signifies other signifiers which seemingly fill the subject’s lack, therefore, ocularcentrism and phallocentrism are permanently reproduced. In short, the visibility of the penis invokes the imagination which it has a power to fill the subject’s lack; the penis becomes the phallus as a signifier. The phallus as a signifier perpetually reproduces the phallocentrism.

In ocularcentric and phallocentric culture, masculinity is constructed around the signifier of the phallus, a signifier which confers power in modern Western culture; by contrast, femininity is constructed through exclusion from the symbolic realm of power.
Therefore, man is defined as “having-phallus” and woman is defined as “not-having-phallus” or “being-phallus”: “Let us say that these relations [between the sexes] will turn around a ‘to be’ and a ‘to have’, which, by referring to a signifier, the phallus, have the opposed effect, on the one hand, of giving reality to the subject in this signifier, and, on the other, of derealizing the relations to be signified” (Lacan [1958a]: 289). Femininity comes to a masquerade because it is phantasized as “being-phallus” by the male. But the result is woman’s alienation from herself: “I am saying that it is in order to be the phallus, that is to say, the signifier of the desire of the Other, that a woman will reject an essential part of femininity, namely, all her attributes in the masquerade” (Lacan [1958a]: 289 - 90).

Then, what does the masquerade (being-phallus) mean? It means that women as being-phallus become exchangeable objects among men. Grosz says, “She paints/shaves/plucks/dyes/diets/exercises her body, and clearly derives pleasure from complements about her look. Her whole body becomes the phallus to compensate for genital ‘deficiency’, which she is able to disavow through her narcissism” (Grosz 1990: 133). In the modern Western ocularcentric and phallocentric culture, woman can be the phallus only through masquerade, and in doing so she can be a desired object of men, not the desiring subject. But as soon as the masquerade is put off, she is degraded down to an undesirable object. Man begins to find another woman who is masquerading as a being-phallus: “his own desire for the phallus will make its signifier emerge in its persistent divergence towards “another woman” who may signify this phallus in various ways, either as a virgin or as a prostitute” (Lacan [1958a]: 290).
(2) The Object a and Jouissance

To Lacan, female sexual identity does not belong to the female because it is defined purely by the male (sexual identity). The masculine subject projects his "lack" onto the female and idolizes the female. The loss of the first love-object inscribes a permanent lack in the male subject; the male fantasizes the female as the lost love-object, the object a, which is the cause of desire and support of male fantasy. In this sense, the object a is not a real object, but an imaginary object. The object a as an imaginary object keeps to remind the subject of the lost love-object, the real object.

The prototype of the object a is the mother's breast which was considered as a part of the infant's own body by the infant. Although the male infant gives up his love-cathexis for his mother (mother's breast) due to fear of castration, his "unconscious" desire for the first love-object is never given up. In other words, he gives up the "object" of desire, but he does not give up the desire "itself." As a result of this doubleness, the male comes to idolize women, or put women in the position of the Other.9

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9. This seems to be connected to Freud's explanation of fetishism as a unique phenomena for men. In "Fetishism" (1927), Freud contends that only men have the possibility of fetishizing. According to Freud, fetishism arises from the little boy's horror at first seeing the female genitals, so fetishism is only a male phenomenon. The first object of love for both sexes is the mother, but the process of detachment from the mother is different. The little boy at first thinks that his mother also has a penis (phallic mother), but later he discovers that she does not have it. The little boy tries to deny it, but later thinks that his mother is castrated by his father. The little boy comes to fear being castrated by his father because he sees his father as his rival. Because of the castration complex, the little boy turns away from his mother to identify with his potent father and in doing so, he accomplishes "normal" heterosexuality. Because the detachment from the mother gives the little boy pain, he keeps denying the sexual difference by reasserting a penis-substitute onto his mother (women). The fetish object stands in for the mother's phallus: "[T]he fetish is a substitute for the woman's (mother's) phallus which the little boy once believed in and does not wish to forgo" (Freud [1927]: 205). The Oedipus complex is resolved, but it comes down into the unconscious as repressed. Therefore, men "normally and
The *object a* is both a part of the child’s body and what can be detached from the body in order to become an external object: “The *object a* is something from which the subject, in order to constitute itself, has separated itself off as organ. This serves as a symbol of the lack, that is to say, of the phallus, not as such, but insofar as it is lacking. It must, therefore, be an object that is, firstly separable, and secondly, that has some relation to the lack” (Lacan [1964a]: 103). The *object a* as an imaginary object becomes a symbolic object (signifier) exchangeable in the Symbolic.

The *object a* is intimately connected with the phallus. As the mother’s breast is detached from the child’s own body, the phallus is detached from the mother’s body (the little boy thinks that his father castrated his mother or his father detached the phallus from his mother’s body — the little boy’s own body). In modern Western phallocentric culture, the phallus is heir to the role of *object a*. Whereas the male fetishizes about a part of women’s body or idolizes her as the *object a*, the female responds to this men’s desire by making herself as a desirable object of men. Women as being-phallus become exchangeable objects because the phallus as the *object a* can be detached. The system of prostitution, in which women are sold among men by men, is rooted in this phallocentric logic.

As we have seen, the *object a* has two aspects: imaginary object and symbolic object (signifier). There is also another aspect: the reminder of the real object. Why the

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naturally” have the potential for fetishizing about women’s body parts. But according to Freud, the little girl first becomes aware of her own inferior clitoris on seeing a boy’s penis, and this gives rise to penis envy. The little girl feels hostility towards her mother; her mother does not give the little girl a penis. The little girl “normally” turns away from her mother to her father in order to take a penis substitute, a male baby by her father. Therefore the little girl does not have to fetishize.
object a functions as a cause of desire is that it reminds the subject of the lost love-object, the real object. Before the imaginary relation between the infant and the mother, there was the Real. Nobody can directly gain access to the Real; it is beyond the Symbolic. We can only vaguely grasp the Real through symptom or trauma which interrupts the automatic unfolding of the signifying chain. The object a is the residue of symbolization, which contains some of the real. In other words, the object a is the symbolized real. Therefore, the object a is the imaginary object reminding of the real, which later becomes an exchangeable object, a signifier.

According to Lacan, the human subject as an alienated existence can feel itself as a (non-alienated) being through relating itself to the Real. In the Real, the human being experienced jouissance, “a pleasure that is excessive, leading to a sense of being overwhelmed or disgusted, yet simultaneously providing a source of fascination” (Fink 1995: xii). The object a reminds the subject of this jouissance. That is why the object a is a cause of desire, not an object of desire. In modern Western culture, the phallus as a heir to the object a promises a phallic or symbolic jouissance whose boundaries are determined by the phallic function. The phallic function refers to “the function that institutes lack, that is, the alienating function of language” (Fink 1995: 103). When the infant is castrated by language, it has to give up its (original, presymbolic) jouissance. This castration institutes lack in the speaking subject, and this lack in turn instigates the movement of desire whose aim is to stop up the lack. The object a is imagined as a real object to stop up this lack. In modern Western culture, the phallus plays the role of the object a. By relating himself to the phallus, the masculine subject enjoys the symbolic jouissance.
Woman can also enjoy this *jouissance*, but only as far as she takes the masculine position as her own. But that *jouissance* is not a true *jouissance* of woman.

In his later article, "God and the Jouissance of the Women" (1972-3), Lacan articulates another concept of *jouissance*, called the Other *jouissance*, a mystery state of sexual joy, an erotic satisfaction which dissolves the boundaries of self and Other. The Other *Jouissance* refers to a condition which is not contaminated by phallocentric discourse: "There is a *jouissance*, since we are dealing with *jouissance*, a *jouissance* of the body which is, if the expression be allowed, beyond the phallus" (Lacan [1972-3]: 145). According to Lacan, woman has her own proper *jouissance*: "There is a *jouissance* proper to her, to this ‘her’ which does not exist and which signifies nothing. There is a *jouissance* proper to her and of which she herself may know nothing, except that she experiences it -- that much she does know. She knows it of course when it happens. It does not happen to all of them" (Lacan [1972-3]: 145).

But we saw above, all women do not experience the Other *jouissance*. For women, the Other *jouissance* is a structural potentiality. When a woman is alienated in/through language, she is not altogether subject to the symbolic order like a man. Fink explains, "Whereas $S \, I$ (the Father’s ‘No!’) functions for a man as a limit to his range of motion and pleasures, $S \, I$ is an elective ‘partner’ for a woman, her relationship to it allowing her to step beyond the boundaries set by language and beyond the pittance of pleasure language allows. An endpoint for men, $S \, I$ serves as open door for women" (Fink 1995: 107). The Other *jouissance* as a structural potentiality is beyond the symbolic, and therefore, it cannot be known in modern Western culture. Grosz says, “Woman
experiences a *jouissance beyond phallus*. But if this enigmatic *jouissance* is attributed to woman as her mark of resistance to the Other, at the same time, this *jouissance* is, by that fact, strictly outside of articulation and is thus *unknowable*” (Grosz 1990: 139). What does “*unknowable*” mean? There are two possibilities for interpreting this. First, Lacan has recourse to a biological (mystic) concept of *jouissance* in order to escape from his overarching and monolithic concept of the Symbolic order. I do not accept this interpretation because it supposes the insoluble opposition between biology and sociology. Second, we can think that *jouissance* cannot be known “under ocularcentric and phallocentric discourse.” I accept this interpretation because it opens the possibility of change of ocularcentric and phallocentric culture. Then the focus is to “re-write” ocularcentric and phallocentric discourse, I think.

(B) Feminist Discourse on the Feminine Subject

Both Freud and Lacan characterized modern Western culture as ocularcentrism and phallocentrism. Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva accept this analysis and try to subvert this culture. They work with the questions which Freud produced: questions on the (female) body and the relation between the little girl and the mother during the pre-Oedipal stage. Following Lacan, they also recognize the significance of language; for them, the key issue is the relation between woman and writing or language in general. They characterize a unique women’s language as antiocular.

1. Luce Irigaray: Rewriting Sexual Difference

Irigaray might be characterized by her synthesis of Derridean deconstructionism and Lacanian psychoanalysis (Burke 1994; Jay 1994). To her, Derrida is important.
because he probes the identity of phallus and logos in Western philosophy. According to Derrida, Western philosophy is structured in terms of binary oppositions such as good/bad, presence/absence, mind/matter, being/non-being, identity/difference, culture/nature, signifier/signified, speech/writing, etc. Further, there is a hierarchy; the first term is given privilege. The first positive term disavows its intimate dependence on its negative term and masquerades itself as self-present truth. Western philosophy has been obsessed with this knowledge: “being, language, knowledge are self-evident, neutral and transparent terms. Being can be known and experienced in its intimacy; language transfers meaning neutrally without interfering in the underlying thoughts it ‘expresses’; knowledge undistortedly reflects reality in truthful representations” (Grosz 1989: 28).

Thus, Derrida calls Western philosophy “metaphysics of presence” which identifies knowledge with self-present truth (Norris 1987). But it is impossibly ideal because it in fact depends on its negative terms. Therefore, logocentrism can be said to refer to “an attitude of nostalgia for a lost presence or a longing for some first cause of being and meaning” (Burke 1994: 42). Derrida’s term “phallogcenrtrism” informs that the oppositional structure on which logocentrism relies is governed by the division between men and women (non-men). The dichotomy of men and women as non-men is a prototype of all kinds of binary oppositions. Psychoanalysis shows that this dichotomy comes from the privilege of vision. The visible is present and the invisible is absent. The penis is a symbol of presence; it is visible. Thus, logocentrism is based on phallocentrism whose logic comes from ocularcentrism. In this sense, Jay calls it “phallogocularcentrism”

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10 In this sense, logocentrism is an attitude of the masculine subject who I defined earlier.
For Irigaray, psychoanalysis has double meaning: it is a model of male discourse which can only represent the imaginary and the symbolic from the point of view of the boy; it is also a mode of reading or interpreting texts (Grosz 1989; Whitford 1991). Psychoanalytic discourse states explicitly the various presumptions and beliefs about femininity left unspoken by other discourses. Also it provides a reading or writing strategy; it makes explicit who speaks, writes, and reads.

According to Irigaray, psychoanalysis as a reading or writing strategy should work directly on enunciation (the place of the speaking subject) rather than, like the linguist or the psychologist, working on the *enonce* (the subject of statement). She tries to analyze the enunciation of the speaking subject in order to uncover the true identity of the subject who assumes the *enonce*, and theorizes the condition for a female subject which could not be simply incorporated back into the male imaginary as its “other.” Following Benveniste, Irigaray defines that “I” and “you” belong to enunciation, and meta-language belongs to *enonce*. Meta-language is a male language, in which the male “I” is assumed as the third person or neutral position (the *enonce* or the subject of statement). But this is impossible; nobody can “comment on one’s own enunciatory position while

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11. Benveniste divides language into two persons, the ‘I’ and the “you”, and claims that only the “I” and “you” refer to persons. The third person is an absent person. The third person has a representational rather than an enunciatory or positional function: “Thus the indicators *I* and *you* cannot exist as potentialities; they exist only insofar as they are actualized in the instance of discourse, in which, by each of their own instances, they mark the process of appropriation by the speaker” (Benveniste 1971: 220); “Thus, in the formal class of pronouns, those said to be of the ‘third person’ are, by their function and by their nature, completely different from *I* and *you*...Certain languages show that the ‘third person’ is indeed literally a ‘non-person’” (Benveniste 1971: 221).
simultaneously occupying it” (Whitford 1991: 41). In other words, meta-language is a false fantasy because nobody can hold both the positions of enunciation and *enonce* simultaneously. Male meta-language asserts the neutrality or scientificality of discourse, but it is just a male form of representation in which the female cannot be represented.

Irigaray’s purpose is to unveil the disguised meta-language of the male “I” which has been prevalent in Western philosophy.

With the aid of psychoanalysis which works on enunciation, Irigaray analyses the structure of “specularization” of Western culture. Irigaray argues that all of western discourse and culture display the structure of specularization, in which the male projects his own ego onto the world, which then becomes a mirror that enables him to see his own reflection wherever he looks. Women as bodies/matters are the material of which the mirror is made, that part of the mirror which cannot be reflected, the *tain* of the mirror for example, and so they never see reflections of themselves:

...in order to transform his death drives and the whole instinctual dualism, in order to use his life to ward off death for as long as it takes to choose a death, man will have to work on building up his ego. On raising his own tomb, if you like. This new detour along the road to death, through/for the construction of narcissistic monuments, involves pulling the libido back from the object onto the self and desexualizing it so it can carry out more sublimated activities. Now, if this ego is to be valuable, some ‘mirror’ is needed to reassure it and re-insure it of its value. Woman will be the foundation for the specular duplication, giving man back ‘his’ image and repeating it as the ‘same’” (Irigaray 1985a: 54).

As the word “mirror” implies, Irigaray clearly knows that the Freudian world is a visible one in which only the visible exists and has privilege. Fear of castration is actually the fear of “blindness”; if he becomes blind, he cannot see his penis, and therefore, he cannot verify that his penis (the visible) is superior to woman’s clitoris (the invisible). The
specularization of Western philosophy depends on the mirror whose matter consists of woman as non-man. This world is a world of sameness in which otherness should be negated in order to become a mirror of sameness: “Woman will therefore be this sameness — or at least its mirror image — and, in her role of mother, she will facilitate the repetition of the same, in contempt for her difference. Her own sexual difference” (Irigaray 1985a: 54). Western culture is constructed over a buried act of matricide: “Furthermore, when I speak of the relationship to the mother, I mean that in our patriarchal culture the daughter is absolutely unable to control her relation to her mother. Nor can the woman control her relation to maternity, unless she reduces herself to that role again...there is no possibility whatever, within the current logic of sociocultural operations, for a daughter to situate herself with respect to her mother: because, strictly speaking, they make neither one nor two, neither has a name, meaning, sex of her own, neither can be ‘identified’ with respect to the other” (Irigaray 1985b: 143).

If it is impossible for women to be represented within Western culture (or Lacan’s Symbolic order), where can we find a possibility in which women can be represented? According to Irigaray, the possibility comes from the “ontological difference” of women. First, the female body is different from the male body. The female body is characterized as plural and fluid while the male body as singular and solid, and this difference makes the difference of sexuality between man and woman: “Whereas the penis is a singular organ needing something outside itself to provide gratification, the vaginal lips, clitoris, labia, vulva, and so on, are multiple—‘this sex which is not one’—and thus capable of self touching” (Jay 1994: 535). The invisibility of woman’s organ is connected into its
formlessness: “This organ which has nothing to show for itself also lacks a form of its own” (Irigaray 1985b: 26). Woman’s body cannot be grasped by the male “scopic” economy; the female sexuality is distinguished by touching whereas the male sexuality is characterized by seeing. Touching or the tangible has different logics and rhythms from the visual: “the tangible provides the preconditions and the grounds of the visible...the visible requires the tangible but the tangible is perfectly capable of an existence autonomous from the visible...The tangible is the invisible, unseenable milieu of the visible, the source of visibility; it precedes the distinction between active and passive and subject and object” (Grosz 1994: 106).

Then, what is the relation between the female body which has the characteristics mentioned above and language? Irigaray argued that there is an isomorphism between male sexuality and patriarchal language: “All Western discourse presents a certain isomorphism with the masculine sex; the privilege of unity, form of the self, of the visible, of the specularisable, of the erection (which is the becoming in a form)” (Irigaray 1977: 64). Similarly, there seems to be an isomorphism between female sexuality and woman’s writing or language. According to Irigaray, Woman’s writing is characterized by fluids, which is based on the female body. Irigaray says, “This ‘style’, or ‘writing’, of women tends to put the torch to fetish words, proper terms, well-constructed forms. This ‘style’ does not privilege sight; instead, it takes each figure back to its source, which is among other things tactile” (Irigaray 1985b: 79).

Second, the pre-Oedipal relation between the girl and the mother is different from the one between the boy and the mother. In order to understand this assertion, we have to
discuss the so-called "fort-da" game again. As we examined earlier, Freud contends that the little boy does this game in order to symbolize the absence and presence of the mother. Through this game, the little boy overcomes the pain brought on by the absence of the mother. Lacan re-interprets this "fort-da" game with a linguistic model. Lacan views this game as an allegory about the linguistic mastery of the drives; he associates this mastery with a signifying transaction by means of which the unconscious is established. By this game the child learns to control his feelings about the presence and absence of the loved object, the mother. The insertion of language into the child with the symbol of the reel represses the child's desire for its mother (the symbol of the reel kills its mother), which means the structuring of the unconscious.

By contrast, Irigaray emphasizes that the player is the little "boy" and he masters the absence of mother through manipulating a toy, an "object." The little "boy" replaces his "mother" (human subject) with a manipulable "object" which can be thrown away and then retrieved. As soon as the male enters into language belonging to the Symbolic order, he begins to manipulate the female. Under this culture, men sell and buy women, and struggle with each other to earn the female. Therefore, violence is a fundamental mechanism for maintaining this culture. From this game comes all male desires for mastering, possessing, and manipulating women. Women, however, are ontologically different from men in regard to this game:

She cannot reduce or manipulate her [her mother] as an object in the way a little boy or a man does. According to Freud, and other theories of sexuality in general, our desire is a desire for objects, and of competition for objects. Violence is thus explained by the need to possess objects and the rivalry to take possession of them. A person's status and even identity is defined by the objects belonging to her or him. This economy is partially valid for male subjectivity. Woman, though, immediately becomes a
subject with respect to another subject who is the same as she: her mother. She cannot reduce her mother to an object without reducing herself the same way, because they are of same gender...The fort/da that Freud describes as the child’s entry into the world of language and culture does not work properly for the girl, except through identification with the boy” (Irigaray 1994: 18 - 19).

The peculiar relation between the daughter and the mother comes from the pre-Oedipal stage, more specifically the pre-mirror stage. But it is unsymbolized under the patriarchal symbolic order: “If the child’s pre-oedipal relation with the mother is ‘the dark continent’ of psychoanalysis, then the mother-daughter relation must be ‘the dark continent of the dark continent, the most obscure area of our social order’” (Grosz 1989: 120). In this sense, the female imaginary, which comes from the peculiar relation between the daughter and the mother at the pre-Oedipal stage, has two aspects: 1) it is the unsymbolized, repressed underside of western philosophy; 2) it does not yet exist and it still has to be created (Whitford 1991: 89). From the first aspect, the female imaginary can be described as fusional, plural, no-identical. Within the male scopic economy, it cannot be articulated because it is dominated by the economy of flow in which the tactile is prevalent. The imaginary of women is different from the imaginary of men. The imaginary of men is confined to only visual sensation; the male ego is a narcissistic object preoccupied with its unified, visual image. By contrast, the imaginary of women is plural, it involves other sensations repressed by the visual sensation. This imaginary consists of the remnants left over by the structuration of the imaginary by the dominant symbolic order: “if the female imaginary were to deploy itself, if it could bring itself into play otherwise than as scraps, uncollected debris...” (Irigaray 1985b: 30). From the second aspect, the relationship between the daughter and the mother should be articulated in

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another syntax: “How can the relationship between these two women be articulated? Here ‘for example’ is one place where the need for another ‘syntax’, another ‘grammar’ of culture is crucial” (Irigaray 1985b: 143). In other words, women have to revive the maternal genealogy and articulate their ontological difference in a form of representation different from male one: “Woman must be able to express herself in words, images and symbols in this intrasubjective relationship with her mother, then with other women, if she is to enter into a non-discursive relationship with men” (Irigaray 1994: 20). Then, what are the characteristics of feminine syntax? Irigaray says:

what a feminine syntax might be is not simple nor easy to state, because in that ‘syntax’ there would no longer be either subject or object, ‘oneness’ would no longer be privileged, there would no longer be proper meanings, proper names, ‘proper’ attributes... Instead, that ‘syntax’ would involve nearness, proximity, but in such an extreme form that it would preclude any distinction of identities, any establishment of ownership, thus any form of appropriation (Irigaray 1985b: 134).

Some interpreters of Irigaray such as Janet Sayers and Lynne Segal call Irigaray a (biological or psychic) “essentialist” (Whitford 1991: 9). But I do not agree with these interpretations because the ontological difference of the female is not a biological or psychic notion. The ontological difference of the female does not come from some pre-given essence, but from the female body and the specific “relationship” between daughter and mother, which cannot be articulated within a patriarchal culture. In this sense, the so-called “ontological difference” is a grammatical difference: “the feminine ‘sex’ is a point of linguistic absence, the impossibility of a grammatically (my emphasis) denoted substance” (Butler 1990: 10).
2. Julia Kristeva: Semiotic Foundation of Feminine Sexuality

Kristeva as a Lacanian psychoanalyst accepts the Lacanian critical thesis: the Symbolic is constituted by the prohibitive paternal law. Kristeva tries to find a space to disrupt the Symbolic by rewriting Freud’s pre-Oedipal stage. I am convinced that early Kristeva especially concentrates on Freud’s new questions about femininity: about the female body and the mother (especially the pre-Oedipal relation between the child and the mother). She synthesizes these questions in terms of the *chora* as the mother’s body:

“The *chora* is connotative of the mother’s body — unrepresentable body. The mother and the body as such in fact go together for Kristeva” (Lechte 1990: 129). The *chora* as the mother’s body is anti-ocularcentric and anti-phallocentric materiality of the symbolic: “The mother’s body becomes the focus of the semiotic as the ‘pre-symbolic’—a manifestation—especially in art, of what could be called the ‘materiality’ of the symbolic: the voice as rhythm and timber, the body as movement, gesture, and rhythm” (Lechte 1990: 129).

In her doctoral dissertation, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva attempts to revise the scope and the structure of Lacanian imaginary and symbolic order. She changes the Imaginary and the Symbolic order into “the semiotic” and “the symbolic.” The semiotic cannot be understood only in its Saussurian sense: Barthes’ writings on pleasure and *jouissance* of the text opens the way to Kristeva’s study of the disruptive *jouissance* of language which is characteristic of the semiotic *chora*; Benveniste’s distinction between

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12. Kristeva cannot be understood only as a Lacanian psychoanalyst. Kristeva combines Lacanian psychoanalysis, structural linguistics, and European philosophy in order to produce a significant account of the relations between unconscious desire, feminine sexuality, and modern social process. Early Kristeva can be best understood in the context of the May of 1968 in France. See Turkle (1992).
enunciation and enonce influenced Kristeva’s theory of the subject in process; Bataille’s characterization of poetry as escaping the stricture of the symbolic order opens up the terrain of Kristeva’s reflection on the semiotic (Lechte 1990). The semiotic has two aspects 1) it refers to the pre-Oedipal modality of experience and the existence of oral and anal drives, which includes bodily drives, feelings, and rhythms; 2) the semiotic as the pre-Oedipal modality of experience ceaselessly returns in all signifying practice. Kristeva says, “The term semiotic...will be used to mean: in the first place, what can be hypothetically posited as preceding the imposition of language, in other words, the already given arrangement of the drives in the form of facilitations or pathways, and secondly the return of these facilitations in the form of rhythms, intonations and lexical, syntactic and rhetorical transformations” (Kristeva, quoted in Grosz 1990: 152). The semiotic is also a space before sexuality is set up: “It [the semiotic] is an anarchic, formless circulation of sexual impulses and energies traversing the child’s body before sexuality is ordered and hierarchically subsumed under the primacy of gentility and the body becomes a coherent entity” (Grosz 1989: 43). There is no sexual difference between two sexes in the semiotic; the semiotic as “the presymbolic realm of signification associated with the mother” (Jay 1994: 458) has the same meaning for two sexes. The semiotic is anterior to the mirror stage; it is not dominated by vision. Kristeva says, “this process [the process through which the child grasp the image] can be called imaginary, but not in the specular sense of the word, because it passes through voice, taste, skin and so on, all the senses yet doesn’t necessarily mobilize sight” (Kristeva, quoted in Jay 1994: 531). Kristeva calls this space the semiotic chora. The term “chora” originally comes from Plato: “We borrow the term
chora from Plato's Timeus to denote an essentially mobil and extremely provisional articulation constituted by movements and their ephemeral stases" (Kristeva 1984: 25);

"Plato's Timeus speaks of a chora, receptacle, unnamable, improbable, hybrid, anterior to naming, to the One, to the father, and consequently, maternally connoted to such an extent that it merits 'not even the rank of syllable'" (Kristeva 1980: 133). For Kristeva, the chora is a function of the child's unmediated relation to the mother's body: "The mother's body is...what mediates the symbolic law organizing social relations and becomes the ordering principle of the semiotic chora" (Kristeva 1984: 27). It is also a state in which the linguistic sign has not yet been articulated as the absence of an object: "The chora is not yet a position that represents something for someone (i.e., it is not a sign); nor is it a position that represents someone for another position (i.e., it is not yet a signifier either)" (Kristeva 1984: 26).

By contrast, the symbolic, for Kristeva, is similar to Lacan's symbolic, language:

"We shall call symbolic the logical and syntactic functioning of language and everything which, in translinguistic practices is assailable to the system of language proper" (Kristeva, quoted in Grosz 1990: 152). The child gains a sexualized position (sexual identity) within language; language is governed by the Name-of-the-Father. Kristeva says, "The symbolic order functions in our monotheistic West by means of a system of kinship dependent on transmission of the father's name and a rigorous prohibition of incest, and a system of verbal communication that is increasingly logical, simple, positive, and stripped of stylistic, rhythmic, 'poetic' ambiguities" (Kristeva 1991: 31). In Western society, the symbolic order is characterized by patriarchy, which involves the domination of the "Law of the
Father” and the marginalization of the semiotic, especially the place of the mother. But unlike Lacan, For Kristeva language develops within the chora through the thetic phase. Due to the positing of the thetic, the chora cannot be definitively posited. In this sense, the semiotic and the symbolic are “inseparable in the signifying process that constitutes language” (Kristeva 1984: 24).

What is important here is that the semiotic and the symbolic conflict with each other: “If the symbolic established the limits and unity of a signifying practice, the semiotic registers in that practice the effect of that which cannot be pinned down as sign, whether signifier or signified” (Kristeva, quoted in Grosz 1990: 152). In this sense, Kristeva argues that the semiotic and the symbolic are two modalities of all signifying processes: “the dialectic between them [the semiotic and the symbolic] determines the type of discourse (narrative, metalanguage, theory, poetry, etc.) involved...Because the subject is always both semiotic and symbolic, no signifying system he produces can be either ‘exclusively’ semiotic or ‘exclusively’ symbolic, and is instead necessarily marked by an indebtedness to both” (Kristeva 1984: 24).

Unlike Lacan, Kristeva seems to give importance to the semiotic. If we equate the semiotic with Lacan’s imaginary order including the mirror stage, we come to know that they both refer to the pre-Oedipal stage, but their contents are very different. As we saw above, Lacan’s imaginary order is characterized by the visual sensation of the infant. The infant is demonstrated as a narcissistic object preoccupied with its visual image. But, the pre-Oedipal stage of Freud is much more complex and dynamic; it involves the anarchic
component-drives and polymorphomous erotogenic zones. Kristeva revives Freud's notion of the pre-Oedipal stage by dividing it into the semiotic and the thetic.

The term "thetic" originally comes from Husserl: "We SHALL distinguish the semiotic (drives and their articulations) from the realm of signification, which is always that of a proposition or judgment, in other words, a realm of positions. This positionality, which Husserlian phenomenology orchestrates through the concepts of doxa, position, and thesis, is structured as a break in the signifying process, establishing the identification of the subject and its object as preconditions of positionality. We shall call this break, which produces the positing of signification, a thetic phase" (Kristeva 1984: 43). All enunciation is possible only when the subject separates itself from both its image and its objects as well as it identifies with an object. In this sense, the thetic is the deepest structure of the possibility of enunciation: "The child's first so-called holophrastic enunciations include gesture, the object, and vocal emission. Because they are perhaps not yet sentences (NP-VP), generative grammar is not readily equipped to account for them. Nevertheless, they are already thetic in the sense that they separate an object from the subject, and attributes to it a semiotic fragment, which thereby becomes a signifier" (Kristeva 1984: 43). In Husserlian terminology, "positing is a nominal act in which the object presented is referred to as existing, which involves an active, rational commitment on the part of the thinker" (Payne 1993: 173); positing is a rational act of transcendental ego. But in Kristevian terminology, positioning is an act achieved through the specific developmental phase: "thetic signification is a stage attained under certain precise conditions during the
signifying process” (Kristeva 1984: 44). The thetic phase of the signifying process includes the mirror stage and the discovery of castration.

Whereas the specular image of the mirror stage provides the child with a representation that is based on wholeness and unity, castration serves the child to form the specular image of wholeness, separating it from too close an identification with the phallic mother. Whereas the mirror stage refers to a detachment from the chora, castration refers to the detachment from the phallic mother: “Captation of the image and the drive investment in this image, which institute primary narcissism, permit the constitution of objects detached from the semiotic chora” (Kristeva 1984: 46); “The discovery of castration...detaches the subject from his dependence on the mother, and the perception of this lack [manque] makes the phallic function a symbolic function - the symbolic function” (Kristeva 1984: 47). Whereas during the mirror stage the child “posits” his imagined ego, at the moment of the discovery of castration signification is structured in the subject. Therefore, the thetic act, which was considered as the act of the transcendental ego by Husserl, becomes exposed as the act attained during the thetic phase. Passing through the thetic phase, the subject enters into the symbolic order: “The thetic phase marks a threshold between two heterogeneous realms: the semiotic and the symbolic” (Kristeva 1984: 48). What is important here is that the thetic cannot be characterized by the oppression of the semiotic chora; its function is the positing of, not the repression of, the semiotic chora: “the thetic is not a repression of the semiotic chora but instead a position either taken on or undergone” (Kristeva 1984: 51).

Once the child enters into the symbolic order, the chora seems to be oppressed.
This seeming oppression of the *chora* results in the repression of the semiotic in language as well as the oppression of femininity in society. Under patriarchal symbolic order, both the semiotic and women are subjected to marginal status. Unlike Lacan, Kristeva does not see this marginalization (oppression) as complete oppression; she believes that the semiotic continues to exert a more pervasive influence upon the symbolic. In the area of language, the return of the semiotic, according to Kristeva, is well expressed in the avant-garde text: "Among the capitalist mode of production's numerous signifying practices, only certain literary texts of the avant-garde (Mallarmé, Joyce) manage to cover the infinity of the process, that is, reach the semiotic *chora*, which modifies linguistic structures" (Kristeva 1984: 88). According to Kristeva, arts including the avant-garde can transgress the boundaries of the symbolic order which is governed by the Law of the Father. Where, then, does the power of transgressing the boundaries of the symbolic order come from? It comes from the pre-Oedipal maternal body: "craftsmen of Western art reveal better than anyone else the artist's debt to the maternal body and/or motherhood's entry into symbolic existence — that is, translibidinal jouissance, eroticism taken over by the language of art" (Kristeva 1980: 243). Therefore, language practice such as the avant-garde revives not only the semiotic *chora*, but also femininity. In this sense, language practice or re-writing the discourse has political meaning, it seeks to disrupt the symbolic governed by the Law of the Father. Both sexes have the potentiality of practicing it because the subject, for Kristeva, is always both semiotic and symbolic. Language practice such as poetic language demonstrates the subject as the subject-in-process: "poetic language puts the subject in process/on trial through a network of marks..."
and semiotic facilitations” (Kristeva 1984: 58). Both sexes can try to change the thetic by activating the semiotic chora.

As we have examined, Kristeva’s theory on the chora is anti-ocular: “the chora precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularization (my emphasis) and is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm” (Kristeva 1984: 26). Freud, Lacan, and Irigaray all agree with the opinion that Western phallocentric culture is characterized by the privilege of the sight (the visible). This visible world represses the pre-Oedipal modality of experience which is characterized by the chora. The chora cannot be reduced to the visual sensation (the sight) because it precedes specularization and is analogous to vocal or kinetic rhythm. The chora cannot be exhausted by the symbolic; without it there is no signification.

Whereas the masculine discourse strives to establish a meta-narrative, which has the name of “science”, by using only the symbolic system, the semiotic chora always has the possibility of subverting it.

Kristeva’s theory on the chora is also based on the mother’s body. The mother’s body plays an important role in ordering the chora. But, unlike Irigaray’s assertion of women’s ontological difference, Kristeva disembodies the feminine and the maternal from women, particularly from the female body. According to Kristeva, femininity is not woman’s nature, but something like the semiotic itself. Grosz says, “femininity is identified with a series of processes and relations that the pre-Oedipal child of either sex experiences and wants before the imposition of sexual difference” (Grosz 1990: 161). Similarly Toril Moi also says, “Kristeva herself has from time to time written about femininity in terms which would seem to equate the feminine with the ‘semiotic’ or the
pre-Oedipal” (Moi 1986: 11). This feminine and maternally structured space as the
semiotic is provided for both sexes. In the pre-Oedipal stage there is no sexual difference
between the two sexes; the semiotic has no special relation to woman. In the pre-Oedipal
stage, the mother is womb, breast, partial object rather than subject. The relationship
between mother and daughter is the same as the relationship between mother and son.
Therefore, the disruptive potential of the semiotic *chora* is available to both woman and
man.

Some theorists criticize Kristeva’s theory on the chora as political naturalism:
“There was a call for a return to a more direct, simpler experience, the return to Eden.
This naturalism stressed that if allowed free expression, man’s natural desires, energies,
and creative imagination would be a revolutionary force. Kristeva spoke about this force
as the semiotic and said that it had to confront the symbolic in order to serve the
revolution” (Turkle 1992: 84). But we have to remember that Kristeva’s intention is not
returning to the semiotic, but revitalizing the semiotic through signifying practices. Butler
also criticizes that Kristeva describes the maternal body as naturalistic and questions
whether the primary relationship to the maternal body is a knowable experience under her
and Lacan’s linguistic theories (Butler 1990: 80). These critics sound reasonable to some
extent if we equate Kristeva’s semiotic and symbolic with Lacan’s Imaginary and
Symbolic. But as we saw above, Kristeva’s thetic marks a significant difference from
Lacan. Kristeva’s symbolic is always in conflict with the semiotic; the thetic poses, not
oppresses, the semiotic. Butler does not say anything about the thetic; she just opposes
the semiotic as natural to the symbolic as cultural and argues that the semiotic is
subordinated to the symbolic. But in Kristeva’s world, the subject is not completely
subordinated by the symbolic. Like Freud’s early topography where the primary system
and the secondary system act on each other, Kristeva’s subject is always in the process.

Summary and Implication

Failing to explain the so-called riddle of femininity, Freud discovered the
constitutive logic of modern Western culture, the Oedipus story. Freud also produced
new questions on femininity: the characteristics of the pre-Oedipal stage and the female
body, which was not represented under modern Western masculine culture characterized
by ocularcentrism and phallocentrism. Lacan made it explicit that the Oedipus story was a
specific discourse in modern Western culture and articulated the ontological inevitability
of visual representation and its relation to the phallus. Both of them showed us that the
masculine subject is constituted by projecting his loss onto the female as a screen. Irigaray
revealed that the Oedipus story functions as a meta-language but it is in fact a masculine
discourse. Irigaray made a possibility of a new feminine subject by rewriting the Oedipus
story. The ontological difference, in fact grammatical difference of the female, can
function as a source of it. Kristeva also conceptualized a possibility of a new feminine
subject by rewriting Freud’s pre-Oedipal stage. Kristeva changed the Imaginary and the
Symbolic into the semiotic and the symbolic and conceptualized a dynamic relation
between them. Both sexes can become a new subject different from the masculine subject;
the subject is always both semiotic and symbolic. The problem is to vitalize signifying
practices such as the text practice of the avant-garde.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS THE POLITICS OF SYMPTOM

While the subject is not substantial, his or her symptom is. In the symptom, there is suffering, that is to say, jouissance. The body is involved, but not only the body: all real behavior. When we say that the subject is asubstantial, we shouldn't forget that psychoanalysis claims to cure or to change something at the level of the symptom, which is a substantial level, by operating on the asubstantial subject. The ambition of psychoanalysis is...vast. (Soler 1995: 44)

I have contended that the modern Western subject was a masculine subject who strove to achieve a fixed identity (self-sameness) at the cost of negating others. Hegelian subjects (the subject of desire and the subject of recognition) were taken as a prototype of the modern Western masculine subject. While the subject of desire who tries to reduce the other to self-othering has the same function as Freud’s ego and Lacan’s moi, the subject of recognition who seeks to achieve mutual recognition is Freud’s masculine subject and Lacan’s speaking subject. The world of the former is the Lacanian world of the imaginary characterized by the binary opposition of identity and difference. Here exists only love (identification) or hate (rivalry). The world of the latter is the Lacanian world of the symbolic where the imaginary world was shattered by the third term as law or meta-language. This is the world of the differences where each difference has its value only in
regard to the third term.

I believe that modern Western politics has been based on these two conceptions of the subject.

The politics based on Hegel’s subject of desire, Freud’s ego or Lacan’s moi, I will call the “politics of identity.” This politics of identity follows the logic of the Imaginary, which constructs the subject (identity) by negating the other (difference). The subject sees itself reflected in the other, and identifies itself with the positive characteristics and the other with the negative characteristics. The subject and the other are thus constructed by imaginary identification.

This imaginary world is thus characterized by “the master’s discourse”. On this point, Lacan’s master’s discourse is similar to Hegel’s master’s discourse. In both, the master is the master and the slave is the slave; no justification is given for the master’s power and the slave’s powerlessness. The slave works and produces something. The master just enjoys it.

The politics of identity also can be characterized as a psychotic world. According to Lacan, psychosis results from the foreclosure of the paternal function. The main function of the father is the symbolic function (symbolic castration) which overwrites the imaginary. According to Lacanian psychoanalysis, the “paternal metaphor creates a foundational, unshakable meaning” (Fink 1997: 94). Based on this point de capiton (anchoring point), language and meaning (reality as socially constituted) come together. In the psychotic, this paternal function fails: “In psychosis, the paternal metaphor fails to function and the structure of language (allowing for the possibility of metaphorical
substitution) is not assimilated" (Fink 1997: 94). The psychotic lives in the world of things, not of words; the psychotic is not alienated in/by language, but has a certainty that what he sees or hears (fantasy, physical reality) is reality. The psychotic is “not able to distinguish between fantasy (physical reality) and reality (the Western notion of social/physical reality he has assimilated in the course of his lifetime)” (Fink 1997: 83). In this sense, the subject of the politics of identity is the psychotic.

These notions of the subject and the psychotic may also be used to define the modern conception of international politics in the colonial era. As an example, let’s see how the United States depicted colonized Filipinos in the nineteenth century:

So long as he [the Filipino] gets his good and fair treatment, and his stipulated wages paid in advance, he is content to act as a general utility man. If not pressed too hard, he will follow his superior like a faithful dog. Even over mud and swamp, a native is almost as sure-footed as a goat on the brink of a quarry. I have frequently been carried for miles in a hammock by four natives and relays through morassy districts too dangerous to travel on horseback. They are great adepts at climbing whatever it is possible for a human being to scale a height; like monkeys, they hold as much with their feet as with their hands; they ride any horse barebacked without fear; they are utterly careless about jumping into the sea among the sharks, which sometimes they will intentionally attack with knives, and I never knew a native who could not swim (Foreman 1899 quoted in Doty 1996: 39).

...a native family feeds; it does not breakfast or dine, it feeds. A wooden bowl of rice with perhaps a little meat stewed in with it, is put on the floor; the entire family squats around it; the fingers are used to convey the food into the mouth. I have never seen any Filipino eat otherwise (Lodge March 7, 1900 quoted in Doty 1996: 39)

Filipinos were imagined by the commanding gaze of the West as dogs, monkeys, and other animals that feed rather than dine. The politics of identity defines the body, women, and civilizations other than those in the West as others in terms of the self-othering of mind
(spirit), men or Western civilization. This politics is characterized by logocentrism, androcentrism and Western ethnocentrism:

...because it [the United States] was ‘God’s best representative of law and order and justice on earth’ (Spooner, Congressional Record, 55th Congress, 3rd session, February 2, 1899), it had a duty to annex the Philippines (Doty 1996: 32, my italics).

At issue was whether the United States was to continue to be a place ‘where a man can stand up by virtue of his manhood and say I am a man’ or whether it was to be ‘so effeminate that we are incompetent to colonize, to develop, and to govern territorial possessions’ (Hoar, January 9, 1899; Nelson, January 20, 1899 quoted in Doty 1996: 30, my italics).

Wherever we have inferior and dependent races within our borders today, we have a political problem — the Negro problem, the Chinese problem, the Indian problem. These problems we slowly solve. Industrial training and industrial pride make a man of the Negro. Industrial interests may even make a man of the Chinaman, and the Indian disappears as our civilization touches him (Jordan 1901 quoted in Doty 1996: 43, my italics).

Doty rightly points out that, “At a more fundamental level, the Philippines were to become a site for the self-elaboration of the identity of the United States” (Doty 1996: 28). This narrative construction of Filipino identity follows the logic of the imaginary order: the United States projects its lack (bad things) onto the Filipino as a screen, through which it constructs its own identity as well as the Filipino’s identity as their self-othering.

Fink says, “‘Imaginary relations’ are not illusory relationships -- relationships that don’t really exist -- but rather relations between egos, wherein everything is played out in terms of but one opposition: same or different” (Fink 1995: 84). The distinction between I and you is based on a “visible” difference. As the infant’s ego at the mirror stage becomes fascinated by its image reflected in a mirror, the United States in the colonial era becomes fascinated by its image reflected in the Filipino. As the ego, upon the illusory self-image
(misrecognition), attempts to make sense of the world around it, the United States, upon its illusory identity-image (misrecognition), attempts to make sense of the world around it, i.e., it attempts to produce "knowledge" (of itself and others).

The result of the politics of identity is only the binary opposition of assimilation or exclusion. In other words, as in the case of the imaginary structure of the dyadic opposition of identity and difference, the politics of identity has an either/or logic. The politics of identity, in contrast to its name, results in opposition rather than identity; self-identity of the subject is achieved only by the death of others or the reduction of others to mirrors reflecting the subject. As Hegel said, this politics is a "life-and-death struggle" and results in the death of others, and finally, the death of the subject itself. That is why Freud calls ego-drive the death-drive.

The politics based on Hegel’s subject of recognition, Freud’s masculine subject or Lacan’s speaking subject, I will call the "politics of representation." The politics of representation follows the logic of the Symbolic, which constructs the subject and the

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1. The term “politics of representation” is similar to Rosenau’s positivistic term “modern politics of representation” characterized by epistemological objectivity and democratic representation in politics. Rosenau summarizes it well as follows: “It [modern representation] is delegation; one individual represents another in parliament. It is resemblance; a painting represents on the canvas what the painter observes. It is replication; the photograph (image) represents the person photographed (object). It is repetition; a writer puts on paper the word (language) that represents his/her idea or thought (meaning). It is substitution; a lawyer represents a client in court. It is duplication; a photocopy represents the original” (Rosenau 1992: 92). But my term “politics of representation” is also slightly different from hers. My term “politics of representation” comes from the recognition that the others are the condition of my existence, and vice versa. In this politics, “I” and “other” strive towards mutual recognition “within” the closed system like language as a web of signifiers. Mutual recognition is, thus, always deferred as meaning is always deferred in poststructural language theory. But the third term freezes meaning.
other (subject) in regard to their values imposed by the third term. The subject as well as the other (subject) are subjugated to the Other; they are alienated in/by language (the Symbolic). They were forced to give up their jouissance which had existed in the imaginary/real and to hold the position imposed by the Symbolic, which is assumed to substitute for the jouissance.

This symbolic world is characterized by "the university discourse." In Lacan's university discourse, systematic knowledge is the ultimate authority; it provides a sort of legitimization or rationalization of the master’s will. Fink says, "the truth hidden behind the university discourse is...the master signifier. Knowledge here interrogates surplus value...and rationalizes or justifies it" (Fink 1995: 132). In the master's discourse, the master is just the master; the master is assumed to have the property of the master in himself. There is no explanation nor justification. But when the slave gradually realizes that his labor produces the surplus value, he begins to struggle with the master. At this moment, the university discourse explains why the master is master and the slave is the slave. The third term is the criteria for judgment.

The politics of representation can be characterized by the neurotic world. According to Lacanian psychoanalysis, the neurotic results from repression: "Lacan sustains that what is repressed is neither perception nor affect, but the thoughts pertaining to perceptions, the thoughts to which affect is attached. In other words, the unconscious consists of thoughts, and thoughts cannot but be expressed or formulated in words -- that is, with signifiers. Affect and thought are generally connected or linked at the outset; but when repression occurs, affect and thought are generally detached from
each other, and the thought may be put out of consciousness” (Fink 1997: 113). The neurotic lives in the world of words, not of things; the neurotic is alienated in/by language. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the neurotic consists of the obsessive and the hysteric. While the obsessive reduces the Other to the object a, the hysteric reduces the subject to the object a as the diagrams below show.

![Diagram 3: The Obsessive](image1)

![Diagram 4: The Hysteric](image2)

While diagram 3 shows that “the obsessive takes the object for himself and refuses to recognize the Other’s existence” (Fink 1997: 119), diagram 4 shows that “the hysteric seeks to divine the Other’s desire and become the particular object, when missing, makes the Other desire” and “constitutes herself on the subject side of the ‘equation’ as object a” (Fink 1997: 120). The obsessive considers himself as a whole subject (who is not alienated in language) and refuses to see himself as dependent on the Other. On the contrary, the hysteric “emphasizes the partner or Other, making herself into the object of the Other’s desire so as to master it” (Fink 1997: 123).

The politics of representation would characterize the neo-colonial era. Let’s see how the United States describes the relationship between the United States and the neo-colonized Philippines.

We of the United States feel that we are merely entering into a new partnership with the Philippines — a partnership of two free and sovereign nations working in harmony and understanding. The United States and its
partner of the Pacific, the Philippine Republic, have already chartered a pattern of relationships for all the world to study. Together, in the future, our two countries must prove the soundness and the wisdom of this great experiment in Pacific democracy (From the message of President Truman to the people of Philippines, July 4, 1946. Quoted in Doty 1996: 79).

The Philippines are here positioned as a partner of the United States. The subject (the United States) recognizes that the other (the Philippines) is a condition of its existence. Therefore, the subject (the United States) desires that the other (the Philippines) desire it (the United States). The subject wants mutual recognition (partnership), but it is destined to fail because it is actually an alienated subject (in the capitalist world system) as a signifying system even though like the obsessive it thinks itself a whole subject.

Capitalism as a signifying system is structured around the master signifier (surplus value), and therefore, the positionality of each subject is imposed by the master signifier (surplus value): core, semi-periphery and periphery, or the advanced, the developing, and the underdeveloped. On the ideological level, freedom and democracy (Western notion) are the counterparts of surplus value. The positionality of the subject (the democratic, the totalitarian, the precocious children, etc) is imposed by the master signifier (freedom and democracy):

An understanding of the Philippine people is essential, and their shortcomings must be appraised against their historic background. A useful analogy is to regard them as precious children without minimizing their potential as future world citizens (From a memo prepared by the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines in August 1951. Quoted in Doty 1996: 79).

The politics of representation recognizes the other's difference but argues that the difference has its value only in regard to the third term. The third term is in the place of meta-position to articulate the truth, and only those who hold the meta-position represent

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the truth. Various discourses and ideologies struggle to assume the meta-position, which is exemplified by the struggles of ideologies during the neo-colonial era. For the West the third term was surplus value, freedom, democracy, etc.; for the East the third term was use value, equality, liberation, etc. The two camps struggled to define "the Rest" according to their third term and absorb "the Rest" into their systems.

But this politics is merely a sublimated form of the politics of identity, aiming for the death of others. The aim of sublimation is to avoid death: "The imaginary is war, the symbolic peace. The symbolic—the law—divides things up, providing a kind of distributive justice: this is yours, that is mine" (Fink 1997: 98). As Lacan's speaking subject achieves the fantasized sense of wholeness of being through fantasized gaining of the object a, the subject of this politics (the neurotic) achieves the fantasized totality of the world through a fantasized holding of the meta-position. In this instance, the other (the hysteric) is merely a signifier which has lost its matrix, exemplified by poststructuralist language theory's notion of the play of signifiers without any references. The subject is produced as an effect when it holds the position imposed by the third term. In other words, the subject is merely a position-holder, but he sees himself as a whole subject. The neo-colonized people (especially their westernized intellectuals) as the other are subjugated to the desire of the Western symbolic (the Other). They desire the Other's desire: they try to be the object a for the West and desire as the West does. Westernization is an absolute value for them.

The result of the politics of representation is more complex than that of the politics of identity. Industrialization and westernization in the Third World varies from country to
country. But it is evident that in no case is their mutual recognition. Some countries in
the Third World tried to follow the West, where other countries tried to refute the West.
But both of them were stuck in Eurocentrism. For example, nationalist and Marxist critics
of the West were also trapped in the master’s discourse: “when nationalism, reversing
Orientalist thought, attributed agency and history to the subjugated nation, it also staked a
claim to the order of Reason and Progress instituted by colonialism; and when Marxists
pilloried colonialism, their criticism was framed by a universalist mode-of-production
narrative” (Prakash 1995: 87). In any case, mutual recognition was always delayed. They
were not able to be the West (signifier). They were more than the West. They desired
that the West desire their desire. But their desire was actually the desire of the West; they
were alienated in the Western symbolic. The West was also alienated in its symbolic
which is structured around the illusory third term. In the early neo-colonial era, the West
believed that there was meta-position (language). It was an ideology of false
consciousness: “they do not know it, but they are doing it” (Zizek 1989: 28). But in the
late neo-colonial era, the West came to realize that there is no meta-language, but the
West still acted as if there were a meta-language. It appeared in the new form of ideology
as cynicism: “they know very well what they are doing, but still, they are doing it” (Zizek

The politics based on Freud’s subject of the unconscious or Lacan’s subject of the
real, I will call the “politics of symptom.” This politics is periodized as the post-colonial
era. I mean by the post-colonial era as the time after (neo)colonialism. Colonialism is
characterized by its binary division between the colonizers and the colonized. In this
sense, neocolonialism, characterized by a triad relation (the subject, the other subject, and the third term), is a sublimated colonialism. Post-colonialists have defined post-colonialism as the deconstruction of this binary division (Prakash 1995; Hall 1996). The mixture of races, ethnicities, localities, cultures, etc. is celebrated: “this mixture of races, rather than resulting in an inferior being, provides hybrid progeny, a mutable, more malleable species with a rich gene pool” (Anzaldúa 1987: 77). But some criticize the post-colonial label for its theoretical and political ambiguity: “dizzying multiplicity of positionalities,” “a-historical and universalizing displacements,” “depoliticizing implications” (Shohat 1992); and “entranced suspension of history” (McClintock 1992). These postmodernists, it is claimed, confuse the heterogeneity of colonial histories with the postmodern pastiche. I contend that the mixture of positionalities itself is not a mark of post-colonialism; it is not a postmodern pastiche nor the playful positioning of heterogeneous positions. What is important is to realize that the subject is more than position-holders, signifiers. Shohat rightly asks whether the post-colonial is an epistemological notion or a chronological notion (Shohat 1992: 101). I think that the post-colonial is firstly an epistemological notion. Epistemology produces knowledge; epistemology is directly connected with power. A post-colonial epistemology will produce post-colonial knowledge.

If so, how is the post-colonial epistemology characterized? Post-colonial epistemology needs a subject who produces it and is simultaneously reproduced by it. This subject has been repressed or forgotten but has functioned as a matrix which makes signification possible. This subject is not merely a position-holder as the poststructuralists
argue. The fundamental reason why the human subject holds the position imposed by the cultural is that s/he believes that it confirms his/her fullness of being. Human beings strive for being (absence of absence) experienced in the real. In this sense, all human beings want to have a relationship with the real, and this makes religion possible. But the position imposed by the cultural cannot completely fill the gap or absence of being. The void of the human being, his/her recognition of it, his/her attempts to fill the void through language, and the failure of language (language does not represent something, but represents the absence of something) — all these, which cannot be filled by gaining the position imposed by the cultural, are the true sources of agency. Language keeps reminding the subject that something is missing. Therefore, the so-called play of language is a painful play. Language seems to function without any reference or matrix, but it in fact has its reference. Zizek says, “all language is in a way an object-language: there is no language without object. Even when the language is apparently caught in a web of self-referential movement, even when it is apparently speaking only about itself, there is an objective, non-signifying ‘reference’ to this movement. The Lacanian mark of it is, of course, the object petit a. The self-referential movement of the signifier is not that of a closed circle, but an elliptical movement around a certain void. And the object petit a, as the original lost object which in a way coincides with its own loss, is precisely the embodiment of this void” (Zizek 1989: 158). The Lacanian notion of symptom as a “return of the repressed” is the clear evidence of it. Symptom is “the substance of enjoyment, the real kernel around which this signifying interplay is structured” (Zizek 1989: 72).
The aims of the politics of symptom change the subject of the politics of identity (i.e., Hegel's subject of desire, Freud's ego or Lacan's *moi*) and the subject of the politics of representation (i.e., Freud's masculine subject or Lacan's speaking subject) into the subject of the real. We cannot directly approach the real; only through symptoms can we gain access to the real. According to Lacanian psychoanalysis, the foreclosed and the repressed are returned in the form of symptoms: "what was foreclosed for the Symbolic returns in the Real of the symptom" (Zizek 1989: 73); "Once thought is repressed, it does not lie dormant. It connects up with other related thoughts and seeks expression whenever possible in dreams, slips, bungled actions, and symptoms" (Fink 1997: 114). We have to work with these symptoms.

The most outstanding symptoms among the psychotic (the subject of the politics of identity) are hallucination, language disturbances, inability to create new metaphors, predominance of imaginary relations, invasion of jouissance, lack of control over drives, and lack of question (Fink 1997: chapter 7). They can be roughly stated as follows: the psychotic is not able to distinguish between fantasy and reality, but s/he is certain that what s/he sees or hears is true or real; the psychotic suffers from language disturbance due to the symbolic’s failure to overwrite the imaginary; words are things for the psychotic due to the foreclosure of the paternal metaphor which creates foundational, unshakable meaning; the dyadic opposition of love/hate, life/death, etc. is predominant; in psychosis, the drives are not hierachized in the body; the psychotic lacks movement or dialectic in his/her thoughts and interest because s/he does not know desire which is in the Other. Then, how do we work on these symptoms? We have to try to rewrite the psychotic's
imaginary with the symbolic: "he [Lacan] issues a warning: to reject the father’s role, to undermine the father’s current symbolic function, will lead to no good; its consequences are likely to be worse than those of the father function itself, increasing the incidence of the psychosis" (Fink 1997: 111). Lacanian psychoanalysis does not encourage the romanticization of the psychotic as do some thinkers such as Deleuze and Guattari. What is at issue is what kind of symbolic we should embrace. Do we know symbolic order other than the modern Western symbolic? This requires us to inquire into other forms of the symbolic.

It is clearer how to deal with the subject of the politics of representation. Fink shows well how to deal with the neurotic.

The neurotic often comes to analysis stuck on the Other’s demands, asking the analyst to tell him or her what to do — that is, to make demands; by refusing to do so, the analyst seeks to open up a space of desire in which the analysand’s desire comes to the fore in its subservience to the Other’s desire; and by playing the role of object a, the analyst seeks to throw into question the analysand’s interpretation of the Other’s desire in the fundamental fantasy and bring about its transformation, such that it no longer inhibits the pursuit of satisfaction (Fink 1997: 210).

Like the psychotic, the neurotic can be also stuck in the imaginary. The neurotic (mis)takes the Other’s demand as his/her desire. For example, the hysterical woman mistakes her partner’s specific demand (for example, for passive sexuality) as her desire. As demand, the hysterical is stuck in the imaginary register, and therefore, the hysterical tries to be the specific demand. Such an effort to be the specific demand may repress her drives and the repressed can return in such psychosomatic symptoms as back pains, shoulder pains, jaw pains, tongue pains, stomach pains, etc. First, the politics of symptom aims to symbolize the symptom (meaningless imaginary traces as well as the substance of
enjoyment). In other words, it aims to give to the symptoms their symbolic place and meaning. Second, the politics of symptom aims to make the neurotic subject the subject as desire who is essentially a stance with respect to the symbolic Other. The subject as desire recognizes that her desire is the Other's desire. Finally, the neurotic is ready to be the subject of the real. The neurotic realizes that s/he is not only a signifier of desire, but is the subject of the real who has his/her own object a. Zizek says, "we must read Freud’s wo es war, soll ich werden. You, the subject, must identify yourself with the place where your symptom already was. In its ‘pathological’ particularity you must recognize the element which gives consistency to your being" (Zizek 1989: 75). The neurotic was a subject of desire who desires the Other’s desire, but s/he now subjectivizes the desire and enjoys his/her symptoms; the symptom is the substance of enjoyment, the real kernel around which this signifying interplay (desire) is structured.

The politics of the symptom which I am here proposing recognizes the importance of the author who represents/creates the subject and the other through his/her discourse. The author is similar to the analyst in Lacanian psychoanalysis. S/he diagnoses the subject’s symptoms and tries to make him/her the subject of the real. For the analyst, the patient (the subject) is not a signifier that should be reintegrated into the symbolic. The subject is more than a signifier that has its own symptoms. The author, thus, should not ignore symptoms when s/he tries to understand/represent the subject.

For example, we may think of the restorationism and liquidationism prevalent in the post-colonial countries. In Korea, for about a hundred years, westernized leaders tried to erase the past and to follow the West. They blamed Korean tradition for mysticism. By
contrast, some people movements (including Korean movements) tried to restore Korean tradition. Westernized intellectuals blamed this movement for reactionism. They said that history cannot be reversed. But we can think that restorationism is a symptom, the substance of enjoyment which gives consistency to Korean being. Korean tradition as a symptom is the Real where was jouissance. It is the traumatic material of unassimilated memories and meaning that blocks the dialectical movement of symbolization. Korean people as post-colonial subjects should identify themselves with the place where their symptoms already were and enjoy this symptom, the real kernel around which their desires are structured. For this, they should realize that they are stuck in the imaginary, i.e., they (mis)take the Western Other's demand as their desire. After that, they should try to symbolize their symptoms. This is a precondition for their enjoyment of symptoms.

Go back to your symptoms. The real cause of your desire is not out there. It is not in the Other, but in your symptoms. Everything that has happened to you is your responsibility. In this sense, the subject of the real is an ethical being who subjectivizes the cause of his/her desire.

A politics of the symptom proposed by this thesis starts from the deconstruction of the modern Western notions of the subject. Lacanian psychoanalysis was used to analyze how they are constituted and how they work. All political practices involve representational levels. Modern Western politics was based on the Western subject and the Rest others discursively represented by the Western (masculine) authors. A politics of the symptom works on what was foreclosed and repressed by modern Western discourse. It aims to represent/produce an ethical subject who enjoys its symptom.
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