



**NATURE OF THE OBJECT
IN CLINICAL
PSYCHOANALYSIS**

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Introduction

In clinical Psychoanalysis the dialectic of the object (among other things)¹ will help clarify predominant structural aspect of the mind. Since this panel is dedicated specifically to study different aspects of object relations, we may begin with a brief presentation of the actual psychoanalytic concept of Object. It will be inevitable to discuss as counterpoint the nature and concept of the controversial psychoanalytic concepts of 'Subject', 'Self', 'Ego' and 'other'. In this line of thought I will also have to include some notes on the nature and concepts of some particular objects, as the 'transitional objet', 'adhesive object' and 'split object' and some considerations on the nature of the 'object' in relation to recent proposals in attachment theory.

In a more advance study of the 'object' it will be necessary to present at least a brief summary (with a clarifying chart) describing the different forms the 'loss of the object' are experience (differently) by the 'Subject' and by the 'Ego'. Next I will describe a controversial proposal Jacques Lacan presented in 1960. It is something he called 'Object-(a)'. This novelty (for some) will allow us to study the nature of the 'Object' in the state of passion of Love and Hate. These last two items open the possibility to present <the locus of the analyst> as 'object-(a)' in the transference phenomena. Also I will present the different nature and qualities of the 'object' in hysterical and obsessive structures, as well as the nature and quality of the 'object' in narcissistic, stabilized psychotics (schizophrenics) and perverse structures. At the end I will present one more observation regarding the nature of the 'Object' in the experience of incest.

1 On the nature of the 'object'

To open debate I will propose a controversial statement: For present-day psychoanalysis the concept of '*Object*' is a two-faced one.

¹ I am referring here to the dialectic of the Phallus and the dialectic of Anxiety. To pursue the study of this subject I may refer to the 1958 Lacanian text 'The meaning of the Phallus' and his 1960 Seminar No. 10 title 'Anxiety' or read my text, publish in English in 2006 'Subjective Experience and Logic of the other' chapter 4 (Anxiety) and chapter 5 (The phallus), Other Press NY.

(a) Object of the Drives

On the one hand it is the '*object of the drive*' contingent to the dialectic of the satisfaction/frustration experience and support of the subject's introjections and identifications (S. Freud ², M. Klein ³). Traditionally, if we follow the logic of the drive, psychoanalysis designates as '*Object*' anything that acquires '*psychic representation*' either symbolic or imaginary. When through the organs of perception, the image (*visual, sound, smell, taste*) of what has been perceived, is energetically charged (this means) *receives libidinal (energy) investiture (so called cathexis)* ⁴, then it becomes a '*mental representation*' and then has '*psychic existence*'. The drives and their journey (around the perceived thing) give rise to the psychoanalytic concept of '*object of the drives*' as a mental, inner, intrapsychic object⁵.

(b) The object in absence

On the other hand (and most important) the psychoanalytic concept of '*object*' rest on '*the absent object*' also called '*object in lack*'.

This important '*absent object*' will be the origin of '*desire*' (J. Lacan)⁶. Let me explain. Early in his work Lacan introduced an important difference among the notions of *desire, need, and demand* ⁷ thus opening the possibility to withdraw '*desire*' from the biological field. In that sense, '*desire*' is an effect of a '*lack*' and a '*mark*' of the signifier (words and concepts) in the human '*speaking being*'. Lacan establishes clearly as Freud did that '*human desire*' must be instated, meaning that it is constituted early in life, as an effect of the dialectic of satisfaction/frustration experience. This '*absent object*' appears when the subject loses his object of satisfaction. This '*object's lack*' gives rise to the presence of '*desire*'. The subject's experiences with the '*absent object*' leaves a mnemonic mark (mental representation). According to Lacan the '*lost object*' is experience by the '*Subject*' in three different forms: *privation, frustration and castration* as we will see further in this text.

2 On the nature of the 'subject'

(a) The psychoanalytic concept of 'subject' refers to the 'subject of the unconscious'

² Sigmund Freud (1905). Three essays on Theory of Sexuality. SE Hogarth Press, vol. 7 London (1967)

³ Melanie Klein (1928). Early stages of the Oedipus Conflict. IJPA Vol. 9 (1928)

⁴ Sigmund Freud (1914). On Narcissism. SE Hogarth Press Vol. 7 London (1967)

⁵ Sigmund Freud (1938). Outline of Psychoanalysis. Chapter 9. SE Hogarth Press (1967)

⁶ Jacques Lacan (1956). The Seminar, Book 4: Object relations. Paidós, Barcelona (1994)

⁷ Need refers to a biological need, Demand refers to a request in speech, and desire is mute, cannot be named.

Jacques Lacan makes a topological statement when he said that the ‘*subject*’ is both, the effect of speech and its support (Seminar 1, 1953)⁸. Seven years later Lacan will assert that ‘the ‘*subject*’ is what a signifier (words and concepts) represents for another signifier.’ In this way, the ‘*subject*’ for psychoanalysis ‘*is not the Ego*’ and is not the subject of ‘*consciousness*’ but rather a *subject* that inhabits the realm of the unconscious.⁹

(b) The ‘zero’ and the ‘subject’

At the end of his life, in Seminar 26 (1978)¹⁰, Lacan makes a revealing comparison between the subject’s nature in psychoanalytic theory and the mathematical characteristics of the number ‘*zero*’. Lacan states that ‘*zero*’ is a number endowed with two opposite properties: *it is an impossible object*, yet in the numeric succession, *it counts as any other number*. In the same way, the ‘*subject*’, while utterly rejected by the signifying chain (words and concepts), is nevertheless represented by a signifier. Lacan thus outlines a tight likeness between the ‘*subject*’ and the ‘*zero*’. This becomes even clearer when Lacan says that in the ‘*speaking being*’ (as human, not as biological being) the ‘*subject*’ is both ‘*subject of the unconscious*’ and an ‘*effect of the signifier*’. The presence of signifiers (words and concepts) renders the subject a ‘*constant*’ a ‘*zero*’, a ‘*subject in absence*’ nature, who will in fact sustain the whole chain to be later ‘*eclipsed*’ in the chain. When being eclipsed in the signifying chain, the subject vanishes in the ‘*Other*’. Thus, a ‘*subject*’ (not the Ego) speaks and, in doing so, vanishes. Later on, in the same Seminar, Lacan moves on and insists that the ‘*subject’s split*’ does not reside between ‘*being*’ and ‘*not-being*’ but between ‘*one*’ and ‘*Other*’. Between a signifier (words and concepts) that represents the ‘*subject*’, and the ‘*subject’s dissolution*’ in the signifying chain, that is, the locus of the ‘*Other*’.

3 On the nature of the ‘Ego’

(a) The ‘Ego’ with conscience qualities

The ‘Ego’ is not the ‘subject’. We might say that the ‘Ego’ is a psychic agency represented by a group of functions, including judgment and syntheses, which are spread within the dimension of the imaginary order (images). The ‘ego’ sustains what we may call the subject of consciousness. This conscious ‘Ego’ participates in a feeling of a ‘unified being’. This is a consequence of the specular (mirroring) relation with the ‘Other’ in the imaginary order. Originally this other is the caregiver that is transformed from the order of the ‘Real’ to the order of the ‘imaginary’ by the dialectic of the frustration/satisfaction experience.

⁸ Jacques Lacan (1950). The Seminar, Book 1: Freud Technical Writtings (1989)

⁹ Jacques Lacan (1960). The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire. In Writtings . Vol. 2 (1984).

¹⁰ Jacques Lacan (1978). The Seminar, Book 26. Topology and Time (Unpublished, photocopy version). 1992

(b) The 'Ego' as a symptom

The child, later on, sees his mother as a unified being. This specular (mirroring) relation with the imaginary 'other' sustains the illusion of self completeness. This will become an inevitable and permanent obstacle to the recognition of 'desire' (which is unconscious). Desire is originated in the 'object in lack' related to the 'lost object'. Desire is silent and impossible to satisfy, as are the formations of the unconscious (dreams, jokes, symptoms, paraphraxes, etc). 'Desire' will always be slippery and unknown. But it may be partially known only through the 'demand' (which is conscious) and which will always be a demand for something else. This demand is structured like a language: Lacan used to say that demand is built when 'desire' goes through the narrow pass of signifiers¹¹. In this way, demand shifts the concept of the 'subject' toward the problem of 'desire'. Lacan will finally say that the 'subject' is the subject of 'desire', and the 'Ego' (since it is built by identifications) is no more than a 'symptom' of the Subject¹².

4 On the nature of the 'Other'

(a) From topography to topology: the non existing 'Other'

This proposal is a consequence of a previous Lacanian structural conception whereby the 'subject' which refers us to the 'subject of the unconscious' is both: cause and effect of the signifying chain (words and concepts). By via of speech the 'subject' vanishes in the locus of the 'Other'. This locus points to the unconscious. Lacan states that the 'subject' is constituted in the locus of the 'Other'. This 'Other' is the locus of the treasure-trove of signifiers (words and concepts). We should linger here for a moment to specify that Lacanian theory establishes a clear difference between the *little 'other'* and the *big 'Other'*. The *little 'other'* with a lower-case (*a*) refers to *the other of the imaginary order (images)*. The *big 'Other'* corresponds to *the 'Other of language' inscribed in the symbolic order (words and concepts)*.¹³

The concept of the *big 'Other'* refers to the locus where the signifying chain originates. The 'subject' will encounter this locus after his arrival in this world. This locus of the 'Other' will always have a reference to other human beings, the 'flesh-and-blood' others whom initially are part of the 'Real' and who inevitably will have an effect on the 'symbolic order' in which we are all immersed. We should note here that due to the effect of identifications, this *big 'Other'* is no one in particular. It refers us to the 'Other' of the unconscious. It is a locus where the signifying chain (words and concepts) emerges and there, in that locus, the 'subject' is constituted. The *big 'Other'* is

¹¹ A signifier in this phrase may be understood as 'words and concepts', as expressed in language.

¹² Jacques Lacan (1960). The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire. In *Writings*. Vol. 2 (1984).

¹³ Jacques Lacan (1954). The Seminar, Book 2. The Ego in Freud's Theory. Cambridge University Press (1988)

the locus of the treasure-trove of signifiers. The *'subject'* thus vacillates in his constitution between the locus of *the 'little other'* (the imaginary axis, images), and the locus of the *big 'Other'* (the symbolic axis, words and concepts). This proposal is not topographical in the sense of mental progression or mental development of the individual. It is simultaneous and permanent phenomena (do not evolve). In essence it is a topological proposition. From a topological point of view, the *'Other'* as an entity independent from the *'subject'*, does not exist. If the *'Other'* does not exist, then the others human been, are no more than reflections of oneself. Sigmund Freud discovers this many years ago and called it *'Transference phenomena'* which is an inevitable universal phenomenon.

(b) The impossible relation: inevitable deaf's dialog

In a topological sense, the dialog with the *'Other'* will always be a deaf's dialog. It is so for two reasons. First, the *'subject'* will address someone that *'does not exist'*, I mean outside of his or her inner realm. This *'other'* will always be a reflection of the *'subject'*. It cannot be in any other way. Second, a human being structurally cannot hear beyond his or her own subjectivity. Lacan use to say that we are all trap in the same phenomena: *'trap by the structure of language, in a deaf's dialog'*. One afternoon while in Milan, Lacan teaches: *'What you said will be forgotten behind the hearing of your saying'*. This estrange sentence written in a classroom board in Italy will illustrate precisely the inevitable structural deaf's dialog. It says: *'What you said will be forgotten'* meaning that your sentences (in its specific intention) will not reach the *'Other'*, but through his or her own subjectivity. Then it continuous: *'behind the hearing of your saying'*. Meaning that it only be heard what everyone subjectivity determines. This is the reason for the proposition that the psychoanalytic interpretation should refers not to the saying of the analyst, but to the hearing of the analyzand.

5 On the controversial nature of the *'Self'*

(a) *'Self'* is not the *'Ego'*

In the fifties Heinz Hartmann¹⁴ introduces the concept of *'Self representations'* and *'Object representations'* given initiation to an important new theoretical concept in Psychoanalysis. *'Object'* and *'Self'* were view as opposed. According to descriptions of papers written at that time, my impression is that the nature of the *'Object representation'* corresponds to the concept of *'Object of the drives'* already presented and described above. The concept of *'Self'* was new and it relates to the concept of *'Self representation'*. This concept was a novelty and was something different. The descriptions presented in those papers place the concept of *'Self'* closer to the concept of

¹⁴ Heinz Hartman (1963). On the Psychoanalytic Theory of the Ego. In *Essays on Ego Psychology*, IUP, NY, 1964

‘Ego’ (but it is not the ‘Ego’). Melanie Klein¹⁵ ventures to say: ...the Ego is the organize part of the Self, and she adds: the ‘Self’ represents the totality of personality (including Drives).

(b) ‘Self’ as a ‘conscious experience’

Later on Heinz Kohut¹⁶ refers to ‘Self’ as an inner mental structure close to a conscious ‘experience’, but clearly it is not the ‘Ego’. Kohut refers to ‘Self’ as ‘Self representations’. These ‘representations’ are organized basically in two ways: First, as ‘Self representation’ of a ‘grandiose self’ which is a consequence of a ‘specular’ (mirroring) identification with a grandiose caregiver, producing an inner sense of narcissistic perfection. And second as ‘Self representations’ of an ‘Idealized Self’ which is a consequence of post-fusional identifications with an ‘Idealized caregiver’ producing an inner sense of post-narcissistic perfection. For Kohut this ‘Self’ offers a conscious feeling of ‘One self’, responding to the question of ‘Who am I’. This idealization mechanism offers the child the sense that ‘power and happiness’ reside in the ‘idealized object’. This is a good reason for the child to resist moving on. Later on, an analyzand with a ‘idealized transference’ will resist understanding and resist resolution of this mechanism¹⁷. Kohut suggests: the analyst should be ready to carry on with the burden of an ‘idealized transference’.

(c) Self as ‘one self’

Otto Kernberg¹⁸ refers to ‘Self’ as an inner mental structure ‘united’ with the ‘Ego’ with mutual influence. He sometimes refers to ‘Self’ as ‘Character’. Donald Winnicott¹⁹ conceives the ‘Ego’ as a forerunner structure preceding the emergence of ‘Self’. For Winnicott ‘Ego’ is an inner mental structure related to cognition, perceptions and synthesis, and in general this ‘Ego’ relates us to the outside world. For him, the concept of ‘Self’ is related to the conscious concept of ‘one self’, offering the basis for ‘Who am I’. Finally for many present-day analysts, the internal view of personal existence: is called ‘self’.

6 On the nature of the transitional object

Donald Winnicott introduced in 1951 to the British Psychoanalytical Society his new concept of a transitional object²⁰. Winnicott had observed the attachment the child develops to certain objects from the environment, more often to their small covers or their teddy bears, especially when going to sleep. He observed that in the presence of

¹⁵ Melanie Klein (1952). The emotional life of infants. In *Developments in Psychoanalysis* 1952

¹⁶ Heinz Kohut (1971) *Analysis of Self*. (Amorrortu Editores, Bs. As. 1977)

¹⁷ Heinz Kohut (1977). *Restoration of Self*. (Editorial Paidós, Bs. As. 1980)

¹⁸ Otto Kernberg (1987). *Object relations theory and clinical Psychoanalysis* (1988)

¹⁹ Donald Winnicott (1965). *The maturational Processes*. London Hogarth Press, 1965

²⁰ Donald Winnicott (1953): *Transitional objects and transitional phenomena.*, *IJPA* 34:89-97

this particular 'object' the child calms down their separation anxiety. Winnicott theorizes that these objects were representing the absent mother. It is considered an object, built by the subjectivity of the child, in a transitional space, that replaces 'mother' in her absence.

Thus since this object is created in a transitional space (intermediate), between an 'other' of the unconscious and something differentiated from the child, it was called by Winnicott a <not-me-possession>²¹: meaning something that it is not me, but that I possess. Winnicott insisted that this new object was not an identification object, which would place this object, as any internalized object will, in the inner world. So Winnicott insists that this object is a construction of the individual, who is aware that <it is not me>. This new object was called 'transitional object' and stands for some absent object. This object is built representing mother (caregiver), it stands in the place of an absent other. So, this transitional object has a particular <quality of absence>. This quality of absence brings this object close to the concept of the object-(a) of Jacques Lacan, but it is not, since this transitional object has a thoroughly different function, which is to calm down separation anxiety. Pathological narcissistic personalities (borderlines), due to the painful experience of mother figure (caregiver) neglect, will find obstacles and impossibilities, to create transitional objects. They do not have them. This leaves them at the mercy of permanent catastrophic and annihilation anxiety. Winnicott used to say that borderlines do symptoms, because they cannot do (built) transitional objects.

7 On the nature of the adhesive object

This proposal refers to a particular object that has existence in the earliest stages of psychic development. It occurs prior to the onset of the transitional object. Therefore it is prior to the onset of the Schizo-paranoid mechanisms (Klein). Donald Meltzer and Esther Bick propose separately, at the end of the sixties (Bick)²² and at the beginning of the seventies (Meltzer)²³, the description of what they called the Adhesive object. We know that the mechanisms of introjection and projection are those mechanisms that help build the psychic virtual spaces of the mind (Freud)²⁴. The representations of the object are located and distributed in this psychic virtual space. This is what originates the perception of our own internal world. What we feel uncomfortable, estranged and foreign to us, we feel it belongs to the external world (projection).

²¹ Donald Winnicott (1953): <Not-me possession>. Collected Papers: from Pediatrics to Psychoanalysis. London (1958)

²² Esther Bick (1968). The experience of the skin in early object relations IJPA (1968)

²² Margareth Mahler (1974). Biological birth of the human infant. Brunner Mazel NY (1975)

²² Didier Anzieu (1986). The skin Ego. Dunod editor Paris (1986)

²² Thomas Ogden (1986). The Matrix of the Mind. N J, Aronson. London, Karnac (1986)

²³ Donald Meltzer (1972) Identificación Adhesiva. Aparece en Exploración del autismo, BA Paidós (1979)

²⁴ Sigmund Freud (1900) Interpretation of dreams SE Hogarth Press (1967)

Is important to insist that both virtual spaces (internal and external), are both within our own psychic spaces. With the onset of these virtual spaces, the experience and feeling of the 'inside and outside' has begun. The basic and very important consequence is that the virtual psychic space for identifications is present. These identifications are fundamentally of two types: introjective and projective. In the first weeks of life, previous to this identifications stage, and previous to the appearance of these virtual psychic spaces, the primitive psychic life of the child obeys to cenesthetic (sensations) biological neuronal mechanisms. In that moment the mother is not perceived as separate from the child. It is the stage of absence of discrimination between the Ego and the object. It is previous to the 'me and not-me stage'. At this time, an object that is capable of containing early catastrophic anxieties is not present in the psychic of the child. Therefore the distress of this kind of primitive annihilation and catastrophic anxieties has to be contained in some other way.

In that stage, the contact of the child with the object (caregiver) is basically surface: skin to skin (including mouth). The nature of this contact on surface, represent a two-dimensional world. This skin contact is not submitted to the process of libidinal cathexis and subsequent introjection. Not yet. The discrimination between Ego and object does not exist at that moment. Therefore the relationship to the object is: of a surface nature, a sensorial skin contact, an adhesion to the object (caregiver). The feeling of the existence of an inner space has not yet appeared in the child mind. Esther Bick proposes for this stage, that 'the skin' function as an Ego boundary. The 'skin contact' will function as a 'container', as a 'holding' of early catastrophic anxieties. This coincides with Freud proposal of the function of the early body Ego. She found that the sensorial pressure (a sensation) of certain objects that she called adhesive (sheets tight squeeze to the body, tight leather jackets, a tight human hug), will serve as 'container' or as a 'holding' to these annihilation and catastrophic anxieties in the adult. Donald Meltzer described separately, a similar mechanism of adhesive attachment to certain objects. This attachment is presented in a two-dimensional spatial quality and with a concept of time that is circular, a concept of time that do not progress. This surface relationship of the child with these objects was called adhesive. Esther Bick made more emphasis in the quality of the skin as an 'Ego boundary' and as a 'container' of anxieties, and this particular 'psychic function' was call a 'second skin'. Donald Meltzer made more emphasis in the adhesive nature of the surface object and the holding of catastrophic anxieties. Thereinafter Margaret Mahler²⁵ in New York City, Didier Anzieu²⁶ in Paris, and Thomas Ogden²⁷ in San Francisco, offered new descriptions and versions of this adhesive concept.

Furthermore, in some small children with early serious affective neglect from a caregiver, and/or some serious early biological (sensorial) insufficiencies, will en-

²⁵ Margareth Mahler (1974). *El nacimiento psicológico del infante humano*, BA Maynar. (1977)

²⁶ Didie Anzieu (1986). *El Yo piel*. París, Editorial Dunod (1986)

²⁷ Thomas Ogden (1986). *The Matrix of the Mind*. N J, Aronson. London, Karnac Editors (1986)

counter these mechanisms of introjection and projection partially blocked. This will prevent the appearance of a virtual psychic space that will enable identification to occur. These children will grow with difficulties to develop the feeling of an inner psychic space. They continue as adult to handle anxieties with primitive adhesive mechanisms. They are similar to the symbiotic relationship to the object, but they are not. The two objects in the symbiotic relationship get some benefits. The quality in the adhesive object means, that it is beneficial only to one object. Sometimes a metaphor is used: attach as a stamp to the enveloped.

8 On the nature of the split object

The mechanism of splitting (*Spaltung*) refers to the possibility that when *introyección* and identification occur, the object representation could be split (divided) in two or more parts. One part passes to form a mental representation of the object, and the other part goes to form another mental representation of the object. This part of the split object may be perceived as uncomfortable or painful to the subject, and then it is perceived as external (so call paranoid). But, the paranoid (split) object is a mental object of the individual. A typical example is the split that the small child makes with mother breast. According to the experience of satisfaction and frustration, the representation of the breast as object is going to be split into good and bad²⁸. They are two objects that have independent psychic existence, but in reality are two aspects of the same object. This type of split is nominated 'vertical', in which the two contradictory aspects of the object exist side by side to one another. The another type of split is nominated as 'horizontal' and it corresponds with the mental mechanism of repression, in which one part of the representation of the object is submitted to the power of repression and passes to form the repressed unconscious. In the case of the important mental mechanism of disavowal (*verleugnung*) describe by Freud in 1927 (Fetishism)²⁹ whereby the child simultaneously <ignores and admits> its perception of the fact that mother does not have a penis, implies the obligated presence of the vertical split. First the presence of anxiety split the representation at least in two aspects. Then the subject is related to two contradictory realities that however coexist side by side. This (*verleugnung*) explains the tolerance to what is intolerable: it is when the subject knows what is going on, but turns the face to the other side, as if nothing is happening. The subject has conscience of both realities, but disavow them (does not repress them). This mental mechanism of disavowal (*verleugnung*) is very common in social life, when referring to various ethical and moral topics: in metaphor, don't do as I do, do as I say. Freud in his article on fetishism describes a particular form of disavowal (*verleugnung*) that will have serious consequences in the future life of the subject. This is referring to the fact that the Ego in the early infancy and under the effects of anxiety, the very small child will disavow <the anatomical difference of the sexes>. Here the small child sees a penis in mother that

²⁸ As presented by Melanie Klein since her early work from 1920.

²⁹ Sigmund Freud (1927): On Fetishism. SE Hogarth Press (1967)

he knows she does not has. According to Jacques Lacan this mechanism (*verleugnung*) when applied to the anatomical differences of sexes, will certainly constitute (built) a perverse mental structure³⁰.

9 Nature of the Object in Psychoanalytic Attachment theory

(a) As a biological bond

Attachment theory refers to and is based on, a bond that develops between two living beings, in this case we refer to two human beings. According to this theory this bond arises from their need for safety and protection^{31 32 33}. As we all know helplessness is paramount in infancy (*hilflosigkeit*)³⁴. This non psychoanalytic theory of attachment established that children attach to caregivers 'instinctively' looking for security and survival. This theory is not intended as an exhaustive description of early human relationships and is based on a biological (instinctual) need of the infant³⁵. Beyond the biological need of the infant for survival, that we accept and respect, and that will establish attachment, we will present additional mental mechanisms and phenomena that are indispensable in the constitution of the human psychic apparatus and are close to this attachment phenomena. In addition to security and survival that leads to attachment, the very small child (the infant) needs two more things that are not biological, but are related as well, to the original 'Object': recognition and affirmation.

(b) Primary prototype of recognition:

This refers to the child's passage from the 'scream' to a 'call'.³⁶ This passage is not a learning process. The child is not learning the use of a 'sign' that could be taught or imitated, since the small child already has this 'sign' in the 'original scream' or 'basic crying'. The important issue here is that this 'scream' means something to somebody (caregiver). The caregiver will respond or not to this 'scream' or 'crying'. This response will determine the meaning of the 'scream'. Any type of response will be transformed in a particular 'meaning' and will represent a signifier (a concept) for the child. So the child is inaugurated in the human signifying chain. The 'scream', 'the cry' and 'the meaning' will acquire the value of a bond with the 'Other'. As we mention earlier above, this 'Other' will become an inner object by way of introjections and identification, which will have unconscious quality. As we already said the 'subject' will be constituted in the locus of this unconscious 'Other'.

³⁰ Jacques Lacan (1962): *Kant with Sade. Writtings (Ecrits) Vol. 2* (1985)

³¹ John Bowlby (1951): *Maternal Care and Mental Health*. WHO (1951)

³² Harry Harlow (1958): *The Nature of Love*. *American Psychologist*, 13, 573-685 (1958)

³³ Peter Fonagy (2001): *Attachment Theory and Psychoanalysis*. Other Press, NY (2001)

³⁴ Sigmund Freud (1911): *Two principles of mental functioning*. SE Vol. 12 Hogarth Press (1967)

³⁵ John Bowlby (1958): *The nature of the child's tie to his mother*. *IJPA* 39 (5): 350-73 (1958)

³⁶ Jacques Lacan (1953): *The Seminar, Book 1. 'Freud Technical's writings'* (1986)

(c) Three basic affirmations of the 'subject':

1. The small child will 'grasp' from the caregiver (whom has simultaneously a 'symbolic', 'imaginary' and a 'Real' quality) that 'small thing' that will transform the child 'scream' in a 'call'. This 'small thing' which is not a 'saying' of the other is the first enigmatic signifier (a concept) that permits the child to express his or her 'demand'. In an extraordinary paradox this call let the small child recognize themselves in the locus of an early imaginary Ego. When the infant makes a 'call' and demand something it also means: this is 'me'. This important event constitutes the first affirmation.
2. At the end (second half) of his or her second year of live, the child will insistently use the 'no' as affirmation. His or her vocabulary is limited but his or her 'presence as a human being' is better affirmed in the 'no' than with a 'yes'. The child has both signifiers (words, concepts) at his or her disposal, but the 'no' is stronger in affirming the child, because it constitutes a voluntary refusal to 'mother'. This is the second affirmation.³⁷
3. Later on during adolescence the child will struggle for independence from his or her parent (or caregivers). In the best cases, the bond with caregivers is strong and permanent. The adolescent child will be tested to break the parental rules, and rebel mainly against father rules as an authority. In doing so, the adolescent establish a third affirmation and open the door to independence. This is the reason why so many acting-out in adolescents are welcome.³⁸

10 On the nature of the object loss

(a) Three ways the 'Subject' experiences the lost object

In 1956 (Seminar 4)³⁹ Lacan outlines the three forms the 'subject' (not to be confused with a response from the 'Ego') could experience the loss of the object. He proposes that the 'object' could be lost and experienced by the 'subject' in three different ways: via *Privation*, via *Frustration* and via *castration*. Then he relates and examines these three ways of losing the 'object' with the *route*, the *nature* and the *agent* that may be present in losing the 'object'. Let us see. (a) Three *routes* for the 'loss' are: **Real** (for privation), **imaginary** (for frustration) and **Symbolical** (for castration). (b) Three ways to conceptualize *the nature of the 'object loss'* are: **Symbolic** (for privation), **Real** (for frustration) and **Imaginary** (for castration). (c) Three different kinds of

³⁷ Rómulo Lander (2006): Chapter 3, Symbolic Order. In: 'Subjective experience and Logic of the other' Other Press.

³⁸ Rómulo Lander (2006): 'Subjective experience and Logic of the other'. Other Press, New York (2006)

³⁹ Jacques Lacan (1956). The Seminar, Book 4 : Object relations. Paidós, Barcelona (1994).

agents of the 'loss' are: **imaginary** (for privation), **Symbolic** (for frustration) and **Real** (for castration).

Next you will see a chart I draw in 1998 clarifying the loss of the object, first in privation, second in frustration and finally in castration. ⁴⁰

Environment	Access route	Nature	Object	Agent
It has to do with needs (biology)	It has to do with privation (It is a matter of specular fusion, symbiosis)	The nature of the lack is real (Possible clinical example: a subject who has been an orphan since early childhood)	The object of the lack is symbolic (The concept of 'mother' within the symbolic order)	The agent of the lack is imaginary (The absence of the mother: 'absence' as an imaginary construction)

⁴⁰ Rómulo Lander (2006). Logic of the Object loss. In: 'Subjective experience and Logic of the other'. Other Press, NY (2006)

<p>It has to do with de-mand (words)</p>	<p>It has to do with frustration (It is a dual matter, dependency, where there is a specular rupture)</p>	<p>The nature of the lack is imaginary (Possible clinical example: a subject who suffers from shame due to having been dishonored by his daughter's pregnancy out of wedlock).</p>	<p>The object of the lack is real (Unexpected pregnancy as real)</p>	<p>The agent of the lack is symbolic (It refers to the ideals within the symbolic order)</p>
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<p>It has to do with desire (silent, mute)</p>	<p>It has to do with castration (It is a matter of the symbolic third)</p>	<p>The nature of the lack is symbolic (Possible clinical example: a subject who is an investor suffers a financial crisis, goes bankrupt, and commits suicide)</p>	<p>The object of the lack is imaginary (Concept of wealth as imaginary)</p>	<p>The agent of the lack is real (Money as a Real)</p>
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(b) The way ‘Ego’ experience the loss of the object

Sigmund Freud in 1915 writes his paper 'Mourning and Melancholia'⁴¹. There he describes, among other things, the Ego responses to the loss of the love object, and coins his famous phrase: 'the shadow of the object falls on the Ego'. Later on the English psychoanalyst John Bowlby devotes almost all his life to the study of attachment and separation of the object (the losses). This permits Bowlby to widen notably the theorization on attachment and losses. For today psychoanalysis, the Ego response to object loss is a particular one and it has received nomination: 'mourning'. Basically this Ego response (in mourning) consists of a double aspect: an affective response and a biological response. These responses of the Ego will depend on the previous nature of the link (attachment) the Ego had maintained with the 'representation' of the lost object. We can find different kinds of previous link or relations to the representation of the lost object: Symbiotic, dependent, autonomous, guilty, persecutory, lovable, hateful, anaclitic etc.). Depending on the quality of the link to the representation of the loss object, the response of the Ego to the loss will vary. Appear thus the concept of 'normal mourning' and 'pathological mourning'. In the normal mourning process, the Ego responded with its affects: Dread (fear), anger (ire) and sadness

⁴¹ Sigmund Freud (1915). Mourning and Melancholia. SE Hogarth Press, London (1967)

(pain). As time goes by (months) the mourning process evolves to what has been called the stage of 'psychic elaboration' of the loss. When the Ego accepts the loss of the object, the withdrawal of 'investitures' or 'libidinal cathexis' posed on the 'representation' of the lost object, will begin. When this withdrawal of cathexis is concluded it will represent the final stage of the normal mourning process. During the pathological process of mourning, this mental process is interfered among other things by unconscious guilty feelings and by loss of symbiotic support.

11 On the nature of the Lacanian 'Object-(a)'

(a) Desire and the missing object (object in lack)

Lacan states, following Hegel's teachings⁴² that the '*subject's desire*' is the desire of the Other's desire. The '*subject*' wants to be wanted by the '*other*'. Hegel states that '*desire*' is human (not a biological wish) only if one desires, not the body, but the desire of the other'. That is to say, the '*subject*' wants to be '*desired*' or '*loved*' or '*recognized*' in his human value (Hegel via Kojève).⁴³ Lacan also establishes clearly as Freud did, that '*human desire*' must be instated, meaning that it is constituted early in life as an effect of the satisfaction experience and it appears when the '*subject*' loses his object of satisfaction. The '*lack*' of the object gives rise to the presence of '*desire*'.⁴⁴ The drives will become desire when joining this '*representation*' or '*mark*' of the '*lack*'. Lacan defines at least three of the traits of '*desire*': (a) 'Desire' is mute (silent) due to its unconscious nature. (b) 'Desire' cannot be satisfied (slippery). (c) 'Desire' is always sexual in nature.⁴⁵

(b) The fragments of the 'object'

Object (a) refers to a very special type of object that originates in the earliest experiences of the 'subject' with the 'other'. Of these early experiences that produce drive investitures (cathexis) there will remain an 'unconscious remainder' that will be incorporated into the constitution and structure of the psyche. This 'remainder' will be lost forever, but the subject will always search for it. The lost objects (as remainders) are partial fragments of the body (*éclats*). The lost object may be the image of *the gaze, the voice, the breast, or the feces*, or it may also be the image of another small body object. It will constitute '*the object-cause of desire*'. It is a remainder construed (acquired) by each subject in early infancy. It is a window (maybe the only one) that

⁴² Wilhelm Frederic Hegel (1807). *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1925)

⁴³ Alexandre Kojève (1947) *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, New York and London: Basic Books, 1969

⁴⁴ Jacques Lacan (1960). *The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire: Writings (Ecrits) Volume 2*

⁴⁵ Jacques Lacan (1960). *The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire: Writings (Ecrits) Volume 2*

the subject has to the 'Real'. The subject fictitiously believes to have found that lost object in the passion object of love and hate. Object (a) thus becomes an illusion of a perceptible object fictitiously found in the other (because it is no more than a projection). In this way, the subject cannot avoid to fall into the imaginary axis (narcissistic organization). In other words, the fictitious encounter with '*object (a)*' precipitates the subject into a 'state of passion' (love and hate) inscribed, therefore, in the imaginary axis.

(c) The Topological object

This object (a) is a topological object. It is neither a part-object nor a total object. It is neither an internal nor an external object. It is not the 'Real', although it opens a window into this order of the 'Real'. It is the 'lost object', never found and always sought. It is the cause of desire. It is a fundamental element in the subject's '*sexual phantasm*'. In this locus of the *phantasm*, object (a) is opaque and it will veil (partially covering) castration. It soothes castration anxiety and triggers the intensity of sexual pleasure (orgasm).

12 Nature of the object in 'Love and Hate'

(a) The object of desire

As expressed above '*Desire*' arises from the '*lack*' that is instated due to the loss of the original object. Since the original loss occurred early in live, the early (original) object loss will represent a very special object. It was called by Lacan: '*Object-(a)*' with a lower case, sometimes is also called 'small-(a)'. This *Object-(a)* will be the original '*object of desire*'. It is a remainder of the early relationship with the primordial other (caregiver). Lacan refers to it as 'the object of which one doesn't have any idea'. Since this is an object representing the original lose (imaginary), this *Object-(a)* will always be sought after, but will never be found. When the '*subject*' believes to have found (in fiction) this *lost object-(a)*, then the experience of a 'state of passion' is unleash. This passion may have a love or hate basic nature. It depends on the quality (good or bad) of the earlier experiences of the 'subject'. Love and hate are passions (narcissistic illusions) suffered by the '*subject*' (not by the Ego), who has in fiction believed to have found the *lost object-(a)* in the field of the '*other*'.⁴⁶ Actually this encounter occurred when *Object-(a)* found the '*subject*' in the field of the '*other*' (imaginary axis, all illusions, narcissistic). This occurred by chance (*hazardous encounter*). This encounter is a revelation, because this encounter has a grip on some detail of the body of the other. This bodily detail represents a piece of the 'Real' (refers to the lost original caregiver)). The 'subject' perceives, sees, hears, or smells, the illusion of *Object-(a)* appearing in the body of the '*other*'. In fact this piece of the 'Real' originates a

⁴⁶ Jacques Lacan (1963). The Seminar, Book 11. The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis. 1977

projection of the lover in the body of the love one. Lacan use to say that ‘Love is to give what we don’t have’⁴⁷. We may say that hate as well.

(b) The object <cause-of-desire>

But this hazardous encounter is a little bit more complicated. Let me explain. As I have already said the *lost object-(a)* will originate ‘*desire*’. But here we have to theorize a little more. One thing is the ‘*object of desire*’ and something else is the ‘*object cause-of-desire*’. *Object-(a)* does not appear ahead (in front) of the ‘*subject*’ (summoned by his or her desire). On the contrary it is located behind the ‘*subject*’ <*causing desire*>. Following this logic, the lost *object-(a)* in fiction is the one that will find the ‘*subject*’. The ‘*subject*’ cannot rush successfully in search of *object-(a)*, which would better suit him or her. *Object-(a)* is actually imposed upon the ‘*subject*’ by chance (*hazardous encounter*). It is clear that the ‘*subject’s desire*’ (as a human, as a speaking being) can only be the ‘*desire of desire of the other*’. After all, it is the ‘*other*’ who leaves a ‘mark’, a remainder in the early subject’s constitution. That remainder is the ‘*objet-(a)*’.

Confusion arises because the ‘*subject*’ has no alternative left but to look endlessly, for the rest of his or her life, for his or her *lost object-(a)*. He or she will always look for it ahead of him or her. The ‘*object of desire*’ presumably (erroneously) is placed ahead (in front) the ‘*subject*’, as a *semblance* (as a decoy). In this way *Object-(a)* is the ‘*object of desire*’ which is fictitiously ‘ahead’.

But there is another history, when the *lost object-(a)* found the ‘*subject*’. When this happens it appears from behind as ‘*the Object <cause-of-desire>*’. This hazardous encounter, ‘*Object-(a)*’ finding the ‘*Subject*’, will inevitably unleash a <state of passion>. These intense illusory phenomena of passion may have the quality of Love or Hate depending on the early predominant <satisfaction or frustration experience> with the caregiver.

13 On the nature of transference: the analyst as object-(a)

(a) The virtuous analyst

In the beginning, when a demand for analysis arises due to the presence of some psychic suffering, the patient need and will make a call to some analyst that may help. This analyst is supposed to have some special virtues. It means the patient attributes some special knowledge and a particular wisdom to this particular analyst whom receive some attributes as the ‘Other’. This ‘attribution’ (projection) will grant a special ‘power’ to this ‘other’. These are the forerunner of a coming transference. As we know every analytic session will unfold under the effect of transference. We know

⁴⁷ Jacques Lacan (1960). The Seminar, Book 8. The Transference. Paidós, Barcelona 1997

that structurally it cannot be any other way. This analyst will occupy the locus assigned by the structure of transference. We also know that this locus will be defined by the particular early childhood experiences of the patient.

(b) The locus of the analyst

In this way the analyst (in the dyad) will inevitably occupy the locus of an unconscious semblance (a decoy). This semblance (or decoy) is the lost 'Object-(a)' of the patient, which in fiction is found in the locus of the analyst. This analyst had already received the 'attribution' of knowledge and wisdom that will alleviate the suffering. This finding of the lost 'Object-(a)' in the analyst is similar to the experience of Love and Hate (describe above). Lacan use to say, that from a structural point of view, there is no difference between them⁴⁸. The daily encounter with this 'Object-(a)' during the analytic sessions, will reveal to the analyst, the vicissitudes of the patient pre-verbal period of live, it means will reveal the early experiences of the patient (with his or her caregiver). The working of this transference will be very helpful to assign 'new meanings' to forgotten and early traumatic experiences that are 'live again' in the intensity of transference.

14 On the quality of the 'Object' in a hysterical structure

(a) The hysteric identifies with a castrated 'object'

The 'clinical structure' we will refer here are unconscious in nature. The hysteria as well as the other clinical structures organizes themselves around the logic of the phallus and the dialectic of the object. The 'hysterical structure' is organized (constituted) early in live around a castrated 'other' to whom the hysteric identifies with. It means the hysteric identifies with the castrated 'object'. So the hysteric personality feels incomplete and desires (in order to feel complete) the phallus of the 'other'. Jacques Lacan use to say that 'hysteria is a slave that looks for a master upon whom to reign'⁴⁹.

(b) The hysteric will look for the phallus in the 'other'

The hysterical personality has a tendency to charm and seduce both sexes especially those who show a 'phallic lure' of power, fame, beauty, money or valuable knowledge. This tendency to seduce causes a propensity for emotional exaggeration and ability for the stage. Sometimes the hysteric does not realize the intense erotic effect she (or he) radiates. The true interest of hysteria lies on the capture of the 'other' with the 'phallic semblance' (decoy). Hysteric needs approval from the 'phallic other' so they

⁴⁸ Jacques Lacan (1960). The Seminar, Book 8 (1960). The Transference. Paidos, Barcelona 1997

⁴⁹ Rómulo Lander (2006): Logic of the Hysterical structure. In: Subjective experience. Other Press, NY (2006)

constantly ask for it. The successful seduction of the ‘phallic other’ who bears the ‘phallic lure’ will bring to the hysteric a feeling of completeness and satisfaction. Hysterics are utterly dominated by the ‘desire of the phallic other’ therefore they are under his (or her) power of suggestion. Once the hysteric has been successful with the conquest of the ‘phallic other’, with the pass of time, this illusion of a ‘phallic lure’ will lose his phallic power and this other will become castrated. The hysterics will again feel incomplete and the hunt for a new illusory phallic ‘other’ will begin: ‘the neighbor grass is always greener’.

15 On the quality of the ‘Object’ in an obsessive structure

(a) The obsessive identifies with a Phallic ‘object’

The obsessive structure is organized early in life around a non-castrated ‘other’. So the obsessive identifies with a phallic ‘other’. In this way the obsessive personality feels complete and in control of life, as they feels they have the qualities of an imaginary phallus. The obsessive desire will be generous since it is their job, to complete the lack in the other. But they live in a paradox: The obsessive feeling of completeness closes his basic inner lack, therefore closes the field of desire. We must remember that desire is originated in the experience of a lack. For the obsessive personalities the promises given in good faith, end up in nothing. Jacques Lacan used to say that the obsessive is a ‘King whom cannot cease to be a slave⁵⁰’.

(b) The hystericization of the obsessive

We found a possible clinical contradiction to this statement since some obsessive structure shows hysterical symptom. It is common to see obsessive personalities with phobias and with hysterical psychosomatic complaints. This clinical phenomenon is explained because the obsessive structure with a phallic (non-castrated) identification may have a transient identification with a castrated object. By doing so the obsessive moved (provisionally) to a hysteric functioning. This phenomenon is also observed in the analytic device. The obsessive whom seek analysis will have to accept some kind of incompleteness and lack, this in order to accept help from a non-castrated analyst. We know that in transference the patient will related to a phallic analyst. This means a knowledgeable and possible extraordinary analyst (non-castrated). We said that the obsessive enter analysis when it is hystericized, meaning the obsessive sincerely experience a lack an accept incompleteness and problems, as any hysteric do.

16 On the quality of the ‘Object’ in a Narcissistic structure

⁵⁰ Rómulo Lander (2006): Logic of the obsessive structure. In: Subjective experience. Other Press, NY (2006)

As describe initially by Melanie Klein⁵¹ in the narcissistic structure the 'subject' relates to 'objects' in two basic ways: with the 'persecutory' object and with the 'idealized' Object. These give rise to either a persecutory relationship with the 'Other' or an 'idealized' one. In clinical practice these narcissistic patients have a peculiar characteristic in their relations with their objects. The 'Subject' and its 'Objects' in these narcissistic structures will follow the rule of a relationship dominated by the principle of 'all or nothing', 'black or white', 'with me or against me'. It does not take into consideration the extenuating or the aggravating circumstances of the event. Also the quality of the identification process in these narcissistic structures is peculiar: These identifications are massive and sudden. The uses of frequent and intense projective identification are common.

17 On the quality of the 'Object' in the stabilized Psychotic

In the broken down psychotic the magnitude of anxiety and the turbulence created by the psychotic symptoms (hallucinations and thought disorders) are so paramount that the relationship with the 'Object' is severely interfered. On the contrary, the relationship the 'stabilized psychotic' develops with the 'Object' is very firm and peculiar. The stabilized psychotic looks very much as a neurotic personality. But it is not. The relationship with the 'Other' is a rigid one and we may say that it resembles the obsessive control of the 'Object'. But it is not. What happens is that the 'psychotic structure' is incapable of using the metonymic resource in the relationship with the 'Other'. This inability makes it impossible for the stabilized psychotic to slide the signifier (words and concept). So he can not lie, he cannot produce a joke, he cannot vacillate in the relationship with the 'Other' (it is rigid). We say the stabilized psychotic cannot and do not use the 'shifter' in language (that help relating him to others). The absence of the mechanism of 'shifter' (metonymic) is due to the non-inscription of the 'name of the father' at the proper moment early in life. This means, nothing more, than the 'paternal function' was not inscribed in the mind of the child, at that crucial moment. This crucial moment is posterior to the normal narcissistic union to mother. It is mother whom would introduce the 'signifier of father' in the mind of the small child. If this signifier (word and concept) is not introduced at this moment in life, the child will organize the developing mind in a schizophrenic fashion, using mental prosthesis (called: suppleances) to substitute the crucial absent father signifier and in this way (with suppleances) keep going as a stabilized or compensated psychotic (with a mental prosthesis) and keep avoiding the psychic collapse. So the relationship to the Object is rigid, because it stands for something else. If this prosthesis fails, a mental breakdown will appear. Until some other suppleances (symbolic or imaginary) comes to the fore.

18 On the quality of the 'Object' in a perverse structure

⁵¹ Melanie Klein (1932). *Psychoanalysis of Children*. Hogarth Press, London

It is very important in the practice of clinical psychoanalysis to make a clear difference between the <perverse sexual-act> performed by a neurotic personality, and <perverse sexual-act> performed by a true perverse structure. In the first case it is no more than a way to intensify sexual pleasure, this act may produce guilt feelings. In the second case it is a tragedy. In the perverse structure there is no guilt. It is a particular (unusual) sexual-act where the 'sexual script' is rigid and petrified. It is performed by an individual mentally structured in a different way. When this individual is not performing any sexual act, the nature of the 'object' is similar to that of a neurotic individual, where there is a clear capacity to discriminate the 'Object' from the 'Subject'. There is no 'fusion' with the 'Object'. In these circumstances these perverse structures are exemplary citizens and abide by law. But when this individual is sexually excited and performing a sexual-act, then the nature of the sexual 'object' is non-human. The 'object' as 'other' is a non-human artifice that will fulfill a specific function. The sexual object is there to sustain (support) the illusion of the subject. This perverse subject has to become and has to 'be' in place of the 'other', while performing the perverse act. Jacques Lacan⁵² used to say that during the true sexual perverse-act the 'Subject' inverts the position with the sexual 'Object'. This means the 'Subject' will appear in the place of the sexual 'Object' and viceversa. For example, the male exhibitionist will achieve orgasm (masturbating) when he feels 'he is' the child (or girl) watching him. Here the places have been inverted and the 'Object' is non-human. The same thing will occur in voyeurism and sado-masochism.

19 On the nature of the 'Object' in the Incest Horror

(a) With Freud

At the end of the 19th century Sigmund Freud presents the novel idea that between any caregiver and an infant child an early strong bond develops between each other. He proposes that it is a bond of love and hate. This love is of a passionate nature and includes sexual drives and desires. Since civilization is founded on the premises of incest and parricide horror, Freud⁵³ proposes that these incestuous and parricide desires are to be repressed by the small child in order to be civilized. In doing so the human infant enters the realm of neurosis forever. So the nature of the 'Object' in these phenomena is clearly an 'Object' of desire (Love and Hate). The reason for this repression comes from family values. It means that these family ideals of incest and parricide horror will be passed from one generation to another, based on the repulsion to it. But this particular phenomenon of incest and parricide horror is a complex one. Once this phenomenon is taken out of the realm of psychoanalysis and brought into the realm of anthropology, ethnology and sociology, we found multiple different ideas and controversial evidences. I think it is relevant to bring here a summary of all these findings for further theoretical and clinical considerations. Freud

⁵² Jacques Lacan (1960). *Kant with Sade. Writtings (Ecrits) Vol.2*

⁵³ Sigmund Freud (1905). *Three essays on a sexual theory SE*, London (1967)

in his book <Totem and taboo>⁵⁴ discusses various ways in which the exogamy of the totem system prevents incest, not only among the nuclear family, but among extended families as well. In addition the totem system prevents incest among members of the same totem clan who are not related by blood.

(b) The evidence of imprinting

Imprinting is a learning process that takes place in young animals during a specific short period of time after birth, giving origin to a specific behavior. For birds this specific imprinting period last for 36 hours after hatching. Konrad Lorenz⁵⁵ working with Canadian greylag geese demonstrated how incubator hatched geese would imprint on the first suitable moving stimulus they saw within what he called a critical period that exist between 13-16 hours shortly after hatching. It is well known the goslings imprinting on Lorenz himself and more specifically on his wading yellow boots. There is a popular photograph of him being followed by a gaggle of geese that had imprinted on him. This phenomenon will have significance to our present theme if we relate it to the Westermarck effect.

(c) Westermarck effect

When two people live in close domestic proximity during the first four years of life, both people are desensitized to later develop any sexual attraction. This phenomenon known as the Westermarck effect was first formally described by Finnish anthropologist Edvard Westermarck⁵⁶. He said that infants raised together are unable to form sexual desires for one another as adults, regardless of their genetic relationship. The Westermarck effect has since been observed in many places and cultures including the Israeli kibbutz system, but also in the biological related families as well. In the case of the Israeli collective farms or kibbutzim, children were reared somewhat communally in peer groups. These groups were based on age, not on family affiliations. A study of the marriage patterns of these children later in life revealed that out of the nearly 3,000 marriages that occurred across the kibbutz system, only fourteen, were between children from the same peer group. Of those fourteen, none had been reared together during the first six years of life. This result provides partial evidence not only that the Westermarck effect is demonstrable, but that it operates during the critical period from birth to the age six. When close proximity during this critical period does not occur, for example, where a brother and sister are brought up separately, never meeting one another, they may find one

⁵⁴ Sigmund Freud (1913). Totem and Taboo. SE. Vol 8 (1967)

⁵⁵ Konrad Lorenz (1949). King Solomon's Ring. Translated by Marjorie Kerr Wilson. Methuen, London (1961)

⁵⁶ Edvard Westermarck (1921). The history of human marriage, London: Macmillan.

another highly sexually attractive, when they meet as adults. This Westermarck effect becomes very debatable from the psychoanalytical point of view, since we could argue, that the endogamy rejection (horror) with its consequent repression, comes due to the social ideals (not conscious) in a given social group, for example in the Kibbutz system. On the other hand, Westermarck suggests an imprinting phenomenon occurring between brothers and sisters, which is what will prevent the development of the sexual desire between them.

(d) Incest Taboo

The incest taboo is a term used by anthropologists to refer to a special prohibition against incest. Incest generally refers to sexual practices occurring between close relatives in human societies. There are various theories that seek to explain how and why an incest taboo originates. Some maintain that some sort of incest taboo is universal, while others dispute its universality. Research on the anthropological incest taboo necessarily involves the study of different concept of incest. According to anthropology⁵⁷ this concept varies strikingly from one society to another. Ethnographic research considers incest any sexual intercourse between individuals with prohibited degrees of kinship. In every society there are rules prohibiting incestuous unions, both as to sexual intercourse and as a recognized marriage. The two prohibitions do not necessarily coincide. There is no uniformity as to which kinship degrees are involved in the prohibitions. Havelock Ellis⁵⁸ suggests that the taboo expresses a psychological revulsion that people naturally experience at the thought of incest. Most anthropologists reject this idea since incest does in fact occur. According to the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss⁵⁹ the incest taboo has been the driving force of humankind. By forcing man to find a mate outside the home, disparate, warring clans have been brought together and society has flourished. Others see the abhorrence for sleeping with relatives, as having a primarily biological motive, some sort of human instinct to prevent defective genes being passed down.

(e) Incest Horror

The anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss⁶⁰ developed a general argument for the universality of the incest taboo in human societies. His argument begins with the affirmation that the incest taboo is in effect a prohibition against endogamy. This taboo will encourage exogamy. Through exogamy, otherwise unrelated households or lineages will form relationships through marriage thus strengthening social solidarity. Lévi-Strauss views marriage as an exchange of women between two social groups. This theory is based in part on Marcel Mauss⁶¹ theory of 'the gift', which

⁵⁷ Boas, Franz (1964),. Fundamental questions in cultural anthropology. Ediciones Solar, Buenos Aires.

⁵⁸ Havelock Ellis (1939). Studies in the Psychology of Sex.

⁵⁹ Claude Lévi-Strauss (1949) Elemental structures of kinship. Paidós, Barcelona.

⁶⁰ Claude Lévi-Strauss (1958) Structural anthropology Editorial Universitaria de Buenos Aires. (1977)

⁶¹ Marcel Mauss (1950). Sociology and anthropology

argued that exchange in primitive societies consists not so much in economic transactions, as in reciprocal gifts. These reciprocal gifts have a far more important function. This primitive form of exchange is not essentially of an economic nature, but is what he aptly calls 'a total social fact'. This event has significance and it is at once: social, religious, magical, economical, utilitarian, sentimental and moral. Lévi-Strauss called attention specifically to data collected by Margaret Mead⁶² during her research among the Arapesh tribe. When she asked if a man ever sleeps with her sister, Arapesh replied 'No we don't sleep with our sisters. We give our sisters to other men, and other men give us their sisters'. Mead pressed the question repeatedly asking what would happen if a brother and sister did have sex with one another. Lévi-Strauss quotes the Arapesh response: 'Would like to marry your sister? What is the matter with you anyway? Don't you want a brother-in-law? Don't you realize that if you marry another man's sister and another man marries your sister, you will have at least two brother's-in-law, while if you marry your own sister you will have none? With whom will you hunt, with whom will you garden, who will you visit?

(f) Inbreeding

As exogamy between households or descent groups is typically prescribed in classless societies, in societies that are stratified and divided into unequal classes, there are different degrees of endogamy. Endogamy refers to the practice of marriage between members of the same social group. A classic example is India's caste system in which unequal castes are endogamous. Inequality between ethnic groups and races also correlates with endogamy. Class, caste, ethnic and racial endogamy typically coexists with family exogamy and prohibitions against incest. An extreme example of this principle and an exception to the incest taboo is found among members of the ruling class in certain ancient states, such as the Inca, Egypt and China.

The avoidance of inbreeding may lower the incidence of congenital birth defects. This theory was first proposed by jurist Henry Maine⁶³, who did not have knowledge of modern genetics, but who did draw his observations on animal husbandry. Anthropologists⁶⁴ reject this proposal for two reasons. First, inbreeding does not directly lead to congenital birth defects per se. It leads to an increase in the frequency of homozygotes. An increase in homozygotes has diverging effects. A homozygote encoding a congenital birth defect will produce children with birth defects, but homozygotes that do not encode congenital birth defects, will decrease the number of carriers in a population. The overall consequence of these diverging effects depends in part on the size of the population. In small populations, as long as children born with heritable birth defects die (or are killed) before they reproduce, the ultimate effect of inbreeding will be to *decrease* the frequency of defective genes in the

⁶² Margaret Mead (1928) *Adolescence, sex and culture in Samoa*. Editorial Paidos, Buenos Aires

⁶³ Henry Maine (1875). *Lectures on the early history of institutions* (1875).

⁶⁴ Franz Boas (1964). *Fundamental questions on cultural anthropology*. Solar/Hachette. Buenos Aires.

population. Over time the gene pool will be healthier. In larger populations, however, it is more likely that large numbers of carriers will survive and mate, leading to more constant rates of birth defects. Anthropologists have pointed out that the social construct called incest and the incest taboo is not the same thing as the biological phenomenon of inbreeding. In the Trobriand tribes a man and the daughter of his father's sister, and a man and the daughter of his mother's sister, are equally distant genetically (cousins). Biologists would consider mating in both instances, but Trobrianders consider mating in one case incestuous and in the other, not. Anthropologists have documented a great number of societies where marriages between some first cousins are prohibited as incestuous, while marriages between other first cousins are encouraged. Therefore, the prohibition against incestuous relations in most societies is not based on or motivated by concerns over biological closeness. Nor can it be explained by the effects of inbreeding in natural selection. ♣

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