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Fantasmatic transactions

On the persistence of apartheid ideology

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ABSTRACT: Apartheid ideology presents traditional historiography with a series of conundrums: the difficulty of separating historical from subjective agency; the paradoxical status of ideologues who both author ideology and yet are nonetheless also subject to the spread of its ideas; the issue of the non-material benefits which appear to drive its ideological system. Taking as its starting-point J.M. Coetzee's (1991) reflections on these issues, this paper builds on his promising intuition of the notion of 'fantasmatic rewards' as a crucial explanatory element in understanding the 'mind of apartheid'. Crucial in this respect are a number of Lacanian concepts (desire, the Other, fantasy, *objet petit a*, alienation and separation). Recourse to these notions enables us to provide a series of responses to the above dilemmas of apartheid ideology. Such concepts, moreover, arguably do greater conceptual justice to the inter-implication of Other and subject, that is, to the inter-implication of the trans-subjective socio-historical substance and unconscious subjectivity.

Keywords: Lacanian psychoanalysis, apartheid, ideology, racism, desire, Other, agency, alienation, separation, fantasy, *objet petit a*, fantasmatic rewards, unconscious subjectivity.

Introduction

The historical analysis of racist ideology – and that of apartheid in particular – presents traditional historiography with a series of conundrums. There is the problem of how to conceptualize the role of madness in history, the issue, that is to say, of how rationalist frameworks of explanation grapple with the fantasmatic dimension of racism, and the related question of how materialist approaches understand racism's non-material rewards. Additionally, there are a series of subsidiary considerations of crucial importance in understanding the functioning of apartheid ideology: the difficulty of separating historical from subjective agency; the paradoxical status of ideologues who both author ideology and yet are nonetheless also subject to its spread of its ideas; and

the issues of what non-material benefits appear to drive the ideological system. These are not new problems; they have in fact been expertly elucidated in an article by the author J.M. Coetzee, which I have taken as a touchstone for the current paper, a vehicle for introducing and dramatizing a series of quandaries of ideology to which I think Lacanian theory offers an important set of responses.

A Lacanian standpoint is clearly not one that doubts the centrality of desire when it comes to issues of subjectivity. It likewise does not shy away from the complexities and ambiguities evident in the subject-Other (or subject-Structure) relation. These Lacanian perspectives make for crucial analytical resources - as I hope shortly to demonstrate - and they certainly support the argument that a Lacanian frame of analysis enables us to conceptualize the transactions underlying the operation of apartheid ideology. My objective here is modest, not to carry out any sustained empirical analysis but simply to connect a particular facet of Lacanian theory to the dilemmas Coetzee highlights. More specifically, my intent is to make the case for Lacan's notions of fantasy, the big Other, the *objet petit a* and the aligned processes of alienation and separation as vital conceptual instruments through which to approach the explanatory dilemmas mentioned above.

Lacanian desire

Desire for Spinoza, as Lacan reminds us in the final pages of *Seminar XI, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, is "the essence of man" (1979, p. 275). Now while this is not strictly Lacan's position – the presumption of any such subjective essence is anathema to his concerns – it does nonetheless give us a flavour of his concerns in *Seminar XI*, and a sense of where a Lacanian mode of analysis might begin. Desire for Lacan is linked to questions of being, and it retains always a relation to that which the subject is lacking. To refer to Stavrakakis, "socially conditioned desire constitutes the alienated, 'extimate'...(‘externally intimate’)...essence of our reality" (p. 47). This, desire, is what psychoanalysis must attempt to read; it is what a Lacanian analytics must attempt to follow.

We can relate this issue of desire – which is always sustained and shaped by fantasy, for fantasy *tells me what I desire* - to a fundamental

pattern, or perhaps *structure* of questioning: “What does the Other want?” I say ‘structure’ here to emphasize that despite countless performative variations and innumerable differences of situation and spoken content, there is nonetheless a basic type of appeal, and a single addressee in question. The period of early childhood provides us with a context for the emergence of such a mode of questioning. “What does she (the mother) want?” provides us with perhaps the most elementary form of this questioning, or, in a way which better lends itself to adaptations of behaviour: “How can I be what she wants?”, “How can I incarnate within myself that which embodies her desire?” Something like a riddle of desire emerges here: I desire to be that which she desires and in this way I myself come to desire. Bruce Fink puts this well: “in the child’s attempt to grasp what remains essentially indecipherable in the Other’s desire...the child’s own desire is founded; the Other’s desire begins to function as the cause of the child’s desire” (1995, p. 59). Or, to draw on Žižek’s (1996) discussion of the implications of Lacan’s “Desire is the desire of the Other”:

First, there is the dialectic of recognition in which the other’s desire is the object of my desire: what I desire is to be desired – recognized by the other (‘the first object of desire is to be recognized by the other’). Secondly, ‘it is *qua* Other that he [the subject] desires – that is, what I desire is predetermined and decided at the Other Place of the anonymous-transsubjective symbolic order, it is ‘mediated’ by the symbolic network of the cultural tradition to which I belong” (p. 167).

The threefold implication of the above state of affairs is worth reiterating: an Other’s desire *causes* mine, it ignites my desire, sets it in motion, firstly; this desire becomes what I want *to be* inasmuch as I want to be *this* object of desire, secondly; I come to desire the same things as this desiring Other, I am similarly located in the social field of desires, I take on their ‘perspective of desire’, thirdly. Already then we have the indication that the subject’s relation to desire and to the Other’s desire – crucial to the problems of ideology to which we will shortly turn – is of considerable complexity.

The child’s eventual realization is that the goal of personifying the mother’s desire is futile. This desire is neither static nor unchanging, it proves

to be always in excess of the child, out of their reach, headed elsewhere. The child thus must come to understand themselves as lacking, inadequate to the task of embodying this desire. Moreover – and this is the moment which heralds the possibility of a type of separation from the Other – the child glimpses that the mother *is also lacking*; she must be, because she is marked by desire, she is not complete, she desires something that exceeds her. This is the difficulty that plagues the pattern of questioning mentioned above: the issue of my desire remains always contingent on an Other, on the question of *what this Other desires* which is always somewhat enigmatic, something beyond the subject, and, indeed importantly, *beyond the Other themselves also*. We have two types of lack then, and a situation in which what is essential to the subject - the question of their desire - is continually stretched out, moving along this circuit of questioning (“What does the Other want?”, “What do I want?”, “Well, what does the Other want?”) that joins two barred positions.

It would be a mistake to assume that a kind of balance of lacks exists here. “The relation of the subject to the Other is entirely produced in a process of gap” advances Lacan (1979, p. 206). The questioning engagement between the subject and Other is circular in the sense, as Lacan puts it, of “from the subject called to the Other, to the subject of that which he has himself seen appear in the field of the Other, from the Other coming back” (p. 207). This circularity *does not* imply a two-way process, it is “circular, but, of its nature, without reciprocity. Because it is circular, it is dissymmetrical (1979, p. 207).

The ‘*Che vuoi?*’ formula: alienation in the Other

The continual movement of such a circuit of questioning and undecided answers – what we might liken to a transaction of desire – is not limited to childhood. This pattern of questioning, this metonymic movement across an endless chain of signifiers, is characteristic of human desire as such. Desire is always caught up in a series of appeals to the Other, that is, to that hovering interlocutor to whom all of my social actions and meanings are inevitably addressed, that principle of intelligibility that makes social meaning and communicative inter-subjectivity possible.

It is not difficult to improvise a set of variations on this “*Che vuoi?*” (“*What do you want?*”) repetitively posed entreaty to the Other: “What am I to you?”, “What must I be?”, or in the melodrama of a lover’s quarrel “*What do you want from me?*”. This attempt of the subject to locate themselves relative to the question of the Other’s desire is destined to constant failure. If it might be said to succeed at all, this success is at best momentary, a flickering event which is quickly tipped over into doubt. We are left with a picture of the perpetual motion-machine of desire as it operates in the human subject: an incessant querying of the Other’s desire; the assumption of a hypothetical answer gleaned from their gestures and actions; a gradual wearing thin of this hypothesis as inadequate; and then, once again: a renewed querying of the Other’s desire...

There is something hysterical in this line of questioning – in this ‘*Che vuoi?*’ formula, which, as Žižek (1989) insists, occurs everywhere within the political domain - inasmuch as no solicited answer will ever be adequate. We are dealing with a bottomless succession of questions; to every answer given (“*This is what you are...*”, “*This is what is demanded of you*”, “*This is what I want...*”) there is inevitable riposte: “*But why?*”, “*What lies behind what you have told me?*”, “*What is the real reasons you have said this?*” Lacan describes this incessant questioning as it occurs in the ‘why?’ of the child, relating it both to the structural incompleteness of discourse and to the child’s preoccupation with what their role is, their importance, their place in the scheme of things:

A lack is encountered by the subject in the Other, in the very intimation that the Other makes to him by his discourse. In the intervals of the discourse of the Other, there emerges in the experience of the child something...namely, *He is saying this to me, but what does he want?* ...The desire of the Other is apprehended by the subject...in the lacks of the discourse of the Other, and all the child’s *whys* reveal not so much an avidity for the reason of things, as a testing of the adult, a *Why are you telling me this?* ever-resuscitated from its base, which is the enigma of the adult’s desire (1979, p. 214).

This situation is thus more complicated than it may have at first appeared: not only is the question of my desire impossibly entangled in the Other, so is the issue of *my social being*, of my status, my purpose, my location, of *what I am to others*. The desire of the Other – that, in other words, of *the trans-subjective symbolic order* – is crucial to any attempt to form an identity within my given community, within the socio-historical and discursive co-ordinates within which I find myself.

To recap: we have introduced the notion of a ‘structure’ of questioning that is the necessary outcome of a fundamental ‘lack of fit’ – a result of the fact that our own desire remains unfixable, brought into being by and tethered to the desire of an Other we can never fully know. We have outlined also the related dilemma according to which we are never wholly accommodated within our socio-symbolic positions. To appreciate this dilemma is to understand the pattern of constant recourse to an Other who is thought not only to hold an answer crucial to my being (the answer of desire, of “*What do I want?*”) but to provide the very co-ordinates of my identity (of what I am, and why). Once we realize that the linked questions of desire (“*What do I want?*”) and of social location (“*What makes sense of the position I occupy in society?*”) are really unanswerable – for they always rebound in the form of another question – then we start to understand the futility of such recourse to the Other, at least within the realm of the signifier, and the alienation of the subject that inevitably results.

Separation: An overlapping of lacks

The notion of alienation within Lacan is often associated, as a matter of course, with the mirror-phase and the Imaginary, the domain of image and identification. What should be clear from the above line of discussion is that to this mode of alienation we need add another: the alienation of the subject within the realm of the signifier. As Jacqueline Rose (1996) puts it, the subject first *identifies with* the signifier (in the misrecognitions of the mirror stage) and then is *determined by* the signifier (in the attempt to express and formulate their desire within the symbolic). The latter is something Lacan never tires of affirming. In *Seminar XI* he declares: “The Other is the locus in which is situated the chain of the signifier that governs whatever may be made...of the

subject” (1979, p. 203). Not only must we appreciate “the constitution of the subject in the field of the Other”, we must understand that “the characteristic of this subject of the unconscious is that of being, beneath the signifier that develops its networks, its chains and its history, at an indeterminate place” (p. 208). It is perhaps necessary to provide a brief précis of the alienation in the signifier that Lacan has in mind here, an outline of the fact that in submitting to the Other, the subject assumes the ‘out of jointness’, the divided existence, of subservience to the signifier.

This mode of alienation is famously described by Lacan in *Seminar XI* as a *vel*, an *either/or* forced choice, like the highway man’s “money or your life”. The *vel* of alienation, more specifically, presents the subject with the ‘non-choice’ of *being* (an existence outside the domain of the signifier) and *meaning* (existence within the jurisdiction of the signifier and the Other). I say ‘non-choice’, because to chose *being* is to fall into non-meaning, which is an effective inexistence. Then again – and this is the pertinence of the highway man’s threat - to chose meaning is to be “eclipsed by the disappearance of being, induced by the...function of the signifier” (Lacan, 1979, p. 211), another form of inexistence.

As inescapable as alienation appears to be, it does not account for the entirety of the subject’s relation to the Other. This relation is also one characterized by *separation*. This is regarded as one of the key achievements of *Seminar XI*, Lacan’s theorization of this twin relationship:

Alienation and separation are linked...they install the subject in a never ending pulsating process of appearing and disappearing. Alienation takes the subject away from being, in the direction of the Other. Separation is the opposite process, inasmuch as it redirects the subject towards its being, thus opening a possibility of escape from all-determining alienation, and even a possibility of choice, albeit a precarious one (Verhaeghe, 1999, p. 180).

Mladen Dolar (1988) is equally helpful here: if alienation excludes the choice of being and the loss of subjectivity – alienation, to reiterate, as a result of the operation of the signifier, in the field of the Other – then the process of separation seems to force the subject “to assume precisely that which was excluded: to present itself as the object of the desire of the Other, an object to

fill its lack” (p. 24).¹ If the Other were no more than a closed structure, then the subject’s destiny would be one of inescapable alienation. Hence the importance of Lacan’s theorization of separation - or ‘dis-alienation’ as it is sometimes understood – as a counterpoint to the alienation in language. This is crucial inasmuch as the subject, and indeed, *subjectivity* within Lacanian theory is not simply the determined result of structure. In this respect we may refer back to the infant-relationship: there must here be some possibility of differentiation from the mother, a strict identity cannot be maintained between mother’s and child’s desire, a gap or sorts must open. As I have implied above, there is a point of realization in which the subject grasps that the Other, like themselves, is also missing something, is also characterized by a ‘not having’, a lack. The moment of respite represented by separation provides the subject a window of sorts “it enables him to avoid total alienation in the signifier not by filling out his lack but by allowing him to identify himself, his own lack, with the lack in the Other (Žižek, 1989, p. 122).

This means then that there are two dimensions to the Other. This is imperative if one is to see beyond the seeming inevitability of alienation: the Other is not only the treasury of signifiers, it is also *lacking*, a site characterized by a certain desire. It is this other function of the Other that makes separation possible. Soler (1995) makes this very clear: in separation we are dealing with “another aspect of the Other, not the Other full of signifiers [evident in alienation] but...the Other in which something is lacking” (p. 49). Homer (2005) extends this idea, emphasizing that separation is linked to desire, that it designates the process through which the child differentiates itself from the m(O)ther and is hence not simply a subject of language. Separation, he notes, “takes place in the domain of desire and requires from the subject a certain ‘want to be’”, this is a ‘want to be’ which, crucially, is “separate from the signifying chain” (p. 72).

A fundamental facet of separation is a *coincidence of lacks*, and furthermore – again a sense of circularity, the evocation of a one-way repeated transaction between subject and Other – the fact that the subject attempts to offer an answer to the lack of the Other, responding to it *with his or her own lack*. The desire of the Other, notes Dolar, presents a question – “What does he want?” – a question inevitably

countered by another question – do I possess what he wants? What is it in me that could possibly satisfy this desire? So the subject is ultimately put in a position of offering not only what s/he has, but essentially what s/he doesn't possess – and this is precisely Lacan's definition of love...“to give what one doesn't have” (1998, p. 24).

This transaction between subject and Other, this loving response of the subject in a circular non-reciprocal pattern of questioning, is well rendered by Verhaeghe. He reiterates that the inconsistency of the Other “is answered by a presentation of the lack at the anterior level”, namely that of the subject's own disappearance, “[h]ence the non-reciprocity and dissymmetry, by which the process topples over into the direction of alienation again (1999, p. 181). We have thus a useful corrective to the idea that separation simply transcends, overcomes the everyday dialectics of alienation. Equally evident here is an emphasis on the *fleeting nature* of this moment, of the void which opens up between subject and Object, thus allowing the possibility of an escape from the determinism of the signifying chain, even despite the fact that it typically collapses back into a state of alienation. In contradistinction then to the ‘this or that’ forced-choice between meaning and being in alienation, the operation of separation is presented as a *neither/nor*. So, by contrast to the process of alienation, the *neither/nor* of separation *does* give rise to a viable form of being, although this being is of a profoundly transient and elusive sort, as implied in Fink's (1995) descriptions of the Lacanian subject as pulse-like movement, a momentary flash between being and meaning.

The radical problem of desire

Something is enabled in the opening of this rift, a fact implied by Lacan's toying with the term for separation (*se parere*), which, again drawing on Verhaeghe (1999), means at once to defend, to dress, to engender oneself. What emerges from this *neither/nor* situation of separation where both subject and Other are eclipsed (neither being able to claim that they “have it”) is the object of fantasy, the object-cause of desire, the Lacanian *objet petit a*. *Objet a* for Fink (1995) is the remainder of the hypothetical mother-child (subject-Other) unity, the last trace and reminder of this posited overlap of desires:

By cleaving to this rem(a)inder, the split subject, though expelled from the Other, can sustain the illusion of wholeness; by clinging to [objet a], the subject is able to ignore his or her division (p. 59).

Not only his or her division, we might add, but that of *the social order itself*; *objet a* is the reparative object, posited by the subject, as a means of responding to both such lacks. In more basic terms: this object of fantasy, this object-cause of desire, is generated in response to the double lack of subject and Other. It is the result of the subject's attempt to retrieve a scrap of an illusory subject-Other wholeness; this *objet a*, forever fascinating, arousing, will sustain the subject in being, as *a being of desire*.

With the *objet a* we are dealing with what Žižek (2000) terms the subject's 'objectal counterpart' that is put to work as means of covering the lack in the Other. Its paradoxical status is thus already clear: it belongs wholly neither to the subject or the Other. It is, as we might put it, the *convexity of the subject's lack*, but given that it functions to paper-over the Other's lack – and so to fantasmatically restore them - it may equally be said to be the convexity of the *Other's lack*, that which grants it a degree of consistency, lends it a semblance of wholeness, integration. We may provide a further gloss on this process of separation, on the outcome of this coincidence of two lacks, which as Dolar (1998) insists – and here it is worth quoting him at length -

produces something:...the object of desire, which appears precisely where the two lacks coincide – the lack of the subject and the lack of the Other. There is an object involved on both sides, figuring as a pivotal point of fantasy – the object “within the subject” that one tries to present in order to fill the lack in the Other, to deal with its desire; and on the other hand, the object “within the Other,” its surmised surplus, the source of its unfathomable *jouissance*, the secret clue as to what makes the Other enjoy and that one wants to partake of. Ultimately, what makes the Other the Other, what makes it unfathomable, is what appears in its lack, an object heterogeneous to signification, irreducible to signifiers, which poses the radical problem of desire. What the Other lacks now is not just a signifier...[but] the object. The surplus pairs with the lack, the coincidence of two lacks, and this is the way in which the subject,

having lost its being in alienation, nevertheless partakes of it in separation – through the elusive surplus object one can never get hold of (p. 25).

In review then, we have been introduced to an impossible object, one which we may locate at the coincidence of two lacks, an object whose location provides us with the pivotal co-ordinates of fantasy. This is not just the case of 'a structure of questioning', a dissymmetrical circuit between two lacks within which the vital question of desire is rebounded off an ultimately inconsistent, inadequate Other. There is also a *return-effect* of this questioning, *objet a*, which, when posed in the form of fantasy, holds the promise both of the desire of the Other and of the completeness of the subject. This impossible object is assumed to hold the key, the answer to the question of subject's place within the social order, and the solution to what would harmonize this social order. It is for this reasons that we may think of this non-reciprocal circuit of desire - this particular type of questioning and its posited fantasy-object outcome – as a fantasmatic transaction. ²

Apartheid and desire

We can now take up the issue of apartheid ideology, something I propose to do via an engagement with J.M. Coetzee's undervalued paper, 'The mind of apartheid' (1991). I will evoke what I take to be the key moments in Coetzee's text, intervening within his central argument so as to make the case for the necessity of Lacanian psychoanalysis as a mode of critique without which we cannot hope to adequately understand the ambiguities and paradoxes of apartheid ideology.

Coetzee begins by distancing himself from a commonplace of apartheid historiography - the notion that apartheid can be understood as a rational (if not extreme) response to various threats to white privilege. He takes a far riskier strategy, posing instead the question of the *madness* underpinning the governmental rationality of apartheid. "If madness has a place in life" he insists, "it has a place in history too" (1991, p. 2). The challenge thus posed is that of understanding the hold of mad political systems, and more than this, of conceptualizing the complex and ambiguous agency of subjects and ideologues within such historical periods of madness.

The method that Coetzee adopts as a means of pursuing these questions is literary: a painstakingly close reading of the sociology of segregation and separatism devised by a single apartheid ideologue, Geoffrey Cronjé. In what seems an uncharacteristic moment, Coetzee makes reference, at the beginning of his essay, to a Freudian diagnostic system, labelling Cronjé, “technically” an obsessive. This is one of two psychoanalytic motifs that are immediately present in Coetzee’s analysis of Cronjé’s writings: desire and obsessiveness. This desire is not of an obvious sort; it is a form of desire that is enacted in relations of repudiation and avoidance, it is made apparent in Cronjé’s very “inability to face the desire of black for white or white for black”; it “manifests itself in motions of evasion...revulsion and denial” (Coetzee, p. 11). Cronjé’s obsessiveness is more immediately evident, a compulsive concern with the perils of mixture, racial blood-mixing (*rassemengelmoes*) punctuate his texts. Coetzee runs these two themes together:

What Cronjé...repudiates at every turn, is a desire for mixture. Around mixture his mind obsessively turns...mixture in its endlessly attractive and endlessly repulsive allure... It is mixture and the desire for mixture that is the secret enemy of apartheid...the baffling force that must be thwarted, imprisoned, shut away (1991, p. 3).

Cronjé’s own analyses never of course address the issue of the unconscious desire underlying the production of apartheid ideology. He does however raise the question of desire, albeit in an odd sort of way: the question he asks of many whites is why there is *not* a more forceful desire to separate one’s self from other races. In other words, he questions the very lack of ‘*apartheidsgevoel*’, the *absence*, in other words, of what he takes to be a ‘natural’ tendency to segregation within ‘*die Afrikanervolk*’ (the values and history of his cherished white Afrikaaner community). His question thus takes the defended form of a double negative, ‘why *not* the desire *not to*?’ In moments such as this – here Coetzee’s method has something in common with that of the analyst - Cronjé’s texts open up into the reverse of their intended meaning, implying, beyond Cronjé’s intention, that there exists in fact none of the instinctual impulse toward racial segregation that he wishes to find. The same seems true of his incessant declaration that as the distance

between whites and non-whites diminishes, so “unconsciously a gradual process of feeling equal...begins to take place” (cited in Coetzee, p. 11). Such a statement, as Coetzee points out, can quite easily be read as an argument that interracial tensions can be reduced by social mixing.

Another apparent absence of desire that Cronjé questions is the void he takes to exist at the place where Afrikaner man might desire the black woman. This is a lack in which Coetzee reads the force of a particular presence, and a particular defensiveness: “the true force here” he remarks “is desire, and its counterforce, the denial of desire” (1991, p. 14). Desire may also be said to lie at the heart of the problem that apartheid endeavours to solve, namely the need voiced by Cronjé to separate “the white man from the daily view of the black man”, to thus “ensure that an essentially unattainable white culture and lifestyle do not become the object of his envious desire” (Coetzee, p. 15). Coetzee rephrases Cronjé’s rationale here, interjecting his own contrary suspicions: such segregation will “remove the black man (the black woman?) from the view of the white man and thus ensure that he (she?) does not become the object of white desire” (p. 15).

The challenge of apartheid governance for Coetzee then is less the control of dissent than the control of desire. Cronjé’s version of apartheid develops precisely as *a counterattack upon desire*. Coetzee is quick to add the necessary proviso: one should not ignore apartheid’s origins in greed, just as one should not elide the complexities of a multifaceted structural history of oppression. Nonetheless:

the text of apartheid deserves to have restored to it that chapter that has been all too smoothly glossed over...removed: a denial and a displacement and retrojection of desire re-enacted in further huge displaced projects of displacements: the redrawing of the maps of cities, the re-division of the countryside, the removal and resettling of populations (1991, p. 18).

Phantom agency

Content that he has made the case for desire in the genealogy of apartheid racism, Coetzee turns his attention to what he takes to be a major shortcoming of standard apartheid historiography. One of the problems in how

apartheid has been committed to history, he insists, lies with the active and conscious role that many historians have accorded to those subjects who were apartheid's beneficiaries. This is not simply to make the point that apartheid's beneficiaries were also subjects of the unconscious whose involvement in its ideology, and whose rewards for participation therein, often exceeded conscious registration. It is also to make a point about the evident inadequacy of many historical theorizations of agency. For Coetzee, there is something insufficient about how agency is construed in traditional accounts of apartheid-as-ideology:

If the ideologist as [conscious] subject writing the text of ideology is one commonplace, the man in the street as the object upon whom the text is written, the one made ready to be written on by his subjection to fears and prejudices that sweep over communities like infections, is another (Coetzee, 1991, p. 28).

Here we may link Coetzee's analysis to that of a variety of postcolonial theorists – of whom Homi Bhabha (2004) is perhaps the best-known example - who have long taken issue with such clear-cut categories of powerful agent and *acted upon* subject. Questions of the authorship of apartheid ideology - much like questions of the authorship of fantasy - would seem to require a different elaboration of agency to that which Coetzee finds in Structuralist approaches to ideology. The analysis of ideology, he argues, aims at *deciphering, unmasking*. "But who did the original ciphering, the original masking?" Indeed:

Does ideology cipher itself, mask itself, unconsciously, or...is ideology the creation of a group of people...who appropriate more or less inchoate popular notions, put them together in a pseudo-system, flesh them out with the appropriate rhetoric, and use them to further [their] interests? (p. 28)

Furthermore, is apartheid ideology a "free-floating, parasitic idea-system running the minds of its hosts" (p. 30), or is it an idea-system that has been consciously constructed, carefully crafted, devised and constantly reformulated by apartheid intellectuals? How then might we understand the bridging of social and individual realms of ideology, and, furthermore, which of these poles should we treat as the pre-eminent or causative category? A

series of inter-related problems come to the fore at this point, two of which are particularly deserving of systematic treatment. Firstly, the question of *the primary authorship of apartheid ideology* and the associated issue of the extraordinary type of authority, indeed, the ‘supra-agency’, that would have to underwrite this authorship. Already we may perceive a hint of what Lacan’s formulations can offer us in this respect, especially in view of the supra-agency of the Other as historical social substance. This is an agency that exists a level above that of everyday individual subjects and that plays the part of coordinating their everyday ideological interactions and presumptions. This seems to lead us in the direction, questionable at best, of an apparently agent-less agency, of an ideological authorship beyond the level of subjects.

Secondly, the issue that seems to most vex Coetzee: the problem of the ostensibly “extra-ideological” position that the authors of apartheid presumably occupy in the process of scripting apartheid ideology. Rather than querying a level of agency *above* that of the subject – i.e. the big Other as historical process - we are concerned here with the idea of ideologues able to rise above the everyday order of ideological discourse and tinker with its constructions. To clarify: I mean here to signal the awareness on the part of such ideologues *of their role in the ongoing construction of ideology*, in the *scripting* of ideological notions. This seems, on the one hand indisputable. Is such an “extra-ideological” position not presumed in the very task of fashioning propaganda? Does such a charge not require that one maintain a minimal degree of reflexive distance from one’s own discursive productions? (There is an interesting implication here: if such subjects are responding to the Other’s delegation to produce a systematic ideological representation, then surely the greatest truth of this system is *its own apparent untruth*, the fact of its very need for *ideologization*?). However, as a Žižekian critique of such a proclaimed “non-ideological” position would quickly point out, an imagined “stepping outside of ideology” is ideology at its most efficient. The implication is thus that such authors *are themselves caught up in the spell of the ideology that they are conjuring*.

These comments make apparent the degree of complexity that will be required in addressing questions of ideological agency and authorship, especially so, one might add, in situations where subject and Other are not

clearly delimited, where a fundamental ambiguity, or apparent overlap, characterizes their relationship. Importantly, this state of affairs, the fact of such oscillations of agency, the 'taking of turns' between subject and Other, indicates the need to consider the role of the unconscious, the unconscious understood in the Lacanian sense of *the subjective locus of the Other*. This lies at the forefront of what a Lacanian perspective brings to these dilemmas of ideology: an appreciation of the implication of subject in Other, and of Other in subject, an awareness of the inter-implication of the trans-subjective socio-historical substance and unconscious subjectivity. Coetzee's critique of apartheid historiography sounds more Lacanian by the moment: not only must desire be factored into historical analyses of apartheid, so must the issue of the subject-Other relationship, an unconscious relationship which involves the subject's (transferential) positing of what it is the Other wants.

What is called for then is an account able to understand how subjects are active as agents in an authorial ideological process which nonetheless at times over-rides them. This switching back between moments when the subject is spoken by the Other and when they voice their own fantasmatic objectives that nevertheless remain conditioned by the Other's presumed desire (as in Cronjé's own idiosyncratic apartheid visions), suggests that we are not far removed from the processes of alienation and separation. There is here something which resembles the circuit of questioning discussed above, namely the relentless ('*Che vuoi?*') recourse to *what the Other wants* as means of deciding issues of desire and of the order of an ideal, harmonious society. Lacan's concepts give us a degree of subtlety in how we go about understanding this to and fro movement where alienation in the Other gives way to a kind of momentary separation (firstly), and the associated emergence of fantasmatic objects and projects that in turn collapses back into alienation (secondly).

Is the big Other racist?

The predictable poststructuralist riposte to this situation of "stepping outside of ideology" is that we have overstated the agency of the ideologue, of the author. This entanglement of types of agency (subject and Other) has, seemingly, resulted from just such an error. We should start our analysis –

following this line of critique - with neither the intention of the author nor with the assumption that they are able to transcend the discursive systems of which they are a part. At this point however another question emerges which threatens the ascendancy of accounts which stress the de-subjectified and determining role of societal structure, institutions, discourse and so on. Are we dealing with a self-perpetuating system that proliferates simply for the purpose of extending itself, a case of a discourse whose predominant goal, to quote Edward Said is "to maintain itself...to manufacture its material continually" (1983, p. 216)? Is this what we need to apprehend, the equivalent of an ideological virus, a parasite that attaches itself to a society of subjects, certain of whom, for a limited time, act as its privileged points of articulation?

This is not an idea that can be simply dismissed: the combined momentum of historical, institutional and material relations of force certainly makes for a significant consideration in understanding the longevity of ideology. Nevertheless, such a phantom agency seems curiously devoid of human passions. The risk taken in pursuing such a line of analysis is that the factors of desire, irrationality and enjoyment are elided within accounts of historical change. Removing passionate human subjects from the equation leads us to ask a naïve question: why would the Other – in and of itself – continue to insist on racist ideology?

There is another problem with collapsing accountability into the category of the Other, one which will help us identify a potential misapplication of Lacanian theory. Mobilizing the notion of the Other of apartheid most certainly *does not* allow us to summarily conclude that the big Other is responsible for setting in motion the machinery of apartheid, true as it may have been that the historical trans-subjective order of white, colonial, pre-apartheid South Africa was indeed racist. Here, as elsewhere, it is imperative to reiterate that the Other retains the transferential status of presumption. As Žižek (1996) reminds us, the Other is posited, 'virtualized' by subjects precisely as a means of making sense of an opaque set of social relations; it is an operational hypothesis which enables the communicative and ideological coherence of a world they co-inhabit. Clearly then the Other cannot be made the patsy for apartheid, just as it cannot be fully divorced from the subjects who transmit and duplicate its values, subjects *who remain thoroughly*

implicated in the ideological universe thus extended. To reiterate the fact of the unconscious dimension touched on above: we are not dealing with the big Other as simply the *objective factuality* of the trans-subjective social structure. Insofar as we factor the unconscious into our analyses we are concerned also with the *subjective locus* of the Other. In applying the Other as an analytical tool we cannot separate it out from the realm of the *subject-Other relationship*, which is of course inclusive of the associated processes of alienation and separation.

To be sure then: the Other is reducible neither to the intra-personal nor to the societal; it is a function neither simply of the 'internal' nor the 'external', it is, by contrast, *the mediator* between these two aspects. My point is clear enough: the Other provides no trump-card in claims of non-accountability for racism, even though it certainly does add a new level of sophistication to questions of ideological agency as an analytical category that *resists reduction to either the psychical or the structural*. What this means then is that we can concede a type of supra-agency (the trans-subjectivity of historical, structural, societal conditions) as a paramount consideration - one which at times certainly does over-run or 'determine' certain utterances/actions of the subject - *without accepting that it wholly exhausts their subjectivity*. It is precisely in view of this latter consideration that the crucial distinction between alienation and separation comes into play.

Two further clarifications need to be made here as a means of expanding our understanding of the role of fantasy and desire, and indeed, of accountability and subjectivization, in the subject-Other relation. The first involves the introduction of a new analytical concept, the notion of enjoyment, that is, the affective intensity of the illicit libidinal gratification of *jouissance*. Such 'subterranean' modes of pleasure-pain elude the grasp of language; they cannot be easily factored into everyday categories of pleasure. However, despite this elusiveness, the subject for psychoanalysis remains *fundamentally accountable* for their *jouissance*. Now, to be sure, the theorization of alienation discussed above makes it clear that the subject is frequently 'over-written', determined by the symbolic structure such that their every attempt at speaking remains radically contingent on the expressive tools, the signifiers of their given discursive and historical 'grounds of

speaking'. Nevertheless - and here we have a clinical pragmatic insisted upon already by Freud - *the subject remains utterly responsible for their jouissance*. Zupančič (2000) makes a useful adjoining point: despite Lacan's 'de-psychologizing of the subject', that is, his repeated emphasis on the alienation of the signifier, he nevertheless insists on an irreducible element of *jouissance* as the 'proof of the subject's existence'. What this means then, returning to the concerns of our above discussion, is that the subjects in question remain accountable for each element of transgressive enjoyment they experience, be it by means of the 'pleasures' of racism or by means of the narcissistic "superiority" of exclusionary *Afrikanervolk* identifications. (Interestingly, Cronjé's very use of the term '*apartheidsgevoel*' (apartheid-feeling) appears to betray this fact, that the longevity of apartheid required not just a set of obvious libidinal investments, but a certain operation of *jouissance*, a particular ordering of enjoyment).

A second important clarification to the argument offered thus far concerns the difference between the desire of the Other and the 'individuated' status of the subject's fantasy. This is a distinction which returns us to the earlier differentiation between the alienated reproduction of signifiers within the field of the Other (firstly), and the fantasy-productions enabled by separation and supported by given modes of *jouissance* (secondly). We are, in other words, returned to the dissymmetrical circuit of questioning that I have elaborated above as a fantasmatic transaction. Important to grasp here is the fact that Fantasy is a means of response, the return-effect produced within this circuit *by the subject* as a means of dealing with the enigma of the Other's desire. This is the paradoxical aspect of fantasy that psychoanalysis helps us understand: fantasy is both that which lies at the very core of our subjectivity – it is that which more than anything else constitutes *what is irreducible about us* - despite that it cannot ever be fully separated from the field of the Other. How do we make sense of this paradox? By making it clear that fantasy is thus both in a sense autonomous – it is the *invention of the subject*, their unconscious response to the enigma of the Other's desire – and yet it is nevertheless contingent on the Other inasmuch as it is a kind of working hypothesis – and a libidinally-loaded one at that, charged with certain modes and promises of *jouissance* - to the question of the Other's desire. In short,

fantasy does not emerge outside of the parameters of this deadlock of the Other's desire, it is always an answer, a fantasmatic solution, to precisely this lack; as such fantasy remains dependent on the Other. At the same time, fantasy can never be reduced to the Other, it is *of the subject*, the Other does not generate fantasies, as Salecl (1998) notes, any more than it enjoys, partakes of *jouissance*.

This is the importance of the above two clarifications: both the accountability of *jouissance* and fact of fantasy *as invention of the subject* demonstrate that the subject *does* attain a degree, no matter how fleeting or transient, of subjective 'individuation' (or, more appropriately, *separation*). Further evidence then that racism cannot be the sole preserve of the Other, that it must, by contrast, be viewed as a negotiated transaction of desire between the subject and the Other.

The rewards of fantasy

My argument thus far has been to suggest that it is with recourse to the complexities of the subject-Other relationship described above that we may better understand certain of the ambiguities and paradoxes of ideological agency in apartheid. The twin processes of alienation and separation appear to offer an answer to whether ideologues are able to stand outside the frame of their ideological world. The answer, it would seem, is both 'yes' and 'no'. 'No' inasmuch as such subjects are thoroughly alienated in the Other whose socio-symbolic and historical substance they play their part in extending. 'Yes' inasmuch as separation allows them a degree of suspension from alienation, even if their individual fantasies are nonetheless fashioned as responses to the Other's desire, and done so within the parameters of certain fundamental questions ("What is it that the Other lacks?", "How might I repair this lack?", "What is my role and function here?", "What is missing in my society, how might it be restored, made complete?")

I wish now to turn to a third set of questions raised by Coetzee in his interrogation of apartheid historiography, that is, to the central issue of what, aside from the imperatives of Capital, propelled the ideological system of apartheid for so long? Given that apartheid occurred in the direction of certain interests, not all of which should be seen as material or even rational, then

what was the nature of its less than tangible, less than rational rewards? The identity of apartheid's beneficiaries seems clear-cut enough: all aspects of white South African society profited from apartheid. This much would appear beyond contention, although one should add the obvious qualification: the transactions of reward involved were not only conscious, but also, crucially, *unconscious* in nature. What Coetzee intimates is that we may need take account of a set of intangible rewards, types of interest – or, as we might add, *modes of enjoyment* - that not only eclipse the terms of clear-cut financial or symbolic gain, but that entirely exceed everyday categories of benefit.

Up until this point we have pin-pointed three inadequacies in standard apartheid historiography: the absence of an analytics of desire; the omission of any adequate discussion of the unconscious dimension of the subject-Other relation; and the neglect of the factor of certain non-material rewards. There is however one further issue that needs to be taken into account before turning our attention to an understanding of the evasive and intangible rewards underlying the intransigence of apartheid ideology. What we have been confronted with is not only a series of paradoxes of ideological agency within the context of a mad political system, we have also the challenge of explaining the particular obduracy of 'race' within this and similar systems. Part of our task is to understand this potent category of division, this Master-signifier, whose force is not adequately apprehended as a discursive artifact, a signifying construction.

Obviously, there are - and have been - many ways one might go about tracing the discursive deployment of 'race' as a constructed notion. A great variety of historical trajectories can be offered as means of tracking the use and growth of this notion as a particularly virulent signifier within the confines of colonial power. It seems to me however, by virtue of the 'constructedness' of race in such explanations, that one is obliged to go further, and to offer an account of something else, at a different ontological level, of what *brings about or necessitates this construction in the first place*. The 'constructedness' of race, in other words, should not represent the limit of our critical horizons, nor should it be the lesson we continually re-articulate. Another analytical priority thus takes precedence, one that can be expressed as a question: what

underlying process gives race its particular density and inescapability in the colonial sphere?

Implicit in these comments is a charge against the notion that 'race' can simply and summarily be deconstructed, 're-signified'. Equally evident is my sense of dissatisfaction with the idea that critical analysis is served merely by linking 'race' to ever more constructions within a broadening textual field. There is an obvious point to be made here about the limits of the socially-constructed world, about those analytical approaches which restrict their critique to such explanatory presumptions, and, indeed, about the role of psychoanalytic explanation in extending such an order of explanation. What is being neglected in such historicist-discursive accounts is the fact that race is bound up in an economy of fantasmatic values and identifications, in the pursuit of particular enjoyments and rewards.

One response to the question of what continued to propel the ideological system of apartheid - aside from the obvious incentives of capital - is to be found in the idea of *the rewards of ideology itself*. The first intuition to this effect that Coetzee (1991) finds in the literature - much of which he finds wanting in this respect - is Marks & Trapido's (1987) speculation regarding the gains of certain "ideological rewards". Coetzee initially treats this answer with a degree of skepticism; surely the notion of an ideological reward is a contradiction in terms, especially so if 'reward' must ultimately be traced back to a material incentive of sorts? Do we not risk giving an answer here (of "ideological rewards") that merely restates the subject of the question (ideology)? If we consider ideology as a system of representations engendered to conceal the inequitable "rewards" of various social contradictions, then surely it is not a reward itself, but precisely a *means to such ends*, a means that is to say of assuring and protecting a regime of material benefits?

If ideology is not just a means to an end, but is in some ways an end in itself, if it engenders its own intrinsic rewards outside the frame of material gains, then what might be an example of such an intrinsic ideological reward? The psychical benefits of racist ideology are easy enough to imagine; we might take as a case in point the narcissistic gain implied by the reiteration of one's own supposed superiority, the consolidation of an imaginary identity or

community. Here we are but a step away from Coetzee's (1991) insight, namely that such ideological rewards might be said to fulfill certain *fantasmatic functions*. This is the closest Coetzee feels he comes to a satisfying answer regards the non-material rewards of apartheid ideology - although, regrettably it is one he leaves largely undeveloped - namely the notion of what he terms the "phantasmatic reward" (1991, p. 29). As in the case of apartheid's preoccupation with racial purity - Marks & Trapido (1987) cite the massive importance that apartheid's legislators accorded to the Immorality and Mixed Marriages Acts - such ideological rewards were not those of material benefit but those of a very different type of possession: that of a particular *fantasmatic identity* (in this case, of white racial or ethnic Afrikaner purity).

The elaboration and protection of such a fantasmatic possession is painfully apparent in Cronjé's writing, much of which is concerned with the shoring-up of the fantasmatic identity of the *Afrikaanervolk* which he treats as far more precious than any material costs that may be incurred in ensuring its protection. What is equally apparent here is the extent to which such fantasmatic properties - or indeed, modes of enjoyment - are typically posed alongside equally fantasmatic threats. Cronjé's sublime object of the *Afrikaanervolk* exists always alongside the perils of racial blood-mixing (*rassemengelmoes*). We have thus a confirmation of Žižek's (1997) assertion that any given fantasy is divided between its beatific, stabilizing aspect (the promise, say, of absolute white racial purity/superiority) and its vexing, radically destabilizing aspect which forms the basis of a variety of exaggerated threats (for Cronjé, the contaminant of blackness, or, metonymically, the danger of infection by *black blood*). The dynamic interplay of these aspects should not be lost on us: the beatific dimension of fantasy functions to mask a structural impossibility (a pure, independent Afrikaner community existing in a state of self-contained harmony), whereas the second dimension provides the reason - and typically also a scapegoat - for why such an inherent impossibility could not be realized.

Coetzee goes on to query whether Marks & Trapido (1978), who supplied the notion of the 'ideological rewards', might not be read as suggesting that the electorate *and the legislators alike* of the crucial 1948

election that ushered in the apartheid state were caught in a “phantasmatic transaction” (1991, p. 29). Unfortunately, he veers off from the intriguing psychoanalytic implications such an answer affords, although he does approvingly suggest that in this depiction “no rigid line is drawn between the constructors of the ideology, and those who misperceive the world through the lens it provides” (1991, p. 29). The postulate of such phantasmatic transactions helps to muddy the notions that apartheid intellectuals were, to paraphrase Coetzee, *the exclusive and conscious authors* of this ideology, that apartheid ideology was merely *the text written by them*, and that the man in the street was the *object upon which this text was written*. We have a threefold disruption thus of *who* authored apartheid (the active role of ideologues understood in the light of a circuit of questioning of the Other’s desire), the *nature* of its ideology (which is thus more than merely textual) and the type of *subjectification* thus involved (phantasmatic *subjectivation*, that is, the active subjective production of fantasies, not merely subjects as structurally-determined). Likewise, the idea of phantasmatic transactions, especially once linked to the processes of the subject-Other relation described above, help us understand how apartheid ideology may have been *both* the “free-floating, parasitic idea-system running the minds of its hosts” (Coetzee, 1991, p. 30) *and* an idea system consciously constructed by apartheid intellectuals.

The structure of questioning I have described above involves a circuit joining two lacks within which the vital question of desire is posed to an enigmatic Other. This questioning, to reiterate, yields a return-effect, a response on the part of the subject in the form of a sublime object of fantasy which holds the promise of a kind of harmony or completeness, be it of an individual’s social role, or of the key meaning of an apparent societal impasse. We understand then why the naïve question of causality as to which is the pre-eminent category, the apparent ‘individual’ or ‘social’ dimensions of ideology, returns an answer of circularity. What do I mean by this? I mean to say yes, apartheid *is* a parasitic idea-system that is embodied in the Other, that comes before and over-rides its ideologues (the operation of alienation), at least in the sense that fantasy always emerges via a transaction with the Other’s presumed desire. However apartheid *is also* an idea-system put together by its ideologues. As in the process of separation, we are dealing

with a fantasmatic response to the enigma of the Other's desire, which is the invention of the subject, a function of their agency – an agency of fantasy and *jouissance* alike – that such subjects remain accountable for. ³

Conclusion

The motivating objectives behind this paper are by now, I hope, demonstrably apparent. I have aimed to add nuance and depth to the notion of a fantasmatic transaction, to take the promising start offered by Coetzee and link it to a series of Lacanian postulates. Doing so has opened an interesting perspective not only on the tenacious hold of 'mad' ideological systems and on the ties that bind subjects to Others during such historical periods, but also on the complicated patterns of authorship, agency and causality thus entailed. I have tried to show that there remains something irreducibly singular about the final, individualized realization of fantasies despite that they take shape within apparently formulaic socio-historical parameters. This is crucial in grappling with Cronjé's writings and his role as ideologue, and a point worth reiterating: fantasies are the return-effect resulting from the attempted separation of the subject from the Other, as such they bear the imprint of a kind of individuation even while they can never be said to be wholly independent of the Other. So, the fantasies that Coetzee is concerned with may be original, characterized by innovative components, unique arrangements and contents, without its authors having the ability to stand completely outside the contextualizing domain of the Other. Generic, stereotypical parameters of racist fantasy co-exist here alongside the individualized details and texture of its particularized realization, indeed, alongside the distinctive modes of its subjectivized *enjoyment* in unique subjects. Within this relation, this particularly Lacanian articulation of fantasy and desire, we have the germs of an account that can simultaneously contain a non-reductive subjectivity and – paradoxically – the role of a 'determining' Other.

Lacanian psychoanalysis provides a series of concepts that may be profitably applied in illuminating the fantasmatic functioning of apartheid ideology. Many of these concepts I have barely touched on: the enjoyment (*jouissance*) entailed in the pursuit of the sublime object, and the related idea

that the Other requires the constant influx of *jouissance* of those who constitute it (Žižek, 1992); the role of castration as apparent in the interplay between stabilizing and destabilizing elements of fantasy (the surplus of *what could be* relative to *what has been taken away*); the functioning of a prospective master-signifier (S1), (say, 'Afrikaanervolk') which positivizes a lack, and sets in play an unending chain of signifiers or knowledge (S2), hence transforming an empty place of meaning into a nodal-point of ideology. By contrast, I have opted to focus on a different and less evoked aspect of the Lacanian account of fantasy, namely the processes of alienation and separation as they occur within the dissymmetric circuit – or transaction – of fantasmatic desire. The reasons for this are, I hope, by now evident. For a start, it brings into sharp relief the driving force of desire, and the need to trace desire as a key analytical consideration in the analysis of power. Secondly, such an approach places the subject-Other relation centre-stage, something which enables us not only to flag-up the unconscious dimension of ideological processes (the unconscious here as “the subjective locus of the Other”), but also to throw light on a number of the paradoxes of agency and causality evidenced within the vacillating relation between subject and the Other.

Discussion of these processes adds new complexity to a series of vexing dilemmas of ideology; it disrupts the constraining categories of acted upon subjects, ideology as text, and ideologues as conscious authorial agents not themselves subject to the parasitic hold of the idea-system they play their part in constructing. Not only does recourse to the processes of alienation and separation help collapse many of these simplistic distinctions, it also does greater conceptual justice to the inter-implication of Other and subject, that is, to the inter-implication of the trans-subjective socio-historical substance and unconscious subjectivity.

The Lacanian concepts utilized here make a unique contribution to the understanding of apartheid racism. The fact that a fantasmatic transaction of sorts may underlie the workings of racist ideology is here absolutely crucial, the idea, in other words, of the unconscious subject-Other relationship, and of fantasy as the form of mediation that joins (or overlaps) these two positions of lack. This lies at the heart of the originality of the Lacanian contribution: the

notion that this mediation of lacks is made manageable, 'domesticated' by the provision of *objet a* and an according fantasy-frame. These two issues, the potent ideological question of what the trans-subjective socio-historical substance *wants* and the vehicle of fantasy which provides a variety of responses to this question of desire, prove absolutely imperative in understanding the many paradoxes underlying the historical insistence of apartheid racism. More succinctly put, these factors are of paramount importance if we are to grasp the peculiar economy of fantasy as it functions within racist ideology, in the 'mind of apartheid'.

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Short biography

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The over-arching focus of his research concerns the attempt to develop an ‘analytics of power’ sufficiently able to grapple with the unconscious and psychological dimensions of racism and ideological subjectivity. This work, which has drawn on – and often attempted to combine - aspects each of Foucauldian, postcolonial and psychoanalytic modes of critique has resulted in publications in *Theory & Psychology*, *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, *Geoforum*, *Psychoanalytic Review* and *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. His first single-authored text *Foucault, Psychology & the Analytics of Power*, was published by Palgrave in 2007. He is the coordinator of *Psychoanalysis@LSE* a multi-disciplinary research group that aims to advance the use of psychoanalysis as a distinctive means of sociological and political analysis.

¹ As I hope is obvious, just as Lacan’s theory of the processes of alienation/separation is not to be confused with Marxist or Existentialist notions of alienation, or indeed with any psychological theories of separation (developmental theories, notions of separation-anxiety, attachment, etc.) By contrast, we are here concerned with *an unconscious dimension of subject-Other relationship*, with one aspect of the inter-implication of the trans-subjective socio-historical substance and unconscious subjectivity.

² It is worth making mention of two attempts to extend Lacan’s alienation/separation distinction. Dolar (1998) makes the promising observation that this opposition can be read “as an elaboration of the difference between metaphor and metonymy” (p. 24). Jacques-Alain Miller (2007) speaks of how alienation “foregrounds the subject of the signifier, just as separation foregrounds the subject of *jouissance*” (p. 61). He also emphasizes the two different modes of identification thus implied: identification by means of representation (alienation), identification with the object (separation). In separation we cannot say that the subject is represented, by contrast:

All...we can say of the subject [of separation] is that it is little *a*. The subject asserts itself as object *a*. The positivization we have here with little *a* comes from the use that the subject makes of its own lack as subject of the signifier, by fitting itself to the Other’s lack. There is no representation. There is an identity as little *a* (p. 61).

³ The paradoxical time of separation supports this assertion of the circular time of ideology as manifest in the subject-Other relation, certainly so inasmuch as it involves an overlapping of future and past. Regards the subject's attempt to move beyond the inescapable determination of the symbolic Lacan (1979) makes reference to the 'future anterior', that is, the future past tense of 'I will have already been'.