

Presentation Prepared by
Pelın Dođan

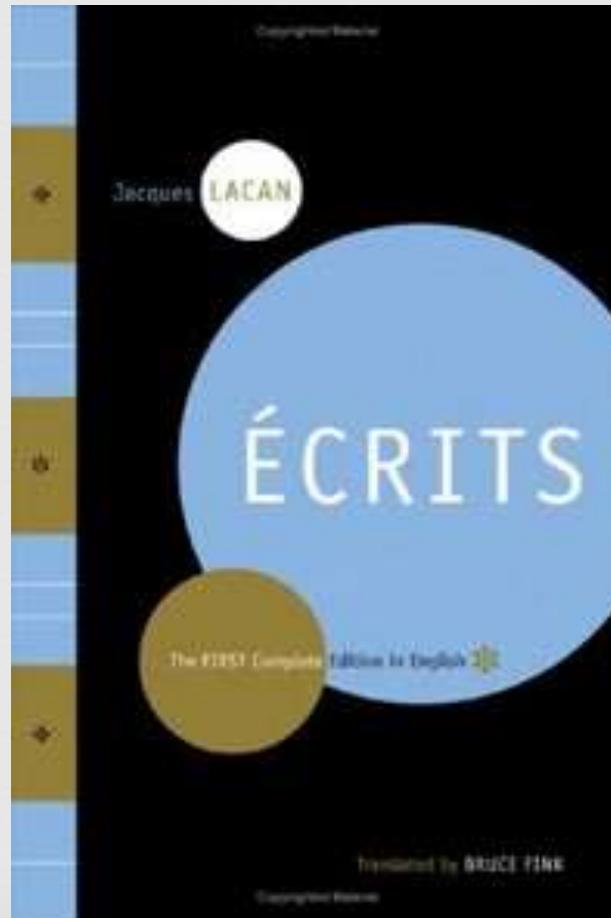


JACQUES LACAN (1901 – 1981)

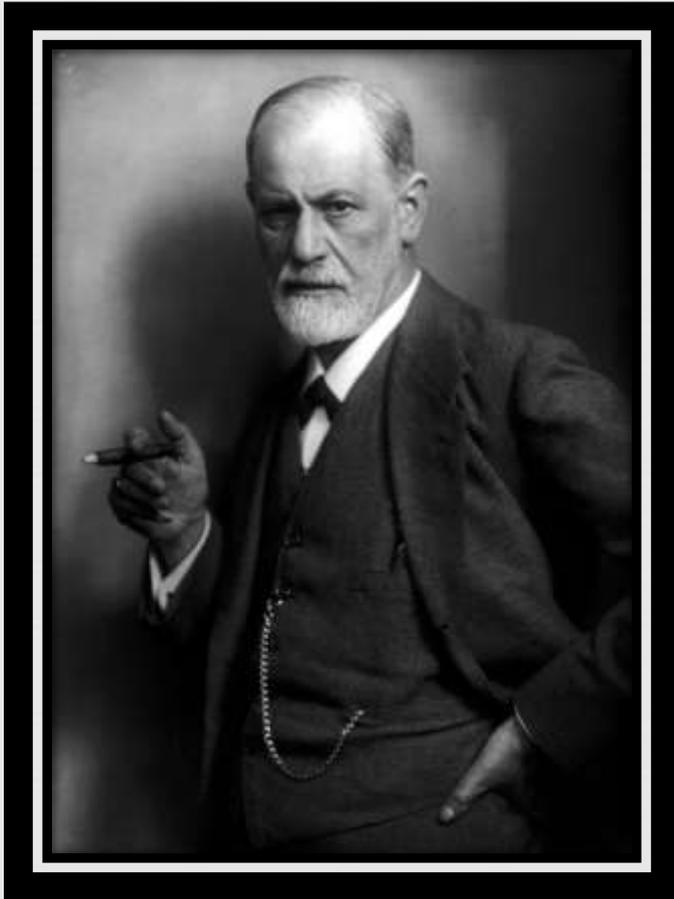
French psychoanalyst and cultural theorist.



Lacan's reputation was established by his publication of **ÉCRITS** (1966).



MAJOR INFLUENCES ON LACAN'S WORK



Sigmund Freud 1856-1939



Ferdinand de Saussure 1857-1913

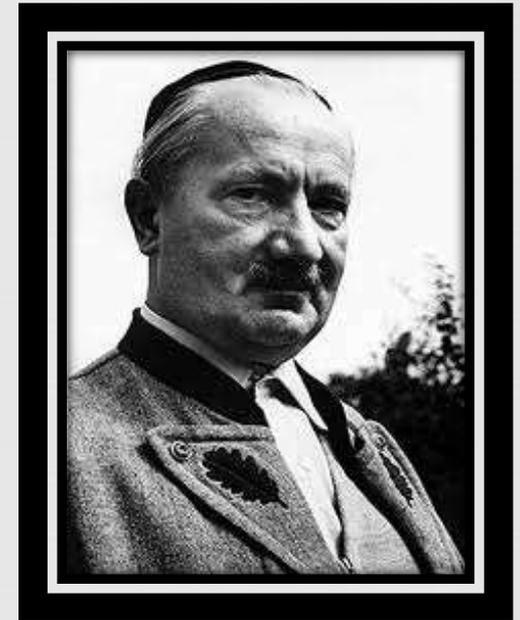
INFLUENCES ON LACAN'S WORK



Georg Wilhelm Friedrich
Hegel 1770-1831



Roman Jakobson
1896-1982



Martin Heidegger
1889-1976

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FREUD AND LACAN



- ✚ Freud has some structuralist elements.
- ✚ There is the telos of 'cure' and it aims to heal the ego.
- ✚ In Freudian psychoanalysis, there are set of clinical or therapy periods.
- ✚ Libidinal dynamics/forces are important.
- ✚ It focuses on biological explanations.
- ✚ 'Penis' is referred as a bodily organ.
- ✚ Lacan drew on structuralism but later on he employed a post-structuralist position.
- ✚ A process of individual research and self-discovery.
- ✚ In Lacanian epistemology, there is the variation of therapy periods.
- ✚ Linguistic dynamics are important.
- ✚ It focuses on cultural, sociological references.
- ✚ Lacan rather prefers to use 'phallus' in a metaphorical way.

'THE UNCONSCIOUS IS STRUCTURED LIKE A LANGUAGE'



This is an endless signification process.

'THE UNCONSCIOUS IS
THE DISCOURSE OF THE
OTHER'

THE GAZE OF THE OTHER



other → The ideal ego

Other ↗ The unconsciousness

↘ The symbolic order

LANGUAGE IS A HUGE TERM IN LACANIAN PSYCHOANALYSIS



✚ Rather than the infant speaking language actually the infant or the child is spoken of by language.

SELF IS NOT
SOMETHING STABLE
OR PREGIVEN

Ego



For both Freud and Lacan, as a result of Oedipalisation or the resolution of the Oedipal complex;

- ✚ The infant enters a kind of acculturation or humanizing process,
- ✚ The infant becomes gendered.

Ego



Lacan's understanding of ego differs from Freud since for him,

- ✚ Ego is not self-reliant
- ✚ Ego is an illusion and based on misconception
- ✚ Ego is the imago that we feel identified with
- ✚ Ego is a narcissistic constitution



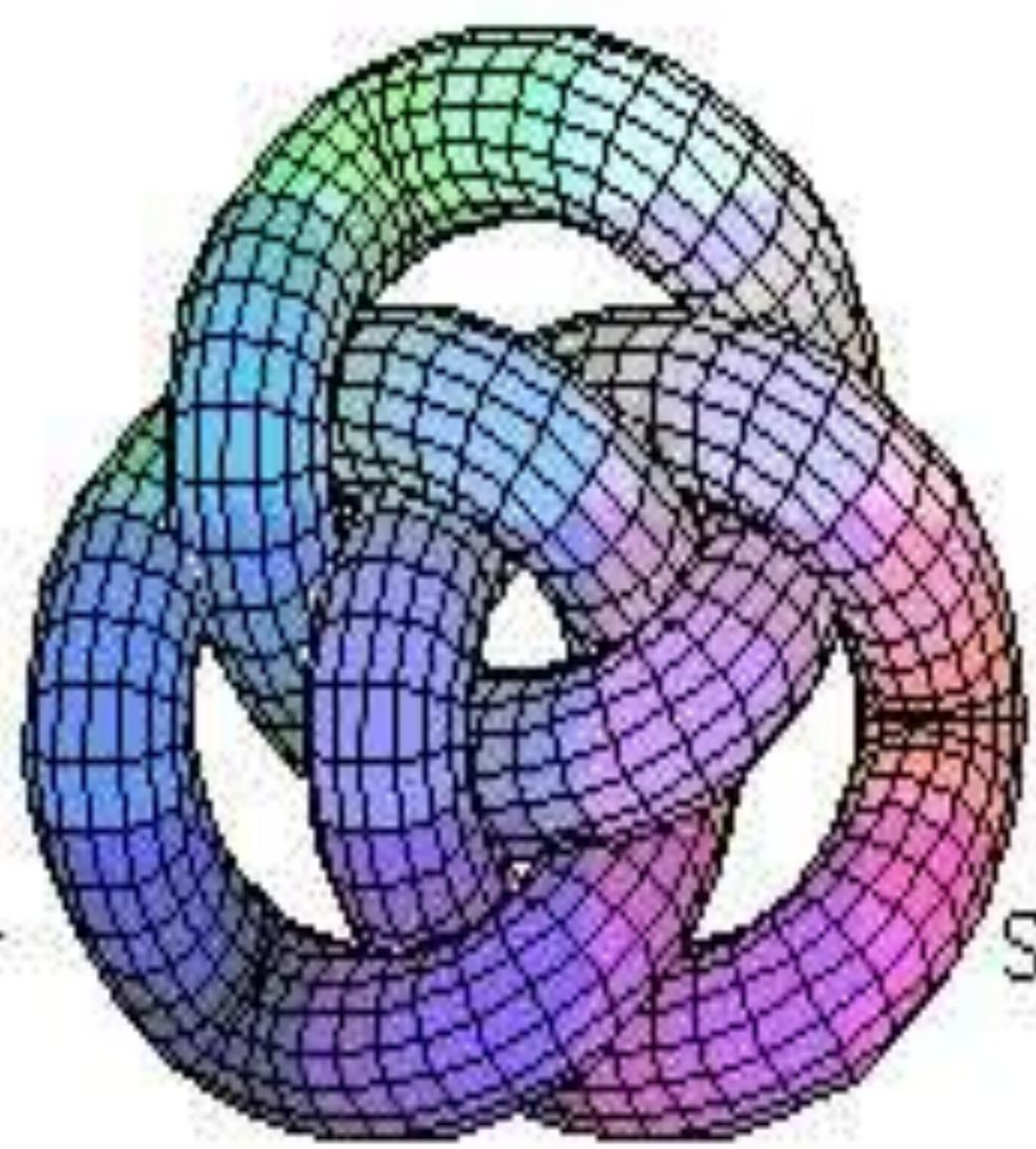
IMAGO: an idealized mental image of a person or the self

- The first imago (the earliest image in the mirror) is either the mother or the nourisher for the infant.



Concept	Phase of development
<p>•Need (mother's breast) 0-6 months</p>	<p>•Real (perfect unity, no language)</p>
<p>•Demand (need recognition and love, not just objects) 6-18 months</p>	<p>•Imaginary (sense of self is a misperception of self in mirror)</p>
<p>•Desire (since self is other, there is a sustained and never-ending lack) After language</p>	<p>•Symbolic (The symbolic order is the place of adulthood. Submit to rules of language. Law. Language. Restriction.)</p>

Real



Imaginary

Symbolic

THE IMAGINARY



- ✚ From 6 months onwards, the infant becomes aware of the images around it.
- ✚ A symbiotic/dyadic relation is established between the infant and the mother.
- ✚ The infant takes the mother as the first imago or it establishes the first identification with the mother.
- ✚ This identificatory process which is an illusion is repeated through and with other imagos.
- ✚ It is pre-linguistic.
- ✚ Aggression.



The Mirror Stage



- # The Mirror Stage occurs in the Imaginary realm, when the child is between 6 and 18 months.
- # The child sees its reflection in a mirror and recognizes that it is separate from its surroundings.
- # One must remember that this is a visual recognition and prelinguistic.
- # The child recognizes itself as separate in the mirror but it is a misrecognition.
- # It is a misrecognition because the mirror gives the child an illusion of autonomy and wholeness.



NARCISSISTIC IDENTIFICATIONS



Frederic Jameson who is a Lacanian thinker says that capitalism tries to enhance this narcissism in our culture because the more we look at our image in the mirror the more we consume/the more we do shopping. Therefore, this is an ideological position as well.



IMAGINE
HOW HAPPY SHE'LL BE WITH
THE SAME RING
AS HER FRIENDS, ONLY
BIGGER



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HER
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On second thought, maybe it's

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The Symbolic



- ✚ From 18 months onwards, we have the intrusion of the third element.
- ✚ The infant is precipitated into acculturation & humanizing process .
- ✚ The Symbolic realm is the realm of language and culture.

THE NAME OF THE FATHER



- ✚ The Name of the Father is not the actual person but is the authority figure.
- ✚ It must also be understood that The Name of the Father is not necessarily a male position, females can also occupy the position of The Name of the Father.
- ✚ Law of the Father.

Language castrates



- + Language constitutes our unconscious as well by breaking the symbiotic tie between the mother and the infant as the third element.
- + By castrating us, language moves us from the space of mother (nature) to the space of the father (culture).
- + This is the first NO of the father.
- + So, we repress our longing for the psychic wholeness.
- + There is the constitution of sexual identity.

Lack and Desire



- # The symbiotic bond is broken.
- # We have desire to go back to this sense of wholeness.
- # It is impossible to fix it again.
- # This desire is supposed to be very strong because that is the triggering drive to fill in this sense of lack.
- # Its object of desire changes throughout our lives.

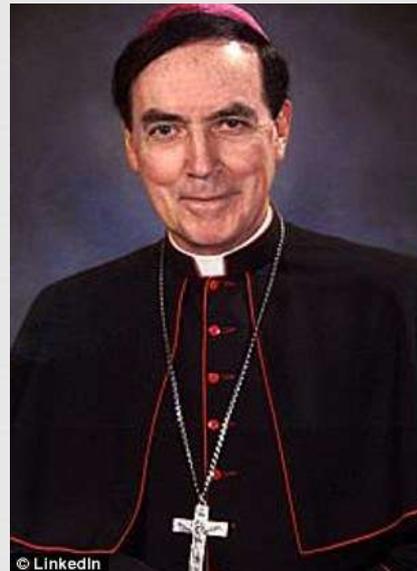
According to Lacan if this is an endless chain of signifiers and signifieds, then what is the point of speaking without a point of reference?

POINT DE CAPITON (THE ANCHORING POINT)



- ✚ The phallus
- ✚ The phallus is the primary signifier in Lacan's theory. It stands for both power and the lack of power.

Castration brings about a gap between one's psychological identity and symbolic identity. The subject's symbolic identity is always historically determined, dependent upon a specific ideological context.



THE REAL



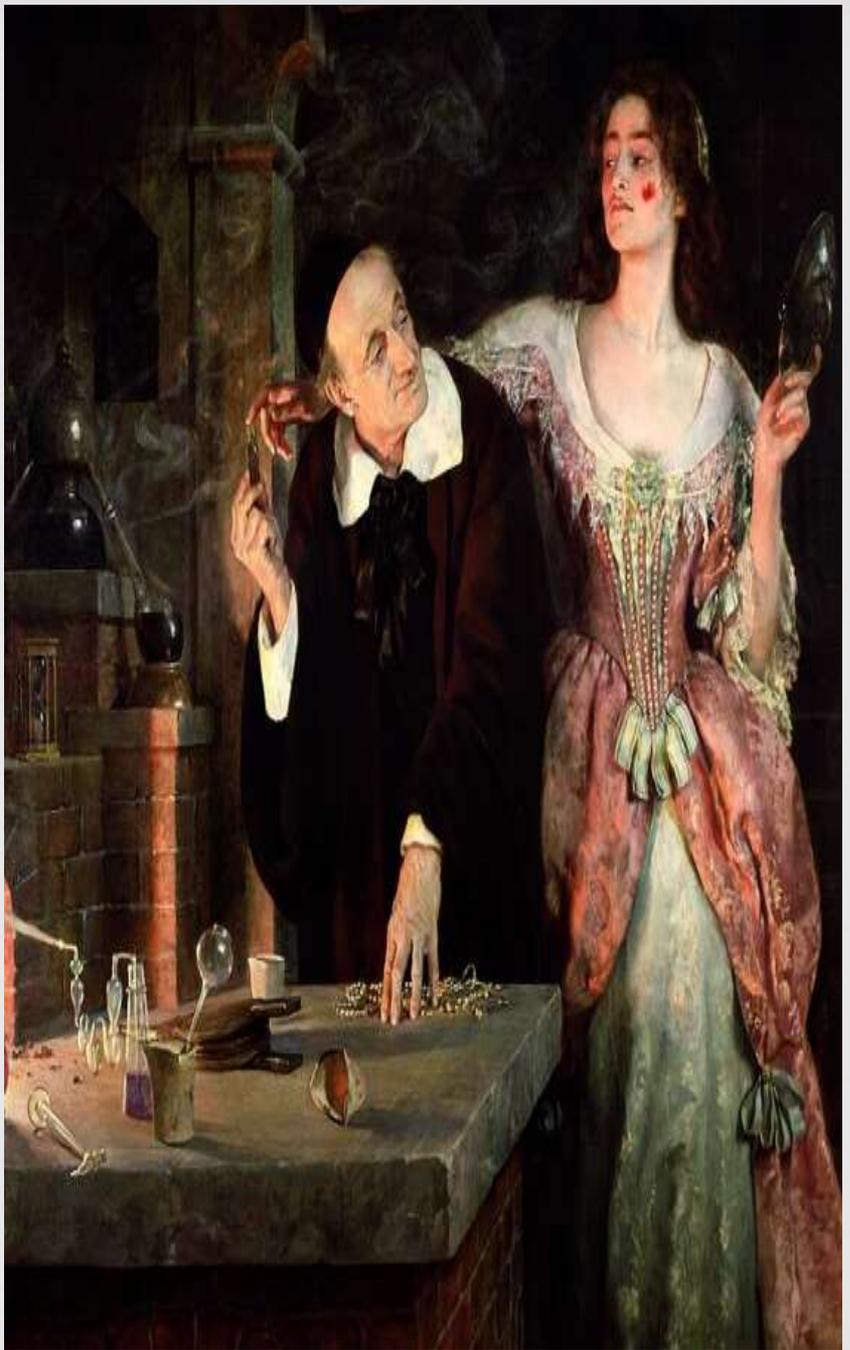
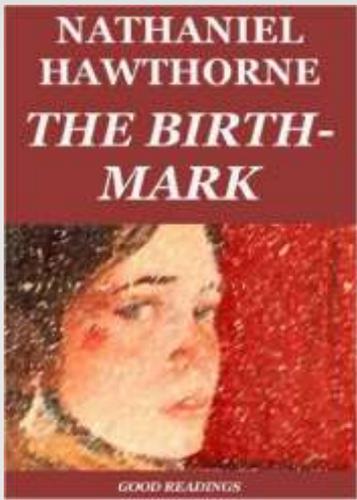
- ✚ We cannot grasp it
- ✚ It is beyond language.
- ✚ We can only have glimpses of it at certain points (moments of excitement/pleasure or threat).

REAL VS. REALITY



REAL: A materiality of existence beyond language and thus beyond expressibility.

REALITY: Fantasy world constructed through language/signifiers.



Lacan has influenced contemporary thinkers
such as
Kristeva, Althusser, Žižek, and Guattari



Julia Kristeva
1941-

Louis Althusser
1918-1990

Slavoj Žižek
1949-

Félix Guattari
1930-

WHAT DO THEY DO?



Psychoanalytic theory deals with these questions:

- # How do we understand ourselves as individuals?
- # How can literature help us understand ourselves?
- # How do we become fully functioning members of society?
- # How do we gain a sense of identity?

OBJECTIONS



- ✚ Phallogocentric
- ✚ Unreadable
- ✚ Too abstract
- ✚ No concrete solutions