THE REPRESENTATION OF THE OBJECT AS THE OTHER IN MODERNISM/POSTMODERNISM: A PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract. *This paper deals with the complex relationship of the modern psychoanalytic subject to his object which is both a material embodiment of the subject in representation (art and literature) and a metaphysical form of the subject as absence. The space of the subject in the world of objects is illustrated through an analysis of Surrealist art and poetry and the continuation of the paradigm in postmodern forms of representation, for which Andrei Voznesensky's poem "Oza" serves as an example.*

Key words: *Materiality of the object in Surrealism, desire, Voznesensky's Oza, the represented object as substitution for the Lacanian 'real" and the Freudian Id, the unrepresentable objet-petit-a, the Self as difference and 'lost' object.*

I THE OBJECT IN MODERNISM/POSTMODERNISM

From the beginning of the 20th century, the European arts have been focused on the representation of the object, which eclipsed or de-centred the solipsistic subject of 19th century Realism. The 'bizarre,' 'surrealist' object of Andre Breton reveals the 'marvellous'[1] in everyday reality. Giorgio de Chirico's cryptic objects in *The Evil Genius of a King* (1914)[2] reverberate with an uncanny presence. Magritte's *The Object-Lesson* (1947), along with the later film script *The Lesson of Objects* (1960),[3] establishes the principle

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[1] Compare Haim N. Finkelstein, *Surrealism and the Crisis of the Object* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1979), 13 ff.

[2] Compare *Four Modern Masters: De Chirico, Ernst, Magritte and Miro.* (The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1981), 18-19, plate 3.

[3] Compare Magritte's *La Leçon de Choses* [*The Object-Lesson*], in *Magritte: Retrospective Loan Exhibition,* Oct-Nov 1973, Marlborough Fine Art (London) Ltd, 97, plate 53. This picture, which represents a woman's torso cut up into three parts, each part fitting into a lower portion of the torso following the principle of a Matryoshka doll, is distinguished from a similar picture, entitled *Delusion of Grandeur* (1948) only by the protruding head and arms of a natural-size woman inside the Matryshka torso, with a white dove resting on her left hand. The film script, the full title of which is "Magritte, or, the Lesson of Objects" (A Luc de Heusch film,

that there is no necessary connection between things and something called 'reality' or even between things and their names. Marcel Duchamp's 'ready-made' object, such as his *Bicycle Wheel* (1913), or *Fountain* (1917) — actually a urinal turned upside down and signed[4] — was a declaration of equality between art and life. The artist is no longer the only privileged member of society, entrusted with the business of producing art. Art becomes 'artefact' and the artist becomes a craftsman in possession of a technique — a *techne*.[5] This proposition is not only echoed in Shklovsky's Formalist slogan 'art as technique,'[6] but appears in numerous manifestations of Futurist and Constructivist art and film, which privilege the mechanical, man-made and mass-produced object.[7] This emphasis on the simple, constructed object raised to the status of art, banishes the notion of 'the beautiful', unique work of art from aesthetics. In its stead, the ugly and the formless become subjects of art and literature. For in the age of the technical reproducibility of the work of art or art

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1960, with Rene Magritte), has nothing to do with the 1947 picture of the woman coming out of the enlarged embedded torso. What they share is the principle of representation of the object, which in both cases eschews the 'normal' dimension of mimetic or realistic representation. In the case of the 1947 painting, the object (the torso, the body) transgresses all the viewer's expectations about how such an object relates to the dimension of space. In the film script, the object (a 'real' piece of cheese and a painted piece of cheese) is offered to the viewer to 'try and eat it.' Through this impossible offer, Magritte re-states the main tenet of his Surrealist art, namely that in perception there is no boundary between 'reality' and representation. Compare "Magritte, or, the Lesson of Objects," in Harry Torczyner, *Magritte: Ideas and Images*, tr. by Richard Miller New York, 1977), 46. Compare also Suzi Gablik, *Magritte*, 2nd printing (London, 1971), 102.

[4] Compare Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* (New York, 1969), 291, plate 101 and 300, plate 111.

[5] The notion of art as 'technique' or as *techne* can best be understood in the context of Heidegger's definition, in which it is related to *power* and not to *skill:* "The power, the powerful, in which the action of the violent one moves, is the entire scope of the machination [*Machenschaft*], *machanoen,* entrusted to him. We do not take the word 'machination' in a disparaging sense. We have in mind something essential that is disclosed to us in the Greek word *techne. Techne* means neither art nor skill, to say nothing of technique in the modern sense. We translate *techne* by 'knowledge.' ... Knowledge means here not the result of mere observation concerning previousuly unknown data... Knowledge in the authentic sense of *techne* is the initial and persistent looking out beyond what is given at any time." Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics,* tr Ralph Manheim, Yale U P, 1987, 159 (first publsihed by Yale 1959) [based on Heidegger's lecture notes from 1935]. Heidegger's reinterpretation of the Greek concept of *techne* as 'knowledge', 'power' - amounts to a new poetics of art as an 'essent' of being, which provides a perfect philosophical back-drop for the Futurist/Surrealist poetics of 'defamiliarization' (Russian Futurists), transgression (Bataille, Duchamp) and violence (Artaud's 'theatre of cruelty'): "The work of art is a work not primarily because it is wrought [*gewirkt*], made, but because it brings about the phenomenon in which the emerging power, *physis,* comes to shine [*scheinen*]. It is through the work of art as essent of being that everything else that appears and is to be found is first confirmed and made accessible, explicable, and understandable as being or not being." Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics, opt cit.,* 159. Compare also Derrida's use of the term *techne* as a synonym for 'art' or 'representation' in *Jacques Derrida, "...That Dangerous Supplement...",* in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology,* tr G C Spivak, Johns Hopkins UP, 1976: 144.

[6] Compare Viktor Shklovsky, *Iskusstvo kak priem* [*Art as Technique*](1917), *Poetika* (Petrograd, 1919), 101-114. See also Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays,* ed Lee T Lemon and Marion J Reis, U Nebraska P, 1965, 3-25.

[7] Compare, for example, Dziga Vertov's Constructivist cinema, which moves the factory conveyer-belt and the anonymous laboring individual to center-stage, assimilating the factory product to a work of art and the anonymous working masses to producers of this new art form. Compare also Vladimir Tatlin's constructed (Constructivist) object, like the project for the *Monument to the IIIrd International* (1919-20). See Camilla Gray, The *Russian Experiment in Art 1863-1922*, (New York, 1962), 226, plate 203. See also Vlada Petric, *Constructivism in Film: The Man with a Movie Camera — A Cinematic Analysis*, (Cambridge, 1987).

object,[8] the ugly (ready-made, non-artistic) art object resembles nothing, it "never manages to raise itself to the level of the double of the image, of reproduction (of the typical or characteristic). It remains a case."[9] The ready-made, non-artistic object, which is deprived of beauty, is thus a non-generality. It is an irreducible particularity - a 'presence' and a force, which eludes representation. As such, it is close to the 'real' but not reality, which is something unknown.[10] The 'real' is coeval with the Freudian 'uncanny.' It is something that escapes rational mental activity: it is beyond sense and sensibility. The 'real' is something that is by definition 'impossible.'[11] As such, it coincides with the *id* (das Es) or the Freudian Unconscious as an exteriority, which is at the opposite pole of subjectivity.[12]

The materiality and concreteness of the object represented in Surrealist and Constructivist art is ambivalent. Although apparently reduced to its basic materiality and uniqueness, the Surrealist object nevertheless remains a representation. It signifies. Even if it signifies 'nothing,' it nevertheless signifies. Moreover, the object signifies in space and not in time. The object is always a spatial object. As a spatial object, the object is always 'present,' and yet it is 'nowhere.' This 'presence' is thus equivocal. For the object is a dual entity: it is an object in space and a representation. As representation, the object is refracted or specularized. In other words, in its doubling as an image, it loses something of its 'presence' to the process of signification, which relies on interpretation. In order to interpret an object, a perceiving subject has to 'refer' the object to a 'concept' or sign. This involves a deferral in time, which dislodges the object from its 'present' spatiality and relocates it on 'another scene,' which is always the scene of 'absence.' This 'other scene' is the scene of the Unconscious, in which concepts or signs are generated in much the same way as dreams or thoughts, namely as wishes (hallucinations or day-dreams).[13] The

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[8] Compare Walter Benjamin's influential essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), in *Walter Benjamin: Illuminations, Essays and Reflections*, ed. and with introd. by Hannah Arendt (New York, 1969), 217-251. See also an excellent commentary on Benjamin's poetics of the reproducible art object by Joel Snyder, "Benjamin on Reproducibility and Aura: A Reading of 'The Work of Art in the Age of Technical Reproducibility,'" in *Benjamin:Philosophy, Aesthetics, History,* ed. Gary Smith (Chicago and London, 1989), 158-174.

[9] These words belong to Denis Hollier, who discusses the relationship between the 'ethnographic' and the 'surreal' object as this difference was perceived by the *Documents* group of Georges Bataille and Michel Leiris in the 1930s. The ethnographer wanted to include all existing objects, no matter how trivial or formless, in the Museum of Man. The Surrealists of the *Documents* group gave the 'formless' a much more radical meaning. For Bataille, the "formless declassifies (*declasse*)". The 'formless' "destabilizes the difference between object and world, between part and whole." The 'formless' is thus the ultimate particularity, the 'absolute exception,' the unique but without 'properties.' See Denis Hollier, "The Use-Value of the Impossible," *October 60*, 20.

[10] Magritte said, for instance: "Reality . . . Many people confidently speak of it as if they knew it. For me it is a word as devoid of meaning as, for example, the words God or matter." See Rene Magritte, "Magritte, or, the Lesson of Objects," op. cit., 46.

[11] Lacan says, for instance, that "since the opposite of the possible is certainly the real, we would be lead to define the real as the impossible." Jacuqes Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis,* ed. by J-A. Miller, tr. by Alan Sheridan (New York, London, 1981), 167. The impossible is thus the 'unrepresentable,' that which does not exist in the logical space of possibilities. The 'real' is, among other things, the 'genotext,' defined by Julia Kristeva as the 'semiotic,' pre-Oedipal, pre-Symbolic realm of rhythm and pure structure without a referent. Compare Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, (New York, 1984), 87.

[12] Compare Haim N. Finkelstein, pt. cit., 19, who points to the similarity between the Surrealists' exploration of the mind and of the 'unknown,' and Freud's study of the Unconscious.

[13] Compare Sigmund Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, tr. by James Strachey, ed. by James Strachey, assisted by Alan Tyson, volume editor Angela Richards (Penguin, 1975), 114-115. Although Freud makes much of the

Surrealist concrete and present object thus comes to signify its opposite: namely absence. The 'concrete' represented object is thus not itself but an invisible and uncanny 'absence,' in which it originates as image or as second order reality. This is the reality of the Unconscious or of the uncanny, which by definition cannot be represented. The Surrealist object, which at first approach appears to be a 'presence' in space, turns out to be a representation of 'absence' and as such a substitution for the 'unrepresentable.' To represent the 'unrepresentable,' Surrealism constructed the metaphors of space and silence. These came to simulate 'states of affairs'[14] - a spatially conceived relational condition of the possibility of complete signification. Magritte's *Lost Jockey* (1940, 1942) or Paul Delvaux's Venus pictures (*The Public Voice*, 1948, *The Night Train*, 1947, *Venus Asleep*, 1944, *Les Belles de Nuit*, 1936) represent objects and inert figures in space, which materialize out of an 'invisible' but palpable absence, evoked 'visually,' that is, synaesthetically, as silence.

The theme of the unrepresentable object is taken up in 'object' or 'thing' ('concrete') poetry, which emerged in some European literatures around WWII.[15] In his *Study of Objects*,[16] Zbigniew Herbert celebrates "the object which does not exist." This non-existent object is like 'unimaginable' space. For, paradoxically, "it has no hole/and is entirely open." In his poem *The Orphaned Absence*,[17] Vasko Popa addresses a self-procreating "abandoned abyss": "And you smell all over of absence/You have given birth to yourself." The abyss grows into the image of an "orphaned girl." This is the poet's absent muse, who, paradoxically, finds herself on the "path" of the poet's "word," which looks "[A]s if it leads to some sort of presence." This movement from 'absence' to 'presence' along the path of poetic speech or through the texture of the poet's verse is repeated in a poem by Aleksandar Ristovic, entitled *Apple in a Restaurant*:

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manner in which dreams 'think' in images, while waking thought 'thinks' in verbal concepts, he nevertheless arrives at the conslusion that all thought, like all dreaming, is wish fulfilment: "Thought is after all nothing but a substitute for a hallucinatory wish." *Interpretation of Dreams*, 721.

[14] Compare Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, tr D F Pears & B F McGuinness, Routledge, 1974 [First published in German 1921, in English 1922]: "What is the case - a fact - is the existence of states of affairs." [*Tractatus*, paragraph 2] 'States of affairs' are thus a generalized logical space in which objects ('facts') can relate to each other in order to form a signifying 'grid.'

[15] Compare Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover, "Post-Modernism in Eastern Europe After WWII: Yugoslav, Polish and Russian Literatures," *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1991), 123-143, in which I deal with the 'thing' poetry of the Polish poets Zbigniew Herbert, Miron Bialoszewski, Jerzy Zagorski, Czeslaw Milosz and the Yugoslav poets Vasko Popa and Aleksandar Ristovic. This poetic *genre* is certainly genealogically related to 'concrete poetry' of Modernism (like the *zaum* or 'trans-sense' poetry of the Russian Futurists and the *chosiste* poetry of the French avant-garde, triggered by Mallame's 1897 piece *Un coup de des*. Compare the reference to this in Martin Jay, *Donwcast Eyes*, U California P, 1994: 179, and Jay's note 98, citing Augusto de Campos' study of the French phenomenon: "Points - Periphery - Concrete Poetry," in Kostelanetz, ed., *The Avant-Garde Tradition in Literature*. Jay also quotes Lyotard's approving comments on Mallarme's devaluation of communication and privileging of the 'word' as 'thing' and 'absence': "When the word is made thing, it is not to copy a visible thing, but to render visible an invisible, lost thing: it gives form to the imaginary of which it speaks." Quoted in Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes, opt cit.*, 179.

[16] Zbigniew Herbert, *Selected Poems*, tr. by Czeslaw Milosz and Peter Dale Scott, with an intr. by A. Alvarez (Penguin Books, 1968), 104-7.

[17] Vasko Popa, *Pesme* (Belgrade, 1976), 178. The translation from the Serbo-Croat is my own.

I have an apple in my hand,
I have half an apple,
a mouthful,
in the end I don't even have that much.

This 'concrete' apple, which dissolves in space as if by prestidigitation, reappears as if by magic in the transparent form of words:

And a shimmerimg sentence like a scintillating thread
reaches my mouth straight from the entrails:
the apple is present once again
with its ruddiness, odor and transparent texture[18]

European prose of the early 20th century is similarly interested in the relationship of objects to absence/presence. In Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (1922-31), the hero's life is represented through memory, which turns experience into alienation and absence. However, the fact that the hero can recall his 'absent' experience through narration, turns this 'absence' into a newly created presence. This new 'presence' is the virtual reality of *logos*, of language and of 'writing.' In Andrei Bely's equally significant Modernist novel *Petersburg* (1913-1916), the Cubist geometry of the pre-revolutionary city of St Petersburg becomes an abstract logical grid, in which fictional characters are deployed at oblique and obtuse angles of vision. The uncanny atmosphere of the setting, conjured up by concrete objects and concrete space, constitutes a universe of absences (the absent mother, the absent relationship between Ableukhov senior and Ableukhov junior, the absence of sense, the absence of love, the absence of necessity). This universe of absences becomes the context for the displaced and condensed stream-of-consciousness narratives of the cast of eccentric and alienated characters.

The interest in the object and its relation to the subject of consciousness has motivated modern psychoanalysis since Freud. The Freudian Unconscious is, in fact, defined by its relationship to a primary 'absent'[19] object, whose locus is in the 'id' (*'das Es'*).[20] It is against this primary 'lost' object that the 'ego' (*das Ich*) comes to constitute itself as an ego, whose primary objective is to be 'recognized' (as a unique and particular - *different* - object) by other egos. 'Desire,' which is desire for recognition, is thus bound up with the instituting structure of absence/presence,[21] which is the structure of *pure difference.* The

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[18] Aleksandar Ristovic, *Ta poezija — pesem [That Poetry - Verses]*, (Belgrade, 1979). The translation from the Serbo-Croat is my own. Both Popa and Ristovic are now deceased.

[19] The constitutive quality of 'absence' can be observed in childhood anxieties, such as being afraid of the dark, of being alone, disliking strangers. "It would seem that the child's fear crystallizes around an absence - that of the loved and longed for-person." Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism,* Penguin, 1990: 81.

[20] Compare Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and the Id" (1923), in *The Freud Reader*, ed. by Peter Gay, (London, 1995), 628-658. See also: Sigmund Freud, *Studienausgabe, Band III: Psychologie des Unbewussten,* herausgg. von Alexander Mitscherlich, Angela Richards & James Strachey (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1982), 273-330.

[21] Freud captured the fundamental importance of the structure of *difference* in the constitution of the pre-adolescent individual when he observed his grandson at the *fort-da* game. The child played this game as a gestural and vocal reenactment of the 'loss' of its mother (who had to be absent from the child for significant periods) and a symbolic retrieval of the 'lost object' through a language game. Compare Jonathan Scott Lee's exposition of Freud's *fort-da* dialectic in his , *Jacques Lacan, opt. cit.,* 51-2.

Self, which constitutes itself as and through *difference,* relies solely on absence—the lost object or the impossible 'real'—as its foundation and support.[22]

Jacques Lacan, whose revision of Freud's concept of the Unconscious has taken psychoanalysis into the domain of structuralism and linguistics, operates with the concept of the *Other* to re-define the Self as a subject of language. The psychoanalytic Other is an abstract locus which overlaps with the Freudian concepts of the 'other scene' and the 'id.' Both the Other and Freud's *ein anderer Schauplatz* [23] are a-temporal and non-spatial substitutions for the 'unrepresentable' or the Unconscious. Both are theorized as abstract, structural categories, which position the equally 'abstract' (psychic) subject of consciousness in a grid of potential significations.

Freud operated with a topological model of the psyche, in which interacting systems of Perception-Consciousness, the Preconscious, Unconscious, Repression and 'listening/hearing' (the acoustics or 'listening cap' on Freud's 'onion' diagram) were mediating instances between the 'id' and its product, the 'ego.'[24] Lacan transformed this 'static' model into a dynamic structural model in his so-called 'schema L'(1966).[25] In Lacan's model, the subject of consciousness is 'split' from the outset (into the *Je* - as distinct from the ego - the *moi*) and situated in a complex relational field of imaginary identifications.[26] Put concisely (and at the risk of simplification), these relations constitute a quaternary structure, whose sole 'support' is a binary structure. The binary structure consists of an identification with a symbiotic 'other': the mother (the nurturer), the mother's breast and a host of 'objects,' which are in themselves already substitutions for an unrepresentable 'lost' (or 'absent') object or originaly 'lack.' This original 'lack' is located in the 'real' of the sub-

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[22] The relationship of the subject or Self to desire was first illuminated philosophically by Hegel in the sections on Lordship and Bondage of his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic, in turn, was interpreted for Western intellectuals, who made up the Surrealist and Structuralist movements in the 1930s, by Alexander Kojève, in his influential Sorbonne lectures on Hegel. Compare G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), tr. by A.V. Miller, with analysis of text and foreword by J.N. Findlay (Oxford, New York, Toronto, Melbourne, 1977), "Lordship and Bondage," 111-119. Compare also Alexander Kojeve, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, assembled by Raymond Queneau, ed. by Allan Bloom, tr. by James H. Nichols, Jr., fifth printing (Ithaca and London, 1993), chapter 2, 31-71.

[23] Lacan, who re-appropriated Freud's term, explains: ". . . Freud named the locus of the unconscious by a term that had struck him in Fechner (who, incidentally, is an experimentalist, and not the realist that our literary reference books suggest), namely, ein anderer Schauplatz, another scene; he makes use of it some twenty times in his early works." Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection*, op. cit., 193.

[24] Compare Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and the Id," in *The Freud Reader*, op. cit., 636.

[25] Jacques Lacan, "On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis," in Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits:A Selection*, tr. by Alan Sheridan (New York, London, 1977), 179-221. Compare also the commentary by Andre Green, "The Logic of Lacan's objet (a) and Freudian Theory: Convergeneces and Questions," in *Interpreting Lacan*, eds. Joseph H. Smith, William Kerrigan (New Haven and London, 1983), 161-191.

[26] That the various 'phases' of psychic transformation of the subject are not strictly chronological categories has been stated time and again. The best way to eliminate the notion of progression in time when speaking of the manner in which the 'self-conscious' subject comes into being and into signification is to conceptualize the subject, with Lacan, in its three 'registers' — the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic, which interlock in a 'Borromean knot.' Compare Jacques Lacan, "Seminar of 21 January 1975," in *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and The Ecole Freudienne*, ed. by Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, tr. by Jacqueline Rose (London, 1983), 169. Compare also the elucidation of the Borromean knot by Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan*, (Amherst, Massachusetts, 1990), 196. Compare also Philippe Julien" "An Imaginary with Consistency," in Philippe Julien, *Jacques Lacan's Return to Freud: The Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary,* (New York and London, 1994), 172-184.

ject's body and constitutes "a real moment of which no 'being' has memory, but to which each subject tries to give voice in words, images and symptoms."[27] The roots of the 'real' are in the "objects-cause-of-desire that give rise to the oral, anal, vocative and scopic partial drives."[28] These substitutory objects Lacan designates as 'objects of the small other' (*objets petit a*).[29]

The quaternary structure of *Schema L* traces the path of the subject's 'split' or 'doubling' as a result of his[30] entry into language and culture (the symbolic order). In the quaternary relationship, the subject 'identifies' with a 'big' (capital) *Other,* which represents the (Name of the) 'Father' or the 'Law' (of the signifier). 'Identification' here is synonymous with the 'fading' of the subject, his 'sliding' under the signifier, which in point of fact constitutes the 'field' of the Other. In this 'field' (and there is no other 'field'), the subject's 'discourse' comes to be constituted as the 'discourse of the Other.' The subject is thus forever 'absent' to himself, but metonymically 'chained' to his *small other* (*objet petit a*), which becomes the elusive (repressed) 'cause' of the subject's desire.[31] The psychoanalytic subject is thus from the start a thoroughly 'fictitious' ('construed' or 'psychic') being, existing only in and through a network of imaginary relationships with imaginary ('psychic'[32]) objects, and predicated on a *lack-of-being* (*manque-a-etre*).

The split subject of consciousness is thus, in part, a signifier (for him/herself) and for other subjects, and, in part, his own (repressed) signified.[33] The subject is thus "an object

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[27] Ellie Ragland, "An Overview of the Real," *Reading Seminars I and II: Lacan's return to Freud,* eds R Feldstein, B Fink, M Jaanus, SUNY Press, 1996: 195.

[28] Ellie Ragland, *ibid.,* 195.

[29] Lacan defines the *objet a* in terms of a primary separation or splitting of the subject, which determines the subject's future existence in permanent alienation from himself: "Through the function of the *objet a*, the subject separates himself off, ceases to be linked to the vacillation of being, in the sense that it forms the essence of alienation." Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, op. cit., 258. In the French phrase *objet petit a* — the *'a'* stands for the French word *autre*, meaning *other.*

[30] I am using the trem 'subject' as a grammatical masculine form, and hence a generic term subsuming both the masculine and feminine genders.

[31] Lacan states that "the symptom is a metaphor...as desire is metonymy," in Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection, opt cit.,* 175. However, as he will concede elsewhere, the two basic mechanisms of language (metaphor and metonymy) are reciprocal constituents of the 'field of the signifier:' the "one side" is "metonymy", "T]he other side is metaphor." Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection, opt. cit.,* 156. For metonymy is present in metaphor, like a repressed ('occulted') signifier, which goes 'under' (or 'fades') in the process of substitution, which is metaphor. For the "creative spark of metaphor does not spring from the presentatio of two images, that is, of two signifiers equally actualized. It flashes between two signifiers one of which has taken the place of the other in the signifying chain, the occulted signifier remaining present through its (metonymic) connexion with the rest of the chain. *One word for another:* that is the formula for the metaphor..." By contrast and concomitantly, "it is in the *word-to-word* connexion that metonymy is based." Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection, opt. cit.,* 157, 156. Compare also Jonathan Scott Lee's lucid summary of the interaction of absence/presence in the relationship of metonymy to metaphor: "Metaphor's ability to make present something that is absent is the basis for language's ability to represent (in some sense) a reality that is external to and thus absent from language. This metaphoric power remains ultimately dependent on metonymy, however, reinforcing the centrality of the chain of signifiers for Lacan. " Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan, opt. cit.,* 56.

[32] Lacanian "things," as Maire Jaanus points out, "are psychic or mere traces of a real thing." Maire Jaanus, "The *Demontage* of the Drive," in *Reading Seminar XI: Lacan's Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis,* ed R Feldsein, B Fink, M Jaanus, SUNY Press, 1995, 125.

[33] Jonathan Scott Lee puts the 'divisions' of the subject somewhat differently: "The Lacanian subject is the uneasy coexistence of three distinct moments. There is, first of all, the real 'presence that is speaking to you,' the speaking body, the subject of the actual act of enunciation. Secondly, there is the symbolic subject

framed by itself."[34] The subject's 'repressed' is *jouissance*,[35] which surfaces as hysteria, voice and speech. Thus *jouissance* marks language as an 'excess,' because language always conveys a 'sense' that is more (or less) than *it would want to say (vouidrait dire)*.[36]

Because the subject is defined only in relation to 'an Other' and an 'Elsewehere,' the mode of being for the subject of consciousness is alienation. That is, the subject exists as a self-instituting *absence*. Or, as Lacan has put it, "[D]esire, boredom, confinement, revolt, prayer, sleeplessness(...) and panic are there as evidence of the dimension of that Elsewhere, and to draw our attention to it (...) as permanent principles of collective organizations, outside which human life does not appear capable of maintaining itself for long."[37]

In sum, the most important moment in the constitution of the Lacanian 'split subject' of consciousness, the subject whose mode of existence is in various kinds of alienations (neuroses, psychoses, boredom etc) is the moment of identification with an object. Even Freud, who at first played with the 'perception' of the 'external world' as an instituting moment for the relationship between the ego and the id,[38] quickly progressed to the object as that which allows the ego to differentiate itself from the id (or, in Lacan's terms, from the 'real'). This object is in the first instance the ego's own body: "The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity, but it is itself the projection of a surface."[39] In a recent study on Eros and culture, Alphonso Lingis argues that in primitive society man scarifies and mutilates his body and suffers pain as part of a process of 'inscription' of the ego's body, which allows the primitive to differentiate himself from the animal and natural world as a carrier of 'culture' or a creature of the 'fourth dimension.'[40]

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indicated by the *je* of the speaking body's discourse, the subject of the statement actually uttererd. The third moment of the subject...is the imaginary *moi* constructed ...early in chidlhood to give the subject an identity that it really lacks. " Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan, opt. cit.,* 82.

[34] Ellie Ragland, "An Overview of the Real," in *Reading Seminars I and II: Lacan's return to Freud,* eds R Feldstein, B Fink, M Jaanus, SUNY Press, 1996: 195. I&II:195.

[35] The term *jouissance* is a key concept in Lacan's psychoanalysis. It designates an 'excess[ive]' [in] enjoyment or pleasure, analogous to sexual orgasm, and having the effect of transporting the subject beyond the limits of the Self without actually killing him in the process, although *jouissance* is close to 'death' (as evidenced in the French synonym for orgasm, which is *petite morte*). Compare Ellie Ragland: "The subject lives in the blind spot between his objectal *being* and the language that seeks to represent this. Put another way, repression is repression of the fact that we are first and foremost creatures of jouissance." Ellie Ragland, in *Reading Seminars I and II: Lacan's Return to Freud,* eds R Feldstein, B Fink, M Janus, SUNY Press, 1996, 195.

[36] Ellie Ragland's interpretation of *jouissance* as an 'excess' bearing on language, and thus not on bodily (sexual) but on 'psychic' pleasure, carries, I think, the correct emphasis. Compare Ellie Ragland, "An Overview of the Real," *Reading Serminars I and II: Lacan's Return to Freud,* eds R Feldstein, B Fink, M Janus, SUNY Press, 1996, 195. Jonathan Scott Lee's elaboration of Lacanian *jouisance* in terms of *male* and *female* desire, and his distinction between 'phallic jouissance' and "*jouissance* proper"(what is this 'proper' *jouissance*?), based, it would seem, exclusively on Lacan's cryptic Seminar XX, *Encore* 1972-3, is over-determined through the questionable polarising of *jouissance* in relation to gender. Compare Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan, opt. cit.,* 179.

[37] Jacques Lacan, "On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis," in Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits:A Selection*, tr. by Alan Sheridan (New York, London, 1977), 192.

[38] "Moreover, the ego seeks to bring the influence of the external world to bear upon the id and its tendencies, and endeavours to substitute the reality principle for the pleasure principle which reigns unrestricted in the id..." S. Freud, "The Ego and the Id", in *The Freud Reader*, op. cit., 635-6.

[39] Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and the Id', in *The Freud Reader, opt. cit.,* 636-7.

[40] Alphonso Lingis, *Excesses: Eros and Culture* (Albany, 1983).

The subject, whose identity is dependent on imaginary objects, thus constructs himself out of fantasy. This fantasy has the structure of 'demanding,' wishing, wanting or desiring an object. The desired 'object' is not itself desired, but is the 'cause' of desire or 'the object' of desire. It is itself not a real object but the subject's *small other (objet petit a),* which is an imaginary structure. [41] This imaginary object is associated with a loss undergone by the subject in the process of the subject's transformation from "a narcissistic ego into a fully, maturely desiring subject."[42] Although essentially unrepresentable, the 'object small a' is associated with the erogenous zones of the body, "those parts of the body where the distinction between inside and outside is both marked and blurred by an anatomical border: ["]lips, ['] the enclosure of the teeth['], the rim of the anus, the tip of the penis, the vagina, the slit formed by the eyelids, even the horn-shaped aperture of the ear["] (E, 817/314-15)."[43] To this list of 'objects,' representing the *petit a,* Lacan adds his own 'impossible' list: "the mamilla, faeces, the phallus (imaginary object), the urinary flow. (An unthinkable list, if one adds, as I do, the phoneme, the gaze, the voice — the nothing.)"[44] The subject forms an "almost symbiotic unity with such objects."[45] These 'objects', which are irreducible and unanalysable by virtue of lacking specularity or alterity,[46] are the support of fantasy, which itself is the 'stuff' of the de-centred ('repressed') 'I' (*Je*). Thus the subject's identity as subject is dependent on a 'stuffing,'[47] which consists of non-specular and unrepresentable 'objects small a.' Such a notion of identity subverts the Cartesian subject of cogito. In the Lacanian subject, the unity and totality of *cogito* is ruptured by language. This rupture is coextensive with the Unconscious, which is, on the one hand, "structured like a language,"[48] and, on the other, represents a 'hole' or a 'gap', which is the 'groundless' support of language and meaning, whose effect on the subject is [that of the] 'real.'[49]

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[41] Compare Elizabeth Grosz, *A Feminist Introduction to Lacan*, (Wellington, London, Boston, 1990), 72-74 and Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan*, op. cit., 142-143.

[42] Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan*, op. cit., 144.

[43] Jacques Lacan, quoted by Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan*, op. cit., 144 (reference to E, 817/315).

[44] Jacques Lacan, quoted by Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan*, op. cit., 144 (reference to E, 817/315). The "mamilla" (a variant of the "lamella") is an imaginary organ of the libido. Compare Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, opt. cit., 197: "The lamella is something extra-flat, which moves like the amoeba.(...) This lamella, this organ whose characteristic is not to exist, but which is nevertheless an organ...is the libido. It is the libido qua pure life instinct...immortal life, irrepressible life. It is precisely what is subtracted from the living being by virtue of the fact that it is subject to the cycle of sexed reproduction."

[45] Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan*, op. cit., 144.

[46] It is perhaps not clear why faeces, for instance, should have no 'specular image.' What is meant is not that faeces cannot be represented as an image, but that faeces and all the other 'objects a' are non-refracting. They cannot refract anything off their surface since they are pure 'surface,' pure 'flatness' which cannot be imagined separating form itself (as in 'surface from surface' to make a 'third' or 'difference'). Similarly, a rim cannot be other than a rim, something between inside and outside, but neither; the slit of the eye-lids and the aperture of the ear cannot be anything but 'slit' and 'aperture' — that is, an opening or a hole, a nothing or a lack. There is no such thing as a 'non-aperture,' a 'non-rim,' a 'non-surface' or a 'non-slit.'

[47] Compare Lacan's assertion that "the phantasy is really the 'stuff' of the "I" [*Je*] that is originally repressed." Quoted by Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan*, opt. cit., 144. Compare also Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection*, opt. cit., 314.

[48] Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection*, opt. cit., 234: "For interpretation is based on no assumption of divine archetypes, but on the fact that the unconscious is structured in the most radical way like a language..." Compare also Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan*, opt. cit., 46.

[49] "The real, the grimace of which is reality, ...is the unconscious." Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan, opt. cit.,* 136.

The 'non-specular object' is thus a 'supposed' object whose properties cannot be brought into dialectical thinking. The non-specular 'objects small a' are not given to 'doubling.' That is why they are closest to the 'real' or to death, which is non-relational. The 'object a' is also non-relational. It is like a 'hole,' it cannot combine with any other object. Hence it is not the same as Wittgenstein's 'simple object' or the Surrealist objects of Magritte, whose mode of existence is relational. However, the 'object small a' is the ultimate support for both the Wittgensteinian and the Surrealist object because the 'object small a' is the cause of the fantasy or desire out of which the signifier (represented by the Surrealist object) is born. The Surrealist object is thus a representation or a metaphor for the signifier and as such alludes to both the relational structure of the signifier and to its support, the uncanny (the 'real') or the *objet petit a*.

Speaking of the non-representability of the *object small a*, Lacan arrives at a definition of the *formless*, which is close to the representation of the *'informe'* of Georges Bataille and the trend of 'excremental' poetics in European culture form de Sade to the Surrealits and beyond. Thus Lacan says: "The *petit a* could be said to take a number of forms, with the qualification that in itself it has no form, but can only be thought of predominantly orally or shittily."[50]

The representation of the object in the European arts of the 20th century and in psychoanalytic thought, which has its roots in Hegel's phenomenology, displays a certain continuity and genealogical interconnectedness. What it means is that a new model of perception has come into being through the study of the object. This model looks at the most diverse historical phases of though production from the point of view of a single, even if diverse, paradigm. From its perspective, all historical phases are reducible to 'discourses.' Thus one might speak of the Hegelian phenomenological discourse, or of the Surrealist discourse, or the post-Structuralist discourse. These discourses are, however, not coextensive with 'periods,' which might be closed off from one another to form a 'typology.' The centrality of the object in European thought of the past two hundred years, which has only become properly visible through the theoretical tools of post-structuralism in the past two or three decades, has undercut the idea of a linear view of cultural history. Consistent with the Hegelian idea of the end of History (as Progress) and the advent of Absolute Knowledge (which translates into the hegemony of the signifier), cultural texts have been brought into synchronic view in a level playing field, in which all of culture has become a giant treasure-trove of 'documents,' which must, literally, be 'brought to light' or illuminated. The illumination of a cultural text is analogous to the 'highlighting' of an organ by means of an x-ray picture. The x-ray machine, in this case, is another text. Put somewhat simplistically, shining a text through another text is what constitutes the 'critical' practice of post-structuralism or 'deconstruction.' Another name given to this practice is 'archaeology.' In the words of Foucault, "history has altered its position in relation to the document: it has taken as its primary task, not the attempt to decide whether it is telling the truth or what is its expressive value, but to work on it from within and to develop it: history now organizes the document, divides it up, distributes it, orders it, arranges it in levels, establishes series, distinguishes between what is relevant and what is not, discovers elements, defines unities, describes relations. The document, then, is no longer for history

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[50] Jacques Lacan, "Seminar of 21 January 1975", in *Jacques Lacan & the Ecole Freudienne*, opt. cit., 164.

an inert material through which it tries to reconstitute what men have done or said, the events of which only the trace remains; history is now trying to define within the documentary material itself unities, totalities, series, relations."[51] In other words, if typologies are still a valid means of classifying cultural 'documents,' they must be deployed from *within* the parameters of the 'document' and come to light as some sort of 'unconscious' structure or 'supplement' of the 'document.' The poststructuralist critical discourse, which encompasses this kind of 'archaeological' research, assigns cultural texts (of the past) to newly constructed (hence indeterminate and not pre-existing) continuities and totalities, which in this manner come to 'exist' in the present. Thus not only 20th century structuralism, but a host of other philosophical and critical traditions, from Descartes backwards to the beginning of Western civilization, to Plato and Aristotle, may be reappropriated and privileged in a new juxtaposition or relation. Through its decon-structive methods, post-structuralism thus reconfigures all of (Western) culture into Mal-larme *one book*,[52] which is open to infinite new re-constructions and re-interpretations.

By contrast, to establish boundaries between cultural 'periods' within a typology - a 'history' of Russian literature or any other 'history' seen from 'outside' - is to demand a correspondence between the signifier (the cultural 'text') and the signified (what is as-sumed to underpin that text 'historically', in time and place). With our poststructuralist in-sights, we know that the nature of the sign is such that there can never be an identity of the sign and the thing. Concepts (signs), too, have no clearly delimited boundaries. For as we know from Wittgenstein, concepts are related to other concepts through 'family re-semblances' and not through correspondence.[53] To reduce the features of a literary 'period' to common typological denominators without connecting them to the context of a subjec-tive reception, is to do no more than label a dead exhibit. For the same reason, it is a mis-conception to credit the concept of 'postmodernism' with any typological features, al-though no doubt many features of texts of the 20th century could be found which one might identify as 'postmodern.' However, enumerating features of texts or of a collection of texts which one wanted to unite within the temporal boundaries of a 'period,' would not fully describe what postmodernism stands for. For postmodernism is not a 'period' in European culture but a practice of 'reading' and generating cultural texts. As an exegetical practice, it can be applied to texts which have come into being at any given period over the last 2000 years and beyond. As a self-acknowledged critical practice, grounded in a

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[51] Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language [L'Archeologie du Savoir, 1969]*, tr A M Sheridan Smith, Pantheon, 1972:7.

[52] As we know from various sources, "all his adult life Mallarme was haunted by the idea of the Book into which he was to put everything, for, he wrote, 'tout, au monde, existe pour aboutir a un livre' ('everything, in the world, exists to end up in one book')." Stephan Mallarme, *Mallarme: The Poems,* bilingual ed, tr with an introduction by Keith Bosley, Penguin, 13. Mallarme's poetics is privileged by postmodern critics like Foucault and Kristeva as representing a radical shift from 'classical' to 'modern' aesthetics.

[53] "The tendency to look for something in common to all the entities which we commonly subsume under a general term. - We are inclined to think that there must be something in common to all games, say, and that this common property is the justification for applying a general term 'game' to the various games; whereas games form a family the members of which have family likenesses. Some of them have the same nose, others the same eyebrows and others again the same way of walking; and these likenesses overlap. The idea of a general concept being a common property of its particular instances connects up with other primitive, too simple ideas of the structure of language." Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Preliminary Studies for the "Philosphical Investigations," generally known as The Blue and the Brown Book*, (Oxford, 1969), 17.

special understanding of language and the structure of the sign, postmodernism is only a few decades old. It is a great-grand-child of the semiotic thought of the school of Pragmatism of C S Peirce, William James and John Dewey at the end of the 19th century; a grand-child of the Structural linguistics of Fedinand de Saussure of the early 1900s; and a child of the Structural anthropology of Claude Levi-Strauss of the 1940s. But such genealogies, although clearly visible, are of historical and not of methodological value. Similarly, to isolate 'canonical' fictional and critical texts of postmodernism, as is done by Larry McCaffrey,[54] is to undertake a giant classificatory task, in which practically all the texts produced between the 1960s and the 1980s must be included. While such an exercise is praiseworthy because it may provide a useful bibliographical tool for the student of postmodernism, it remains only a bibliographical guide and not a critical exegesis of illumination of 'the period.' This is simply because there is no such general concept as 'the period,' which could meaningfully subsume all the particular features of the vast body of fictional, artistic and critical texts generated in this segment of time.

One might therefore be tempted to put the question: what, then, is the point of using this term 'postmodernism'? The term is necessary in the first place as a designation of 'difference.' When we speak of 'postmodernism,' we know that we are not in the territory of the 'older' criticism, but in a 'different' critical and conceptual realm. This 'new' realm, which is not a fenced-off 'period,' is very definitely bound up with a certain outlook, a certain practice of modelling reality self-consciously through discourse. Postmodernism is thus nothing more and nothing less than a model of discourse. As a model of discourse, it is not a model of 'a period,' or of 'a historical segment,' or of 'a phase of development.' As a model of discourse, it is a tool which is at the same time a practice. When one subscribes to the 'practices' of postmodernism—be they critical, antistatic or organizational— one subscribes to the various discourses which feed the overall model of perception and representation of reality currently produced by and producing the 'spirit' (Hegel's *Geist*) of Western man. And not only 'Western' man. Anyone anywhere on the globe, whatever his or her home culture and 'native' language may be, is subscribing to the 'Western' postmodern model of discourse if the texts he or she is producing conform to the general perception of reality as discourse, whose instituting trace is *pure difference*,[55] which may come into representation as 'absence' or 'lack,' as distinct from being determined by a point of view which separates itself off from that discourse and evaluates it from 'outside.'

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[54] Larry McCaffrey (ed), *Postmodern Fiction: A Bio-Bibliographical Guide*, (Greenwood Press, New York, Westport, Connecticut, London, 1986), ix - xxviii.

[55] Even when Western thought steers a course away from *difference* as the ground of non-essentialism, as in Deleuze and Guattari's excursion into 'anti-Oedipus,' it still remains 'inside' discourse as an *arche*-trace (*arche*-being a metaphor for the Unconscious), in which a subject determined by desire and the 'object petit a' is constituted within a 'rhizome' instead of the totality of the signifier. All attempts to eliminate 'difference' as a founding trace (as in some Feminist discourses) have not so far been sucessful in establishing a 'counter culture' of 'universal' (in the Kantian sense) validity: that is, a culture that would subsume *all* cultural phenomena that are 'other' than the counter-culture. For example, the gay counter-culture can be subsumed quite comfortably *within* the model of *difference* of non-gay discourses, but it does not itself offer a universal model (one that would apply to *all* who are non-gay). Thus a Pascal de Duve, writing his 'diary' *Sida, Mon Amour!* just before his death, evokes the 'real' of aids, but only as the 'real' within a structure of language - namely as *metaphor*. On the cultural modelling of anti-Oedipus compare my analysis of Liudmila Petrushevskaya's *Three Girls in Blue* "The Russian Anti-Oedipus: Petrushevskaya's *Three Girls in Blue*, " *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies,* vol 12, no 2 (1998): 31-56.

Thus a Chinghiz Aitmatov, writing in Khirgiz but translated into Russian and English, is not an 'Oriental' but a postmodern writer, using the Russian literary tradition to mainstream his thought about the cultural identity of his non-European people. Similarly, the Egyptian writer and Nobel Prize winner, Naguib Mahfouz, writing about the Arab poor of Cairo, is nevertheless a Western European postmodern writer, who himself locates his literary roots in the (Modernist) writing of Proust; while a writer like Israel's A B Yehoshua, whose language of writing is Hebrew, was hailed by reviewers of *The Times, Times Literary Supplement* and *Sunday Times* as an event in the literary canon of the English-speaking (Western) world.

There is, therefore, despite regional and linguistic differences, only one 'global' cultural paradigm in the 1990s. For the sake of convenience, let us call it the paradigm of 'Western' or 'European' culture.[56] It is the only cultural paradigm which is truly 'universal' in the Kantian sense of being operative for 'all' and hence of 'general validity.'[57] By virtue of having abandoned 'historicalness' as 'typology' (as distinct from true historicity), the analytic methods 'authorised' by this cultural paradigm know no supreme or single 'authority' or 'hierarchy,' other than that imposed by the 'real' of language. They are therefore truly 'pluralist,' in that they may be constituted by a host of critical 'practices,' which make up a *polyphony* of discourses brought into equivalence and synchronicity.

Consistent with the argument about postmodernism as a method and not as a typology is the study of 20th century European literary and artistic texts on a continuum of Modernism/Postmodernism. These terms are not 'period' markers in any strict ('typological') sense. Our study of the representation of the object in texts which originated in the period of High Modernism (Surrealist 'texts'), in conjunction with a text or texts that originated in the 1960s, is an attempt to show the paradigmatic continuum of Modernism/Postmodernism in the sense that all the texts considered share a common model of perception, grounded in the structure of language and the logic of the signifier.

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[56] Naturally, every culture has its 'Other' and, in so far as European culture has had various 'Others' over the centuries, Eduard Said is right to claim 'Orientalism' as its 'Other' of the 19th and early 20th century. However, as interesting as his study of the 'European' construction of the 'Oriental' may be (even if one finds it hard to imagine how one could study the construction of the 'Oriental' from a point of view outside European culture, unless one took the position of an extra-terrestial or of God), it is not a study of 'otherness' as such, nor does it bring out any 'essential' features of the 'Orinetal,' which might transform the 'Oriental' from an 'object' into a 'subject' in his/her own right. To do that, Said would have had to study the original Oriental discourses, which are the 'documents' analysed by the Orientalists, who mediate the Oriental world for Said. This would involve using not a 'descriptive' method, but a non-excluding one of the type Foucault tries to implement in his study of 'madness from inside madness.' To study the Oriental as a 'subject' would involve letting the Oriental speak for himself, a practice introduced into post-Structuralist anthropology by Pierre Bourdieu and described in his *Logic of Practice*, (1st posthumous ed 1972, French edition 1980, Polity Press 1990).

[57] For example, the Australian native Koorie people (generally known as the 'Australian Aborigenes') do not belong to the 'Western' cultural paradigm of the 1990s with their nomadic and tribal culture, but they 'operate' through the democratic processes of 'European' Australia, which is in intention and principle a pluralist culture, to obtain recognition for their own cultural specificity. Whether it is acknowledged or not, their 'voice' is derived from the 'European' universal cultural paradigm. If it did not come from that source, it would not exist, since to communicate their needs *otherwise* (through an imagined 'tribal' or 'original' voice) to the 'European' majority, which now populates the Australian continent, they would have to bring that majority to the level of their tribal, nomadic culture (make nearly 18 million people follow nomadic, tribal practices) - in other words, 'universalise' the Aboriginal culture and turn it into a context for shared cultural practices and symbolic exchange.

II THE REPRESENTATION OF THE OBJECT AS OTHER IN VOZNESENSKY'S OZA

In dreams and in poetic or artistic discourse, the other as *objet petit a* comes into representation as a concrete, mundane and at the same time uncanny and displaced object. The representation of this other[58] becomes the overwhelming preoccupation of all European modern art and literature of the 20th century. It is manifest in Surrealism and its heirs, pop art and Conceptualism. It is evident in object (concrete) poetry and its successor genres.[59] It emerges in all forms of representation of the human being as a machine or as assimilated to a mechanical object (Surrealism, Constructivism, Futurist poetry), as well as in representations of pornography and violence in postmodern prose genres.[60]

Russian literature of the 1960s, which emerged in the wake of the post-Stalinist thaw in Russian culture, began its reassimilation of the 'lost' avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s with the reclamation of the object as a subject of artistic representation. The re-entry of the object into representation established the object as a new source of legitimating meaning and discourse. The object thus replaced the abstract, metaphysical or ideological 'concept' as the ground for the construction of social reality. In itself, this was an enormous perceptual shift in Soviet culture of the 1960s. One of the first works in Russian literature of the post-Stalinist era in which the object was to be radically privileged was Yuri Dombrovsky's novel *The Keeper of Antiquities* (published in *Novy mir* in 1964) and its companion *The Department of Useless Objects* (written in 1964-1975, published in Paris in 1978 and finally, posthumously, in *Novy mir* in 1988).[61] The 'archaeological' object in Dombrowksy's Ethnographic Museum in Alma Ata is opposed in its concreteness and 'truth' to the insanity of the human subjects, who become enslaved to a system of metaphysical concepts far removed from any human concreteness or reality. Thus the quest for the 'lost years of Russian history' and the reclamation of Russian Modernism begins in the 1960s with a return to the object as Man's most 'concrete' and 'real' Other.

Voznesensky's novella-poem *Oza*, first published in 1964,[62] privileges the object, whose positivity appears guaranteed by the fact that this object belongs to the realm of science.

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[58] A classic representation of the Other appears in Albert Camus's first novel *L'étranger* (1942) and Jorge Luis Borges's story *The Other* (in The Book of Sand, tr. by N Thomas DiGiovanni, New York, 1977). Kafka's major novels are also, in the main, nightmare-like experiences of this absent and uncanny Other, represented by the metaphor of 'the castle' or 'the law.'

[59] In contemporary American poetry, the genre of object or concrete poetry is represented by the American-Serb Charles Simic, whose poetic roots are in the Belgrade Surrealist school, established by Disan Matic and inherited by the post-war Serbian poets, Vasko Popa and Aleksadar Ristovic. Compare Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover, "Vasko Popa's Thing Poetry and the American Poet Charles Simic," *Serbian Studies* (Journal of the North American Society for Serbian Studies), vol 7, no 2 (Fall, 1993), 96-105.

[60] I have in mind, in particular, Anthony Burgess's *Clockwork Orange* (1962), Hubert Selby's *Last Exit to Brooklyn* (1957), the 'dirty realism' of American fiction represented in *Granta 8* (1983) and *Granta 19* (Fall, 1986) and D. M. Thomas's novel *The White Hotel* (1981). In Russian fiction, pornography and violence made their re-appearance in works such as Leonid Gabyshev's novella *Odlian, or the Air of Freedom* [*Odlian, ili vozdukh svobody*], in Alexander Kabakov's novella *No Return* [*Nevozvrashchenets*], reaching its apotheosis in Vladimir Sorokin's prose. It is interesting to note that the first American novel of 'artistic' pornography, Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, proscribed in the USA in the 1950s, was a virtual 'transplant' of Russian Modernism onto Americna soil. In *Lolita,* Nabokov embodied the eroticism of his early (1917) Russian Modernist prose through a theme based on contemporary American life.

[61] Compare Willi Beitz , ed., *Vom 'Tauwetter' zur Perestroika: Russische Literatur zwischen den fonfziger und neunziger Jahren,* (Bern, 1994).

[62] Voznesensky's *Oza* appeared in *Molodaia gvardia*, no. 4, 1964 and in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, Oct 31, 1964.

Scientific discourse, at first glance, is thus posited as the discourse which legitimates all perception. But as will become clear from our reading of the poem, this legitimating positivist discourse of nuclear physics is only a verbal gesture. It has no substance other than as a 'metaphor of science.' But as metaphor, the science of physics, which looms large in Voznesensky's poem, stands for something quite different than science proper.

The cyclotron, "an apparatus for the acceleration of charged atomic particles revolving in a magnetic field" (COD), looms as an object larger than life, which at first sight appears to threaten the fragile heroine of the poem, Zoya, the poet's beloved. However, as the poem unfolds, it becomes increasingly clear that the anxiety the poet experiences in relation to this beloved woman does not emanate from any simple nuclear threat to the human race. Indeed, the anxiety, masked as fear for the beloved, is not anxiety at all but a *dechirement*, a tossing of the poet in search of the one thing which is unattainable for him: the beloved and the object, which, as will become clear, are intimately connected.

For the poet, this 'woman' is, to start with, a collective portrait of immortalized womanhood, whose historic carriers are 'Anna' (Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* or Anna Karenina) and Beatrice (of Dante's *Divine Comedy*). Thus Zoya, whose name read backwards or folded back on itself becomes Oza, is initially placed in the pantheon of metaphysical Beauty and sublimated or idealized. But this sublimation turns out to be of quite a different order than the idealization of Beauty in the classics, which are evoked as the poet's models for his heroine. Instead of being raised into their pantheon, Zoya, along with the classsical heroines, is dragged down to earth, into a 'cage,' in which she and they are objects of public spectacle or the *gaze*:

Immortality puts you behind bars;
Anna, Oza, and Beatrice — all are
Caged like animals while the public guffaws
And freely discusses their birthmarks.[63]

While the tone of the poet, in which this state of affairs is evoked, is one of lament, the fact that his heroine and muse is subject to the laws of the *gaze* is objectively part of the new structural laws of his own poetics. It is he, the poet, who is the master of the 'cage' in which his heroine is on display to the public *gaze*, to the 'drooling' of any Tom, Dick or Harry who can pour over the page on which the poem is inscribed while eating his beef-steak. For the bars on this 'cage' are the lines of the poem, through and by which his heroine acquires immortality: *"Let us say farewell through the bars of these lines. . . "*

Other features distinguish Oza from her classical predecessors. Unlike Anna Karenina (or Donna Anna) and Beatrice, Oza is never seen embodied. She is 'transparent':

Light flows through her body
To the tip of her little finger
                    (...)
Now she melts into thin air...

The reader, in fact, never sees Oza/Zoya as a complete picture or a portrait. She is never there as a body or a fully-fledged subject. She is only obliquely present, as an atti-

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[63] Andrei Voznesenky, "Oza," in *Antiworlds and the Fifth Ace. A Bi-Lingual Edition*, ed. P. Blake and M. Hayward, Oxford, 1968, p. 201

tude of listening *("A woman stands by the cyclotron,/Graceful, fine-boned./She listens, magnetized."),* or as a partial object *("she still has her bracelet on").* She is reduced to an ornament, an accessory, a dim figure standing by the larger-than-life 'scientific' object, the object par excellence: the cyclotron. She is mutable, elusive, neither absent nor present — the presence of an absence:

> *She is changing, changing;*
> *Now she's with us...now she's gone...*

Oza/Zoya is thus not a traditional female heroine but comes close to being the zero-subject of postmodern literature.[64] 'She' fuses with the lines of the poem, of which she is not only the 'content' but the very inner core, out of which its lyric emerges. She is the invisible or transparent 'foundation stone' of the poem, a sacrifice to the structure of the poetic edifice. The poet 'kills' her *("I had hoped to make you live forever;/ instead, I have brought you only ruin."),* in order to erect the poem out of Oza's absence, just as medieval stonemasons immured a young mother into the castle's foundation walls as an offering to the gods in South Slav folk legends. It is the poet's unremitting search for Oza which propels the poem to its inconclusive, open-ended ending. The poet's search never ends, his yearning for Oza/Zoya is never extinguished. Oza/Zoya is the poet's desire and this desire is the prime mover of his verse. The anxiety and the sense of threat displayed by the poet merely mask this desire. If Oza/Zoya were present, if she and the poet were united and allowed to consummate their love, there would be no poem. The quest for the heroine Oza/Zoya, the poet's desire, muse, beloved, is the *raison d'etre* for his artistic creation. The fundamental support, on which the poem rests, is just this: Oza—a name— as the metonymy of desire and absence.[65]

This foundation of the poem, which is grounded in absence, is captured in the strikingly sentimentalized image of a pair of shoes found in Canto VIII. Voznesensky's shoes, like so many pairs of empty shoes, which have figured so prominently since Van Gogh's famous *A Pair of Old Shoes* (1888), are a representation of the absent or 'zero' human subject. The fact that Voznesensky gushes over his shoes makes his 'sonnet'—which is thematically an echo of the 'object' or 'concrete poetry' of the Herbert and Popa type—close to the affectivity of Modernism. But like the poet's 'lament' about his beloved, this affectivity is not genuine. It is only a mask or gesture, on the whole incongruous with the 'coldness' of the 'scientific' object, which is the alter ego or metonymy of the poet's beloved. The same symbol of absence is portrayed by Andy Warhol in his *Diamond Dust Shoes* (1980). Warhol's representation of the object lacks affectivity and "mortifies the reified eye of the viewer," as put so evocatively by Jameson. Voznesensky's image does not quite rise to the challenge of postmodernism's parting with appearance in order to embrace the order of the 'real'. It does not complete the erection of

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[64] It was Roland Barthes who initially put forward the term "zero degree prose," in his first book of criticism *Writing Degree Zero* (1953), as a concept to describe prose that was "instrumental" and not necessarily the expression of a "content" of ideas or ideologies. From there the term spread to postmodern criticism and was applied to the subject or hero of such prose, who appeared untypical and unrepresentative or even unrepresentable. Compare Frederic Jameson, *A Prison House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism,* (Princeton, N.J., 1972) and especially his essay "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review*, no. 146 (Jul-Aug 1984), 53-93.

[65] 'Metonymy' is used here to designate the 'occulted presence' of something which is by definition an 'absence' or a 'lack' - namely desire.

the simulacrum as alternative reality. But in his basic thrust of privileging a 'dead' object (the cyclotron) as the central image of the poem, Voznesenky engages with postmodernism on the tenuous 'historical' boundary, at which it meets its not quite dialectical 'Other,' residing in the 'sentimentality' of a *socialist realism* or the affectivity of the monumental-declamatory poetics of a Mayakovsky.

The poet as the subject, who experiences Oza/Zoya as his desire and his muse, is in fact not the creator of his lyrical heroine. The lyrical "I" of the poem is not the immediate originator of the images and action of the poem. Since the poem is framed as a 'diary,' found at a bedside-table in a hotel in Dubna, the atomic village near Moscow, the poet who speaks is not 'the author' of his poem. The poet is a mediator of 'someone else's thoughts,' inscribed in this well-thumbed copy of the anonymous 'diary' found by chance. The poet who speaks is not even the first or only 'reader' of the 'diary,' which is replete with banal marginalia and even contains interpolated texts, such as an excerpt of some-one's science lecture notes.

What the 'diary' represents in the structure of Voznesensky's poetic text is memory, which has no particular origins and no boundaries. For the 'memory' of the 'diary' is appropriated by and merges with the 'memory' of the 'poet' who speaks. This memory of the lyrical "I", in turn, overlaps with scraps of memory of an anonymous female inner voice, wondering about the 'physicist Zoya' in Canto XII. But any of the 'previous' readers of the diary, whose physical 'traces' are left on its pages, are all potential proprietors of the diary's memory.

The subject of the diary's and the poet's memory is Oza/Zoya, but this does not make her into a 'human' subject. On the contrary, there is nothing 'human' about Oza/Zoya despite the poet's protestations and apparent efforts to 'save' her from destruction. Instead, Oza/Zoya is indestructible by virtue of the fact that she is not a human being but a memory trace.[66] The ultimate transformation of her name from an ordinary Russian girl's name, Zoya, into the coded name Oza, which is apotheosized at the end, in Canto XIV, is a reflection of this. The elusive Oza/Zoya, who undergoes several mutations in the course of the poem, ends in complete lucidity or transparency, "bright, like a light behind a lantern slide." 'She'—this memory trace named Oza, whose name is no longer the name of a woman but a cypher— comes and goes from the poet's life. 'She' cannot be marshalled by the poet's will, nor summoned by him. 'She' is completely indeterminate, without origins, boundaries or contours. She is an original *objet petit a* , which is unrepresentable except as the artificial monstrosity of the cyclotron. That is why 'she' is so intimately associated not with the 'poet' but with this machine, which can, in one of its variants, mass-produce people or their organs, which in turn become partial objects. Oza, one of whose masks is that of a 'woman physicist,' is in fact the 'soul' of the cyclotron, the 'soul' of an object that has no soul. She is suffused with the energy of the cyclotron, which turns her into an energy or magnetic field:

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[66] The "memory trace" (facilitation or *Bahnung*) is a concept used by Freud to designate the original inscription of 'concepts' or 'thoughts,' which are then stored as unconscious thoughts. The memory trace is thus equivalent to a proto-sign or *arche*-signifier, generated in the unconscious. For Derrida, the memory trace translates into the concept of *writing* — the inscription that precedes speech. This anteriority of *writing* is due to the fact that it is in signs that the signifying process is instituted. Compare Jacques Derrida's elucidation and appropriation of Freud's concept in "Freud and the Scene of Writing," in Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, tr. by Alan Bass (London and Henley, 1978), 206.

A woman stands by a cyclotron,
Graceful, fine-boned.

She listens, magnetized.
Light flows through her body
To the tip of her little finger
As red as a wild strawberry.

This field, which Oza radiates in her symbiotic relationship with the larger-than-life object, the cyclotron, is the elusive and unrepresentable field of the unconscious. Unrepresentable except through dreams, images, memory traces and the entire process of thought production. Voznesensky's poem is the 'staging' of just such a thought production process or performance. The lyrical narrator of the poem, the lyrical "I" who speaks in the poem, does not experience life or love or nature in any immediate sense, but only in a mediated form, twice removed, or as a reality of the second order. This is the reality of memory or the memory trace. That is why all the sequences in the poem, segmented into cantos, appear so fragmented and disconnected while at the same time displaying the plasticity of dream-images. That is also why these memory or 'dream' sequences are so heterogeneous in form: they vary in metric measure, style, intonation and even graphically, in type-face.

The 'heroine' of the diary, found by the 'poet,' is thus not a woman but an object. This object is not 'of this world,' but exists on the boundary between matter and non-matter. The allusions to quantum mechanics and to atomic particles which the cyclotron can isolate parallels this bi-polarity of the object on the level of 'scientific discourse' — in the poem actually a metaphor for the 'discourse of the Other'— which has the task of legitimating the poetic discourse. Oza, the cipher, the 'soul' of the cyclotron, is thus a heroine of this boundary zone, situated between heaven and earth, between the visible and the invisible, a zone without tangible form that is yet not form-less either in its incessant mutability. This zone is recognizable as the zone of the limit.[67] This limit is "the ontological void,"[68] which has opened up in the wake of an 'event' of radical significance for Western philosophy, an 'event' described metaphorically, by Nietzsche and others, as 'the death of God.' Instead of 'God,' conceived traditionally as a transcendental totality, modern humanity has 'sexuality' (Foucualt) or, as we would say with the Lacanian psychoanalyst, *desire*. It is the relationship between 'sexuality,' read (in Foucault's seminal "A Preface to Transgression") as *desire* or 'lack' , and the language spoken by the human subject, which now determines the latter's ontology, knowledge, truth or reality:

"Sexuality is only decisive for our culture as spoken, and to the degree it is spoken: not that it is our language which has been eroticized now for nearly two centuries. Rather, since de Sade and the death of God, the universe of language has absorbed our sexuality, denatured it, placed it in a void where it establishes its sovereignty and where it incessantly sets up as the Law the limits it transgresses."[69]

Oza/Zoya personifies this 'denatured' sexuality or desire, 'absorbed' by language. 'Desire' used in this psychoanalytic context has nothing to do with the physical union of two

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[67] Compare Michel Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. with an intro. by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Cornell, Ithaca, 1977).
[68] Michel Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression," op. cit., p. 50.
[69] Michel Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression," op. cit., p. 50

beings in a sexual relationship. 'Desire' is a concept which describes a psychic agency or energy field, which is the foundation of all human psychic and cultural production. A direct predecessor of the psychoanalytic concept of desire is the Schopenhauerian concept of a Will whose 'teleological' aim is death (the 'will to death'). The Freudian libido is also a related concept. However, this desire, although the mainspring of all human second-order production (that is, the production of thought), is groundless. That is, it is grounded in a void, in nothingness, in absence, in silence, in a split and in a lack. The reason for this is bound up with the nature of representation.

According to phenomenological theory of representation, which overlaps with the psychoanalytic theory of the subject, things we see manifest something that transcends both vision and the consciousness of the one who sees. This is, according to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the "transcendent invisible."[70] This invisible involves the operation of the *gaze*. Thus Mearleau-Ponty writes:

"What there is then are not things first identical with themselves, which would then offer themselves to the seer, nor is there a seer who is first empty and who, afterwards, would open himself to them — but something to which we could not be closer than by palpitating it with our look, things we could not dream of seeing 'all naked' because the gaze itself envelops them, clothes them with its flesh."[71] Just as desire is defined in terms of an Other, who is an absence ("desire is the desire of the Other"), so the gaze is defined as being 'outside' and 'anterior' the subject of consciousness : "I am looked at, that is to say, I am a picture."[72]

Thus the subject becomes 'a-given-to-be-seen,'[73] which exists only in relation to an imagined *gaze* projected on the subject from *outside*. The *gaze* figures in Surrealist art as silence or absence. It is captured programmatically in Marcel Duchamp's last work, entitled *Étant donné... [Given that...]*. It is also echoed in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, in the opening proposition: "The world is all that is the case."[74] Transcribing this into a logicized version of desire, one might say that the world is all that can be constructed through *desire* and the *gaze*.

The *gaze* is thus part of the dialectic of the void or negativity, which is this newly discovered *limit* of human existence, located in human 'sexuality' or *desire* and circumscribed by the finitude of language. The "experience of the limit...is realized in language,"[75] in a new distance which separates "a speaker from his words (in a diary, notebooks, poems, stories, meditations, or discourses intended for demonstration)."[76]

Such a separation of the lyrical "I" from his creation is just what obtains in Voznesenky's poem. This lyrical "I," the 'poet' who speaks in the poem, not only is not the 'author' of the 'diary' that is the source of his 'inner experience'[77]: the "I" that is the consciousness of the poem

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[70] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, (Evanston, 1968), p. 131.

[71] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, opt. cit., 131. Compare also Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan*, op. cit., 155-6.

[72] Lacan quoted by Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jacques Lacan*, op. cit., 157.

[73] Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, opt. cit.,* 74.

[74] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, op. cit., 5, paragraph 1.

[75] Michel Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression," op. cit., p. 51

[76] Michel Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression," op. cit., p. 43

[77] Georges Bataille, *Inner Experience*, tr. by Leslie Anne Boldt (New York, 1988). In this 1954 'Surrealist' theoretical-philosophical text, Bataille raises 'inner experience' to the status of the only truth criterion available to the human subject. This 'inner experience' is not 'sense-certainty,' already deconstructed by Hegel. It is the experience of 'presence' and 'communication,' which is at the same time an 'excess' and an 'absence.' It is, ultimately, the experience of language.

also has no stable identity or even presence. In Canto X, in the scene set in Moscow's Hotel *Berlin*, under the mirrored ceiling, the 'poet' attends a birthday party for his beloved. However, at the banquet table, there is an empty place,[78] right next to the birthday girl. This empty place is occupied by the poet, who is invisible during the entire episode. He seems to be located in another world (or at 'another scene'), in the world which is on the other side of the mirror on the ceiling. This gives the 'poet' a peculiar, Escheresque[79] perspective on the mundane world of the birthday party. The poet perceives it upside-down, as if in/from another dimension of reality or in *reverse perspective*.[80] The 'reverse perspective' characterises the mode of vision of the 'gaze,' which is not the vision by the (organ of the) eye; hence not vision in the ordinary sense, but vision as a function of the 'scopic' drive, which is allied to *desire* as 'desire of the Other.' What the function of the 'gaze' invokes is: "*You want to see? Well, take a look at this!*"[81] The 'gaze' is thus the function which 'inscribes' the subject in a 'picture', makes of the subject a 'representation' for 'others,' and hence an 'object' of the *desire of the Other*. In trying to attract the spectator to the image, the 'gaze,' which produces the subject (and not *vice versa*) functions as 'lure.' Thus the ultimate aim of representation is *seduction*. This is also the poet's design out of his virtual space of the mirror. This space is like a 'hole' or a 'trap,' into which he pulls the virtual 'spectator' - the reader of his poem. Or rather, by inverting the perspective on the 'seen world' of the poem, the poet turns his virtual spectator into a peeping-tom, who must look at the picture presented to him through a hole in the ceiling.

The guests at the party are seen only from "obtuse"[82] angles, from the tops of their heads. They thus appear to be faceless, without subjective identities. They are like indeterminate

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[78] In Danilo Kis's posmodern novel *Houglass* (1972), the motif of 'an empty space' at a dining-room table is used to symbolize the play of absence in memory.

[79] Compare, for instance, M. C. Escher's print *The Puddle*, in which sky and earth appear inverted so that the sky is perceived from an 'impossible' space 'inside' the ground or the earth. The entire 'representation' is, moreover, structured like a 'gap.' This 'gap' is the 'real,' the impossible or the unrepresentable.

[80] Pavel Florensky's 1919 study of 'reverse perspective' in the Russian icon ("Obratnaia perspektiva," in Sv. Pavel Florensky, *Sobrabie sochinenii I: Stat'i po iskusstvu,* por red. N A Struve, YMCA-Press, 1985: 117-192; also in an abbidged English version, entitled "The Point", in *Geo-Graffity,* a publication of the Quantum Bureau of the Russian Academy of Sciences, vol 1, no 1 [Jan 1993]:29-39) preempts Lacan's exposition on the *gaze* in "Anamorphosis", *The Four Fundamental Concept of Psychoanalysis, opt. cit.,* 79-90. "Anamorphosis' is a geomtral structure which relies on "the inverted use of perspective." The introduction of 'geometral perspective' revolutionised European painting since the 16th century (Holbein, Durer) by introducing "the mapping of space, not sight." Following Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, Lacan postulates a split between the (organ of the) eye and the (function of the)'gaze' as fundamental to the constitution of the subject of language. In Merleau-Ponty's essay "Cezanne's Doubt," in which the Modernist painter's manner of 'seeing' becomes a model of the pscyhoanalytic function of the 'gaze,' the latter emerges as something akin to the Freudian concept of 'Bahnung' or 'trace.' The 'gaze' therefore does not 'copy' reality, but engages in what in the world of insect life is referred to as 'mimicry.' Lacan makes reference to an article by Roger Caillois (evidently similar to Caillois' 1937 "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," *October 31,* 17-33), in which a small crustacean, known as *caprella,* who settles in the domain of 'other' minute animals-qua-plants, known as briozoaires, 'imitates' its environment not for purposes of survival, but in order to be "inscribed in the picture." Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, opt. cit.,* 99.

[81] Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, opt. cit.,* 101. Tatyana Nazarenko, the Russian Conceptualist painter, has a picture entitled "The Dance" (1980 - *Taniets*), in which she emulates the 'gaze' as a vaudeville gesture (of, say, Gypsy Rose Lee's "Let Me Entertain You" type), performed by the artist and a girlfriend, dressed fetishistically, in jeans and calf-high cowboy boots, evoking the costume of the street girl, who 'lures' with her 'banal' ('real') appearance.

[82] Compare Roland Barthes's concept of the 'third meaning' or 'obstude meaning,' which he derrived from the images in some of Eseinstein's stills of the silent film *Ivan the Terrible*. This 'third meaning' comes close to the concept of the 'unrepresentable' or the object small a. See Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, (Flamingo, 1984).

objects in an indeterminate space. The 'two' worlds are inverted reflections of one another, analogous to the picture of an hourglass. They flow into one another and are separated or united by a limit: the limit which is the divide between the visible and the invisible. The 'poet' is placed in this double alienation of the limit or the 'gaze.' He is invisible to the birthday party guests, but he is also out of touch with himself, with his own body, which the dancing guests criss-cross with high-heel marks as 'he' lies prone in a phantasmic posture, flattened into a two-dimensional extension or surface on the dance-floor. Voznesenky's poet thus achieves with admirable accuracy an artistic representation of the 'gaze' in its "pulsatile, dazzling and spread out function," - the manner in which Lacan interprets it as figuring in Holbein's *Ambassadors,* in the enigmatic elongated non-object (which has been compared to a 'cuttlebone'), thrown in amongst the other 'gifts' but not resembling anything on earth. [83]

The poet's 'flat' body is literally transformed into its own object, which is inscribed by an impersonal 'writing,' represented by the anonymous stylus-like high heels of the dancing couples who are 'there' but invisible for the reader. As surface and object, the poet's body thus comes close to the concept of the 'absent' or non-existent organ of the libido, which Lacan has called the "lamella." Thus both poet and muse form one identity albeit a metonymically 'split' one. They are 'united' through the *objet petit a* - the absent cause of desire. Both poet and muse are metonymic presences of this unrepresentable desire. They are thus metonymies of metonymies or metonymies of absence.

The poet, who places himself 'on the other side' of the limit (the mirror), thus disappears as a subject, only to re-appear instantaneously as a function of the 'gaze,' which structures his poem through word (concept) and image. The poem *Oza* thus becomes the poet's 'visible' representation or embodiment, just as earlier the lines of his verse had been evoked as the earthly and visible body ('cage') of his heroine Zoya.

The 'poet' himself, though, remains invisible. Like his beloved, 'he' is never present. He never faces the reader but only a 'thou' (*ty*), who is in the realm of his inner experience, his memory. The 'poet' (the lyrical "I" or Lacan's psychoanalytic *Je*) thus fades inside the folds of the poem, its text, its imagery, its scenes, its structure and its language. This 'fading' of the poet is also thematised through the appearance of his various verbal doubles — the 'fashionable poet' (a self-parody of Voznesensky), who is invited by the Toastmaster to recite a paradox: "something close to life, something out of this world," followed by the 'dead drunk' poet. Both recite poems about Oza/Zoya, both seem to share in the quest for this mysterious 'woman' or to possess 'her' as a memory and as a mainspring for their poetry. These 'other' poets are thus metonymies of the 'poet.' They, too, have no identity except through their voice[84] and their verse. They might as well be invisible, just like the 'poet,' who *is* invisible. The 'poet' and his 'doubles' thus become 'extensionless points,' coordinated with the space which contains the plastic representations, the images and metaphors, which form their poems. These plastic representations have the quality of solidity, of concreteness and thus of objects. But this materiality and positivity has a non-positive and non-material source: language. Language is a product of the un-

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[83] Compare Jacques Lacan's analysis of Holbein's *Ambassadors* in "Anamorphosis," in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, opt. cit.,* 88-89.

[84] As was cited earlier, Lacan included the voice in his list of the 'objects small a,' and in this way raised it to the status of the 'gaze.'

conscious, of memory. Language is a memory trace, the product of deferral and difference. The memory trace has no ground except the absence and the silence of the Other.

Oza/Zoya, who is the absent heroine of the poem, is this Other. At her own birthday party, she appears to be ecstatic but it is an ecstasy that is simultaneously strange and alienating. Wrapped in cellophane paper, she looks like her own birthday present. She never speaks and is not endowed with knowledge: she is 'un-knowing.' She thus has all the attributes of an object. One might say, she is 'commodified.'[85] Bearing in mind her close affinity with the larger-than-life object of science—the cyclotron—one can say that Oza/Zoya is the original lost object, the *objet petit a* and cause of desire. Since Oza/Zoya is the poet's desire, out of which the entire poem is generated as a text, we can say that Oza/Zoya is the poet's fantasy out of which the thought of the poem is constituted.

Although Zoya/Oza is at the center of the poem, the poet is never in a position to confront her face-to-face. Either she is present at her birthday party but the poet is 'absent,' in another dimension (his place is empty). Or else, she is the poet's absent beloved, whom he searches for in time and space. Her attributes of femininity, vulnerability and beauty do not in any way concretize her. And although she is given a name by the poet—Zoya/Oza—, her name is not generally known. This Zoya/Oza is, like Umberto Eco's title *The Name of the Rose*, unfinished, 'unsaid' to the end, unuttered. Even the Toastmaster at her birthday party does not know what name to attach to her. Thus Oza remains an aloof and elliptical presence, silent and 'ecstatically other' (*vostorzhenno chuzhaia*). She is the unrepresentable, the *objet a*, manifest in 'pure' form and given embodiment in Voznesenky's verse.

PREDSTAVLJANJE OBJEKTA KAO DRUGOG U MODERNIZMU/POSTMODERNIZMU: PSIHOANALITIČKA PERSPEKTIVA

Slobodanka Vladiv-Glover

Ovaj članak istrazuje kompleksan odnos između modernog psihoanalitičkog subjekta i njegovog objekta, koji nije samo materijalno ovaploćenje subjekta u reprezentaciji (umetnosti), već i metafizička forma subjekta kao odsustvo. Mesto subjekta u svetu predmeta se ilustruje kroz analizu umetnosti nadrealizma i postmoderne poezije za koju "Oza" Andreja Voznjesenkog služi kao primer.

Ključne reči: *materijalna priroda objekta u nadrealizmu, Oza Voznesenjskog, predstavljeni objekat kao zamena za Lakanovo 'stvarno' i Frojdovski Id, objet-petit-a koji se ne može predstaviti, osoba kao različitost i 'izgubljeni objekat.*

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[85] Frederic Jameson sees 'commodification' as one of the salient characteristics of culture in the postmodern era. This feature is played on, in particular, in the work of the artist Christo, who has 'wrapped up' various monuments of European culture and who is about to wrap up the German Reichstag in Berlin in June 1997.