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Received: 09/2023, Published: 10/2023

## Abstract:

This research aims to uncover the impact of structuralism on psychoanalysis and highlight its manifestations in contemporary psychoanalysis, with Jacques Lacan being considered one of its pioneers. He gained renown for his innovative reinterpretation of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, critiquing contemporary psychoanalytic theories that had misinterpreted the writings of the founding figure of psychoanalysis, because it excluded the role of language, which cannot be separated from the human and psychological world, in particular, and proceeded to reestablish the concepts of psychoanalysis based on the discoveries of structural linguistics and anthropology. However, Lacan didn't stop there. He served as a philosopher who evaluated everything critically. He corrected Freud's most important ideas and introduced fundamental modifications to the essence of classical psychoanalytic theory. He acknowledged that the unconscious has a structure similar to that of language, and this perspective had a significant impact on the components of the unconscious and much of his research.

**Keywords:** Structuralism, Psychoanalysis, Unconscious, Signifier, Signified.

*Tob Regul Sci.* <sup>TM</sup> 2023 ;9(2 ): 1 - 21

DOI: [doi.org/10.18001/TRS.9.2.365](https://doi.org/10.18001/TRS.9.2.365)

## Introduction:

Western modernity was built on the disconnection from the past and the demolition of all the illusions and outdated ideas crafted by the theocratic state in the age of irrationality. It worked to liberate the mind from the shackles of traditional thought patterns and the dominance of sacred beliefs. Thus, the mind became a measure and reference for interpreting the phenomena of existence. The era of scientific enlightenment witnessed a tremendous development in the natural sciences and the dominance of the positivist tendency, which aimed to undermine the philosophical frameworks of a structural nature.

Structuralism emerged in the twentieth century, especially in the late fifties, as a critical and modern approach expressing human aspirations and adventures in the realms of abstraction, aiming to elevate from concrete particulars to abstracted universals, that is, to structure as a system or pattern. It rejected any atomistic view of knowledge, as it gave precedence to the whole over its parts.

Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure is considered the actual founder of structural linguistics in

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modern times. He played a significant role in bringing structuralism into existence, and it was not limited to linguistic sciences alone. It extended its influence to various fields of knowledge and penetrated the realms of the humanities to explore their depths. Anthropological structuralism emerged under the guidance of Claude Lévi-Strauss, and historical epistemological structuralism under the influence of Michel Foucault. However, structuralism did not interact and converge with the field of psychology and psychoanalysis until it encountered the French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan.

**Research Problem and Questions:**

- What is the concept of structuralism, and what are its effects on psychoanalysis, in the case of Jacques Lacan?
- How did Lacan view the structure of the unconscious?
- Are unconscious psychological processes fundamentally linguistic in nature?
- What is the nature of the relationship between the unconscious and language?
- Which is primary, the unconscious or language, and is language a necessary condition for the existence of the unconscious?
- What are the key central concepts upon which Lacanian psychoanalysis is built?
- Did Jacques Lacan introduce significant modifications to classical psychoanalytic theory as established by Freud?

**1- Definition of Structuralism:**

Structuralism, as a critical and modern approach, emerged in the early to mid-20th century during an era infused with a critical philosophical spirit that championed freedom of thought and rejected any dogmatic claims of possessing complete truth. In this age, critique became the fundamental characteristic that pervaded the spirit of the time. Every idea was subject to scrutiny, examination, and analysis. Structuralism was a reaction against atomistic tendencies that sought to fragment knowledge into isolated elements and against an excessive emphasis on a naive sensory approach that excluded the role of reason in understanding. It recognized that science is fundamentally a mental construction rather than a purely sensory activity.

Structuralism, or the structuralist approach, is an intellectual movement aimed at revealing the underlying structure of thought, which forms the foundation of both past and present cultures. It seeks to uncover the structure of phenomena, determine their levels, and analyze them to reveal the relationships that emerge from these structures. It emerged as a response to an intellectual climate that was marked by the fragmentation of knowledge into specialized and isolated disciplines. Therefore, structuralism called for a holistic and interconnected system that unified

and linked various fields of study, moving away from the fragmentation caused by the trend toward narrow specializations, which had led to human isolation and intellectual disintegration (Qassab, 2007, p. 118).

Therefore, structuralism calls for the unity and integration of the sciences. On a methodological level, all approaches, whether various forms of inductive methods or deductive methods (syllogism), ultimately trace back to the deductive method. This deductive approach became the master and cornerstone of methodologies. It applied the analytical method to various domains, including language, kinship, and all aspects of culture, such as art, religion, and magic, also, structuralism, in its broadest sense, is a method of inquiry into the entire reality, not into its individual components, but into the relationships between them. It aims to discover the comprehensive laws that govern these relationships, drawing from the science of language and its system. (Qassab, 2007, p. 118).

The word "structuralism," derived from the word "structure," which in turn is derived from the Latin verb "struere," meaning "to build" or "to construct." When something has structure, it means it is not "irregular" or "formless," but rather it is an organized entity with its own unique form and self-contained unity (Rashwan, 1984, p. 128).

According to André Lalande's Philosophical Dictionary:

- a- the term "structure" refers to both the concept of "Gestalt" meaning the form or the image.
- b- The arrangement of the parts that make up the whole, and it is used in contrast to their functions... In psychology, it is the composition of elements that manifest in mental life, for example, representing different levels of consciousness. It is also those systems or patterns, meaning the whole composed of interconnected phenomena in such a way that each phenomenon is related to the others, and it cannot be what it is except in relation to those phenomena (Lalande, 1997, pp. 1031-1032). The term "totality" characterizes the self-regulating nature of the structure, which does not rely on external regulation.

Structuralism gives prominence to the text in contrast to deconstruction, which explicitly proclaims its death. Deconstruction is seen as post-structuralism or a rampant revolution that seeks to dismantle meaning and acknowledges its crisis. Structuralism, in its beginnings, was rooted in a linguistic approach, limited to the field of linguistics. Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) was undoubtedly the pioneer of linguistic structuralism. "It has become customary to attribute the birth of linguistics to the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, as he emphasized the strong - during a period dominated by historical studies - importance of describing language synchronically. Despite the emergence of a series of new linguistic ideas presented by de Saussure in his three courses at the University of Geneva between 1907-1911, published in 1916, some scholars consider 1928 as the birth year of structural linguistics. This was during the

International Congress of Linguists held in The Hague" (Ghafflan, 2013, p. 30), the emergence of phonology and its spread throughout Europe, alongside the formation of the Prague School, which was named the functional school due to its focus on both grammar and phonetics from a functional perspective, played a significant role in the development of linguistic studies. It propelled them forward and spread them across the Western world. The influence of this movement extended to various fields, leading to the appearance of multiple structuralisms, each with its own approach. In this regard, Jakobson states, "If we wish to possess the basic idea of contemporary science in most of its diverse manifestations, we can hardly find a more appropriate name than "structuralism". When contemporary science studies any set of phenomena, it does not treat them as a mechanical conglomeration but as a structural whole. The main task is to discover the internal laws of this system, whether they are fixed or evolving. External stimulus is no longer the focus of scientific interest; instead, it is the internal prerequisites for development. Thus, the mechanical view of processes now leads to questioning their functions" (Jakobson, 2002, p. 13), the structure becomes a system of relationships, where we do not consider the parts except in terms of the functions they perform within the context of the whole. Thus, structuralism rejected the atomistic and reductionist view of language, refusing to consider it as mere isolated elements. Language is not just a list of separate elements because the meaning of a word is determined by its context, its relationships with preceding and succeeding words. The concept of the whole is what defines the parts. Structuralism prioritized and gave primacy to the structure of the system over its individual elements. It added a conceptual and abstract dimension to language that transcended the boundaries of concrete empirical reality. "Emphasizing the stability and rationality of structures does not mean a return to the absolute Hegelian position; rather, it implies abandoning a naive empirical stance that stops at the sensory perception of phenomena and ascending to a more abstract conceptual level, the level of structure as a constructed and conceptual reality, a level that is not concretely present in the given reality" (Mehibel, 2007, pp. 33-34), he realized that the first step in scientific research is classification or definition, which can only be achieved by identifying the characteristics of the subject. Therefore, he attempted to define the subject of language from multiple perspectives and to consider various branches of the humanities that intersect and constitute linguistic phenomena and linguistic activity in human groups.

## **2-Psychological Structuralism:**

### **2-1 The Unconscious as Linguistic Structure in Jacques Lacan:**

Sigmund Freud's study of the unconscious has been a significant starting point for the study of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Marie Emile Lacan, born in Paris on April 12, 1901, and who passed away in 1981. He learned under the Jesuits and received training as a doctor before becoming a psychiatrist. He presented his first theses in 1926, followed by his doctoral dissertation in 1932, which explored the connection between paranoia and personality. Lacan was associated with the Evolution Psychiatry group in France, which introduced Freudian ideas

and also embraced the functional approach of English evolutionists such as John Hughlings Jackson and Henry Head (Abdul Karim, 1999, p. 17), Lacan, a French psychoanalyst, gained fame for his innovative and pioneering interpretation of Freud's works. He relied on the central concepts of linguistic structuralism. He is considered a pioneer in the theory of the mirror, and his first significant discovery was his consideration of the unconscious as a structure, a relationship rather than an entity. He viewed all aspects of the unconscious, including slips of the tongue, pen, and dreams, as having a language-like structure. He rejected the notion of language as merely a means to access the hidden depths of the unconscious; instead, he saw language as a creator of the unconscious itself. It possesses a unique logic for the unconscious, which the psychoanalyst employs to delve into the depths of the human psyche. Lacan considered language as an end in itself, not just a tool (Abdul Karim, 1999, p. 17), his fame spread through his famous statement, "The structure of the unconscious is akin to the structure of language." Jacques Lacan firmly linked language and the unconscious, considering language as the mirror of the unconscious. He deemed it a necessary condition for all unconscious processes, expressing the essence of our entire personality. This philosophical dimension added to his growing fame and his ideas permeated intellectual circles.

While Lacan is not a philosopher, he himself acknowledges that he is nothing more than a "psychoanalyst." He took upon himself the commitment to the boundaries of his scientific field with complete integrity and rigor, yet Lacan's philosophical sensibility and his eagerness to confront his ideas with those of philosophers like Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and Heidegger. He was also concerned with questioning the philosophical implications of psychoanalysis. All of this contributed to Lacan becoming a structural thinker (Ibrahim, n.d., p. 156).

Furthermore, he armed himself with a critical approach and criticized the new theories of psychoanalysis, as well as the American behaviorist school that sought to subject psychological phenomena to experimentation and the same methodological conditions as natural phenomena. They excluded the role of language, which he considered a vital connection to the human world. Instead, language is the essence of the unconscious and the primary foundation upon which psychoanalysis is built. He believed that linking Freudian theory with Pavlovian experimentation, as Masserman did in his study titled "Principles of Dynamic Mental Medicine," would only neglect the "problem of language, which is at the core of psychoanalytic theory" (Ibrahim, n.d., p. 157).

The various components of the unconscious, such as fantasies, instincts, and buried desires, were merely linguistic symbols—words, in other words. They expressed themselves and took on a symbolic character with specific connotations. Hence, Lacan's call to "return to Freud" was not just a reactionary movement but rather a discovery or a rediscovery to the point that Freud has become an inseparable part of this cultural revolution, deeply embedded in French society under the banner of "structuralism" (Ibrahim, n.d., p. 159).

Returning to Freud meant a return to the genuine origin, stripped of human impurities, accumulated interpretations, and readings that had distanced themselves from the pure scientific truth that imposes itself on the minds. Lacan's attempt was bold and akin to a revolution aimed at critiquing past ideas that had misunderstood the pioneer of psychoanalysis and its founder. But Lacan did not stop there; he made significant alterations to the core of classical psychoanalytical theory. He worked to discover what was implied in Freudian psychoanalysis. The fundamental issue that captivated Freud's thoughts and formed the focus of his interest was not merely about the existence of the unconscious and how to prove it. Instead, it regarded the unconscious as a system of relationships, as a structure. This structure resisted chaos and the atomic view of psychological life as isolated pieces. As John Strook explains in this context, "What Freud discovered, in the view of Lacan and many other writers, is not merely that the unconscious exists (this is clear), but that the unconscious is structured, and that this structure has innumerable effects on our words and actions. When it presents itself in this way, it becomes amenable to analysis" (Strook, 1996, p. 126).

The language served as the obedient assistant and servant of psychoanalysis, aiding in understanding the hidden elements of the subconscious mind and revealing its mysteries. This is evident in Freud's theory of repression, through which he aimed to transform unconscious pathways into conscious ones. As Strook explains, "In his analysis of verbal stories, which provided him with much of the evidence for the cases he treated, as well as in his writings on dreams, verbal slips, and jokes, Freud showed consummate skill and subtlety as a textual critic... Lacan argues that historical coincidence alone prevented Freud from benefiting from the science of linguistics itself" (Strook, 1996, pp. 169-170).

There is a close relationship between language and psychological life. Language is an essential condition for understanding our subconscious mind and capturing the symbolic contents of the unconscious. Lacan considered the unconscious as a structure similar to language, a system of relationships where its parts interact within the framework of the whole. Therefore, he gave precedence to the relationship over the essence.

Considering the unconscious as a structure, Lacan necessarily rejected confining it within narrow boundaries, such as the "id" in Freud's theory, because psychological life is fundamentally temporal, not bound by space. The id in Freud's theory serves as a repository for repressed desires and forgotten memories that defy logic and refuses all systems, revolving around the libido as a inclination towards pleasure and the vital energy to which Freud has given a general character, the central question revolves around the relationship between the unconscious and language: which is the origin? The posed question revolves around the reality of the relationship between the unconscious and language: which one is the origin? John Strook asserts in this context: "The structure of the unconscious is similar to the structure of language." This famous statement from Lacan's sayings attests to the importance he attributes to linguistics. Since it is formulated as a simile, the questions we may ask about Lacan's formulation are: How accurate are these types of

comparisons? What is their utility? Does the first term (the unconscious) take logical precedence over the second (language)? If we reverse the order of the terms, do we arrive at the same thing or something equally significant? (Strook, 1996, p. 171), The fact is that he looked at the problem from the perspective that the unconscious is the origin of language, and language, in turn, is the effective tool for uncovering the depths of the unconscious mind. This suggests that this relationship is characterized by interconnection, interplay, and mutual influence between them, he considered that the relationship between language and the unconscious can be viewed from two perspectives. First, it is possible that psychological tensions and conflicts contributed to the formation of the structure of human language. The idea that language was created in the image of the partial unconscious provides a poetic interpretation for the natural overlap between these two systems... Second, language is the only medium for psychoanalysis (Strook, 1996, p. 171).

Language is an essential prerequisite for the unconscious because psychoanalysis relies on the patient speaking and disclosing their thoughts, fantasies, and childhood memories in the form of linguistic symbols. In other words, "psychoanalysis has only one medium, which is the patient's speech as evidence of the truth that should not be neglected. Every utterance demands a response, even if it encounters silence alone. In this process, a listener is required, and this is the essence of the analytical process" (Lacan, 1953, p. 241).

The purpose of psychoanalysis is not to neglect the role of symptoms but to release repression and reduce the effect of psychological resistance in the patient. Symptoms are functions of meanings, and there is a causal relationship between repressions and the disappearance of symptoms when the patient undergoes psychotherapy.

Dreams are considered manifestations of the unconscious, and they are, in essence, a defensive mechanism for ventilation. This is because consciousness has gaps, and during dreams, repressed desires are released since the authority of mental and social censorship diminishes, and psychological resistance weakens.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) explains that dreams have a purpose or meaning. He states, "The realization of desire in the dream represents itself indirectly" (Freud, 2016, p. 26). Dreams are considered a fertile ground for capturing the contents of the unconscious. They are the royal road to the unconscious, as Freud put it. In reality, dreams fulfill unconscious motives that are repressed. Many matters and desires cannot be achieved in waking life due to barriers and obstacles, extending back to childhood, which serves as the foundational basis for one's personality and stability. However, these barriers are released during sleep, where desires are not expressed directly but take on symbolic forms. The skill of the psychoanalyst lies in interpreting these symbols, as "aggressive, sexual, and prohibited desires appear in symbolic form in dreams... The dream is the realization of desire in a symbolic way. It is a masked realization of desire" (Ziour, 1988, p. 233).

The significance of dreams in the field of psychoanalysis is immense because they arise from repression. "It must be a genuine psychic fact, containing a meaning, and it must be something we can make use of in our analytic work... But how are we to convert a dream into an ordinary reportable statement, and how are we to interpret the fact that a portion of what is recounted by the patient has assumed a form that defies his understanding and ours as well?" (Freud, n.d, p. 7).

There are challenges that hinder the work of the psychoanalyst in interpreting dreams and uncovering the depths of the unconscious. Freud deserves credit for creating a system of new and pioneering terminology and enriching the scientific terminology in the fields of psychology and psychoanalysis, specifically. In this context, he states: "The first thing we must do is to establish the foundations for our new attitude toward the problem of dreams, by taking into consideration two new concepts and using two new terms. We commonly refer to what people usually call "dream content" as the "manifest dream" or "the manifest content". We also refer to what we search for in its presence behind the dream as the "latent thoughts of the dream" or "the latent content", Therefore, we can express the two problems we face as follows: transforming the manifest dream into the latent dream within the dreamer's psychological life (Freud, n.d., p. 7). Indeed, Freud's study of the world of dreams was meticulous, delving into the minutest details and paying attention to every word uttered by the dreamer. What one remembers upon waking up is merely the surface, concealing many things. What is hidden is often more mysterious and impactful because it represents repressed and forbidden desires. The unconscious, in this view, is the realm of the unsaid.

From a Freudian psychoanalytic perspective, the latent content of a dream is transformed into manifest content through a process of distortion or displacement. through the processes of condensation and displacement to express the buried desires that have arisen from the mechanism of repression. Condensation is a term used to describe a fundamental process in the formation of dreams and symptoms of psychological disorders. In condensation, one element in the dream or symptom may represent multiple elements. For example, in a dream, a person might see someone who resembles the face of their older brother, while their body dimensions resemble their father, and the skin color may resemble their close friend. In this case, the single person in the dream condenses the qualities of these three individuals (Abdelkader Taha, n.d, p. 143), Entering such a complex format inevitably leads to difficulties in interpreting dreams due to the inherent distortion, Because, in reality, it is an alternative to something else. The concept of displacement, on the other hand, is a defense mechanism that involves shifting an internal emotional charge from its actual source to an alternative external object. This mechanism can be observed in phenomena like phobias, where one avoids confronting the real source of anxiety and instead displaces it onto a different object or situation. (Abdelkader Taha, n.d, p. 42)

Therefore, the latent content is the hidden meaning of the dream, which the psychoanalyst works to interpret and decipher through the patient's assistance. Meanwhile, the manifest content refers

to all the elements of the dream that are observed or recalled by the dreamer. Thus, there is the manifest dream and the latent dream. The former is the dream as it appears in the mirror of the self; it is fragmented and incomplete, specific to the individual dreamer. The latter consists of the repressed thoughts and tendencies that are considered the origin upon which the dream is built, as it essentially represents the meaning of the manifest dream. Interpreting the symbols of dreams is not an easy process; it poses significant challenges for the psychoanalyst. This is because it relies fundamentally on extracting the repressed content, which differs from deliberate suppression. To interpret the dream, two fundamental processes are required: the first is related to the interpretation of the dream, and the second is the extraction of the dream (Freud, S., 1973, p. 8).

The dream holds a significant place in Lacanian psychoanalysis, as language encompasses all aspects of the unconscious that reveal themselves and speak, including the dream, which is considered, in essence, a language imbued with symbolism. It is a text that needs careful and thorough reading to uncover its depths. Lacan defined the nature of the dream as follows: "It is an experience of the unconscious, a pure experience of the unconscious, and simultaneously, it is a field of pure symbolism" (Lacan, 1953, p. 392).

Lacan's return to Freud was a fresh interpretation of Freud's text and its hidden and enclosed meanings, requiring precise clarification and interpretation. In this context, Lacan stated, "Let us consider Freud's work in his book entitled 'The Interpretation of Dreams' (traumdeutung) to show that the dream is the structure or, more precisely, the writing. In the child's dream, it is the primitive ideography, while in the adult, it reproduces both the phonetic and symbolic use within the semantic elements" (Lacan, 1953, p. 267).

And it's worth mentioning in this context that the linguistic perspective on the unconscious in Lacanian thought has multiple sources. Lacan was not the first to delve into the subject of language and its significance, so there are no ideas from nothing. The history of human thought is a history of continuity and succession. Heidegger, the German philosopher, had a significant influence on Lacan. Heidegger considered language to be the house of being, where being, in its entirety (Heidegger, 1962, p. 373). Aristotle's definition that humans are rational animals means they are speaking animals, as "logos" is language in the eyes of many German philosophers, such as Heidegger and Hans Georg Gadamer. The term "logos," which can be translated as reason, also translates to the word itself. Heidegger used it as an ontological path because the word speaks being, and it is fundamentally a form of speech (die sprache). Therefore, humans only become humans to the extent that they speak, "Heidegger has a metaphysical exhaustion of speech that cannot be founded on anything other than itself." (Juignet, 2003, p. 131)

Lacan was also influenced by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009), the pioneer of structuralist anthropology, who criticized Eurocentrism and called for openness to the Other. He emphasized the importance of intercultural communication and considered it a fundamental condition for entering the realm of humanity. Lévi-Strauss rejected the term "primitive societies" for ancient

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societies and instead referred to them as "societies without writing" because culture is not a mental product manifested in external forms like science, art, and philosophy, but rather a social product embodied in customs, values, beliefs, and everything that humans have added to nature. He refuted the idea of a natural human state, arguing that culture shapes human beings according to the norms of behavior established by the community throughout their lives. Thus, he saw their relationship as one of interplay, as there is no culture devoid of interaction with nature, and there is no pure nature free from any cultural influence. There is no distinction between mythical and scientific mind, since it is a nature deeply rooted in humans and is universal among all. Strauss aimed to reveal the unity behind diversity, uncovering the unconscious structure of primitive societies. This idea had an impact on Lacan's view of language, which represents an end in itself, enabling

humans to transition from the natural state to the cultural state.

## **2-2 The Significance of the Symbolic in Jacques Lacan's Thought:**

The concept of the symbolic plays a fundamental role in Lacanian psychoanalysis. It is one of the three systems around which all his theoretical ideas revolve concerning his critical reading of Freud's work, such as dream interpretation and the pleasure principle. These three systems are: the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real. The symbolic is the place of the Other or radical alterity, the Other that is embodied in the unconscious and is the domain of the signifier. Lacan imagines the relationship between the imaginary and the symbolic as similar to language, which is structured around the signifier and the signified. Linguistic signs fall into the realm of the imaginary, unlike the signifier. However, this is also due to the broad meaning Lacan gives to the term "signifier" (Cléro, 2003, p. 148).

The idea of the symbol and the symbolic order is derived from Claude Lévi-Strauss and has an anthropological character. Lévi-Strauss made a significant leap in this field when he moved from structuralism to a broader study of culture as a social product. Thanks to culture, humans can cease to be animals. If we isolate humans from their social environment, considering it a moral entity and a cultural milieu, they become like dumb animals. Lévi-Strauss expanded structural concepts and applied them to the study of cultural phenomena. It is not just about conveying signs; it is also about distinguishing structures as the subject of research, using the term "symbolic system." He states: "Any culture can be considered a collection of symbolic systems, including language, kinship rules, art, science, and religion" (Bontalis, 1997, p. 267). Thus, this concept transitioned from the field of anthropological structuralism to psychoanalytic analysis. This project is part of the fusion between the structure of the unconscious and the structure of language and the use of linguistic and anthropological structural concepts in psychoanalytic analysis. It seems to us that Lacan's use of the idea of the symbolic in psychoanalysis addresses two points:

A- Approximating the Structure of the Unconscious to that of Language and Applying the Method Proven in Linguistics to it.

B- Explaining how the human person is deeply embedded in a pre-existing system, of a symbolic nature, as suggested by Claude Lévi-Strauss (Bontalis, 1997, p. 268). The dream is a symbolic language because hidden desires are not expressed directly but through a symbolic play. Urgent desire is an internal driving force for behavior from within, transferring from one signifier to another. Freud uses condensation and displacement, so when the patient expresses a desire and discloses it through the psychoanalyst's technique of the stream of consciousness, this desire carries meanings other than its direct interpretation. This desire consists of a series of signifiers containing hidden meanings, and the original signified is difficult to grasp. According to Lacan, the signified is like the repressed that continually resurfaces and justifies its existence through many signifiers which forms the chain via metaphors and metonyms." (Houb Allah, 2004, p. 61). Meaning is subjected to the meaningful chain, extracted from the movement of one signifier to another. The Father represents the authority of the super ego, preventing the realization of the Id's desires. The Oedipus complex revolves around the Father and can be traced back to libidinal desires. In his early writings, Freud studied the Oedipus complex, which can be traced back to Greek mythology and is built on the urgent desire to maintain a passionate relationship with the mother and eliminate the same-sexed father, considering him an enemy and a rival. Lacan distinguished between three images of the Father: the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real. Regarding the Father as a topic of social life, but also one found in the unconscious closer to primitive instincts, it cannot be defined except by invoking the signifier denoting the Father's name. In this signifier, the signification based on the semiotic chain itself converges, This semiotic chain is what distinguishes between human identity and animal life (Lacan, 1953, p. 513). The unconscious does not carry meaning in itself except through the mediation of language, which brings the hidden unconscious into existence. The concept of the symbolic initially appeared in Lacan's work in a traditional sense, recognizing that symptoms are symbols of conflict, and the components of dreams symbolize something other than themselves. The symbol has continuity with language when it becomes a mere word, associated with the permanence of meaning, and turns into a language when freed from material attachments (Juignet, 2003, p. 133).

Language is a tool for condensing reality, where the symbol replaces the thing. What's important in Lacan's perspective is that the symbolic has no connection to the libido and sexual desires. It belongs to the human society, the world of culture, and the realm of civilization. It is the opposite of the imaginary, which belongs to nature. The imaginary is linked to libido-driven desires, such as neurosis and narcissism. It operates based on libidinal desires, and it is the realm of imagination, illusion, and seduction. It has a close connection with the body.

Lacan, through his interpretative reading of Freud's work titled "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," stated: "The symbolic system is not a libidinal system. It goes beyond the pleasure principle,

outside the bounds of life, which Freud defines as the death drive... The symbolic system is excluded from the libidinal sexual system. The death drive is nothing but a mask for the symbolic." (Lacan, 1953, p. 375). Thus, the symbolic serves as a law that regulates desire because it belongs to human society, which seeks to build the edifice of civilization. Therefore, symbolism is a distinctly human characteristic, and it is through it that humans became truly human.

While the imaginary does not distinguish between humans and animals, considering nature as a common denominator for all living beings, the differentiation between the symbolic and the imaginary is not absolute despite these fundamental differences. Lacan's view is that if the signifier represents the symbolic system and holds a prominent position, and the repressed is the signifier's referent, this means that the symbolic system establishes and regulates the imaginary. A linguistic unit consists of the signifier and the signified without excluding the reference. Therefore, language is the origin that encompasses them all.

Additionally, there is a distinction between the symbolic and the real. Lacan goes beyond classical theories of knowledge that separate the subject from the object. He distinguishes clearly between the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real. Through this triad (the imaginary, the symbolic, the real), Lacan significantly deviates from classical analyses and phenomenology... The real is in direct opposition to symbolism. In his work titled "The Writings," Lacan states: "It is a field that exists outside of symbolizing." (Cléro, 2003, p. 151), Therefore, it is necessary to clarify these concepts to avoid confusion, especially in defining the term "the real." The latter should not be confused with the external world representing the realm of things which is everything outside the self. Lacan distinguishes between reality and the external world, presenting reality as noise, where we can hear everything. However, we now understand why the concept of the real will evolve towards the impossible, as indicated in his seminar book (Livre XI du séminaire). We must recognize the mystery of what he calls the real, especially since it lies beyond symbols, attracting the ethics of desire because it is a principle of materiality (Cléro, 2003, p. 151), these three systems – the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real – are among the most critical foundations of Lacan's psychoanalysis, which he relies upon exclusively, and they also serve as principles for scientific classification.

### **2-3 The Unconscious as the Discourse of the Other:**

Lacan contends that the unconscious is the discourse of the Other. He questions the nature of the unconscious and its relationship with language, asking if we can truly organize it like language. For him, "the unconscious is the discourse of the Other, where the self receives its forgotten messages inversely and precisely. It falls under the system of the signifier, but the evidence of this fact is what Lacan calls the Other, the locus of speech" (Jacob, 1967, p. 201). But what is this Other that Lacan speaks of? The Other encompasses repressed tendencies, suppressed desires, forgotten memories, and all the erroneous actions that reveal themselves and

speak out. It manifests in all aspects of the unconscious. "The Other in speech conceals what Lacan terms the treasure trove of signifiers, the place where the self-forms as a residue of the signifier"(Garciaz, 2017, p. 1).

Often, the term "Other" is taken to mean another person, as it is commonly understood by people. However, Catherine B. Clement provides a broad meaning for the Other that transcends narrow individuality to encompass society, its institutions, and history. She states, "We should not understand this Other as merely another person. The unconscious might be the one who speaks in its name. In the Lacanian context, it is radically different, transcendent from any hypostasis, whether divine or human. The Other is the place of the stranger from which all discourse emerges: the place of family, law, and the father in Freudian theory, the place of history and social locations" (Clement, 1988, p. 18). The Other never departs from the self that consciousness has possessed. The self remains imprisoned, thinking and acting only within its domain and scope. The self speaks, but it does so according to its consciousness. This aligns with classical philosophies that prioritize conscious, thinking selves for all their actions, as seen in Cartesian philosophy. The Other also holds a place within the structure of the self: It is not merely another person but a place. The self is not a point, but a complex result that emerges from a specific event. It is the only event that happens to the individual self throughout their life journey. Lacan constructs this structure that limits actions without any possible alteration. The stage of the mirror, a clinical revelation carried out by Lacan, is the stage at which the infant recognizes itself as an independent self (between six months and eighteen months of age) (Clément, 1988, p. 18).

A child is not born with a fully formed personality. Initially, from birth until around the fifth month, the child is intertwined with the world of objects, living through the undifferentiated stage, as confirmed by psychologists. his actions are reflexive, without differentiation between self and object. The first stage of acquiring individuality and a sense of distinct self is the stage of body awareness, obtaining the bodily ego. Lacan's experience in the mirror stage demonstrated that a child, upon seeing their reflected image in the mirror, discovers their self and recognizes themselves through the image initially. It firmly establishes that this reflected image is a realistic image that they strive to grasp. Yet, the child recognizes it as another person because it fundamentally represents their own body. Initially, young children rely on others and their parents, remaining dependent on them and incapable of fulfilling their needs independently. This clearly indicates that humans are created as the weakest of all creatures. However, this perceived weakness is the secret to their subsequent development. They transition from a state of lack to a state of completeness when they enter the world of language as a human specificity. "The transition that occurs here is a fundamental one: the self-gains a complete image of itself and presents the ego. However, it presents it, as Lacan stated, "within an imaginary framework" (Clement, 1988, p. 18). The ego is associated with the imaginary system based on illusion and seduction, far removed from the world of reality. However, Lacan does not separate the

imaginary from the symbolic. They interplay and this is evident in the definition of the ego, which is not solely imaginary but is understood as a relationship between the imaginary and the symbolic (Simonelli, 2000, p. 3). Two closely related concepts to the imaginary and the symbolic are the ideal ego (Ichideal) and the ego ideal (Idealich). Freud did not clearly distinguish between them, leading to ambiguity regarding the concept of the ideal ego. However, Lacan worked to eliminate this ambiguity to provide a clear view to the audience. Due to the elucidation of the symbolic and imaginative dimension, he clarified that the difference between the ideal ego and the ego ideal lies in the distinction between the imaginary and the symbolic. "The ideal ego is the imaginary one, meaning the ego in the mirror stage. According to Freud, the self's completeness and unity are found in the narcissism of the child in its lost paradise. However, the mirror stage also constitutes the source of the symbolic. The unconscious is the place of the Other, which is the place of desire. Symbolism elevates humans to their most complete and highest existence. It sets limits to the internal conflicts when desire turns into speech. The self can get rid of "undetermined desire by destroying the Other." Symbolism kills the thing and makes it an object of desire. It elevates it to the symbolic Other, considered the place of the signifier, the place of speech... Symbolism allows us to escape this illusory deadlock by naming desire and through its speech, (Simonelli, 2000, p. 3), Lacan revolutionized the field of psychoanalysis by merging the unconscious and language. Many Freudian concepts were redefined in the context of linguistic psychoanalysis. Things were turned upside down when Lacan incorporated the concepts of linguistic structuralism. He asserted a crucial starting point: "I will explain to you what allows you to economize your mental effort, for in the first year of my seminars, which essentially revolve around Freud's writings on technique, I want to introduce you to the concept of the symbolic function as the only function capable of interpreting what can be called the 'determination of meaning,' the reality that we must adhere to as the basis for the Freudian experiment. The ego itself is the signifier for the symbolic relationship that can be affected by its density and its structural functions" (Lacan, 1981, p. 4). Consequently, Lacan brought about a radical change in the foundations of Freudian psychoanalysis when the psychoanalytic world adopted a linguistic perspective. From this point, the highest ego becomes the symbolic place of order and law, the place of the father's speech. The ego becomes the imaginary place, the place of imagination, diversity, change, and self-supplements that are dynamic and fragile. The id has no place except through the heart of meaning: It is the place of no place, the cause of the structure of the absent. Lacan refers to it as the Real. Its production is part of the self's organization concerning the subject of desire (Clément, 1988, p. 19).

If we return to the foundational figure in this field, Sigmund Freud, and his division of the psychic apparatus into what he referred to as "les deuxièmes topiques" (the second topography), we find that he divided it into three components: "le ça" (the id), representing the pleasure principle and the domain of the unconscious centered around the libido, which constitutes the realm of prohibitions and buried desires seeking satisfaction; and "le moi" (the ego), which represents the reality principle, and "le sur-moi" (the superego), which embodies the authority of

society with its values and customs, often equated with the authority of the father. It's noteworthy that Freud's concept of the ego has two aspects: the unconscious ego, and the bodily ego. As Freud states in this context: "The ego is a part of the id that has been modified by the direct influence of the external world through the medium of perception... and stands for reason and good sense, in contrast to the id which is dominated by passions; yet the ego is before anything is also the bodily ego " (Freud, p. 18).

This ego, particularly the bodily ego, is what Lacan developed in the mirror stage. The ego's function is to maintain a balance between the desires of the id and the demands of the superego, which seeks perfection and inhibits the id's desires. Freud employed a retrospective interpretation approach, interpreting things by referring back to reality and the events accompanying the individual during childhood as a crucial stage in the construction of one's personality. Alternatively, he referred back to history, not just personal history but the history of humanity as a whole, tracing it back to the experience of the first humans, Cain and Abel's fratricide. This framework takes on a dynamic nature, with these sections interacting with one another and not allowing for separation. Nevertheless, it's crucial to remember that this division is merely an assumption that overlooks the metaphysical aspect that distinguishes human existence. Humans, as humans, are not merely bundles of instincts. Biological motivations are insufficient to explain human behavior, as humans seek ideal values as their highest purpose.

Lacan derived the idea of "the place" from Freud's early writings when he delineated the levels of the psychic apparatus, which were: the unconscious (l'inconscient), consciousness (conscient), and preconscious (préconscient), often referred to as "les premières topiques" (the first topography). However, this classification was significantly influenced by the neuroscience of his time, taking on a primarily physical character. These levels were unclear and not well-distinguished, prompting Freud to criticize this division because the mental life is temporal rather than spatial. Life unfolds in mental time, and any alterations occur in this temporal dimension. Therefore, Freud introduced modifications, as mentioned earlier, dividing the psychic apparatus into three components: "le ça" (the id), "le moi" (the ego), and "le sur-moi" (the superego), which he called "les deuxièmes topiques" (the second topography). These components interact with one another and contribute to the construction of a unified personality. The term "topiques" is derived from the Greek word "Topos," which means place. It represents the theoretical way to conceive of the psychic work as a system with a spatial order, as opposed to understanding the psyche as a dynamic interaction. Freud proposed, in his 1900 work, "les premières topiques" (the first topography), that the psychic apparatus is distributed across the following locations: the unconscious, consciousness, and the preconscious (Tamisier, 1999, p. 3399).

Lacan didn't stop at defining the nature of "the Other" but made a distinction between two facets of "the Other": "le petit autre" (the little other) and "le grand autre" (the big Other). We find a similar categorization in Freud's work, where he differentiated between "der Andere" (the

other) and "das Andere" (the other or person). In 1955, Lacan made a crucial distinction between "le petit autre" (a) and "le grand autre" (A), which remained central throughout his life. This differentiation holds a fundamental meaning in psychoanalytic practice (Cléro, 2003, p. 145).

The distinction between "le petit autre" and "le grand autre" is akin to the difference between the imaginary and the symbolic. The former is an imaginary image with no basis in reality, while the latter has a close relationship with language and its rules, falling within the realm of the signifier. "Le petit autre" is not the real Other but a mere reflection and projection of the self, situated within the domain of the imaginary. On the other hand, "le grand autre" relates to radical alterity, transcending the imaginary otherness. Lacan addresses the identity of this fundamental Other in connection with language and law, thereby integrating "le grand autre" into the symbolic order (Cléro, 2003, p. 145).

If the unconscious is structured like language, it implies that both are subject to the same mechanisms and laws. In every language, meaning is determined by the rules and criteria governing its structure, such as metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche. Any change in the structure necessitates a corresponding change in meaning. This is subject to the specificities of each language and its criteria. Lacan, in this regard: "the rules that govern the unconscious are the same rules that govern language" ... Similarly, he emphasizes that metaphor and metonymy are the fundamental laws governing the other scene. All aspects of the unconscious are elements of a sentence, the meaning of which is mysterious and concealed but can be accessed through interpretation targeting the signifier (Garciaz, 2017, p. 1).

Lacan extensively employs linguistic concepts to delve into the depths of the unconscious psychic life. His impact, especially in discussing the signifier and signified as linguistic units that separate the human world from the animal, is particularly pronounced. Linguistic unity is a distinctly human trait, as opposed to animals with their natural language. Animal instinctual signals are fused and lack growth, development, disassembly, or articulation.

Indeed, the dream is fundamentally a defense mechanism for psychological relief, and it is purely a symbolic language. The psychoanalyst deciphers its symbols and interprets them to bring them to the patient's awareness. This means that the unconscious only becomes conscious through the representations of the words spoken by the patient and the symbols contained within the dream text. The dream, in turn, is built on the mechanisms of language and its essential units. It follows linguistic formulations and rhetorical styles. The same aspects found in language are present in dreams, which means: "the formulation of dreams and the formulation of language rely on the same rules and style: metaphor (as condensation), metonymy, or the sender's metaphor (as displacement). The primary processes lie behind the unconscious, and rhetoric is more like what Freud called secondary processes. They are separated by a resistant line that resists all attempts to penetrate it, especially the elimination of the last meaning which is the signified" (Habib Allah,

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2004, p. 57).

Lacan indeed redefined the rules of the unconscious and its mechanisms according to linguistic and rhetorical concepts, building upon Freud's groundwork.

#### **2-4 Jacques Lacan's Theory of the Sign (Signifier and Signified):**

Lacan's influence of structural linguistics doesn't mean that Lacanian psychoanalysis is merely an extension of structuralism. When we delve into the intricacies of the subject and its details, we can clearly see significant differences between Lacan and Saussure in their concepts of the signifier and the signified based on linguistic evidence. Saussure rejects the idea of a direct connection between names and what they represent. He acknowledges that linguistic signs do not inherently tie the signifier to the signified but rather link the mental concept or "concept" to the acoustic image. The relationship between the signifier and the signified is therefore considered arbitrary. Because by the sign, we mean the totality resulting from the connection between the signifier and the signified, and we can simply state: linguistic signs are arbitrary " (Saussure, 1985, p. 100).

Furthermore, Saussure places greater emphasis on the signified over the signifier because he views language from a more abstract, conceptual perspective. This differs from Lacan, who prioritizes the signifier over the signified. During his seminar on mental disorders or "psychoses" in 1956, Lacan declared: "placing the signified at the forefront of analysis is a common approach, because it is certainly considered the most tempting, which seems primarily to be the special dimension for symbolic realization in analytical psychology. However, when ignoring the essential mediating role of the signifier, and when disregarding its role as the guiding element, we do not obstruct the original understanding of neurotic phenomena, but also the interpretation of dreams themselves. We become entirely incapable of understanding what happens in the psychoses, the signifier played a fundamental role in understanding the unconscious life, whether it concerns patients or individuals in general. Through it, the humanity of a person is achieved, emphasizing the symbolic nature of the signifier that differs from the auditory image in structural linguistics. Lacan did not assign great importance to the signified. In this context, in the stolen letter, because the signified does not have a specific meaning and it is difficult to grasp and reach the final signified that puts an end to the problem in the process of dream interpretation. There is no necessary correspondence between the signifier and the signified, as the clarity of the first does not necessarily imply the clarity of the second, the signifier serves as the master to which everyone submits. The self has no importance except in its relation to the signifier. "Therefore, the signifier has priority in defining the self, moving within the signifying chain. It is the one that defines it and indicates its place, as the self, according to his definition, is what the signifier represents in relation to another signifier. Any signifier cannot completely eliminate the final meaning of the signified" , this is because, by its very existence, it is only a metaphor for a missing link or a lost subject, which can only be inferred through new metaphors that appear

through analysis. Humans say more than they know (Houb Allah, 2004, p. 61), and this is what amazes them, this means that the analyst does not possess a magic wand to find the ultimate cure for the patient. Our knowledge in the field of the unconscious remains always partial and incomplete. No matter how hard the analyst tries to uncover the causes of mental illness, it is difficult to predict human behavior accurately.", Lacan highlighted the close relationship between the unconscious and language, drawing on linguistics to understand the intricacies of human psychology in its unconscious aspect, which individuals cannot understand its motives and hidden causes behind but this does not imply that psychoanalysis is not a standalone science, but rather, it is a branch of linguistics, and the relationship between them is conceptualized on the principle of identity, Lacan tirelessly sought to impart scientific significance to the unconscious psychological phenomenon, considering linguistics as auxiliary sciences, similar to how a historian draws on various sciences to construct historical events. Philippe Cabestan confirms this approach, stating, 'Lacan does not mean that the structure of the unconscious is identical to that of language, and that psychoanalysis should merely be an extension of linguistics.' Moreover, Lacan often emphasized the distinction, asserting that it is not a precise linguistics but rather an (Linguisterie). He insists on treating this concept with utmost seriousness: as 'the unconscious is organized like language,' and it holds another meaning. Lacan aimed to describe unconscious processes based on concepts derived from modern linguistics, starting with the concept of the 'signifier' (Cabestan, 2011, p. 4).

Jacques Lacan deserves credit for introducing a set of terms that significantly contributed to enriching the psychological language and expanding the scope of analytical psychological research. There is a clear distinction between linguistics (Linguistique), which studies the characteristics and structures of human languages to discern areas of agreement and difference among them, and (Linguisterie), which implies the study of language for psychological purposes. This stands in contrast to formal linguistics (Formalism). Lacan introduced the term 'Linguisterie' to signify the method by which discourse in psychoanalysis approaches language" (Maalaguarnera, 2012).

Jacques Lacan aimed to achieve relative liberation from the constraints of linguistics and to establish clear boundaries between psychoanalysis and linguistics. This categorization process is crucial in the field of science to prevent the blending of different scientific domains. Lacan introduced modifications because they were necessary to transform the Saussurian approach to linguistic unity, particularly the concepts of "signifier" and "signified", The linguist de Saussure is often used as a reference, but Lacan took an opposing direction by assuming the independence of the signifier from the signified. He focused on the function of "signifier" in the sense carried by this term in linguistics, where the "signifier" is not only characterized by its laws but also dominates the signified and imposes its laws on it. Thus, the relationship between human and the symbolic becomes "the relationship between humans and the "signifier" (Juignet, 2003, p. 135), making the nature of "signifier" symbolic. He remained faithful to him in many of his

opinions, and the idea of structure as a relationship even becomes clear in his definition of the signifier. In his writings from 1960, Lacan highlighted the distinction between “sign” and “signifier”, affirming that the sign always refers to an idea, while the signifier points to another sign (Clément, 1989, p. 68).

In addition, the concept of (the signifier) has been imbued with a linguistic dimension closely related to rhetoric science, and its key terms such as metaphor, metonymy, and allegory. These concepts were incorporated into the study of the subconscious mind and extensively utilized in exploring the depths of the human psyche. Psychoanalysis took on a rhetorical character, evident in his "third seminar" (1956-1955), where Lacan did not only know (the signifier) through the theory of symbolism borrowed from Claude Lévi-Strauss but also chose another starting point. He utilized concepts like metaphor and metonymy drawn from Jakobson Roman (Clément, 1989, p.72), However, if Lacan praised the role of language in understanding the depths of the unconscious psychic life and employed many concepts and terms related to structuralism, one may question the legitimacy of this transition and transformation. To what extent is this non-Kantian approach legitimate in the field of psychoanalysis? The psychological world is a world of its own with an independent existence, risky to reduce it to mere linguistic elements. Structuralism focused on language as a general key that opens all doors of knowledge, forgetting the world of humanity. It excluded history from its domain, while humans are primarily historical beings, considering historical quality as an inherent characteristic of human nature. Freudian psychoanalysis is a confirmation of this historical nature, attributing the ego to its individual history, but also to the history of humanity as a whole. It is a philosophy that explicitly declares the death of man.

### **3- Conclusion:**

Jacques Lacan's contributions to the field of psychoanalysis represented a unique blend of various theories and diverse fields of knowledge. He did not limit himself to concepts and terminology solely from linguistics but drew from philosophy, anthropology, and mathematics. Jacques Lacan's thought underwent significant developments, and his texts remained open to multiple interpretations.

1. There is a notable difference between the views of the pioneer of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, and Jacques Lacan in their definition of the unconscious. Lacan's linguistic perspective influenced all his research. When the function of the whole changed, the function of its parts, namely the components of the unconscious mind, necessarily changed as well. Lacan utilized several concepts from linguistics in his study of the unconscious mind, extending beyond structural linguistics to include rhetoric and semiotics.

2. Psychoanalysis, as a standalone discipline, employed linguistic sciences to uncover the mysteries of the unconscious mind. It is an independent field, but independence does not imply

isolation. All sciences interact and complement each other to discover objective scientific truths. Saussure's structuralism had a significant impact on Jacques Lacan's thinking, when he viewed the unconscious as a structure, a relationship, not an entity where its components interact within the framework of that organized whole.

In this context, language is considered the essence of human existence. It revolves with human existence, It expresses the world of things in minds and the world of things in reality, and it also expresses the essence of psychological life because language is a general activity that does not contain spoken or written symbols. Instead, it encompasses everything that society has agreed upon, and every movement in the body is considered a precise language that expresses the hidden thoughts.

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