

**sense and insensibility:
cross-currents in lacan and
frege on the problematics of
meaning**

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Engaging with numerous philosophers of divergent persuasions throughout his lifetime, Jacques Lacan may be said to have been principally interested in the possibilities of the extension of certain philosophical concepts and ideas as such, and less so in their thinkers' total systems or theoretical positionings. Emblematic of this, a consistent preoccupation with the precursor/influence (founder?) of the analytic philosophical tradition, Gottlob Frege, throughout his series of Paris seminars over a number of years attests to the fact that Lacan held in esteemed regard the mathematician's insights into language as well as the (convoluted) place of subjectivity in the performance of logical analyses. Along with his psychoanalytic students who were involved with the publication *Cahiers pour l'Analyse* in the mid-60s, Lacan approached Frege in regard to three main issues represented by three key texts: conceptual variations and forms of inscription in his early *Begriffsschrift* (1879); the function of number outlined in *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik* (1884); and the nature of naming in his 1892 paper 'Über Sinn und Bedeutung' wherein factors such as the subjective and objective representation of objects and their denomination were supremely relevant during this 'high structuralist' period. With his own forays into formalization and logic, Lacan was fascinated by the difficulties in ascribing any simple role to the function of thought, similar to the stumbling blocks enumerated by Frege in attempting to determine a logical structure of/through language. In the following discussion, we will return to the latter of Frege's original German texts to examine some of these complica-

tions in detail while scanning the Lacanian seminars to tease out his dealings with Frege (a thematic underdeveloped to date in scholarship). Ultimately we hope to determine whether Lacan's additions, particularly on the role of the unconscious, make impossible the attempt to conceive of a 'pure' logic of thought. Based on the illuminations Lacan and his entourage discovered in Frege's work, we will also indicate the future avenues wherein these cross-currents may be further elaborated and synthesized.

SYMPTOMS AND SOURCES

If, in the beginning, there was the symptom, then it was incumbent upon Freud to add that it must possess sense, *Sinn*. Namely, that symptomatic actions have "a motive, a sense and an intention"; which also possess a "relation to something unconscious"; and which "are related to the patient's experiences" (and thus that even 'senseless' symptomatic behaviours, such as those found among obsessionals, actually "have a content of the most frightful kind").¹

Further, as intermediaries, other important concepts must enter into consideration, namely *Darstellung*, the presentation/representation of things/events and *Vorstellung*, ideational representations, as these intervene between symptom and sense. Seemingly random obsessional actions, for example, for Freud, consist of, on one level, a "representation, a repetition, of the significant scene"; further, an intention, namely to put something which had gone wrongly right again; and a motivation (or *wish*) to fulfil something that is or was not the case "in reality."² To use one of Freud's examples: a man on his wedding night suffers from impotence and cannot deflower his wife, running back and forth between rooms trying to accomplish this act and then giving up each time. Ashamed of what the housemaid will think in the morning, he spills red ink on the marital bed to simulate the shedding of blood. His wife later develops the persistent behaviour of running into a particular room of their house (in which a stained tablecloth is clearly visible), summoning the housemaid to complete an errand (or to merely dismiss her again), and then running back to the original room she was in.

The *sense* of the action, they established (i.e. the analysand with Freud, in line with the above formula), was based on a representation of the original, traumatic, scene; the intention, the kernel of the symptom, was to summon the maid and not feel ashamed, as the husband would have been *without* stained bedsheets (i.e. she was correcting the scene itself); but ultimately, she was addressing the originally

shocking fact, the encounter, of the sexual, as well as her husband's incapacity, i.e. establishing a more *agreeable* reality as such.³

The original trauma or scene in such symptomal behaviour is usually from childhood, i.e. what Freud calls the typical case, and thus he notes that the above example is atypical. But on the other hand it allows the succession of events, and hence the *structure* of symptomal expression (how the newlywed came to sustain a form of substitutive enjoyment in this way), to come into better focus via forms of representation and their senses.⁴

Taken from the *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, the case was emblematic of how sense could not be discounted in respect to psychical issues and indeed was intertwined in their elaboration. Hence, explanatory frameworks could be established to account for diverse phenomena traditionally eschewed, ignored or suppressed. The crucial questions of sense, meaning and representation then were always at the forefront of the psychoanalytic endeavour, clinically and theoretically, and continue to be treated variously with regard to different formations: dreams, symptoms, fantasy, etc.

Thus, it is no wonder that for the ruminations of Jacques Lacan in his weekly Parisian seminar, in his return to Freud, the 'meaning of sense,' the status of the subject in relation to symptomal behaviour, and the role of (re)presentation, in particular with regard to 'the object of psychoanalysis,' would be recurrently approached and significantly situated thematics.

SENSING SENSE

Edging into the 'high structuralist' era, at the beginning of his twelfth seminar on December 2, 1964, Lacan turns to Noam Chomsky to initiate a discussion of sense, meaning and grammar which he would continue to develop over the mid-60s.

Chomsky had attempted in his first major text *Syntactic Structures* in 1957 to create a "completely non-semantic theory of grammatical structure."⁵ Contra Chomsky, and with respect to the sentence "*colorless green ideas sleep furiously*," the famous example of a supposedly semantically nonsensical yet grammatically correct sentence,⁶ Lacan argues that grammar (as opposed to random, ungrammatical statements) *presupposes* a relation to meaning or at least to the effects of sense (for example in the simple act of adjoining a substantive and an adjective).⁷ For him, this distinction is essential as "grammatical structure is absolutely correlative to

all the first appearances of language.”⁸ He thus sided with linguist Roman Jakobson who contended that it is only “[t]horoughly degrammaticalized utterances”⁹ which can be nonsensical.¹⁰ Lacan noted that,

Undoubtedly meaning is completely extinguished where there is no grammar, but where there is grammar, I mean a grammatical construction, sensed, presumed by the subject, the subject who is being questioned, who here is called on as judge ... can one say, that there is no meaning?¹¹

For Jakobson, moreover, the ontological and the sense-possessing could not be conflated in linguistic analyses, thereby problematizing denotational correspondence theories of language (as is the case for Lacan when, for example, a signifier is used as a bi-univocal “iron brand on the referent” which clashes with connotative aspects introduced at the level of the concept).¹² Jakobson argues in relation to the ‘sleeping’ ideas:

... even if we pedantically censor any image-bearing expression and deny the existence of green ideas, also then, as in the case of ‘quadrature of the circle’ or ‘pigeon’s milk’, the nonexistence, the fictitiousness of these entities has no bearing on the question of their semantic significance. The possibility of questioning their being is the best warning against a confusion of ontological irreality with senselessness.¹³

For Lacan, the primary interest is, of course, the work of analysis of speech acts in the clinical environment (as “psychoanalytic action develops in and through verbal communication, that is, in a dialectical grasping of meaning”)¹⁴ as well as, crucially, forging the traces of the unconscious which emerge. So what status do ‘ideas,’ green or otherwise, have here and in which *form* are they able to ‘move’ between systems such as the unconscious and pre-conscious/conscious in the psychoanalytic account?

Firstly, unconscious ‘truth’ seeks a path of procession:

What is the unconscious, if not precisely ideas, thoughts, *Gedanken*, thoughts whose faded greenness, does not Freud tell us somewhere, that like the shades summoned from hell and returning to the sunlight, want to drink blood, to recover their colours. Is it the thoughts of the unconscious that are involved, that here sleep furiously?¹⁵

Expressed differently, these ‘colourless,’ furious, sleeping, unconscious ‘thoughts’ or *Sachvorstellungen*, thing-presentations, in Freudian/Lacanian parlance (as the only form of representation available to the unconscious), *return* to regain their ‘colour’ in the transition and retranslation involved between un-, pre- and conscious systems, within differing forms of presentation and representation. These must then be bound with *Wortvorstellungen* (word-presentations) to be able to enter conscious comprehension and result in utterable material.¹⁶

And yet their meaning is by no means fixed. As for Jakobson, anything can be semantically significant; and as for their submission to an objective test of truth (do they exist, these ideas?) Jakobson and Lacan are indeed at odds with the opinions (and intentions) of Chomsky.¹⁷ And yet these representations produce senses, in a seemingly endless proliferation. Psychoanalysis thus has to account for these representational scenarios “in which scholastic psychology sees only nonmeaning.”¹⁸ Added to this is the fact that *what someone says*, as Lacan notes, “may, in fact, ‘have no meaning,’” but what is said to the analyst “conceals one anyway.”¹⁹ That is to say, human communication, as extending beyond the verbal and the unequivocal, is prone to reveal despite its concealed forms.

Indeed, and this is a key issue in the psychoanalytic treatment as conducive to the elucidation of ‘*subjective truth*’: any meanings can be produced (or found). Lacan as such notes in his seminar that “to search for meaning in a signifying, grammatical chain is an undertaking of extraordinary futility” and that the “unconscious has nothing to do with these metaphorical meanings, however far we may push them”:

For if, because of the fact that I am before this audience, I was able to give it that meaning, I could just as well have given it a completely different one, and for a simple reason, which is that any signifying chain whatsoever, provided it is grammatical, always generates a meaning, and I would go further, any one whatsoever.²⁰

Hence, no simple equation between act and meaning can (or should) be substantively quantified. Indeed, the *making of sense* arises during the processes of transmission as ‘knowledge’ as such; it is not inherent in the unconscious except as *related to* truth (it is of course also shrouded due to distortive processes, subject to laws of repression). Thus Lacan will say that “sense is never produced except by the translation of one discourse into another.”²¹ And hence one of the functions of

analysis, as Mladen Dolar astutely notes, is “not making sense of non-sense, but the making non-sense of sense.”²²

One must of course also note the important role played by *Unsinn*, or nonsense (as opposed to non-sense, or senselessness), in this theory, introduced as early as Lacan’s 1950s work on the psychoses: nonsense is not seen as the privation of sense; in psychotic patients it is “very positive and organized.”²³ And thus one can listen to a delusional patient’s speech, and take indications from it, without falling into the traps of dismissal. *Sinn*, as Lacan would later explain, is “fundamentally marked by the fissure of *Unsinn*.”²⁴

Lacan also argues (with regard to the distinction thinking/being, invoked in the famous proposition of the Cartesian *cogito*²⁵) that the “supporting point, the navel” of the term *subject*, which is for him *split* due to the introduction of language,²⁶ “is properly only the moment at which it vanishes beneath sense, where sense is what makes it disappear as being, for this Therefore I am is only a sense.”²⁷ He would later further locate (or complicate) the philosophical import of the tension by explaining that “being does not have of itself any kind of sense” in opposition to the meaning-making functions of thought.²⁸ Hence his various, differing, attempts to rethink or re-establish the *cogito*, playing on the shifting function of the *I*, and the different senses of thinking (foremost the results of the addition of the unconscious register) in psychoanalysis, in relation to being, throughout the 60s in particular.

Ultimately, for the analysand, split as they are into subject and (sexed) being, sense is interpretable in terms of knowledge, but the *truth* of analysis comes from difficulties, stumbling.²⁹ For this, he states, is “what is involved in psychoanalysis”:

If *Sinn*, if what is sense is interpretable, belongs to the subject from the side of knowledge, in the difficulties of discourse, in the stumbling of the signifier, the signified which thus comes, comes from elsewhere; it comes here from underneath, not at all through a detour of knowledge, but through this direct relationship of the subject with the sexed being.³⁰

Hence it is no simple account of meaning which Lacan is postulating. And indeed, if in the above the terms ‘sense’ and ‘meaning’ could be used almost interchangeably, it would become further necessary for him to demarcate them in order to detail the muddled relations between language and thought. Thus finding *the*

meaning of something is not the domain of psychoanalysis. And Lacan is often at odds with analysts such as Jung and Jones (et al.) due to this. As Annika Lemaire concluded within her thesis on Lacan's 'system,' "the limit of the perpetual sliding of the signifier over the signified," which Lacan calls 'Frege's paradox,' "cannot be reduced to a phenomenon of inter-human understanding."³¹ With the emerging notions of the Lacanian object and its placement in respect to the real, this paradox would come further into sight.

WHAT MEANING CAN MEAN

The previous all leads to the question the reader may have been wondering since the introduction: what is the precise role Frege has in all of this? The Lacanian-Fregean 'relational project' may indeed be said to be in the infancy of its elaboration, despite the maverick interventions of Lacan's students affiliated with the journal *Cahiers pour l'Analyse* which sought to explore, through psychoanalysis and the structural method, wider questions about epistemology. We will indicate further below the avenues of this exploration and the areas in which they need further teasing out. For the purposes of the current discussion we will restrict ourselves to examining one article of Frege's (which Lacan draws upon often to develop his ideas on the object and representations of psychoanalysis and their relation to sense and meaning throughout the 60s), namely 'Über Sinn und Bedeutung,' usually translated as '[On] Sense and Reference.'

Frege's article begins with the concept of *Gleichheit* [identity], which he had defined in his earlier text *Begriffsschrift* as a relation "between names or signs for objects" [*Namen oder Zeichen für Gegenstände*].³² This is based on the fact that, following Kant's analytic/synthetic distinction, sentences proposing $a=a$ ³³ are a priori analytic but those proposing $a=b$ ³⁴ cannot be comprehended in this manner as they involve the further work of our individual *Erkenntnis*, usually translated in Kant scholarship as cognition (or "representation with consciousness").³⁵ When sign *a* is said to equal sign *b*, it is presumed that these terms have the same *Be-deutung* or referent (also translated as meaning/nominatum); yet the distinction is arbitrary, for Frege, as it is impossible to forbid the assignation of different objects to different terms, i.e. names or signs, or to use objects and terms interchangeably to refer to different things. What is distant, again following Kant, is the object 'itself.' What the different determiners *a* and *b* and *c* etc. can offer, however, are different ways or modes of 'presenting' and representing the same 'thing' ...and here sense comes in.

Frege thus separates *actual* objects from their designation in a *process* of reference (which he *also* calls *Bedeutung* or assignment of meaning) when establishing connections between the sign, its sense, the reference and the referent. In his definition, “[b]y means of a sign we *express* its sense and *designate* its referent.”³⁶ If it is a perceptible object, moreover, it connects with “memories of sense perception,” internal and external performed activities, and an associated idea to form a *Vorstellung*, a conception or representation, which is saturated with feeling. Multiple senses are then evoked by a conception, which is to a large degree *purely* subjective. As he argues, “*Die Vorstellung ist subjektiv: die Vorstellung des einen ist nicht die des anderen*”³⁷—the conception or representation we have is ours (subjective) and not the same as that of someone else. And thus “on account of the uncertain connexion of ideas with words, a difference may hold for one person, which another does not find.”³⁸

Frege equates what he calls the referent of the proper name with the object itself (in the form of denotation) which is combined however with the purely subjective conception we have of it, between which lies the sense (or that which is expressed and related to thought), which is less subjective but isn’t the object itself. “The same sense,” he says, “is not always connected, even in the same man, with the same conception.”³⁹

In everyday speech, our thoughts, conceptions and associations do not correspond *exactly* with those of any other interlocutor. There is a component which is purely individually overdetermined. Commonalities arise however due to the types of shared sense (reflected in context, conventions, culture, etc.).

Yet, a sentence must contain what Frege calls an objective thought, i.e. something that multiple thinkers can share. ‘Thought’ however is identified with the sense. Hence there can be sentences with no referent, as in literature,⁴⁰ and thus these representations involve the “coloring and shading” of “poetic eloquence” (hence, the very possibility of meaning *anything at all* by the greenifying of furiously sleeping ideas). The truth value lies ultimately in the referent: it can only be true or false for Frege (and thus the problem of the ontological/semantic distinction mentioned above returns). Signs which *only* have sense but no referent can still be called representations nevertheless, Frege notes; as, similarly, we see that psychoanalytic representations have a discordant relation with things ‘themselves,’ due to the addition of ideas, memories, distortion and other subjective ‘colour.’

A judgment for Frege moves from thoughts to objective referents and assesses their truth values. Yet the thing-in-itself always lurks as a 'presupposition' in his theory. Taking his example of the Moon: it can be verified, visually at least, by multiple parties (despite complicating factors such as retinal differences resulting in different images for each individual, as he argues), and compared with its reference point; and yet "for scientific purposes," he says, "we do not intend to speak of our idea of the Moon, nor are we satisfied with the sense alone, but we *presuppose* a referent."⁴¹

Thus we see a tension between his hope for a formal language (based on the stability of individuated referents) and the 'psycholinguistics of everyday life' as it were. Most organizations of speech, and he lists many, such as subordinate clauses, quotations, analyses of words themselves, etc. have *no recourse to a direct referent*, he admits. And yet his hope for and conception of a 'pure' symbolic code, which he attempted to initiate in the *Begriffsschrift*, requires an *assured* referent combined with a *defined* name (reflecting the tension between subjective and objective representations). Indirect indicators, then, are seen as opposed to proper names.

Yet, if one defines the sense of the sentence as the thought expressed by it (as he does), the issue of cognition again enters into the picture. While one may establish that $a=a$, in the case of $a=b$ different senses are expressed, and therefore the cognitive value is different. Human judgment must then go from thought to truth value, and thus a thought about $a=b$, influenced by its sense, will produce a different judgment. Hence "the sense of the sentence," that is "the thought expressed by it," is "no less relevant than its reference, i.e. its truth value."⁴²

To summarize briefly: the effects of sense take place *within language itself* and within the subjective *Vorstellungen* following encounters with objects in the world combined with products of the mind; reference deals with this relation between language and the world (i.e. the process⁴³), referent being the object explicitly referred to but not always (or ever) directly present. Moreover, as there is little constancy of reference in language, any fixity usually comes from the context. Added to this, even if a proper name has a direct referent, a concept must intervene *for* other ideas, or common terms, in which there is no direct referent (e.g. between *the idea of planet* and *that particular planet* there seen through the telescope, in his example).

FREGE'S INSIGHTS WITHIN LACAN'S EXPLICATION

To return to Lacan (and re-establish a connection to Frege): the object of psychoanalysis is defined as that “which can never be attained,” i.e. “the CAUSE of desire rather than that towards which desire tends” which the drives, through expression in representations, circle around.⁴⁴ It exists as “the leftover, the remainder... the remnant left behind by the introduction of the symbolic” and undoubtedly has a questionable ontological status (which does not mean, however, that it does not produce effects in/on the subject, as we already argued).⁴⁵

This Lacanian object is *directly equated* with Fregean *Bedeutung* in the fourteenth seminar (it is “the first *Bedeutung*, the first referent, the first reality, the *Bedeutung* which remains because it is, after all, all that remains of thinking at the end of all the discourses”⁴⁶) counterposed against the Fregean concept of *Sinn*: i.e. it is sense or signification which “comes to fill in”⁴⁷ the gap in between the subject and the object, and which acts as the “syncopation of the *Bedeutung*.”⁴⁸

Lacan had already introduced, in the early life of the child, and in the establishment of the unconscious through the entry into language, a series of fantasmatic part-objects (as they are called in the early seminars and in the psychoanalytic tradition), in the initial stages akin to processes of hallucination, which have a status between substance and appearance, reality and irreality. This relation subsequently affects all following, adult, interactions of subject and object. Over the late 50s and early 60s in particular, he would add nuances to the status and shaping of the psychoanalytic object, eventuating in the fundamental concept of the *objet petit a*.

This object, in fulfilling “precisely the function that Frege distinguishes from *Sinn* under the name of *Bedeutung*”:⁴⁹

.... gives its veritable sense to what Freud says about the unconscious, namely, that it is constituted by thing-presentations, *Sachvorstellungen*. It is in no way an obstacle to the unconscious being structured as a language, for what is at stake is not the *Ding*, the unsayable thing, but the perfectly articulated *affair*, but in so far, in effect, as it supersedes—like *Bedeutung*—anything whatsoever that may order it.⁵⁰

For Lacan, then, Frege opens up a realm between any actual objectal ‘thing’ and our consciousness of it, due to the layers of representation (unconscious, pre-conscious and conscious) introduced in every act of judgement. For visualization purposes, we may posit the following synthesis (see **Fig. 1**) showing how Frege’s insights on sense and reference could be thought to fit into the psychoanalytic model (without however privileging the vertical structure or anticipating limitations between levels):

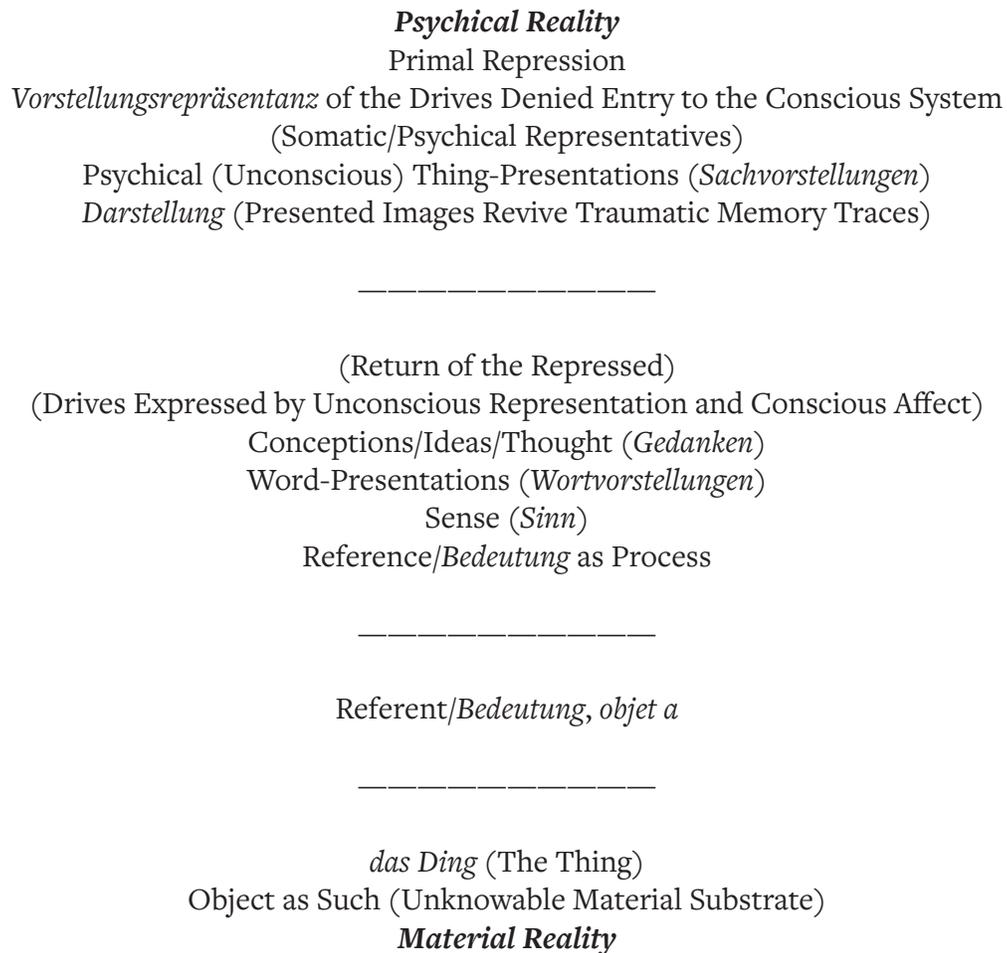


FIGURE 1: FREGEAN TERMS WITHIN A PSYCHOANALYTIC MODEL

At issue, however, is the version of reality adumbrated by each of these thinkers. For Lacan, of course, the two ends of the above schematic would be inexplicably linked, due to the imbrication of the psychical and material levels. To what extent the psychical and material are co-influential in determining representations, which are then subject to attributions of sense, relies on the stability of the Referent/*Bedeutung* level which is of course complicated by both thinkers due to the status of the Thing *an sich*. The distinctions between the real and reality developed by Lacan further complicate, moreover, the truth attributions (T/F) which can be made in regard to certain propositions.

As Roger Perron notes, in his excellent précis of the representational dilemmas of psychoanalysis, Freud early in his career encountered the following problem in relation to psychical states and the establishment of reality criteria: “By what criteria can the subject distinguish a true perception (the German verb for perceiving is *wahrnehmen*, ‘to take to be true’) from an illusion or hallucination?”⁵¹ Ultimately, what Freud discovered, and which Lacan of course draws on, is that “every perception, every memory trace, and therefore every representation, is ‘constructed’ by the dynamics of the psyche itself and undergoes a constant process of retroactive reworking.”⁵² Lacan adds to this his insights on the possibilities of symbolization as well as an irreducible connection to the register of the real, drawing on his own theory of language linked to Frege’s:

The relation of the signifier to the subject, in so far as it involves the function of meaning, passes through a referent. The referent, that means the real, and the real is not simply a raw and opaque mass. The real is apparently structured. We have moreover absolutely no knowledge of how as long as we do not have the signifier. I do not mean for all that, that if we do not know it, we have no relations to this structure.⁵³

Thus our very relation to the real is structured within a representable relationship (in both senses of the term: i.e. *representative* and *representation*). And what is *touched on* in Lacanian theory is the object as “semblance of being” at level of the real.⁵⁴

Can the addition of the register of the unconscious to a theory of language, augmented by Frege’s insights, then help better articulate the subjective interactions at the core of sense production and thus one’s inherently indirect, mediated relation with the world of objects, whatever their ontological status? Can the analogy

between referent as incomplete object and process and *objet a* as remainder of the real shine more light on the linkages between the concepts of psychoanalytic theory, such as *Vorstellung*, and the philosophical tradition from which they emerged? We believe the answer is yes and that it may provide explanatory power to some of the less developed interconnections imbibed within Lacanian theory. To this end, the above, very brief, analysis needs to be further developed in the form of closer attention to the works of Frege that Lacan draws on, tracing the conceptual developments of the subject and object as well as their interrelations which are central to his work.

How would this be envisaged? As indicated in the Abstract, Lacan approaches Frege from three different directions across his oeuvre, only one of which is language, which we have outlined here. The issues of conceptual variation and the function of numbers are also subject to close treatment in his seminars. Each of these elements are interrelated in Lacan's work (as they are, crucially, in Frege's) and as such it would be rewarding to explore further what he said about these texts; examine their content (in general terms, but also in regard to what he specifically *takes from* them); and explore his relation to this other, fascinating, thinker in greater detail and with of course more depth than is possible here.

Indeed it was in these directions, as also noted above, that other thinkers in the *Cahiers* group were motivated. Alain Badiou, Yves Duroux, Serge Leclaire and Jacques-Alain Miller each entered into discussions of the more mathematically orientated works of Frege (most gave presentations of this work in Lacan's seminar in fact) and came to conclusions usually complementary to Lacan's.⁵⁵ As the most significant exception, perhaps, Badiou argued against the conception of the subject he found in Miller's work on Frege (and, by extension, he sought to critically appraise Lacan's formulation) from the viewpoint of the function of representation in ideological discourse and toward a critique of the logical status of the signifier (i.e. "the system of concepts through which the articulation of the subject is conceived") in his paper 'Mark and Lack: On Zero.'⁵⁶ In questioning the notion of 'suture,' i.e. the relations between subject/discourse and lack/structure, which Miller introduced and found to be implicit in Lacan's work, furthermore, Badiou was interrogating each thinker's compositions on the status of science (most notably, in Lacan's case, 'Science and Truth,' which was published in the first issue of *Cahiers* and read out during his thirteenth seminar), their definition(s) of the real, and ultimately, also, their logical and mathematical credentials (particularly with regard to Gödel, Frege and Boole). No doubt, both Frege and Lacan remain cen-

tral figures within Badiou's subsequent and current theory. As such, in addition to the necessary exegesis merely sketched here, it would be fruitful to examine this legacy.

Hence we see a complicated yet exciting field of enquiry open up, the surface of which has been breached but the implications and senses of which still remain to be further negotiated and represented.

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NOTES

1. Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Volume XVI*. Trans. and ed. James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1963, 248, 253, 257, 258.
2. Freud, *Standard Edition: XVI*, 262–263.
3. See Russell Grigg, Leonardo Rodriguez and Diane Wieneke, “Fantasy and Foreclosure,” *Analysis* 1 (1989, 210) for other potential consequences of this. In Lacanian terms, one can also question the representability (or non-existence) of the sexual relation as such, which always eludes or complicates symbolization.
4. He also notes that there is a brand of symptom that is ‘typical’ in another sense, namely those which are “approximately the same in all cases” and in which “individual distinctions disappear” (Freud, *Standard Edition: XVI*, 270).
5. Quoted in Roman Jakobson, “Boas’ View of Grammatical Meaning” in *Selected Writings Vol. 2: Word and Language*. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1971, 494.
6. Noam Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures*. The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1957, 15.
7. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XII*. Trans. Cormac Gallagher, 3–4. Available at: <http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/published-works/seminars>.
8. Lacan, *Seminar: Book XII*, 19.
9. Jakobson, “Boas’ View of Grammatical Meaning,” 495.
10. Nevertheless, nonsense, as will we soon see, also has specific roles in the clinic. Therefore it may be of necessity to further demarcate nonsense and the nonsensical, including what Lacan would later call *ab-sens*, or lack-of-sense.
11. Lacan, *Seminar: Book XII*, 3: “at the place, at the locus of the Other, to reintroduce the term inscribed in my presentation last year as a reference, where there is a grammatical construction.”
12. Lacan, *Seminar: Book XII*, 10.
13. Jakobson, “Boas’ View of Grammatical Meaning,” 495.
14. Jacques Lacan, “Aggressiveness in Psychoanalysis” in *Écrits*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: Norton, 2006, 83.
15. Lacan, *Seminar: Book XII*, 5.
16. In the sense of both *Vetretung*, representative, and *Vorstellung*, representation.
17. Jakobson, “Boas’ View of Grammatical Meaning,” 494.
18. Lacan, “Beyond the ‘Reality Principle’” in *Écrits*, 65.
19. Lacan, “Beyond the ‘Reality Principle’,” 66.
20. Lacan, *Seminar: Book XII*, 5. The subject has to grapple with meaning nevertheless in order to be able to change in any ‘meaningful’ way. Depending on the era involved, the symptom acts variously, as Evans points out, as “signification”; “truth taking shape”; a “metaphor in which flesh or function is taken as a signifying element”; an “enigmatic message which the subject thinks is an opaque message from the real instead of recognising it as his own message”; and finally “pure jouissance which cannot be interpreted” (*sinthome*). Dylan Evans, “Symptom” in *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge, 2006, 205–206.
21. Jacques Lacan, *L’etourdit: Second Turn*. Trans. Cormac Gallagher, 11. Available at: <http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/published-works/ecrits>.
22. Mladen Dolar, “Cogito as the Subject of the Unconscious” in *Cogito and the Unconscious*. Ed. Slavoj Žižek. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998, 22.
23. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book III*. Trans. Russell Grigg. New York: Norton,

1993, 122.

24. Jacques Lacan, *Seminar: Book XII*, 308.

25. Namely, *je pense, donc je suis*.

26. See Matthew Sharpe, "Jacques Lacan (1901–1981)" from the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, available at <http://www.iep.utm.edu/lacweb>. He notes "the subject is not an object capable of being adequately named within a natural language, like other objects can be"; instead it is split between ego, 'I' as shifter, and what contradicts the 'I' (hence also the distinctions of the subject of the enunciated and the subject of the enunciation).

27. Lacan, *Seminar: Book XII*, 7.

28. Lacan, *L'etourdit*, 4.

29. Lacan, *Seminar: Book XII*, 308.

30. Lacan, *Seminar: Book XII*, 308.

31. Annika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*. Trans. David Macey. London: Routledge & Keagan Paul, 1977, 116.

32. Gottlob Frege, „Über Sinn und Bedeutung,“ *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik* 100 (1892, 25).

33. Today's sun is also tomorrow's sun in his example (it is the same 'thing').

34. E.g. is the 'sun' exactly the same referent as the 'flaring star' you talk of in your sentence? If the same object, then true.

35. See, for clarification, Howard Caygill, "Cognition [*Erkenntnis*]" in *A Kant Dictionary*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, 113. For example, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant writes:

The genus is representation in general (*representatio*). Under it stands representation with consciousness (*perceptio*). A perception which relates solely to the subject as a modification of its state, is a sensation (*sensatio*), an objective perception is a cognition (*cognitio*). A cognition is either an intuition or a conception (*intuitus vel conceptus*).

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. John Miller Dow Meiklejohn. Portland: The Floating Press, 2009, 411–412.

36. Gottlob Frege, "Sense and Reference." Trans. Max Black. *The Philosophical Review* 57 (May 1948, 214). Italics added.

37. Frege, „Über Sinn und Bedeutung,“ 29.

38. Frege, "Sense and Reference," 213.

39. Frege, "Sense and Reference," 212.

40. Frege, "Sense and Reference," 213. If truth comes into literature, then it interferes with aesthetic appreciation for Frege. We will have to leave this comment untouched due to space for now.

41. Gottlob Frege, "Sense and Reference," 214. Italics added.

42. Gottlob Frege, "Sense and Reference," 230. The condition of fulfilment for Frege is that the sense be interchangeable while not affecting the truth content of a statement, which follows Leibniz.

43. As Frege's early translator Max Black describes it.

44. Evans, "Objet (Petit) A" in *An Introductory Dictionary*, 128.

45. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XIV*. Trans. Cormac McCarthy, 78. Available at: <http://www.lacanireland.com/web/published-works/seminars>. See also Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary*, 129.

46. Lacan, *Seminar: Book XIV*, 9. In the Staferla version, available online at: <http://staferla.free.fr>: «c'est la première Bedeutung l'objet(a), le premier référent, la première réalité, la Bedeutung qui reste parce qu'elle est, après tout, tout ce qui reste de la pensée à la fin de tous les discours.»

47. Lacan, *Seminar: Book XIV*, 99. (His concept of *das Ding*, a conceptual offshoot on the way to his fuller development of the *objet petit a*, is moreover often linked to the Kantian *Ding an sich*.)
48. Lacan, *Seminar: Book XIV*, 99. E.g. in fantasy “these ideas with no colour and nevertheless green, why not?—... ‘sleep furiously’! That is what breasts are!” The unconscious, moreover, “in its poetic and *Bedeutung* sense comes to the place of this ‘I do not think’,” in the split being/thinking at the level of the real, i.e. in the inversion of ‘I think ...’: “either I am not or I am not thinking.” *Seminar: Book XIV*, 78.
49. Lacan, *Seminar: Book XIV*, 9. Mistranslated as ‘sign’ in the Gallagher version. In the Starferla version, op. cit.: «remplit précisément la fonction que FREGE distingue du sinn sous le nom de Bedeutung.»
50. Lacan, *Seminar: Book XIV*, 72.
51. Roger Perron, “Idea/Representation” in *International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis: Volume 2*. Ed. Alain de Mijolla. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2005, 781.
52. Perron, “Idea/Representation,” 781.
53. Lacan, *Seminar: Book XII*, 9.
54. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XX*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: Norton, 1999, 95.
55. See the wonderful *Cahiers* resources available at <http://cahiers.kingston.ac.uk> as well as the two-volume *Concept and Form* edited by Peter Hallward and Knox Peden. London: Verso, 2012. The articles primarily concerned are Yves Duroux, «Psychologie et logique»; Jacques-Alain Miller, «La suture (Éléments de la logique du signifiant)»; Serge Leclaire, «L’analyste à sa place?»; and Alain Badiou, «Marque et manque: à propos du zéro.» Also relevant in these collections are Jean-Claude Milner, «Le Point du signifiant»; Xavier Audouard, «Le simulacre»; and, of course, Jacques Lacan, «La Science et la vérité» which was later published in the *Écrits*.
56. Badiou, «Marque et manque: à propos du zéro». Here, the specific terms ‘identity,’ ‘representation,’ ‘logic,’ ‘lack’ and, indeed, ‘true’ need to be strictly defined in each of their works before an analysis is undertaken. One must also interrogate the subjective/objective distinction at the core of the theories of representation.