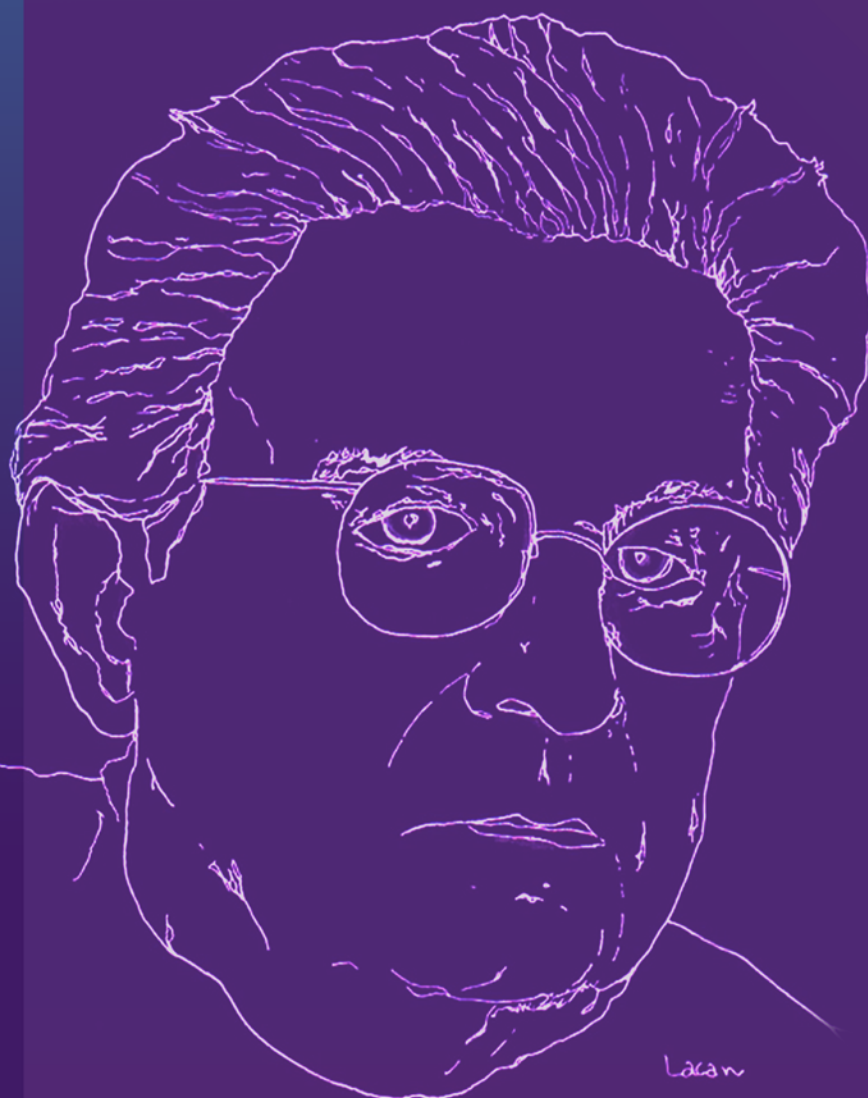


LACAN

INTRODUCING THINKERS FOR PLANNERS – A NARRATIVE AND CONVERSATION



Michael Gunder

Associate Professor
School of Architecture and Planning
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand
Phone: 64 9 373 7599 ext 88680
Fax: 64 9 373 7652
e-mail: m.gunder@auckland.ac.nz

Chuan Wang

Lecturer
School of Architecture
Southeast University
2 Sipailou, Xuanwu District, Nanjing,
China, 210096
Phone: +86 25 8379 2223
Fax: +86 25 8379 0682
e-mail: chuanwang@seu.edu.cn



AESOP Young Academics Booklet Project
Conversations in Planning

Booklet 7
Michael Gunder and Chuan Wang@ June 2019
ISBN: 9789082819137

Internal And Cover Design
Shaimaa Refaat, Piece Of Art Egypt

AESOP YA Booklet Project
Editor-in-Chief
Chandrima Mukhopadhyay
Visiting Scholar, MIT-UTM Malaysia Sustainable Cities Program
Summer Winter School, CEPT University, India
Visiting Faculty, Physical Planning Department, School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi.

Other editorial board members
Chiara Belingardi
Post - doc DICEA - Sapienza Università di Roma
Giusy Papparaldo
University of Catania, Catania, Italy
Verena Radinger Peer (Editor of the booklet)
University of Natural Resources and Life Science, Vienna
Senior Adviser
Mona Abdelwahab
Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, Alexandria, Egypt

Authors
Michael Gunder
Associate Professor
School of Architecture and Planning
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand
Phone: 64 9 373 7599 ext 88680
Fax: 64 9 373 7652
e-mail: m.gunder@auckland.ac.nz

Chuan Wang
Lecturer
School of Architecture
Southeast University
2 Sipailou, Xuanwu District, Nanjing, China, 210096
Phone: +86 25 8379 2223
Fax: +86 25 8379 0682
e-mail: chuanwang@seu.edu.cn

AUTHORS

LACAN

INTRODUCING THINKERS FOR PLANNERS – A NARRATIVE AND CONVERSATION



Michael Gunder is an associate professor at the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of Auckland. He is a former Managing Editor of *Planning Theory* and the recent Co-Editor (with Ali Madanipour and Vanessa Watson) of *The Routledge Handbook of Planning Theory*.



Chuan Wang is a Lecturer at the School of Architecture, Southeast University in Nanjing. He recently completed his PhD at Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (ESALA), the University of Edinburgh, where he employed terminological studies and Lacanian theory to analyse the discourse of urban futures.

CONVERSATIONS IN PLANNING: EDITORIAL

'Conversations in Planning Theory and Practice' is an innovative project that encourages learning through conversation, and learning across generations and has published six booklets so far. The project was conceptualized in November 2012, initiated as a dream by the then AESOP president. The aim is to have young academics and senior scholars work together and push the debate in the Planning discipline further through an intergenerational learning process. In a first phase, the structure of the project was grounded on three series or themes, such as, the use of philosophical theories in planning (Exploring foundations for Planning Theory), planning theories (Exploring the abstractions in the Planning Debate) and planning practices (Exploring place matters in planning practice). Now, we have merged these series into a sole and comprehensive structure. The booklets are open peer-reviewed for improving the project's rigor: commentators are asked to enrich the conversation through constructive criticism.

From a pedagogical perspective, the uniqueness of the project is learning through conversations. The booklets aim to provide an introduction to the theories and ideas of senior scholars: what and how they contributed to the field of planning; what and who influenced the development of these theories; and how this implicated/reflected on planning debate in theory and/or practice. Philosophical theories are notoriously difficult to comprehend, especially by the young academics. In specific, it is challenging to make sense of such theories in relation to Planning. The young academic authors, who are in the early stage of their career, not only learn from the senior scholars about their work, but also get involved in conversation with them in order to make sense of how the senior scholars have used these theories in their work, and how such theories are applied in planning theory and practice.

Since Urban Planning is a practice-oriented discipline, many raise questions about the role of theories in the discipline. Most of our published booklets have addressed the debate and interdependency between theory and practice in planning. Previous booklets also demonstrated various ways of understanding planning theory, urban theory, or critical theory. The booklets show how the academic discipline of urban planning evolved over time, in different times and contexts, often cross pollinating with other disciplines, and creating new branches.

We would encourage both the young academic community as well as the senior scholars to use the booklets in their teaching. Being open-access, they can be easily circulated. The Editorial Board is also working for improving the dissemination of the booklets through the mainstream publishing. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the senior scholars of present and forthcoming booklets who have not only enthusiastically agreed to take part in the project but have also relentlessly supported our YA authors in spite of their very busy schedule. For the booklet, we thank both Michael Gunder and Chuan Wang, who enthusiastically took up the task.

With thanks and regards

Editorial Board of
Conversations in Planning Theory and Practice

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Preface	iii
Table of Figures	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
The Inspiration of Lacanian Theory for Planning Research	4
Foucault's Power and Lacan's Desire	7
Chapter 2: A Critical Overview of Lacan in the Feminist, Philosophical, Political Studies and Related Literature	8
Feminist Studies and Lacan	13
On Ideology	14
On the Real	15
Chapter 3: Master Signifiers and Knowledge	18
On Master Signifiers	21
Fantasy/Desire as Another Entry Point for Lacanian Planning Research	27
Chapter 4. Subjectivity and Lacan's Theory of Desire and <i>Jouissance</i>	29
<i>Jouissance, plus-de-jour and objet petit a</i>	31
Chapter 5. Lacan's Four Discourses and Planning	33
A. The Master's Discourse	35
B. The University Discourse	36
C. The Hysteric's Discourse	37
D. The Analyst's Discourse	38
Master Signifiers and Four Discourses	39
Questions on the Analyst's Discourse	39
Four Discourses in a Broader Context	43
The Limit of Four Discourses	43
Chapter 6: Conclusion	44
General Discussion I: Discourse, Language and the Symbolic	45
General Discussion II: Dualistic Division in Lacan's Theory	51
The Examples of Lacanian Analysis in Planning	53
References	54
Lacan Reading List	63
Postscript Note	64

Acknowledgement

Parts of this text are derived from, updated and build on: Gunder, M. (2005)
Lacan, Planning and Urban Policy Formation, *Urban Policy and Research*, 23(1), 87-107

Preface

Why should planning scholars and professionals read Lacan? Lacan's theory offers an insight into the process of how ideology shapes social reality (Glynos, 2001), and provides scholars in other fields with a cautionary portrait of thinking-as-it-happens (Bowie, 1988). The central issue of Lacan's theory is 'a focus on belief, knowledge and desire' (Gunder and Hillier, 2009, p. 12). Lacan's thoughts are widely applied to the fields outside of psychoanalysis, particularly in political, social and cultural enquires, with the further interpretations from Lacanian followers. Lacan's innovation on symbolic subjectivity has more contributions to social theory than to its origin - psychoanalysis (Dean, 2000, p.2), and is further employed in the analysis of complex social relationship in planning, environment and geography (Swyngedouw, 2011, 2010). Since 'planning is a form of social action, or a social practice...intervening in the world to protect or change' (Taylor, 1998, p. 167), Lacan's theory can help planners to have a better understanding of both individual and societal desires for urban futures and to analyse the complex social bonds behind planning policy and practice.

Jacques Lacan's theory is not easy for planning researchers who are new to this critical theory, especially for ones who are not familiar with European continental philosophy. Lacan was a productive and prominent psychoanalyst and philosopher, but he did not follow the modern academic writing style in his publications. His major work is in the form of seminar transcripts named *Seminar + No.*, which are all in an oral teaching style (Lacan, 2006). Due to his writing style and wide divergence from other theories of psychoanalysis and philosophy, his work is notoriously difficult to read and comprehend. Furthermore, Lacan's work contains numerous difficult new concepts, and some untranslatable terms, as Lacan insisted, such as *savoir-faire* and *plus-de-jouir*, make this theory even more difficult to fully understand (Bracher, 1988). Tackling this difficulty is the primary motivation for us to write this booklet as an introductory step to touch Lacanian theory for planning researchers and professionals.

The entry point of Lacanian theory is language-in-use, as an unconventional perspective to critically analyse urban policy formation, individual's perception of urban reality, and urban practice in the complex social network (see more details in Michael Gunder's Introduction Chapter). Ideology is embedded in language unnoticeably in education, media, political debate and even personal communications. In Lacan's theory, discourse is 'a necessary structure'... 'beyond speech' and 'subsists in certain fundamental relations which would literally not be able to be maintained without language' (Lacan, 2007, pp. 12-13). The subject or the big Other cannot exist without language, but language is always incomplete. (Lacan, 2006). Part of the desire from the subject that cannot be put into the Symbolic remains in the Real and is not possible to be verbalised. The endless loop among the Symbolic, the Real and the Imaginary opens up a new perspective to interrogate the actors' behaviours and their influence in the planning discourse.

Unlike the seeking of rationality in the Foucauldian and Habermasian discourse analyses in urban planning since the late 1990s (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005; Healey, 1999; Sharp and Richardson, 2001), the Lacanian approach interrogates the illogical aspect of human beings – lack, fantasy and desire. When a person speaks (or acts when it comes to non-utterance), he/she becomes a subject of language. Thus, it inevitably creates the separation between the subject and the object (Verhaeghe, 1995). What Lacan did was ‘in search of a scientific theory of the unconscious’, which is more appropriate to be understood as Althusser’s summary as ‘a philosophy of psychoanalysis’ (Althusse, 1996, pp. 91-93, emphasis in original), for a deeper understanding of politics, society and culture. Aesthetic pleasing and rational reasoning are sometimes conflicting in urban planning. As humans live with fantasies, desire and imagination, not everything can be rational in the process of urban planning. Therefore, this approach can reveal ‘the hidden and unintended consequences of social actions’ in reality, which, as Jacobs (1999, p. 210) believed, is the ultimate aim of discourse analysis in urban planning. The Lacanian approach provides an insight that planning policy and urban practice are shaped by not only the planning experts’ belief but also the public’s identity and the various actors in the complex process from policy debate to project implementations.

The next question this booklet aims to answer is ‘how to use Lacanian research in planning research?’ The most direct application is to use Lacanian concepts to reveal new findings in the analysis of urban policy and practice. Many notions in urban planning can be associated with Lacan’s lack, desire, *jouissance*, the big Other, the Symbolic, the Imaginary, the Real, mirror stage, master signifier (S1), knowledge (S2), the divided/alienated subject (\$) and the unattainable object of desire (*objet petit a* or *a*). These concepts or the intersections of these concepts provide new perspectives to re-examine the taken-for-granted ideas in urban planning. For instance, the endless desire for more secured, harmonious and prosperous urban futures in urban planning may only be filled by planners’ fantasies in the form of master signifiers – ‘urban resilience’, ‘sustainable development’, ‘smart city’ and many more. Here I’d like to briefly demonstrate ‘master signifier’ and ‘the big Other’, since many concepts are elucidated in the main text.

One key concept that cannot be ignored is ‘master signifier’, which can be used to analyse the numerous buzzwords in planning activities. Master signifiers are the ‘point of departure for the definition of discourse that we will emphasize at the first step’ (Lacan, 2007, p. 13). The master signifiers are the positioning which articulated systems need to establish a certain ‘identity’ of perception for the subject. In both theory and practice, urban planning is facing the explosion of buzzwords, which are analogous with master signifiers in Lacanian theory. The buzzing terms in planning, such as ‘New Urbanism’, ‘sustainable development’, and ‘smart city’ are the subjective identities, which aim to have an impact on the knowledge and beliefs in the planning profession. Master signifiers are invested in an individual’s identity and ‘constitute a powerful positive or negative value’ (Bracher, 1988, p. 35). These terms attempt to structure our perception of urban futures, in the same way as master signifiers in constituting a value in knowledge. Since metaphor and linguistic slippage is core to this planning policy process (Gunder, 2003b), the research findings around master signifiers can reflect on the (slippery) use of the buzzwords in planning policy and practice.

Another example is the big Other (French: *Autre*), which is the collective symbolic order that can refer to the ideas of anonymous authoritative knowledge and power (Johnston, 2014). The big Other is 'both another subject, in [Lacan's] radical alterity and unassimilable uniqueness, and also the symbolic order which mediates the relationship with that other subject' (Evans, 1996, p. 136). The big Other is the missing subject that guarantees the enforcement of the wider social reality unconsciously (Gunder and Hillier, 2009, pp. 44-45). In urban policy and practice, the big Other is the collective, anonymous expectations of urban planners, architects, urban designers, policy-makers, journalists and any other people involved in the process of urban development. The big Other holds the established and ubiquitous knowledge of urban planning as the anonymous authority without the possibility to question it. The critique on the big Other brings about new thinking about how the individual's unconscious in planning is heavily affected by the collective – planning legislation, professional shared values, local politics and social norms.

Besides the reflection from Lacan's key concepts, Lacanian diagrams, including Schema L, Schema R, the *Chè Vuoi* diagrams and the schemata of the Four Discourses, can provide new (always surprising) findings when the hidden elements are uncovered based on the explicit ones. This approach allows planning research to reveal the complex and hidden social bonds among different social positions in urban policy formation and urban project practice. For instance, the schemata of Four Discourses can help planning researchers to probe the actions from different social positions in urban policy and practice according within four fundamental social effects: indoctrinating (the Master's Discourse), governing/rationalising (the University Discourse), desiring (the Hysteric's Discourse) and analysing/subverting (the Analyst's Discourse).

How to use this booklet?

This booklet aims to be an easy first step for the planning researchers who are interested in exploring the irrational side of planning discourse, such as desire, fantasy and lack, and revealing the (always) hidden truth behind the Symbolic. Gunder's narrative is a backbone introduction of Lacan's theory to planning research at both levels of theory and practice. This condensed text is based on his twenty years of research on Lacan and planning as well as his published research outcomes. From the starting point of imperfect language-in-use and always-misunderstood ideology, the narrative text elucidates the foundation of Lacanian theory in philosophy, politics and literature, and explains some key elements – master signifiers (S1), knowledge (S2), subjectivities (\$), desire and *jouissance* and their positions in the Four Discourses to uncover the social bonds in planning discourse.

At the end of every chapter, the well-structured narrative is closely accompanied with conversations based on my interview with Michael Gunder. These dialogical texts are expected to provide readers an easier and more reflective way to have a better understanding of Lacanian theory in planning and resolve the speculative confusions during comprehending this booklet or in further readings. The interview questions are not only based on my reading of Gunder's narrative text, but also reflect my personal experience of reading and using Lacanian theory in my own research. This conversational format provides an easy-reading text in the association with vivid contemporary issues that most readers are familiar, such as Brexit (p24 & p41), Trump's election and governance (p24, p25, p29 & p61) and British Parliament (p54).

This booklet is keen to make the complicated Lacanian theory more pleasant in reading, no matter whether you have several days to digest our writing or just have a few minutes to skim this booklet. A number of diagrams are accompanied to make complicated concepts and the relationships among some Lacanian concepts easier to comprehend. Through the visualisation, readers can understand some crucial points in the narrative and conversation in an easy and intuitive way. Furthermore, some key and powerful arguments are extracted from the conversations, as the anchoring sentences for further reading, aiming to help readers to grasp some concise answers for inspirations or to locate their attentions before diving into details. A Lacan reading list is added at the end of the booklet for the new Lacanian researchers to set off their Lacanian journey, including recommended Lacan's original narratives, selected classical Lacanian research outcomes in the Anglo-speaking world, and Gunder's selected articles/books that employ Lacanian theory in planning.

Another approach is providing a number of examples to demonstrate how Lacanian theory can be applied to the analysis in urban planning, from merely buzzwords in planning policy to case studies of planning practice. Famous master signifiers in planning – ‘sustainability’ (pp.19-20), ‘neo-liberal’ (p.30) and ‘resilience’ (p.22) – are explicitly explained as the example to demonstrate how master signifiers dominate the discourse of future cities, how normal signifiers convert to be master signifiers and why master signifiers are empty in some conditions. The example of politicians and their policy report (p.35) demonstrates the typical master discourse in planning discourse. Planning education and the recognition of the planning profession are used to elucidate the Master’s Discourse (p.35) and the University Discourse (p.38). Gunder even use his own personal dream to explain the important role of signifiers in human’s unconscious. Particularly, Gunder uses his long-term monitoring case, the Auckland Region’s planning policy – to illustrate how to analyse planning activities from a Lacanian perspective (Lack in Auckland planning policy, p.11; The Auckland Regional Council’s transport policy and practice in the University Discourse, p51, the Hysteric’s Discourse, p.37, the Analyst’s Discourse, p.38).

Furthermore, this booklet adds a mapping illustration of Lacanian analysis examples in urban planning (see Examples of Lacanian Analysis in Planning at the end of this booklet). This illustration encourages readers to keep exploring when you face difficulties in reading the theoretical part. These planning-related examples, we believe, can help planning scholars and professionals to understand Lacanian theory more easily from a more practical perspective, and to enhance their connections with planning knowledge in both planning policy and practice.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to note that Lacan’s theory originally derives from his knowledge of philosophy and psychoanalysis, which mean different conditions in knowledge generation compared with urban planning. This booklet only employs the social part of Lacan’s theory and applies this part to urban planning. Although this new research perspective provides inspiring research methods to examine human’s illogical aspect in planning, it is important to keep in mind that Lacanian theory is not an antidote for all (Fink, 1998) and it is dangerous to reduce complex social relations to some specific conditions (Verhaeghe, 1995). For instance, our conversation uncovers that ‘the Analyst’s Discourse’ is a weak point in Lacanian Four Discourses, at least for urban planning. As we can only express our thoughts in the forms of the Symbolic in this booklet (texts and diagrams), the understanding process between this booklet and the readers can never been complete. What we essentially wish is to remind readers to open up their perspective to accept and analyse the illogical sphere of human beings and keep a critical stance towards language-in-use in urban planning.

Table of Figures

Figure 1 Different Philosophical Perspectives on the Same Issue 1

Figure 2 The Symbolic and the Real 16

Figure 3 The Emergence of Three Registries for Infants 17

Figure 4 A Demonstrative Diagram of Master Signifiers and Narratives 22

Figure 5 The Four Voids in the Schemata of the Four Discourses 33

Figure 6 Diagram of the Analyst’s Discourse 39

Figure 7 Diagram of the Master’s Discourse 42

Figure 8 The Chess Example of Lacanian Three Registries 50

Chapter 1. Introduction

Understanding how language works to shape both the individual, and in aggregate, society is core to critically comprehend how our perceptions and understandings of urban realities are formed; and, specifically, how planning policy is developed, shaped and implemented (Gunder, 2011a). This is particularly important because ‘at any point in time planning will be dominated by a particular discourse, and this discourse will favour the interests of particular groups’ (Bounds, 2003, p. 249). A need for critical insight as to how language works and how it can be influenced is probably core to the significance of Habermasian communicative theory and its often contrasting stance, that of Foucaultian governmentality and power/knowledge relationships, in *planning theory* over the last three decades (Allmendinger 2017; Flyvbjerg, 1998a; 1998b; Gunder and Hillier, 2009).

Both Habermas and Foucault’s work offer great explanatory power as their language orientated critical theories are largely concerned with human rationality and/or how disciplinary methods of practice and knowledge emerged. Habermas prescribed a new model of rationality where collaborative actions are encouraged to occur through the rigorous testing of validity claims to create undistorted debate and consensus, so as to negate the potential of oppression that can sometimes occur through the application of inappropriate administrative rationality (Habermas, 1984; 1987a; 1987b). Foucault provided insight as to how discursive based disciplinary practices have evolved through contingency, in hand with the evolution of modern government, to become unquestioned sets of knowledges and truths that constitutes what defines a healthy and productive society (Dean 2010; Foucault, 1970; 1981; 1998; 2000). Yet both these important *planning theory* perspectives, with their focus on rationality, at best, only indirectly engage with and provide insight on an alternative dimension of the human condition – desire, emotion and irrationality. These ‘illogical’ human conditions are predominantly addressed by Habermas as a deterrent to rational discussion when seeking agreement for action (although normative values and feelings are considered a reasonable concern); or by Foucault, as a dysfunction in self-governing subjects to productively normalise themselves resulting in a need of human disciplinary practices of control (Allmendinger, 2017; Dean, 2010).

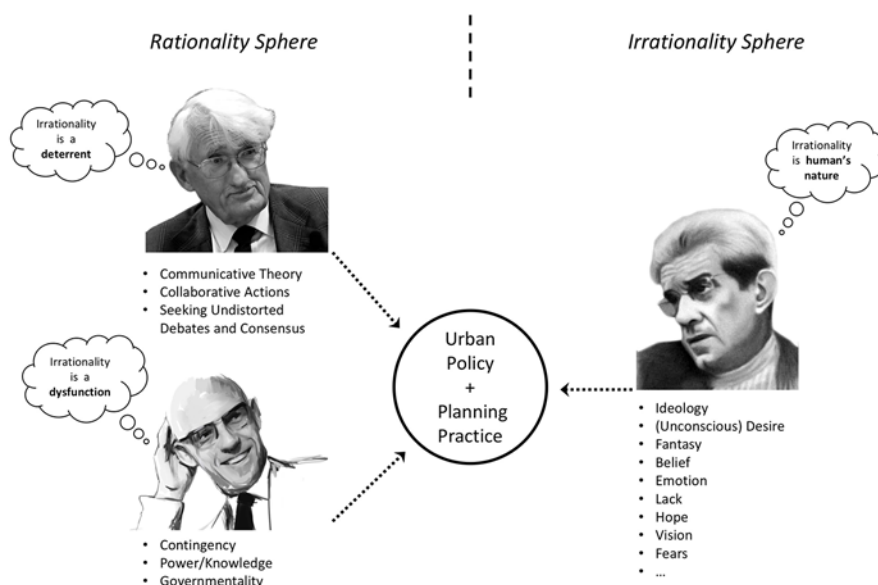


Figure 1 Different Philosophical Perspectives on the Same Issue
Graphics: Chuan Wang, annotated and remixed based on the portraits of Michel Foucault (Camilo ;o, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0), Jürgen Habermas (Wolfram Huke, CC BY-SA-3.0) and (Jacques Lacan (Blatterhin, CC BY-SA 3.0

Yet, many planning concerns and issues are emotional and even irrational. Indeed, they 'are often about (or inspired by) powerful memories, deep fears, passionate hopes, intense angers, and visionary dreams' (Throgmorton, 2003, p.128). These emotive issues more often than not shape our attention as to what is 'actually' important and hence requiring of planning action. This occurs particularly when these issues draw on our most forceful feelings and often unconscious desires (Allmendinger and Gunder, 2005; Gunder and Hillier, 2009). As Kristeva (2000) declared, the emotive dimensions of our subjectivity, personal desires and identity produce our strongest actions and these include rebelliousness, revolution and transformation. Of course, all this tends to involve the concept of ideology (Laclau, 2005, p. 12), something that both Foucault and Habermas largely tried to distance themselves from (Gunder, 2010).

I contend that ideology is profoundly important and that individuals, including planners, cannot function in society without engaging in its continual deployment (Gunder and Hillier, 2009). Consequently, to do planning effectively practitioners need to understand how ideology works and how it influences both individuals and, in aggregate, their politics. Trouble is, ideology is everywhere and in everything. We literally 'swim' in it. It is what Bourdieu (2000, p. 135 – emphasis in original) calls the social *illusio* 'of *being in the world*'. This is especially so when we have an interest to participate as an agent in a field of endeavour, such as that of planning. To do so, practitioners are willing to unconditionally believe in the constructs of fantasies, fictions and perhaps truths that they believe constitutes the social reality of that field and thus shapes the *habitus* – how things are done – of any field's often un-reflexive practices (Bourdieu, 1998; Gunder, 2011b). So, we tend not to think about ideology, or even wish to acknowledge its existence, particularly if we wish to appear rational and perhaps even 'scientific' in our thought.

My interpretation of ideology is not one predicated on just distorted communications used to seek a strategic interest (after Habermas); rather for me ideology is intrinsic to communications. It is what actually shapes for all of us our individual and shared social reality. This is because no application of 'truth' can remove the distortions that inherently constitute communications. Rather language will always be imperfect in its communications and we just have to accept this and get on with it (as this text will subsequently discuss). This perspective is derived from the critical philosopher and cultural theorist Slavoj Žižek (1989; 1997), who in turn largely derived this understanding of ideology from the work of Jacques Lacan (2006).

Our engagement with ideology commences as we learn language within our family with both the education system and the public media subsequently playing an important further role in constituting our ongoing interpellation with it (Gunder, 2004; 2011a). Ideology constitutes the ideas we use in everyday interactions within our lifeworlds. As a consequence of ideology, '[p]eople do not see their world through complex formulations, but through simple slogans, folk ideas, images and metaphors... labels or categories that' ideologically 'clump experience in understandable and repeatable chunks' (Fine and Sandstrom 1993, p. 26). In doing so 'subjects produce themselves in the act of making the antagonisms inherent in any ideological field acceptable and coherent' (Rickert, 2007, p. 106). In this regard, ideology allows individuals to construct imaginary relationships to their actual existence so that each individual can have an 'indispensable mapping fantasy or narrative by which the individual subject invents a "lived" relationship with collective systems' (Jameson, 2003, pp. 37-8).

Further, in doing so, ideology obscures the inconsistencies and deficiencies of social reality and provides a simplified understanding of how things work, or at least, how they should ‘ideally’ work (Geertz 1973; Freedon 2003, p. 41).

Prior to the introduction to Lacan’s work to the planning and related literature, *planning theory* lacked recognition that there was a need to understand both ‘*language and a process of emotional involvement*’ constituting the ideological dimension of planning processes (Sandercock, 2004, p. 139 – emphasis in original). A decade ago Sandercock (2003, p.322) argued that if we wish to be effective in our planning, planners need to understand and work with the emotions that drive ethnic and other forms of urban and related conflict. This text suggests that to begin to resolve the ideological dimensions of planning policy formulation and its implementation requires an understanding of the subject, an understanding that considers both what the subject can assert in language and what cannot be fully articulated, especially the subject’s conscious and unconscious fears and desires.

Jacques Lacan (1988a; 1988b; 1992; 1993; 1994; 1998; 2006; 2007) provides such an understanding. This work sets out to convey some fundamental Lacanian concepts and highlight their usefulness in understanding the important function and consequence of this core ideological dimension within planning. After a brief biographical introduction to Lacan and a short critical overview of his work in the non-planning literature, the text discusses many of Lacan’s key concepts. These include: a discussion about Lacan’s focus on the Symbolic (language) and what lies outside of symbolic articulation (the Real), lack, fantasy, the big Other, master signifiers and knowledge, the ego-ideal, the unconscious, desire, *jouissance* and Lacan’s theory of discourse. In doing so, the text will consider how these concepts have and can be applied to understanding planning.

THE INSPIRATION OF LACANIAN THEORY FOR PLANNING RESEARCH

Chuan Wang (CW): Let's start with some fundamental questions. The first two questions I'd like to ask are: 1) Does Lacanian theory help us to understand the alternative dimension of human conditions or ideological investigation of planning? 2) Or is this a new radical area beyond our existing discussion that we had in planning? Do you think it's a supplement to what we have already or a completely new discussion of planning?

'... the whole things of Lacan ... is that we still reside in ideology.'

Michael Gunder (MG): Well, if you go beyond planning, the whole thing of Lacan, particularly that situated by Žižek and others, is that we still reside in ideology. Whenever you want to explore any practice that exists in the world, it's impossible to strip it from ideology because it's permeating everywhere and through everything. Writing as a planning theorist, planning is not engaging with just planning itself. How does ideology command planning? Ideology is everywhere in planning! How does it come in and actually structure planning? In the context of the way that Lacan talks about: unconscious thoughts, connections, meanings, and everything else. That's basically what I'm writing about: using Žižek, Lacan and others as a basis to do that type of ideological analysis.

The trouble is that there are different meanings and terminologies of ideology. And the dominant concept of ideology in the 20th century purely tends to be that of Marxism. Marxism is a failed experiment to change the world. So, ideology has a really negative connotation. Its negativity is prevalent. In French post-structuralism, simply because of May '68, there was a profound shift for intellectual Europeans particularly, but even for North Americans and in the rest of the world's intellectual thought. Part of the rejection of that shift in French thoughts was to kick out Marxism, and accordingly, its emancipatory goals have been re-thought profoundly by people like Jacques Rancière and many others.

As Lacan famously said to the students after May '68, all you are doing is kicking out one master and replacing 'him' with another. You do not change anything but just change your master. Ideology was considered under Marxism as simply false consciousness. So, if you throw out Marxism, you may also throw out ideology. Therefore, it was no longer appropriate. It was no longer in favour. So, everyone, like Foucault or Deleuze, dumped on ideology: 'I am not into ideology'. Post-68 it was really a sin to say that you are still into Marxism. Hence they said: 'I am not considering anything about ideology'. So, the subject of ideology doesn't remain engaged in the emergent poststructuralism that displaced structuralist Marxism. And Marxism, ideology and false consciousness were no longer considered as an influence. Indeed, when you are aware of Marxism's concept of false consciousness, you are kind of seeing it and you then produce what Anthony Giddens called – 'double-hermeneutic'. You talk actually after you figure out what you're thinking. Therefore, false consciousness is eliminated and not prevalent – or so you think!

However, where false consciousness gets absent is where Lacan comes in. Particularly, Žižek's interpretation of Lacan is where he re-engaged with ideology. But that approach to ideology is much more sophisticated and nuanced than Marx as it is building on Lacan's work. It is taken forward by Žižek from the chapter of Lacan's (2006) *Écrits* that is central to Žižek's (1989) core 'Che Vuoi?' chapter, which is originally from 1963 when Lacan addressed in one of his famous seminars. Lacan wasn't considering ideology directly but he actually did just that, as far as I can understand – and it was Žižek's genius in teasing this out as core to his new ideological critique. In the 1950s, Lacan was really fundamentally indebted to Heidegger, although this has not been picked up by that many. Also, I note that much of Žižek's early Slovenian research was on Heidegger. Lacan translated some of Heidegger's work into French, including Logos and other later pieces. He was a prolific reader, and definitely read *Being and Time*.

'So basically, it's Lacan that took Heidegger, Sartre, Freud and Hegel and came up with his diagrams. And Žižek interprets that any says this in another way which we can engage with ideology.'

The big Other in Lacan's writing is basically the 'They' who makes *Dasein* act in-authentically in *Being and Time*. And *Dasein* – being-there – is the 'Subject' that Lacan is largely talking about. So, the whole thing in Lacan's diagrams is his concerns about a human subject's being-there – *Dasein* in Heidegger's terms. How is he or she influenced by the 'They', the big Other? His crucial diagrams sort this question out. This question was the core that Lacan was thinking about particularly in the 1950s and the early 1960s. So basically, it's Lacan that took Heidegger, Sartre, Freud and Hegel and came up with his diagrams. And Žižek interprets that and says this in another way which we can engage with ideology. But not an ideology which is as simplified as that of false consciousness of Marxism. It is much tidier, if a lot more complicated, to think of the human in its split subjectivity to the signifier chain of the symbolic order of the Other (language/culture) via desire/fantasy/lack and everything else that makes us human. And it seems an incredible powerful model!

CW: This is a way to think about and research on ideology from a new perspective. The planning discipline is a way how we vision our future cities and how we implement our ideology or visions of our urban futures. Do you use this strand of theory in planning because this? Is this any connection between the nature of planning and Lacan and Žižek's thoughts?

'... [T]he interlink of Lacanian theory and the planning discipline is that of lack and desire, which are the core formulations of Lacan.'

MG: Sure! The interlink of Lacanian theory and the planning discipline is that of lack and desire, which are the core formulations of Lacan. I think it is similar to politics as well. There's something not right in the current city. How can we make it better? That's where the plan comes in. A plan applies something to a lack, i.e. deficiency, in the city. And Lacanian thought is basically about fantasy formulation to paper over a 'lack' like that everywhere. Where will this city be in twenty or thirty years? Planning practice presents fantasies about how to fill the 'lack' of what is causing concerns and insecurity, which can be tied with collective desire of the residents of that city. And all these fantasies are profoundly ideological in the promises of certainty and security, ultimately making you and the city 'whole' without 'lack' by promising to fulfil your desires.

LINK TO VIDEO:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0N6c3-R0sQo>



FOUCAULT'S POWER AND LACAN'S DESIRE

CW: In your writing, you mentioned other philosophers' writings, such as Habermas and Foucault, who are the most widely cited philosophers in the enquiries on the power in the planning discipline. As for your narrative, from what I understand, your starting point of using Lacanian theory is human's desire. Do you think that power and desire are closely interwoven together? Or, is desire more important than power at some point? Or, do they have to be under consideration in the same time?

'[Power and desire] are different sides of a very similar issue'

MG: Well, they are different sides of a very similar issue. If you look at the Foucauldian perspective, everything is power. But you can actually say, if you look at it from Lacanian perspective, everything is lack and desire. And lack underlies the agency. Promises are manipulated by that desire. It is a dimension of power! The trouble is that language is never perfect. And our words are not fully comprehensive. So, we use metaphor and metaphorical models to engage with what we're doing. Some deploy their model of power, as Foucauldian scholars always employ it to examine and investigate the world. But you can also link and examine similar issues through examining the Lacanian dimensions of desire and lack comprising them! Great! They are all looking at the same fundamental issue: How do we exist and act in the irrational material world? They are just different perspectives on the same issue. Think about how you decide with your personal partner what to do on a Saturday night. Sometimes you do what your partner wants, sometimes she/he does what you want, sometimes you both compromise with a third option. This can be examined as a Foucauldian micro-power relationship or as a relationship of lack/desire and the fantasy fulfilment of giving your Other what you think she/he wants for the obvious reciprocity it will bring: both perspectives are examining the same thing – how trade-offs are made in decision-making in a social relationship. Encapsulating what I am doing, I take the Lacanian perspective.

Yet let's look at Habermas. The Habermasian ideal-speech situation is actually derived from Freud's concept of parapraxis. Habermas made the basic assumption that we don't want to miscommunicate. So, Habermas is trying to avoid miscommunication, which Freud calls parapraxis. The ideal-speech situation is where people can 'ideally' fully communicate without misunderstandings. But Lacan would say that this is completely wrong. Because we always have incomplete information: language inherently 'lacks' completeness. Indeed, we try to have an effect on others when we speak. It's a power thing! Speaking is based on power. We are all like little kids who try to communicate with Mum to give me something sweet rather than the healthy vegetables. From the Four Discourses, we can know that we speak in order to influence others. We don't express simple information for information stake, rather we try and produce an effect on the Other!

Chapter 2. A Critical Overview of Lacan in the Feminist, Philosophical, Political Studies and Related Literature

Born in 1901, Lacan was arguably one of the most important French intellectuals of the last century. Lacan considered himself principally a practicing Freudian psychoanalyst and teacher of trainee psychoanalysts who draw, apart from Freud, in his theorisation largely on neo-structuralist philosophy (Marini, 1992; Foucault, 1998, p.279). He did not publish extensively. His collected articles and papers were published in 1966 in *Écrits* (Lacan, 2006). The greater part of Lacan's publications were transcriptions of his spoken lectures which comprised his teaching seminar series. The seminar series ran for 27 years in Paris from 1953-1954 until 1978-1979, two years before his death in 1981. Importantly, these seminars became a focal point of intellectual culture in Paris and at their height in the 1960s, filled lecture halls to overflow, attracting members of the public, students, psychoanalysts and academics, including many leading French intellectuals of the day (Marini, 1992; Roudinesco, 1990; 1997).

Core to Lacan's theory of the subject is a focus on belief, identity and desire. Lacan drew predominantly on Freud's metapsychology and 'other theoretical traditions, prominent among them phenomenology and existential philosophy, structural linguistics and anthropology' (Boothby, 2001, p.9). As a consequence, today it can be argued that 'Lacan's account of symbolic subjectivity contributes more to social theory than to psychological theories of the individual' (Dean, 2000, p.2). Indeed, much of Lacan's thought is applied, at least outside of psychoanalytical clinical practice, through interpretations of his works by social and political scientists, cultural theorists and contemporary philosophers, with Slavoj Žižek and Alain Badiou perhaps being the most famous of this latter group.

This is because Lacan's (2006) thought is largely concerned about the subject's relationship to others, both to other individuals and also to wider society and its shared culture realm which constitutes the symbolic order, which Lacanians often refer to as the 'big Other' (Žižek, 1998a). In doing so, the subject tries to act so as to give the Other what the subject thinks that the Other wants so as to be wanted by this Other (Lacan, 1988b, 1998). Accordingly, the subject is always asking, 'even without knowing it... "What does he want from me?"' (Lacan, 2006, p. 690). Of course, since we rarely, if ever, know what we unconsciously want for ourselves, yet alone what the Other actually wants, either consciously or unconsciously, this can give considerable grounds for confusion, ideological, or otherwise!

Compounding this relationship to the Other is that it largely occurs through language. Indeed, the Lacanian concept of the 'big Other' is not only the theoretical collective aggregate of all individuals constituting society, but importantly, the intangible public realm which comprises the totality of the symbolic order – knowledges, norms, discourses, laws, fictions, beliefs, practices, etc. – constituted by all these other subjects (Žižek, 1998a, p. 496). Yet, central to Lacan's (2006) thought is that while the subject itself, or the aggregate of subjects that in total constituting society, cannot exist without language; neither the subject nor the material world can be diminished to the symbolic alone. Some type of symbolic structure, or system, is critical from which to constitute our perception of social reality. But language, for Lacan, is never fully comprehensive; it can never say everything we want it to, it is always lacking intrinsic completeness. So the relationship between structure and agency within our social reality is often symbolically obscure or even 'undecidable'; for these relationships extend to a dimension external to language or even that of our imaginations.

Lacan (1988a; 1994, p.49; 2006) called this indeterminate registry, or dimension, the 'Real' (not to be mixed up with the signifier 'reality') which resides completely externally to that of the symbolic or the image(ary). At best, we deploy fantasy and *illusion* to obscure this 'impossible thing', a noumenon that exists but cannot be symbolised or even visualised (Žižek, 1997; 1999a, p.78). This Real is a lack in the symbolic that provokes the subject to produce an imaginary element – fantasy – to obscure what is lacking and give some type of consistency to what cannot be signified within language (Stavrakakis, 1999, p.27). Hence, what ensures the possibility of a coherently appearing social reality is "the intrusion of fantasy, especially the manner in which fantasy screens over the void, lack, or absence" of the Real that we fail to articulate or even to conceptualise (Elliot, 2001, p.76). Of course, if the symbolic is inherently incomplete and this lack is papered over through the construction of fantasy, this rather puts an end to Habermas's ideal of undistorted communications seeking a consensually agreed 'truth' for communicative action, as was first articulated in *planning theory* by Jean Hillier (2003).

Not surprisingly, the application of Lacanian theory to the understanding of society and culture is not without concern, and not just for supporters of Habermas. Some clinical practitioners of Lacanian psychoanalysis are 'suspicious of the wider "application" of the theory to those not actually in analysis' (Parker, 2004, p.69). Alternatively, Lacan's teachings have been criticised by social theorists as being only theoretical and void of empirical material (Sarup, 1993, p.26). Further, in contrast to psychology, the inability to reconcile the nuance of each particular psychoanalytical case to a meaningful universal theory of the unconscious that is testable – what Karl Popper (1963) would call the test of falsification – is a fundamental constraint for considering psychoanalysis a science, or by extension, a valid scientific body of thought applicable to the understanding of aggregate human behaviour (Fink, 2004). In this regard, Lacan was unable to successfully legitimise and advance Freud's psychoanalytical theory as a science of the unconscious even with his application of mathematical theory and linguistics to Freud's metapsychology (Althusser, 1996; Fink, 2004; Morel, 2000). Consequently, this author views Lacan's work in a manner originated by Althusser (1996, p.93), as best being understood as a 'philosophy of psychoanalysis' from which subsequent understandings of society and culture may be derived and, where possible, tested.

Within feminist theory Lacan's metapsychology is valued as a useful set of concepts from which to challenge phallocentric knowledges and patriarchal power relationships by, for example, Judith Butler, Joan Copjec, Elizabeth Grosz, Julia Kristeva and Juliet Mitchell. Alternatively, Lacan is perceived as privileging masculinity, where women are signified as constituting a lack that is a substratum of the androcentric subject by Luce Irigaray, Nancy Fraser, Germaine Greer and Dale Spender (Hillier and Gunder, 2003, p.240). Blum and Nast's (1996, 2000) feminist critique is particularly relevant to this text as they examine Lacan in relationship to Henri Lefebvre's critique of the production of urban space and find both authors' guilty of an underlying phallocentric and heterosexist viewpoint that distorts their perspectives of subjectivity and agency.

This author agrees with those feminists who defend Lacanian theory and contend that Lacan's work should be used as an explanatory analytic tool for understanding power relations (Grosz, 1989, Mitchell, 1974, Ragland-Sullivan, 1986), or bodily life (after Agamben) and desire as a more significant explanation of causative relationships than that of Foucauldian power (Copjec, 1994, 2002); rather than being interpreted substantively. While Lacan built his theories in the context of Freud's early twentieth century metapsychology and was largely a person of his own mid-twentieth century times, accordingly constructing his male gendered theories without apparent acknowledgement of patriarchal domination, this author agrees with Elizabeth Grosz (1990) that Lacanian theorising provides scope to change our perspectives on androcentric power relationships and how they are replicated in society. Through transcending Freud's focus on mere biology, Lacanian thought permits us to understand gender domination in the context of the ideological constructs that constitute the social realities of society, although this in its own right, is also not without question (see, for example, Moi, 2004).

In philosophy, ethics and political theorising feminists including Butler (1997a; 1997b), Mouffe (2000; 2005) and Zupančič (2000; 2003; 2008) have used Lacan for explanation of individual and social agency. Male authors including Bracher (1993; 1994), Glynos and Howarth (2007), McGowan (2004), Stavrakakis (1999; 2003; 2007), Swyngedouw (2010; 2011) and Žižek (1989; 1993; 1997; 1999a; 1999b; 2001; 2002b; 2004; 2006b; 2008, 2010; 2012) have extensively used Lacan's social theorisation in critiquing the ideological *illusions* underlying our political and social realities. Lacan has also in recent years found significant traction in public administration and organisational studies (Bloom and Cederstrom, 2009; Catlaw and Jordan, 2009; Cederstrom and Hoedemackers, 2010; Contu, 2008; Fotaki, 2009; 2010; Styhre, 2008). Indeed, Frederic Jameson (2003, pp.37-38) attributes to Lacan and his followers the first new understanding of ideology since that of Nietzsche or Marx.

Of particular significance to understanding at least one dimension of planning policy development is the work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) and the subsequent thought of Laclau (1996; 2002; 2003; 2005) on ideology and hegemonic articulation. Laclau's cultural hegemony is predicated on the recognition of a lack (from Lacan), a deficiency detracting from a sense of completeness for and within a community, such as a need for sustainability, liveability, health, or global competitiveness (Gunder and Hillier, 2009). Lacanian and Laclau's theorising suggests that this lack acts as a focal point for political debate (Stavrakakis, 2003, p.318). Once established, the lack is then filled by a policy solution so that this 'filling function' of the proposed policy determines what is to become the unfulfilled reality.

Here, the lack in the Other, the impossibility of the social, is approached through the irreducible gap between the need for a universal point of reference (i.e. for a force which acts in the name of the whole community, thus symbolically instituting society as a more or less coherent whole) and the particularism of all social forces (Stavrakakis, 2003, p.332).

Of critical concern is that this ‘filling’ task may also serve a hegemonic function for a dominant group that has divergent values, vested interests or even ulterior motives to those of other groups constituting a polity. Here the dominant group’s prescription fills and resolves the identified deficiency gaining popular support, while also achieving particular corporatist, or other peripheral objectives, or even just incidentally imposing divergent embedded values into the wider community.

Laclau suggests that the identification of deficient community issues and their prescribed resolution is highly ideological. Metaphor and linguistic slippage is core to this planning policy process (Gunder, 2003b). In this regard, consider the recent dominant planning policy discourses of lack and their prescribed solution used in my city of residence: Auckland, New Zealand. At the turn of this century, Auckland’s planning policy practitioners and its politicians regarded the metropolitan area as an unfit car based city tending towards middle-aged flab that lacks transport mobility and a sustainable footprint. Urban containment and public transport sustaining high density nodal development were necessary to condition the city into becoming the lean, fit, youthful and muscular city capable of a competitive place in the global economy (ARC, 2003; Gunder, 2003b, pp.288-289; Waddell and Pollock, 1999, p.9).

More than a decade on, some progress had been made in intensification and improved public transit provision. However, the new public policy ‘lack’ of a now somewhat fitter city has shifted to one of ‘liveability’. The overarching aim of the recent Auckland Plan, operationalised in March 2012, was to make Auckland ‘the world’s most liveable city’ (Auckland Council, 2012, p. 2). This is a vision that first claimed to ‘inspire’ the Mayor and then the planners who drafted the Plan, for who could possibly oppose becoming a resident in the ‘most liveable city in the world’ (Auckland Council, 2011, p. 1)! Of course, what the plan promises and what it delivers are two different things, but most people would most likely wish to identify with the fantasy that is being promised – that Auckland is now becoming the most liveable city in the world – even if the reality might be somewhat less than true (Gunder, 2014).

Indeed, fantasy plays an important role in supporting the structure of social reality, ‘ordering our emotional investment within a larger narrative of reconciliation and stability... fantasy is what attempts to conceal all fissures... turning our worldly experience into something coherent and appealing’ (Bloom and Cederstrom, 2009, p. 163). Yet, by doing so, while ‘fantasy formations shape the basic orientation of our existence’, they also tend to ‘curtail our lives by causing us to proceed mechanically exactly at those moments when a degree of self-reflexivity would help us to arrive’ at a better, or more productive response, to a distressing situation; after all, how can our problems in Auckland be so bad if Auckland is the most liveable city in the world! (Gunder, 2011b; Ruti, 2010, p. 1). Fantasies make us not look too closely at the conditions of our social reality, especially when fantasies help to provide the subject with a ‘clear’ sense of identity, worth and even provide a guide as to what action is, or is not, necessary.

For fantasies help to facilitate our ordering of the messy world under obscure labels of desirable identification and apparent, but fuzzy, substance – our sublime objects of ideology (Žižek, 1989), so as to posit ‘the symbolic order as a dependable structure that ensures the solidity of meaning and cultural life’ (Ruti, 2010, p. 2). Further, as will be discussed in more detail in the next section, without this simplification under fuzzy signifiers of belief that almost all may have solidarity with, such that ‘liveability’ (however defined) is a good thing, social reality would simple dissolve into an amorphous if not a completely incomprehensible mass (Žižek, 1997). In so doing, fantasy acts as an ideological mechanism to anchor our affect within these symbolic labels, so that narratives are allowed ‘to provide the co-ordinates for our desires and, by extension, teaches us how to organize and express our emotions’ (Žižek, 1989; Bloom and Cederstrom, 2009, p. 160). In other words: ‘fantasy links a level of meaning with a level of enjoyment, or if you will, connects narrative and affect’ (Bloom and Cederstrom, 2009, p. 173; Gunder, 2011a).

This is an inherently ideological process, so that ‘the ideological significance of fantasy can be understood in the context of its capacity to “grip” the subject, whether as part of a social practice or as part of a political practice’ (Glynos, 2011, p. 378). In this regard, ‘[f]antasy not only provides the framework, or affective coordinates, for integrating emotion into narrative but in fact directly structures individual experiences as eternally part of a larger affective story’ (Bloom and Cederstrom, 2009, p. 164). It binds us in our impregnation with ideology, so that ‘individuals are constantly being inscribed into larger ideologies through fantasmatic narratives’, desirable stories of what might be (Bloom and Cederstrom, 2009, p. 164). Further, in so doing, this reflects a ‘constitutively blurred boundary’, or vagueness, between the two concepts of a materialised reality produced by our actions and the fantasies that help to create this materialisation (Glynos, 2010, p. 22).

Having introduced Lacan and some of his supporters and critics, as well as the concepts of lack and fantasy, the rest of this text will further engage with Lacanian derived theorising and how it might be applied to the further understanding of *planning theory*. It will focus on four key factors that for Lacan (2007) affect, or are affected by, any speech act that facilitates public and professional discourse. These may be simplistically summarised as identity defining signifiers (Master Signifier, S1), knowledge (S2), desire/pleasure (a) and the human subject split between conscious knowing and unconscious being (\$).

FEMINIST STUDIES AND LACAN

CW: In this chapter of your narrative, you used such a long length in your text to elucidate the relationship between Lacanian theory and feminist research. Is it an example of an analytical tool for understanding power? What's its relationship with planning? What's the purpose of this part?

MG: Yes, it's important as some feminists are understandably critics of Lacan. A few years ago at a top Australian university, there was a Gender Study's course titled: 'Lacan is a Prick'. Lacan is heavily criticised by some feminists, particularly for Lacan's psychoanalytical foundation derived from Freud. Freud became active in the late 19th century, where he became embedded in the century of psychoanalysis in Vienna. At the time, psychoanalysis was very much a middle-class thing, predicated on the then very conservative middle-class values, including that of a patriarchal family structure. In theorising things like sex, which was incredibly controversial for the Viennese and their middle class, bourgeois, patriarchal society. So, that is the whole connotation to do about psychoanalysis.

It understandably doesn't set well with many feminists today. If you have to consider that context, some feminists use Lacan in negative ways. Half of the planners in the world are women, of which most are, of course, feminists. They have understandable resistance to Freudian psychoanalysis, because of the then unquestioned gender bias represented by it in the late 19th century and the early 20th century, things like Freudian analysis of the phallus and all the gendered things represented moralistic values that are embedded in traditional psychoanalysis. If you see the acknowledgement at the start of this text, it was originally based on a rewrite and update of fairly descriptive and wide-ranging article I published back in 2005. Years ago, when Lacan was new to social and *planning theory*, there was a considerable and understandable gendered push-back on Lacan, not only in planning, but also in other literature, such as geography. Back then I was doing a lot work with Jean Hillier on Lacan. As Jean is a very strong feminist, our writing inherently contained a feminist perspective that I agree with then and as I continue to fully support, and hence the importance of raising this feminist concern in this text.

CW: I think this might be a very personal question, since I am not good at the knowledge about feminism. Now I understand why you used such a long length in your narrative text. Because this can change people's biased view towards Lacan's theory in planning research.

MG: It's not so much biased *per se*. But it's not against just Lacan but against psychoanalysis. Because largely Freud's psychoanalysis has pretty conservative and had inherently patriarchal attitudes towards women. In some Lacanian stuff that I get into (it's very relevant to planning about *jouissance*), female *jouissance* is different from male *jouissance*. Some feminists use this positively while others say how you should not differentiate them. Arguments of sexual differentiation are understandably open to question and debate. I barely have expertise on that but it should be acknowledged and accepted, especially in the text introducing Lacan.

You can imagine that many young academics have no real awareness of Lacan and Freud. In Freudian psychoanalysis, which is the starting point of Lacan's theory, the phallus is pretty central, even though Lacan's concept of the phallus and its castration is actually referring to the symbolic order, not an actual part of male anatomy and its threat of loss. But, unfortunately, it is inherently derived from a male gendered perspective, as that is where it began with Freud. So, I need to engage with this for the readers.

ON IDEOLOGY

CW: How do you think about different terms concerning ideology? Because you mentioned several different ones in your text: ideology, fantasies and fictions. Are there any difference among these concepts?

MG: They're all different components of ideology. Ideology is manifested in numerous different ways, when we aim to engage with the world. To me, it is *per se* like Žižek: one dimension of ideology is how we think the big Other wants us to act, so as to be 'good'. You are trying to figure out what side you want to go in any materialised path. If I am wearing my planning 'hat', I claim that public transport is wonderful – because that's what I think a good planner is supposed to say. I might actually like and prefer driving my sports car. But I can't say I like cars. Because a 'good' planner is supposed to support public transit. So that's how ideology is materialised in the world, as we all try to act correctly as 'good' agents in the different roles that we play.

CW: Do you mean that ideology is from the external, for the whole society? Therefore, ideology is not a very personal thing? And the personal, internal notion seems to be fantasy, as you used in your text.

MG: Yes. But not just universal, but also particular. If you're a member of certain practice – planning or architecture – there are a whole bunch of unspoken assumptions and pretending to be done for the big Other constituting being a 'good' architect or a 'good' planner. They are largely something ideological that you suppose to obey and materialise in your public actions. You've seen but you never say, because you don't control all those components about ideology. That applies to all identifications. It is what Judith Butler calls performativity.

But in our practices, you are always doing things under ideological components whatever constitutes a 'good' planner, 'good' architect, or in regards to our other identifications. And most people want to be perceived as a successful, 'good' person. When you go to university, you learn the formal role as an architect to make structures that won't fall over. But there are a lot that you also learn in informal roles relating to your identifications, planner, architecture or anything else, which actually shapes your personality in your unconscious, some of which will also go to your planning, or architectural, practice. The ideology of 'good' planning practice has a kind of global universal world, including that of European professional practices, all of which are mostly ideologically.

ON THE REAL

CW: If we go back to the previous question. The subject articulates something – the Symbolic or language. Can I understand that if it's unconscious and it can't be articulated in the symbolic, it is the Real? Because the Real is never able to be articulated.

'The Real are things that your perceptions might somehow pick up, but you cannot process... You can't articulate the Real or put it into signification.'

MG: You can't put the Real into language. In my session in AESOP 2017 at Lisbon, I mentioned that I read a lot of Jacques Rancière and Kant in the last year. If you look at the Real from Kant's idealism, everything you perceive about the world is purely a mental construct in your head. Reality – the external world – is constituted as representations in your head. The Real are things that your perceptions might somehow pick-up, but you cannot process them/it/whatever as a mental concept or representation. You can't articulate the Real or put it into signification. The Real is somehow affecting your world, but you can't put your fingers on what it is. If you go back to Žižek, you can see the shapes of pieces and the borders of social reality, you know the symbolic rules and how you can act in the symbolic order. But what about that thing causing some kind of cognitive dissonance, the thing you can't quite pin down? It is not anything that you can imagine or give some degree of certainty to in the symbolic order. It's the thing that is not possible to speak about, but it is somehow there having some kind of an effect, but what and how you just cannot quite say.

CW: So, can we understand that anything put into expression, for example body language, drawing, language, are not the Real?

MG: Well, I mean the Real is the other side of the Symbolic. So, if you can't put into symbolic structures, it can't be articulated. The Real is kind of hidden. It's the negative of the negative of all kind of things. Again, using Kant, you talk about things-in-themselves, which we cannot readily perceive and nominalise. There are thousands different ways to describe one thing, just circling around it. The Real is something that you can't put into lingua. Also, thinking about images, try and put into words what is so cool about Mona Lisa's smile – you just can't, and I would call lack of ability to describe this that you can actually see, a dimension of the Real.

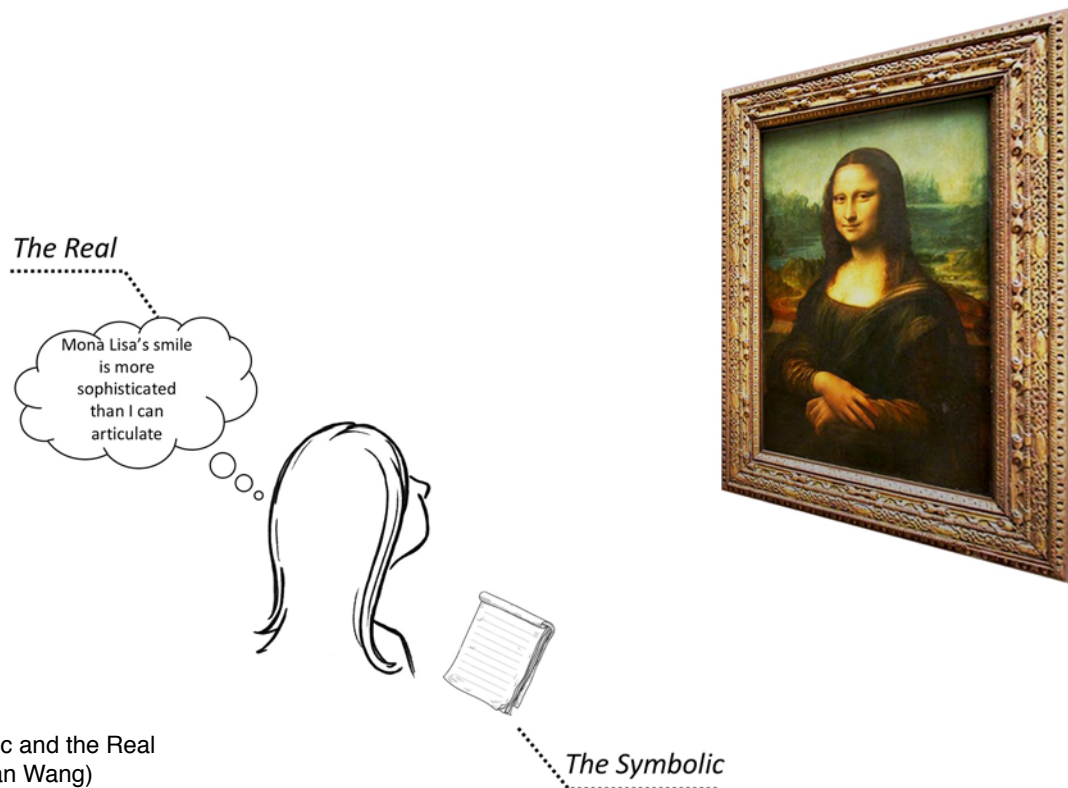


Figure 2 The Symbolic and the Real
(Graphics: Chuan Wang)

CW: Yes, I think now I understand that to some extent, the Real and the Symbolic are two different sides of the same issue, but they are all in your mind. The Symbolic is able to be articulated, while the Real is not.

MG: If you go back to early Lacan, he talked about the little infant who cannot speak any language and perceives the external world as a *gestalt* of an undifferentiated everything. Very simplistically, in early Lacan, it is the same as where the Real comes from: the infant is perceiving the undivided Real. And then *langue*, these signifiers allows the *gestalt* of everything to be chopped up with differentiations into different things and words. That's the same as the colonisation of the symbolic order on the little infant. Lacan here uses Freud's metaphor of castration. Not in the literal sense of genital castration, but rather in the sense of cutting you off from perceiving the world undifferentiated and whole. Language and its signifiers differentiate the world by giving its components of shared names (and of often shifting mean), but in doing so language arbitrarily cuts the world up with an alien set of labels imposed on you to use by the Other and you have no choice but to use this alien imposed shifting system of signification and all the extensive cultural clutter that comes embedded within it constituting the symbolic order.

Again, that touches on a bunch of other philosophical perspectives, such as Deleuze’s philosophy of interconnectivity, and Heidegger’s materialisation of things. That’s the other definition of the Real. But the little infant emerges into the Real, which is then subsequently completely subsumed – cut off – in the maturing subject via the subject’s entry into the Imaginary and the symbolic orders of culture and language constituting social reality. All are originally just a massive undifferentiated infantile reality that you lose in the assimilation of language and all that goes with it.

Humans gradually become a split subject with the influence of language, culture etc.



Figure 3 The Emergence of Three Registries for Infants
(Graphics: Chuan Wang)

Chapter 3. Master Signifiers and Knowledge

Identifications with a range of master signifiers constitute the subject as an individual (Verhaeghe, 2001). These signifiers include descriptive signifiers of bodily appearance, ethnicity and gender through to more abstract signifiers of our intellectual and spiritual beliefs (Bracher, 1999, p. 45). The totality of our master signifiers constitutes a subject's ego-ideal, which comprises the core beliefs, values and a sense of self producing who, at least we believe, we are. Although Lacan (1988b; 2006) would argue that there is always a lack in our identifications that prohibits a complete identity and, as a consequence, this search for completeness, itself, is what actually constitutes the subject. In turn, each of our abstract master signifiers is comprised of a complex aggregate of ordered signifiers constituting diverse narratives of contestable sets of knowledges and beliefs. Master signifiers are empty signifiers without explicit meaning (Laclau, 2003; 2005). They tie together multifaceted and often snarled, muddled and conflicting, arrays of narratives – academic or cultural, which may, or may not, also comprise other master signifiers in their own particular right – under one universal and iconic signifier. They permit us to amicably arrange and clearly outline and communicate our descriptive, as well as abstract, identifications; eg, 'I am a white, male, liberal, cyclist and planner who passionately supports new urbanism and is proudly a Kiwi resident of Auckland – the most liveable city in the world!'

Master signifiers are crucial for sorting out our sense of self in society's complex sea of conflicting and contradicting knowledges, beliefs and values. Without sufficient master signifiers to anchor our identifications we would be driven to psychotic madness and with too many, and/or if too rigid in their structure, we would be driven to neurotic despair and obsessive self-sacrifice (Bowie, 1991, p.74). Master signifiers allow us to identify with others in our lifeworlds; they allow us to form our diverse groups and communities of interest. Master signifiers allow shared and harmonious social identifications, while at the same time allowing the accommodation of difference and disagreement within, and across, each identification. They constitute the structuralisation of our socio-political life (Stavrakakis, 1999, p.30).

Lacan calls these master signifiers '*points de capiton*', 'button ties' that pin narratives – networks of signifiers – to both the individual subject and wider society (Stavrakakis, 1999). Each master signifier is a 'nodal point... which "quilts" sets of knowledges, beliefs and practices, 'stops them sliding and fixes their meanings' (Žižek, 2002b, p.87). Each provides an anchoring point or concise signifying label for a 'whole field and, by embodying it, effectuates its identity' (Žižek, 1989, p.88). What constitutes a signifier as a suturing master signifier is that it is isolated from the rest of the narrative, which includes the sets of knowledges, codes and beliefs that comprise it (Fink, 1995, p.77). While the master signifiers remain unchanged, 'their descriptive features will be fundamentally unstable and open to all kinds of hegemonic rearticulations' (Laclau, 1989, p.xiv). For example, sustainability – just as liveability – has many contested interpretations but the label 'sustainability' itself does not change (Gunder, 2006, p. 212).

Gunder (2003b) deployed Schön and Rein's (1994) theories of policy frame and generative metaphor to demonstrate how hegemonic re-articulation is used to create and then implement novel urban planning narratives under globally anchoring master signifiers of planning policy formation. Master signifiers related to urban planning and engendering contemporary policy discussion include: 'public good,' 'liveability,' 'market forces,' 'globalization,' 'democracy,' 'new urbanism,' 'smart growth,' 'sustainability' and perhaps even 'planning' itself, although this inventory, of course, is not comprehensive (Gunder, 2004, p.303; Gunder and Hillier, 2009). These 'empty' signifiers have given up explicit, concise, significance to secure multifarious points of view, or unique interpretations pertaining to particular situations, under one common label (Stavrakakis, 1999, p.80).

Narratives – sets of knowledge, stories, and symbolic practices – firstly describe and support their master signifiers prior to any hegemonic re-articulation or fine-tuning as to what these master signifiers should actually embody. For example: the dissimilar planning narratives of regional science and communicative rationality, both fundamentally support the master signifier 'planning'. These diverse sets of knowledge also constitute our normative behaviours, the sub-codes that fix the master signifiers, describing their ambiguous characteristics, acceptable behaviours and values (Bracher, 1999, p.45). The acquisition of these knowledges, stories and practices constitute learning, and these also include the disciplinary and professional codes that constitute planning and related urban policy disciplines. Further, these narratives are also the product of disciplines, where they provide direction for society to act.

Narratives and the master signifiers that 'stop' them are ideological (Žižek, 2002b). These ideological fictions construct reality itself. Kant (1951) called many of these discourses 'transcendental ideas', that is, they are ideas that are ultimately beyond actual human knowledge and experience. Yet, if we reject these fictional ideas and the hopes, dreams, *illusions* and fantasies that we may attach to them, 'we lose reality itself; *the moment we subtract fictions from reality, reality itself loses its discursive-logical consistency*' (Žižek, 1993, p.88 – emphasis in original). Reade's (1987) infamous anti-planning assertion that planning is an ideology is correct, but from a Lacanian perspective then so is the rest of our socially constructed reality! Fundamentally, for planning, this is a fantasy that the discipline successfully provides the answers necessary for certainty and harmony in our actions towards the future (Gunder, 2003a). Planners all know that this is an impossible fantasy, why else do they constantly have to revise their plans and policies, but they continue in the belief that all policies will be effective and so they have the faith to continue planning (Gunder and Hillier, 2009).

Professions, such as planning, are constituted by a membership comprised of similar-minded practitioners. As Gunder (2004, p.302) reported: 'What guarantees the community's consistency is a [master or transcendental] signifier whose signified is an enigma for the members themselves – nobody really knows what it means, but each of them somehow presupposes that others know it, that it has to mean "the real thing," and so they use it all the time' (Žižek, 2002a, p.58). Each profession 'recognizes itself through the common use of some jargon-laden expressions whose meaning is not clear to anyone,' in planning's case these are terms such as sustainability, smart growth, liveability, new urbanism, resilience, the good, the public interest, or even planning itself, 'everyone refers to them, and what binds the group together is ultimately their shared ignorance' (Žižek, 2002a, p.58). For in Lacanian theory, social reality's '*very ontological consistency implies a certain non-knowledge of its participants*' (Žižek, 1989, p.21 – emphasis in original). Reality can only be constituted symbolically as a set of ideological simplifications, fictions, *illusions*, or fantasies that we accept to make our existence less painful and bearable, while blindly overlooking what is lacking (Gunder and Hillier, 2009).

Master signifiers constitute the symbolic construction of our ego-ideals. Identity-sustaining master signifiers are extremely precious for they literally provide the symbolic dimensions of our sense of self that we can articulate to others. We go out of our way to defend our master signifiers because they are our sublime objects of ideology (Žižek, 1989). All of our 'utterances have as a fundamental aim the reaffirmation of both the importance or dominance of the subject's master signifiers and the subject's of these signifiers, which supports the ego's sense of oneness and wholeness' (Bracher, 1999, p.45).

Our master signifiers make us who we are in society. They also provide the fixed pivotal or anchoring points that fundamentally underpin social reality itself. Desirable popular or specialist master signifiers, and their metaphoric or metonymic symbolic substitutes, often have great emotive political power when identified as lacking in our communities, or in wider society (Gunder, 2003b; Laclau, 2003). Planning examples include statements such as: the city lacks transport mobility, health and fitness, sustainability, liveability, resilience, or global competitiveness (Gunder and Hillier, 2009); all of which were identified as applicable to Auckland by politicians, policy analysts and planning consultants in that city's recent dominant urban policy narratives (cited above). Residents, understandably, respond to this identity loss by asking, or even demanding, that these deficiencies be resolved. Politicians, policy planners as well as others, such as 'key' stakeholders and the information media, play a central role in the filling of this lack by providing and/or supporting specific urban planning prescriptions (Gunder, 2011a). Core to this process is human desire.

ON MASTER SIGNIFIERS

CW: In this section, all questions are about master signifiers, since this is one of the most important concepts in Lacanian theory. And this booklet, of course, is not an exception. How do you draw the boundary between master signifiers and other (or ordered) signifiers? Are they exchangeable in some contexts? You use a very good example in your text: 'I am a white, male, liberal, cyclist and planner who passionately supports new urbanism and is proudly a Kiwi resident of Auckland – the most liveable city in the world!' I am wondering whether Kiwi, Auckland, new urbanism or liveable city are master signifiers in any context or only in this particular context?

'[Master signifiers] are "*points de capton*", "button tie" or "nodal point" - that pertains to in its signifier chain and which solidifies their S2's specific meanings... In theory, there can be an infinite set of master signifiers, with layers of master signifiers nestled within each other.'

MG: There are different ways to talk about master signifiers. In this way, I am talking about master signifiers regarding my identifications. You can identify yourself as 'a male Chinese architect, interested in *planning theory*'. Take 'Chinese' as an example. That's a simplified master signifier for that whole library of other signifiers. 'Chinese' is a gigantic master signifier. The history of China and the history of Chinese people are gigantic. But they can be simplified in one word – 'Chinese'. It's the role of an empty signifier. So, an underlining organising principle of a series of signifiers. 'I am a man.' 'I am a heterosexual man.' 'I am a gay man.' When you say one word – 'heterosexual', 'gay', 'man' or 'woman', your identification is captured by that one – gendered master signifier. The list of master signifiers that state who we are to others constitutes our ego-ideal. That's one simplistic level of what a master signifier is. It provides an underlying organising principle for a series of other signifiers constituting knowledge as what these signifiers ought to do and mean in relation to its master signifier, such as being an 'architect', being a 'planner', being whatever that one 'symbol' of identifications happens to be.

A master signifier (S1) has to remain empty of signification (be an empty signifier) 'to serve as the underlying organizing principle of [a] series', while an ordinary signifier (S2) does not (Žižek 2008 [2000]: 47 – *The Fragile Absolute*). Further, aspects of an S2's signification are provided by their S1 in a discourse – which Lacan (2006 [1963]: 681-682) and others also refers to as a '*points de capton*', 'button tie' or 'nodal point' – that pertains to in its signifier chain and which solidifies their S2's specific meanings. For example, 'sustainability' is a master signifier and when we are talking about 'sustainability' words like 'city', 'biodiversity', 'transportation', 'resilience', 'development' or 'carbon-neutral' all have specific significations given to them by the S1 of 'sustainability'. Similarly, a signifier like 'freedom' has diverse significations, only if we attach them to relevant political master signifiers, such as 'socialism' or 'neoliberalism' do their meanings become clear and unambiguous, with 'socialist freedom' being free of capitalist domination, unfairness and oppression and 'neoliberal freedom' being the freedom of consumer choice and fair access to market opportunities, self-determination, etc. In theory, there can be an infinite set of master signifiers, with layers of master signifiers nestled within each other.

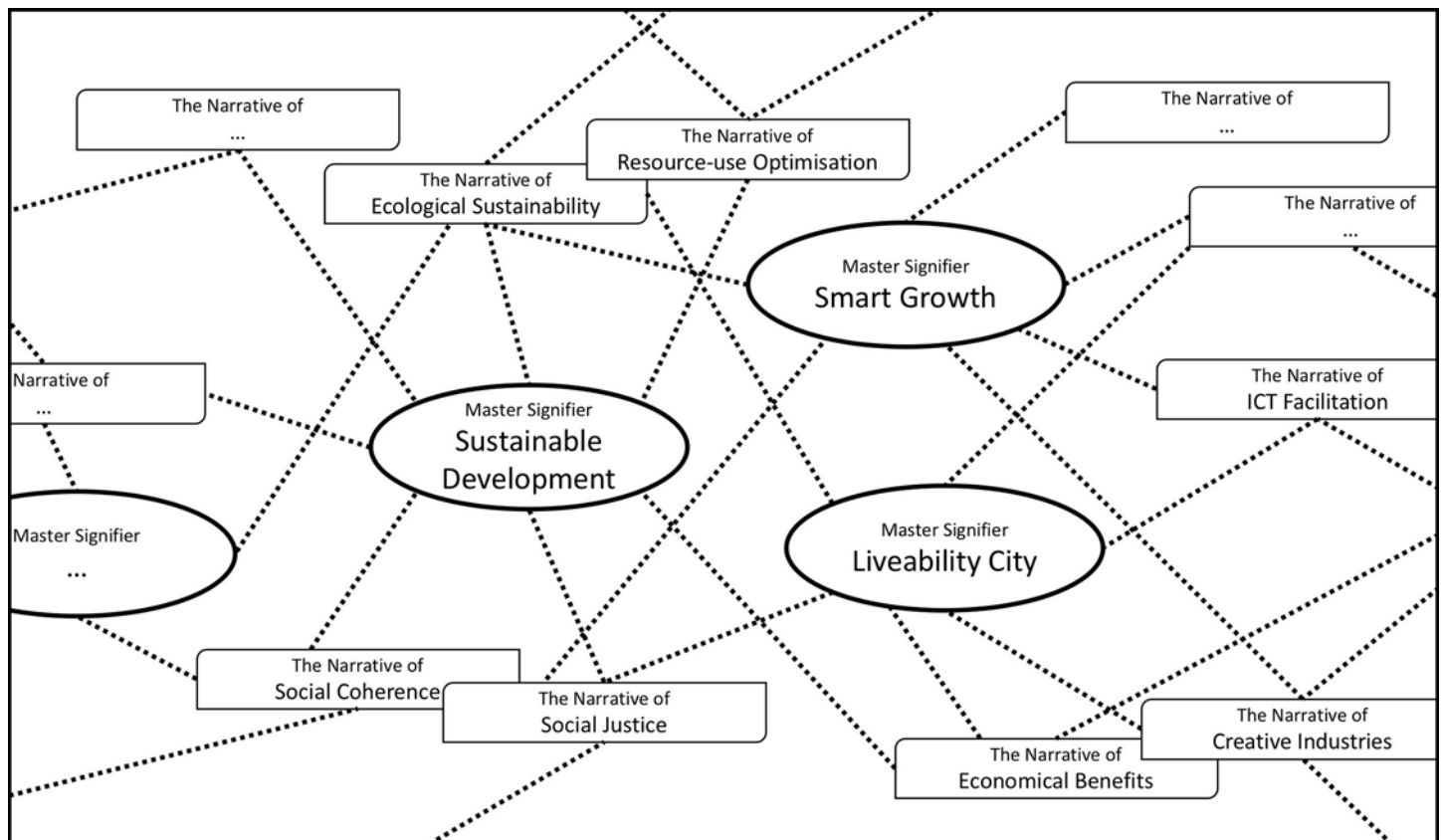


Figure 4 A Demonstrative Diagram of Master Signifiers and Narratives
(Graphics: Chuan Wang)

CW: Yes, I agree with what you said. But do you think some master signifiers in some other contexts are not master signifiers? For example, when you talk about my identity of being Chinese. This is definitely a master signifier. When we talk about the trading between New Zealand and China, we use 'Chinese Government' or 'Chinese Businessman' which are still master signifiers. But when they emphasise on other things, is 'Chinese' always a master signifier in any context or depending on the context?

'A signifier can be a normal signifier or a master signifier depending on the particular context.'

MG: A signifier can be a normal signifier or a master signifier depending on the particular context. It might change with the evolution of a concept. For example, 'sustainability' has been in English for probably a hundred years. It was just a floating signifier. In the 1970s, when concern about the environment gradually emerged, we started to use the word 'sustainability', as a way to save the environment, especially after the report from the Brundtland Commission in 1987. We engaged in a sustainable way with the world. Then it came to sustainable development which is a way that public policy could engage with sustainability, in the neoliberal world, because sustainable development also includes economic development – GDP growth. All round the world in the 1990s, it all came together to emerge gradually at this point in which sustainability became a universal master signifier. This one word covers the whole range of nodal points that belong to the master signifier, such as 'carbon footprint', 'carbon neutral', 'climate change', all those are nodal points in the contemporary discourse of sustainability. The overarching word 'sustainability' is a flexible thing that gets its real power, because it's an empty signifier. It is whatever you want it to be, accommodating marketing, commerce, economic growth with a little consciousness of social issues and environmental issues. This is attracting the liberal, the neoliberal, and even the Communist Party in China to be sustainable, because it also somehow legitimises economic growth by tying it to an environmental 'good'. Accordingly, at the end of the 20th century, or at the start of the new millennium, it transcended into becoming a universal master signifier of public policy for the UN, World Bank and all countries concerned with GDP maximisation. This is a policy master signifier that somehow contained and supported economic growth along with the positive 'fairy-dust' of somehow also protecting the environment – even when it did not do so in its actual application.

CW: Is it transition between normal signifier to master signifier?

MG: Yes, it's kind of morphosis. If you talk to the students younger than yourself, sustainability is everywhere and universal today and for young people it has always been there. For them sustainability has always been an important principle for protecting the environment, even before it actually transcended into becoming a master signifier. It is similar to the case of 'neoliberalism' in the 20th century. In the late 1940s there were a group of Chicago School economists gathered together in a symposium in Switzerland, which became the start of neoliberalism. In the 1970s, it started to gain traction with some politicians. In the 1980s, when Thatcher and Reagan got in the power, neoliberalism became a universal signifier. Even the Chinese Communist Party is essentially a neoliberal party, or perhaps post-2010, a post-neoliberal party. It's a dominating hegemonic way of perceiving the world and became the universal word of the dominating hegemony of the Global economy. What happened in the UK with Brexit and what is happening in the US with Donald Trump probably will just become another game of neoliberalism. That's the universal hegemony.

CW: Who create the master signifiers? Obviously, you mentioned that the hegemonic power creates several master signifiers. But do you think that the general public create some master signifiers as well? Because we use so many master signifiers in our daily life. Do you think that master signifiers are mainly generated from the hegemonic power or super power? You contend that the planners are the victims of master signifiers to some extent, since they cannot be the master in the master's discourse. However, from my observation, I've found that many master signifiers such as 'sustainability', and another recent popular one – 'resilience' are introduced from other disciplines to planning by planning scholars. These master signifiers originated from ecological or environmental studies. At the very beginning, they were employed for scientific reasons, but then the hegemonic power converts them from normal signifiers to master signifiers. Who created master signifiers in the planning discipline?

MG: Yes, sure. Hegemony within the profession creates the discipline, where concepts gradually emerge into becoming a discipline's (or political movements, etc) master signifiers. Resilience is a good example. Originated from ecology, it has been around for a long time. When I was master student in planning back in the late 1970s, at the University of British Columbia, I took a required course on ecology taught by Bill Rees. That course was basically about ecological resilience. But it did not use the word 'resilience' in those days. But the content of the course was largely about ecological resilience and ecological science and how planning must engage with the environment. Only fifteen years later did Bill Rees with one of his PhDs coin the word 'ecological footprint' and they started developing ways to actually measuring it so as to determine human carrying capacities.

Probably, at the start of the millennium when sustainability came into power for planning, this only occurred because under sustainable development equal, or even more weight could be given to economic development. Everyone now knows sustainability, as we use the term today, is false, but everyone still uses the word now and then. What about resilience? Resilience seems more applicable for planning. Let's make resilient cities. A recent news reports that under Trump in America, if you work for the American Environmental Protection Agency, you are not allowed to talk about climate change. But you're encouraged to use the word 'resilience'. Because it is convenient, and you don't want your cities to be washed away. You can't discuss the facts about climate change and how these facts are the causal reason for this flooding, but you can talk about resilience!

CW: We talked about so many popular terms in planning research, or master signifiers as Lacanian scholars call. In your book, *Planning in Ten Words or Less*, you mentioned 'sustainability', 'smart growth', 'new urbanism' and so on. However, I found people abuse them extensively, not only the general public, but also planning professionals. They abuse them in their daily use and professional use, for example in the conversations of the AESOP annual conference in July 2017.

MG: These magic words are powerful!

CW: Yes, I understand that they're master signifiers for power, with magic behind them. But how do you think about it? Do you think it's a good trend? Because from my research that I just submitted for viva two months ago in August, I found that in the end, people speak about nothing, because of these empty signifiers. People speak a lot, but in the end, it's totally empty.

'Some, but not all keywords in planning, are these magic words of power, nor, are they necessarily just controlling signifiers.'

MG: They're all signifiers. In my neoliberal country (New Zealand), my university (The University of Auckland) considers it important to promote entrepreneurship. I am from the School of Architecture and Planning within the Faculty of Creative Arts, which includes dance studies, music, fine arts and so on. We just got an initiative appointment of an entrepreneurial lecturer, across the whole Faculty. She is employed to do entrepreneurial workshops which is not really relevant to planning. However, one day, she came to our weekly School Executive Meeting and was doing her sales pitch. Almost her whole talk was predicated on master signifiers – buzzwords. Everything she said ultimately was empty of any meaning, but it still sounded good! After she left we all laughed. We all looked at each other and realised all those buzzwords have no real meaning. But her pitch still sounded good. In the world, sustainability is going out of flavour a little now. But for years, you are used to say the magic word - sustainable. If you want a sustainable city, you could not argue against that policy, because you're against sustainability. It's surely powerful 'motherhood'. And this entrepreneurial person talking resilient enterprise, resilience, sustainability and so on. Again, she just used a bunch of buzzwords. But that's what it is. It's all politics. It's about the rise of these words in ideological power. They are the fundamental promises of what Žižek (1989) calls 'sublime objects of ideology'.

Moreover, in order to be very effective as master signifiers, they have to transcend all known ideas and go beyond known human knowledge and experience. So, no one knows what they really mean by definition – they are transcendental ideals. But again, they are profoundly ideological. Again, in planning, terms and words are master signifiers more than the ten words in mine and Jean Hillier's book. But there are some ones pretty close to these. Some, but not all keywords in planning, are these magic words of power, nor, are they necessarily just controlling signifiers.

‘If you take away these empty words - master signifiers, language doesn’t work... values, interesting things, nice things are all with the values of connotation.’

CW: But do you think if we reduce the use of these empty words, the planning profession can be better?

MG: If you take away these empty words - master signifiers, language doesn’t work. That’s the whole Lacanian thing, fundamentally. Of course, we can be really rigid in our signification, but then there can be no real ‘new’ language. What about rigid meaning? How do you create new concepts without new words? You can’t. Metaphors and metonyms are the only way to shift meanings and create new thoughts and ideas.

CW: I definitely agree with your opinion. But in a context that you can use ‘resilience’ or ‘sustainability’, sometimes you can keep the concept clearly with a word like ‘energy-saving’. As you can see, energy-saving is more precise than the other two terms. If you are really doing an energy-saving project, you can also use overarching words, such as sustainability or resilience to describe it, although this usage makes it vague. If everyone tries to reduce using these empty and vague words, and to use more precise words, do you think there is any difference?

MG: You folded this back, very nicely, into Lacan. This is what Lacan tried to do towards the end of his career. He said I am not going to use linguistics anymore, because anyone can use slippery words. So, instead, he used matheme signs. If you use mathematics, which is basically an unambiguous code, there are no arbitrary significations or connotations. It’s something firmly coded. It’s clear communications. So, in the last ten years of his work, Lacan was trying to do these mathematical things to remove any ambiguity. He didn’t any longer want the fuzzy effects of language. He wanted to clearly use something like that had a very clear meaning.

CW: Should this be encouraged in the planning discipline as well?

MG: OK. This brought me back the memory of the AESOP conference in the *planning theory* track in Netherlands, a few years ago (AESOP 2014 in Utrecht/Delft). Someone was presenting in *planning theory* by using mathematical formulas. I was joking to a pretty famous Dutch planning academic about who would want to remove all connotations from doing planning. It might be purely deconstructive to do so. But values, interesting things, nice things must all have the values of connotation. You're an architect, you're trying to create something aesthetically pleasing. But if you go to purely mathematical code, you strip the pleasure and the aesthetical beauty away. What do we want as human subjects? We want beauty. We want love. All these things don't exist without connotation. If we want to be human instead and ambiguous, we need the diverse connotations and ambiguity of words. Yes, you can strip them away. You can make planning just mathematically coded. But everything for a human is in the connotations: the beautiful and the gossip. That's what life's pleasure is about. Without *jouissance*, what's the point of living? If activities go on without pleasure and happiness, what is the point! And further, Lacan's last years of work largely using mathematics, arguably, did not really go anywhere, perhaps Badiou's set theory work in philosophy, aside.

I think, beyond personal identification - male, Chinese whatever, Canadian - you can rarely fully identify (master signifiers). You need ambiguity which is the nature of master signifiers to function. They need to transcend the development of ideals, human experience and knowledge, for the function of master signifiers to work. And, we want a world of changes. Do you want a static world, a truly sustainable world without any change? All arguments probably go in terms of good or bad. But that's really one of things inspiring the world. So, you have to have this ambiguity. You have to have this connotation. If you want to do anything in the world, you need make it as a more interesting, better and different place and try to find the values of goodness.

FANTASY/DESIRE AS ANOTHER ENTRY POINT FOR LACANIAN PLANNING RESEARCH

CW: In your book published in 2009, *Planning in Ten Words or Less*, you defined all the master signifiers that you want to analyse in your texts. This is the starting point of your Lacanian research.

MG: Yes.

CW: If young planners use Lacanian-inspired research methods, do you think they have to start with defining the master signifiers?

MG: If they are doing *planning theory* and want to use Lacanian stuff, certainly it is one way to do. But another way to do this is about fantasy, which is the big promise about where we are going. There are many perspectives that you can actually engage with Lacan, Žižek and others. But that is what actually is tied into those poststructuralist analyses. Why do we do things with the aspects of power, fantasy and desire? All come into Lacanian analysis. You don't need to be purely Lacanian, but I think the aspect of fantasy is really important to uncover why it is. The real thing we talk about while using fantasy and ideology is saying what it is. This analysis can explore the unconscious subject and get some findings about what grabs the 40 percent or 35 percent of the American people, who vote for Trump. He managed to define the right vocal labels to buy into these people and somehow became the president of his country. What is the mechanism behind that? To analyse that, you need to talk about what drives the agency at the level of the unconscious of these people. What attracts them? What desires are they feeling? What are their *illusions* and fantasies? Do they have the flexibility to change?

Similarly, when the New Zealand government, or German government, or Chinese government makes promises, why are they doing that? What are they trying to identify and achieve? China is very honest about what it does. Until very recently, it had a gigantic Ministry of Propaganda. Now they have changed this title because of the negative connotations of that word for the rest of the world – propaganda. The Ministry's purpose is actually to drive the ideology of the Chinese people. This is simply a unit of the Communist Party Government - the very large Ministry of Propaganda. You know they structure the police system for the people. China is honest about that. They actually called it what it is.

The same kind of neoliberalism of China also pulses in Europe and America. Neo-liberalism, for example gained attraction over time. But the way it gained attraction and it stayed in fashion and attraction, particularly in America was different than in China. Very wealthy Americans largely control the media, not the American government, and stream billions of dollars to fund the Cato Institute and other organisations. All the right-wing agencies – Fox News and other – dance to the syntax for right-wing thoughts in politics. It is a jeopardised system. It's rather different compared with the honesty of the Chinese government, which had its Ministry of Propaganda. We're working as planners and architects. In that environment, we need tools to engage with what is going on, or even simplistic tools like knowing what Chomsky talked about regarding the American media. Chomsky observes that much, but not all, American media tries to be neutral but it also always keeps its income sources - advertisers' sources – happy. They cannot do anything to offend their advertisers – big business. Otherwise, they'll lose their income and resultant profit stream. The American media must always be subservient in the interest of American corporations.

'That post-structuralism over Lacanian analysis is really useful *per se* to see what is the driving agency underlining that fabrication.'

As planning practitioners, we're working in a very political environment. All cities have special interests with lots of power. As John Forester wrote in 1989, planning is basically about power. That is what's going on. One of the tools you can get is fantasy deconstruction to explore what the promises are that are being given. It is used by planners and planning related interests. Bent Flyvbjerg is very good at that on mega projects. Some of his analytical studies on that show how virtually everyone lies in government when it wants to develop a billion dollar plus mega-project. When you do cost-benefit analysis, you always shift it in the way that makes the numbers much better in the support of the new subway system, or bridge project, or whatever, the government, or perhaps its bureaucrats want. Is the cost much lower than break even? You get awesome numbers to make it happen. But it is actually virtually always a fiddle (see Gunder 2014). At a global scale, virtually any major infrastructure project is a kind of the explosion of reality and underlining fantasies are used there. That post-structuralism and Lacanian analysis is really useful *per se* to see what is the driving agency underlining that fabrication. So, you can use this analysis in that way.

Chapter 4. Subjectivity and Lacan's Theory of Desire and *Jouissance*

Central to Lacan's (1988a, 1988b, 2006) theorising is the role of desire in constituting the subject. This author suggests, along with Stavrakakis (1999, 2007), that the Lacanian conceptualisation of the subject as a split subject provides a crucial insight for explaining a key dimension of socio-political conduct. For Lacan, the subject is inherently separated between the symbolic realm of conscious understanding, including a sense of self that we share with others in society, while divided/split from the ability to articulation or even understand the subject's own unconscious self and its often strangely perverse drives and desires (and not just those of a directly sexual nature). An understanding of human desire and how it drives and motivates the subject opens new avenues beyond that of utilitarianism as to why actors behave as they do in planning and urban policy processes and why actors construct *illusions* that constitute their perceived social reality so as to obscure the undesirable (Gunder, 2003b; Hillier and Gunder, 2003; 2005; Žižek, 1989, 2002b). Further, this understanding gives insight as to how ideological beliefs are materialised into our daily planning practices (Dean, 2001; Gunder, 2011a; Gunder and Hillier, 2009; Žižek, 1997).

In Lacanian theory, the conscious ego is literally a self-construct, initially arising in relationship to the infant's body's perception of the external world. This is a consciousness subsequently captured by symbolic language as the young child learns to articulate its needs. As a consequence of language being imposed on us by our integration into culture, the conscious ego-ideal is barred and/or split from understanding its own being's unconscious subjectivity and desires (Lacan, 1988b). For Lacan the root of psychological conflict is the 'radical incommensurability between the biological human organism and the socially, linguistically constructed human subject' situated within a symbolic network constituting society (Bracher, 2000, p.190).

Lacan (1988b; 1998) also defines this barred subject as a stance, or position, adopted in relationship to the Other's unknowable desire – originally that of the infant to the (m)other – insofar as that desire arouses the subject's own desire. The subject adopts a stance against the traumatic encounter with the Other's desire as a primal experience of pleasure/pain – originally ourselves as terrified infants screaming for the unfulfilled desire of non-stopped wholeness provided by our primordial experiences of Mother's milk and security. The lack of wholeness induced by our first separation from Mother's security is our most fundamental unconscious psychic trauma. Mum is lacking and from this lack arises our desire. The Lacanian 'subject comes into being as a form of attraction toward and defence against this primordial, overwhelming experience of what the French call *jouissance*' (Fink, 1995, p.xii). This is a French signifier that largely means bodily enjoyment, pleasure, but in the Lacanian lexicon it has an extended meaning. *Jouissance* is also a seeking of enjoyment that transcends the pleasure principle into what Freud refers to as the 'death drive'. In this pre-symbolic realm of *jouissance* and the ongoing trauma of separation from the (m)other's desire, our most fundamental and profound memories are constituted; memories that forever reside in our unconscious, ever split and barred from direct conscious awareness by our symbolic self. From this experience arises our unfulfillable desire, but this is a desire that must always lack, as it cannot be satisfied, even when our later demands are met.

Compounding this, human development, entering into language and socialisation, that is having a place in the symbolic network, comes at a cost to its participants. This is the cost of displacing *jouissance*; and the very conscious desire for *jouissance*, itself, because it is ‘fundamentally indifferent – and often inimical – to the well-being both of oneself and of the other person’ (Bracher, 1993, p.20). *Jouissance* is anti-social, it is inherently ‘childish’, and it is blatantly pathological in its drive for unachievable fulfilment. At the same time our ego-ideals consciously shapes and tempers our external identity to try and confirm with the norms of language and society, our ‘unconscious goes its own way, taking no account of the interests of the living being and its adaptation to reality, and desire is borne along by signifiers that knead and shape our existence – even against our interests as living beings’ (Van Haute, 2002, p.125). This drives us, it supplies the psychic energy that makes us act, often at odds with acceptable behaviour, ie, beyond societal norms and law (Boothby, 2001). *Jouissance* is not pleasantness, ‘but an unconscious clinging to that in being which does not wish one’s own good, an unconscious masochism that is not utilitarian’ (Ragland-Sullivan, 1991, p.64). Lacan’s concept of ‘*jouissance* is of a different order to pleasure, and answers to a different logic – a “logic” that takes precisely no account of what the subject can experience as “pleasant”’ (Van Haute, 2002, p.225).

We all experience the negative side of *jouissance* when we transgress a societal norm, or expectation, knowing that it is wrong, but we do it anyhow. It is why we sometimes stick to our positions, perhaps on a planning issue, knowing that the position is untenable. This is because some unconscious internal force – a manifestation, a symptom, of our desire driven by *jouissance* perhaps for a forgotten or repressed key word, phrase, memory, image or belief, i.e., a master signifier – makes us hold our ground even when we know in our conscious reflection that our position is unwinnable and even likely to cause us social or professional embarrassment, or worse. It is perhaps why a member of the public knowingly submits a development application that is wildly non-complying as to what is permitted, or even what is a prohibited use, in an urban regulatory plan; yet builds up an expectation, a fantasy, that approval will be readily forthcoming. It is his/her frustrated *jouissance* that then drives the applicant into a frenzy of protest at the application’s refusal, even though this outburst will be to no avail (Hillier and Gunder, 2003; 2005).

The understanding of our desire is impossible, as is its resolution. This drive to *jouissance* resides within the Real, outside of the symbolic (Lacan, 1998, p.55). The Real is a lack that the signifier can never fully signify, at best, *jouissance* and the Real express themselves in the symptoms that they evoke when we transcend cultural norms and laws construed by our constructed – signified – reality. We are always in a bind. To act freely is to be ‘caught between acting on one’s own fundamental fantasy – in this case the *jouissance* of masochistic resistance that defines the Real of desire which sustains being as long as it remains foreclosed and repressed – or accepting the subjectivization (symbolic identification) that is offered’ by society (jagodzinski 2002, p.xxx-xxxi).

The ego-ideal is often indecisive in our actions because of this unyielding contradictory position between what we symbolically think is expected of us by the big Other (but do not actually know) and what we unconsciously desire to do. Can I? May I? Should I do it or not? Always absolute knowledge is lacking from which to decide. In this light, our quest for 'knowledge, according to Lacan, is motivated by some failure of pleasure, some insufficiency of pleasure: in a word, dissatisfaction' (Fink, 2002, p.34). This gap, or lack, in knowledge is never filled; so we are always driven to further fulfil our desire for security/certainty through the attainment of further master signifiers and their supporting sub-codes. Let's do more studies. Let's develop a better policy. Let's do a new plan. The value of acquiring knowledge 'is renewed every time it is exercised, the power it yields always being directed towards' our *jouissance* (Lacan, 1998, pp.96-97).

Yet it is this very *jouissance* that stands between our master signifiers and knowledge when the latter strives to be truth (Lacan, 2007). For our professional and wider societal identifications are ideological constructs – often even predicated on transcendental ideas – they are beliefs, not universal truths; for how else could they encompass contradictory and contestable positions? Lacan's Four Discourses provides a set of tools for understanding how language is employed in this agonistic dance, including that of planning policy formation (Gunder, 2003a).

JOUISSANCE, PLUS-DE-JOUIR AND OBJET PETIT A

CW: When you talked about Four Discourses, you said that the four elements are master signifiers, knowledge, split subject... and the last one you mentioned is *Jouissance*, the French word (see more details in next Chapter). But according to the literature I read, it was sometimes called *plus-de-jouir*, *objet petit a*, or the surplus of *Jouissance*. Do you think they are the same or different? Because you mentioned the forth one is the induced *jouissance* or the lost *jouissance*.

'In Lacanian usage, [] has a much-extended set of meanings in his different periods'

MG: *Jouissance* means 'enjoyment' in French, but obviously it also has a sexual connotation in its slang use in relation to having an orgasm. In Lacanian usage, it has a much-extended set of meanings in his different periods. At first, in the early 1950s he just uses it in the sense of meaning enjoyment in the filling of a biological need, then a few years later it has a stronger sexual connotation. In the 1960s, his use of *jouissance* goes beyond that of Freud's pleasure principle and includes a dimension of pain and suffering that engages with Freud's death drive. In the 1970s Lacan talked about feminine *jouissance*, but let's skip that here.

'The drive is attempting to get the *objet petit a* that I want but I can't get... That circling creates a form of *jouissance* derived from frustration in not achieving what I desire.'

In your first set of questions, you talked about the Lacanian concept of drive. The drive in Lacan's theory is all about *jouissance*. But it's the drive circling something that you want but can't get. The drive is attempting to get the *objet petit a* that I want but I can't get. I can only keep trying to get to a point close circling around the *objet petit a* that I want. That circling creates a form of *jouissance* derived from frustration in not achieving what I desire. I want that job, that promotion, that affordable or luxury house, but I can't get it, but I keep trying and that gives me a kind of *jouissance* in trying. Because *jouissance* can be pleasurable but it can also be painful. Let's go back to the early Lacan's little infant, the crying little infant. You cry because you want Mum to come back and make you whole and complete with a clean diaper, in her arms being fed: secure and content. The infant's screaming and resultant completeness with Mum are both aspects of *jouissance*, right from the start, the pain and pleasure of contentment are all mixed up. Fundamentally, they're just desire for Mum to come back and make me whole with her again. It is this kind of desire that still permeates all of human subjects, even as adults, except its metaphorically shifted onto other things that we desire: the job, the house, the promotion, the life partner, the consumer item and so on.

One simplistic *jouissance* critique of Lacan is his use of capitalist surplus value as a form of *jouissance*. He talked of a different *jouissance*, derived from Marxist surplus labour value, in 1968/1969, just after May 68' in his *Seminar XVI*. Pleasure, pain, whatever all constitute *jouissance*, this term is fundamental to human nature. That's basically why we do things. You're going to make your contribution to this book because of ultimately the pleasure that will give you because of everything that goes with it, including the benefits for your career. Otherwise, why should you not be out there on this Thursday night enjoying Berlin. You should be having a good time, rather than talking to me in far away New Zealand on your computer. You are going for the *jouissance* which the book might give you. That's why we do things. We don't do things for nothing. We do it for the *jouissance* this produces, even if this is not always pleasurable.

Chapter 5. Lacan’s Four Discourses and Planning

As ‘an attempt to identify and analyse the crucial factors through which language exercises both formative and transformative power in human affairs,’ Lacan (2007) presented his ‘schemata of the four fundamental structures of discourse’ (Bracher, 1994, p.107). These include the discourses of the master, the university, the hysteric and the analyst. Each represents, respectively, one of ‘four fundamental social effects: (1) governing/commanding, (2) educating/ indoctrinating, (3) desiring/ protesting, (4) analyzing/ transforming/ revolutionizing’ (Bracher, 1993, p.53). Further, these four effects are central to human agency within the processes and practices of planning formulation and in its implementation.

The planner acts as agent in all four Lacanian discourses, dependant on their structural position within the urban policy process. The planner can be either an institutional insider or alternatively an agent represented the interests of alternate policy positions and concerns (see Hillier and Gunder, 2005). Not-with-standing their positions of agency, planners within their practice dynamically slip between deploying and receiving each of the four discourses. Gunder (2004) suggests that asserting the university discourse is the most common position for the planner, while that of being the agent of the master’s discourse is perhaps the most desired position, but one seldom achieved by the expert, for reasons set out below.

Lacan’s (2007) discourse theory is built on four key concepts discussed in the prior sections of this text. These are: 1) the master signifier (S1), 2) the network of ordered signifiers that constitutes knowledge (including that of planning) and underwrite the contestable signification of each identity shaping master signifier (S2), 3) the *jouissance* induced, or lost, by the subject in relationship to the Other’s unknowable desire (*Objet petit a* or *a*), and 4) the human subject split between its symbolic consciousness and its unconscious relationship to the Real (\$) (Bracher 1993, 53). These concepts are located in different fixed positions in the following structural relationship underlying each of Lacan’s four discourses.

For Lacan (2007) every act of symbolic exchange comprises four unchanging structural elements common to each of Lacan’s Four Discourses. All discourse ‘starts with an *agent* driven by [an inner] *truth* to speak to *another* with as a result a *product*’ – a response (Verhaeghe, 2001, p.41). It is the slippage of the master signifier, knowledge, *jouissance* and the split subject (always in that order) between each of these elements that constitutes which of the four discourses is occurring at any one time for a speaking or listening actor.

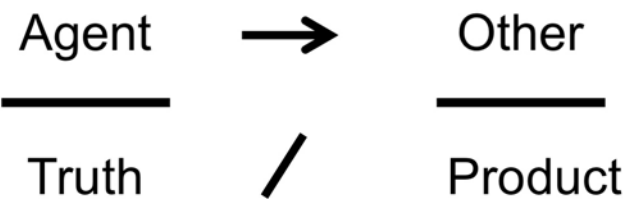


Figure 5 The Four Voids in the Schemata of the Four Discourses (Graphics: Chuan Wang)

Yet it is impossible for the planner, or others, including members of the public, to fully transmit their message, or similarly, fully understand the other's message, for part of the motivational component and what is desired remain outside of the symbolic within the Real. The fundamental drive behind the agent is one's unknowable desire constituted as the agent's psychic truth. This is a truth that 'cannot be completely verbalised, with the result that the agent cannot transmit his [sic] desire to the other; hence a perfect communication with words is logically impossible' (Verhaeghe, 2001, p.23). 'Both the impossibility and incapability are the effect of the radical heteronomy of the truth: part of it lies beyond the signifier and belongs to the realm of' *jouissance* and the Real – outside of language and the symbolic (Verhaeghe, 2001, p.41).

The truth of the master's discourse is that the speaker does not know his/her unconscious desire. The truth of the university, or expert's, discourse is that of their driving master signifier(s) of belief and identity, which always lacks comprehensive and unambiguous signification. The truth of the hysteric's discourse is a lack of satisfaction, of *jouissance*; and for the analyst's discourse the truth is the desire to know the unconscious cause of the Other's dysfunctional symptoms. Alternative discourses evoke these same 'truths' as their 'product' in the listening subject, e.g. the master evokes the dissatisfaction that constitutes the truth driving the hysteric to seek a response for more knowledge from the master, and so on. Both the symbolic and the unsymbolisable Real are embedded as components throughout each of the four discourses. The human subject is never a 'stark free' agent, at liberty to choose his/her master signifiers, desires and knowledges; but rather an uncertain split subject, subject to the ambiguity of their unconscious drives and desires in relation to that the Other's unknowable desire, with their response being 'subject-to' rather than 'subject-of' the discourses of the signifier. For Lacan (2006, p.689) our very unconscious, itself, 'is (the) discourse about the Other.'

Imagination and its fantasy construct of ideology is key to covering over this uncertain void of the Real (Jameson, 2003). The slippage of metaphor and metonym within signification (and the unconscious) obscures the lack induced by the Real and ties objects of desire to the subject (Žižek, 1989). This includes the *illusions* for a safe and harmonious community that knowledges and practices of urban policy seek to evoke in discourse so as to fulfil our most fundamental desires for completeness with the Other (Gunder, 2003b).

A. THE MASTER'S DISCOURSE

In this commanding discourse, the master signifier is located in the position of agency to shape the listener's knowledge and obedience. In doing so, it will evoke a loss of *jouissance* for the listening subject. The masters will always be obeyed because they are the unquestionable dogmatic authorities. Their power is without need of justification: it just is! It is truth, whether the truth of political will or spiritual faith, or the 'truth' of dogmatic scientific or academic belief. The master does not care about knowledge, *per se*, just the certainty of his/her belief. 'I AM = I AM KNOWLEDGE = I AM THE ONE WHO KNOWS' (Ragland, 1996, p.134). Politician often partake in the master's discourse because it empowers them to slash through the complicated issues, analyses and material considerations of a policy report to assert 'a simple "Yes" or "No"' making a 'gesture that can never be fully grounded in reasons,' because it is the assertion of the master who must be obeyed (Žižek, 1998, page 76)!

The masters are easily satisfied provided their authority is obeyed. The dominant politician, perhaps on the advice of the planner, structures both the planning experts' and the public's knowledges and practices in a way that is supportive of the master's own truths and values while constraining and repressing the enjoyment of the receiver's *illusions* and fantasies underlying their own perceived social reality (Bracher, 1994, p.121). For this to work 'the other has to sustain the master in his [sic] illusion that he is the one with the knowledge' (Verhaeghe, 2001, p.27). The public and to a lesser extent the planners, make the politician the master, just as the student makes the teacher the master. Yet the hidden truth in this agency is that the masters are divided subjects, they are not aware of their own desires, the very reason for asserting their master signifiers, be it of an abstract transcendental idea or other signifier of belief and identification.

Consider the following actual politician master commands. 'The council instructs officers to prepare policy documents that reflect the following principles...' (ARC, 2004a, p.3). 'The Auckland Regional Council sets the following rates...' (ARC, 2004b, p.6). 'Environmental initiatives, particularly, clean air and water, will continue to be major concerns for the Auckland Regional Council, as will regional transport and growth' (ARC, 2004c, p.6).

The master's assertions shape all before it, as 'one reads or hears such a discourse, one is forced, in order to understand the message, to accord full explanatory power and/or moral authority to the proffered master signifiers and to refer all other signifiers (objects, concepts, or issues) back to the master signifiers' (Bracher, 1993, p.64). Sustainability, liveability, transport mobility, or smart growth, must be good because the political or academic master says so and the master is the authority that knows! The product evoked in the master's discourse is the frustration or lack of enjoyment alienated from the public, student, or staff in obedience to the master's assertion; hypothetically, perhaps the pleasure of conspicuous consumption lost in obeying the command of sustainability in ensuring clean air and water.

As much as many planners and policy analysts might desire to assert unquestionable authority, the master's discourse is not really that of the expert. The expert 'is by no means in the position of the Master: knowledge and the Master are mutually exclusive' (Salecl, 1994, p.168). The professional planner, at least in western democracies, can seldom demand or command, because the policy expert must give justification and reasons from legitimising sources. The expert and her/his knowledge is the slave to the master (Lacan, 2007, pp. 21-22). The expert is both the product and the subsequent agent of the university discourse. Here the master's assertion 'lies' as the plan maker's own truth and the speech acts of knowledge further shapes the planner and then the public as a subject alienated within the symbolic order constituting social reality.

B. THE UNIVERSITY DISCOURSE

Driven by the truth of the master signifier the agent of this discourse imparts knowledge to shape and constrain the *jouissance* of the listener. The product evoked in the university discourse is that of an alienated, split, subject. This may be the planners produced by the tertiary educational system, or in turn; the product can subsequently be the public that the planners imposes their learnt knowledges upon (Bracher, 1993). Fledgling planners must position themselves into the system of planning knowledge that constitutes the discipline and by doing so, they become responsible for further reproducing, applying and reinforcing this knowledge in society. Knowledge and practices are instilled into the new planner by their educators and mentors, but the domination of these knowledges is further strengthened where the planner 'remains subordinated to a system of knowledge/belief, with "mastery of" (read: mastery "by") the system being taken as an end in itself rather than as a means to benefit either individual subjects or society in general' (Bracher, 1993, p.56).

Fink (1995, p.132) suggests 'a sort of historical movement from the master's discourse to the university discourse, the university discourse providing a sort of legitimation or rationalization of the master's will.' The expert cannot command. The expert only presents the master signifier's truth as its agent. This expert agent transmits dominant sub-codes of knowledges, practices and values as justification for the truth of, or as means to implement, the master's command. In this regard, the expert policy planner's agency might be to provide knowledge and regulations (e.g. road pricing) to increase public transit ridership 'driven' by the 'truth' of sustainability. This might be achieved by giving technical justification based on evaluation of the policy's 'impacts on accessibility, economic efficiency, vehicle emissions, impacts on the growth strategy, social impact and public acceptability' (ARC, 2003, p.52). In this example the product evoked is that of the alienated public, displaced from their desires to drive their cars.

The truth of our planning agent in the university discourse is that of the master signifier. This is what guarantees knowledge – the suturing stopping point under which the knowledge set is pinned. Lacan warns that the agent of the speech act can use rhetorical knowledge as rationalisation to justify any master signifier (Fink, 1995). This is what Flyvbjerg (1998b, p.6) calls *realrationalität*. This is not just the perceived ‘truth’ of the ideological identifications of the planning expert’s asserting the speech act, but intrinsically, the hegemonic ideological ‘truth’ of the dominant paradigms of urban policy formation and planning that have previously been interpellated into the planner by their teachers and professional mentors. Lacan shows that the university discourse destabilises objectivity, thus the essential ‘classical requirement of science’ is shown ‘to be a mere illusion’ (Verhaeghe, 2001, p.31). Consequentially, Lacan’s latter ‘view of genuine scientific activity correspond[s] to the structure of the hysteric’s discourse’ (Fink, 1998, p.34).

C. THE HYSTERIC’S DISCOURSE

In the hysteric’s discourse, the split subject is located at the position of the agent, hailing the master signifier driven by his/her inner truth that something is not right, there is an unease or dissatisfaction that needs further knowledge to overcome. The hysteric ‘goes at the master and demands that he or she show his or her stuff, prove his or her mettle by producing something serious by way of knowledge’ as the ‘hysteric gets off on knowledge’ (Fink, 1995, p.133). The ‘hysterical structure is one in force whenever a discourse is dominated by the speaker’s symptoms – that is, his or her conflicting mode of experiencing *jouissance*, a conflict manifested (in experiences such as shame, meaninglessness, anxiety, and desire) as a failure of the subject to coincide with, or be satisfied with the *jouissance* underwritten by, the master signifiers offered by society and embraced as the subject’s ideals’ (Bracher, 1993, p.66). Driven by *jouissance*, the hysteric’s discourse is one of protest, complaint and resistance (Fink, 1995). It is the discourse of both the questioning public and the questioning planner seeking both the production and then the assurance of new knowledge: ‘Justify to me why sustainability requires me to use public transit instead of my car!’ Consider the following Auckland based transport discourse in Gunder (2002, pp.136-137):

The hysteric’s challenge:

‘Why did we bring in American [transport] consultants [who have a different set of landuse values that are conducive to urban sprawl, compared to our British derived values], Mr Chairman?’

The political master’s response, drawing on the university discourse of expert knowledge:

‘Because they were the only ones, Mr Thomas, who had the knowledge at that stage to advise us how to go [in resolving our problems of congestion and lack of transport mobility].’

But despite the hysterical subject’s challenge to the master’s position, he/she ‘remains in solidarity with it’ (Bracher, 1994, p.122). The hysteric speaker demands that the speaker ‘who knows’ respond with knowledge that has ‘a secure meaning that will overcome anxiety and give a sense of meaningful, and respectable identity’ (Bracher, 1993, p.67). Policy planners, or politicians, provide such a response when responding to enquiries in a public meeting. Seeking of promises of certainty can similarly be attributed to academic research when it pushes paradoxes and contradictions until they collapse (Fink, 1998 ;1995).

D. THE ANALYST'S DISCOURSE

The analyst's discourse for Lacan is 'the only ultimately effective means for countering the psychological and social tyranny exercised through language' (Bracher, 1994, p.123). In psychoanalytical practice the clinician driven by the truth of her knowledge and practice questions their analysand (patient) at the gap between the unconscious and conscious so that bits and fragments of dysfunctional master signifiers can slip through. The task of the psychoanalyst is to bring unconscious master signifiers, often produced by repressed trauma, into spoken language (Fink, 1995).

Just as the unconscious is not knowable by the conscious, the underlying ideological *illusions*, desires and values comprising the planning field, or game, are often mis-recognised, not visible, or even knowable, to those emerged within practice (Gunder, 2003a, p.303; 2011b). The field's ends and norms create an illusion for the practitioner that can only be ascertained by the critical observer situated externally to the game being pursued. As such, this discourse is seldom the role of planning practitioners and those they plan (Gunder and Hillier 2009, p. 126). It is suggested that this is perhaps a role for the critical theorist and hence, perhaps, that the analyst's discourse might be metaphorically one discourse for critical 'academic' research that seeks to draw out the hidden structures of ideological illusion and fantasy underlying our social reality (Gunder, 2003a, p.304).

In the case of Auckland's transport policy, an example of such an approach might be Gunder (2002) where the author illustrated the historical American landuse ideological values embedded in the Region's sprawling urban form. Gunder provided evidence that this was a consequence of New Zealand's post-war call to American expertise to fill a perceived lack in either its own national discourses of transportation knowledge, or at least a lack of self-confidence in its national expertise to overcome the city's largely public transport induced congestion. This lack of confidence in local knowledge led to the importation of external solutions to fill this void, but also resulted in an additional supplement of unexpected values that inadvertently accompanied this 'freeway'-based solution. This was an extra-embedded element pertaining to an American cultural imperative, then largely unquestioned since the 19th century 'conquest of the West', that unoccupied land was an unused waste. This implicit reification of the environment led to a solution inducing unsustainable urban sprawl that Auckland is still attempting to overcome 60 years after the imposition of this hegemonic American motorway cure (Auckland Council, 2012).

MASTER SIGNIFIERS AND FOUR DISCOURSES

CW: Is it necessary to define one or several master signifiers to use the schemata of the Four Discourses in planning studies?

MG: Any number may do, dependent on your topic of investigation. If you buy into Mouffe and Laclau’s (1985) conceptualisation of hegemonic ideology, there always tends to be one master signifier dominating and structuring the signification of the ‘sensible’ discourse (after Rancière) and alternative signifiers vying to replace this position of mastery. So, if we are talking about the truth of the master in the master’s discourse, say in hegemonic politics, then she is speaking her dominant truth, say for the necessity of neoliberal markets or Brexit. But as a split subject without knowing why, she is unaware of her own unconscious desires (see Gunder and Hillier 2009: 104).

QUESTIONS ON THE ANALYST’S DISCOURSE

CW: I am still a little confused about your application of the Analyst’s Discourse in the criticism on American experts’ participation in Auckland Highway Consultancy Project. You mentioned the Agent and the Other and explained the Truth well, but what made me very confused is the Production. According to Lacan’s diagram of the analyst’s discourse, the Production should be master signifiers (S1). But in your analysis, I didn’t see any master signifiers at all. Can you explain more about how you use the analyst’s discourse in the case of Auckland Highway project?

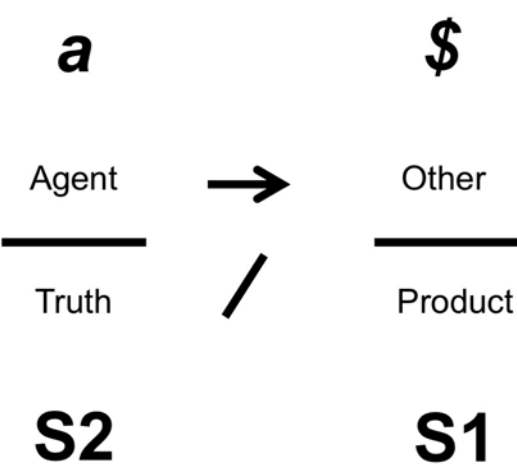


Figure 6 Diagram of the Analyst’s Discourse
(Graphics: Chuan Wang)

‘[The analyst’s discourse] gets you to talk about any traumas you experienced, what you really want to do with yourself, and how you gain an understanding of being manipulated by the society.’

MG: Well... The university discourse is superficially about knowledge but not really. The whole point of the analyst’s discourse is literally about the analyst being there to seduce the truth out of the analysand’s unconscious (the patient of the psychoanalysis). So, the Truth is in the desire of analysand constituted as a master signifier. The truth is somehow made to surface from the unconscious through speech, talking about the trauma, or starting to engage with the fundamental fantasies that construct the analysand’s desire or thing that he/she is trying to repress. That’s the role for the analyst. If we go back to Heidegger and *Dasein*, the analyst is trying to get the analysand to voice how the ‘They’ (or the big Other) is seducing us and shaping us to be inauthentic to ourselves and our true desires. Lacan’s whole thing is how the symbolic order (or for Žižek: ideology) binds us in its manipulation in both constructing what we think the big Other –society – wants us to be so as to be perceived as ‘good’ in our particular identifications and the roles that must perform within them as a ‘good’ subject, so as to be wanted and essentially ‘loved’ by the big Other.

So, the analyst’s discourse symbolises the analyst drawing out what resides and causes problems in the analysand’s unconscious. Central to this is the concept (from Freud) of transference. The analyst is placed by the analysand in the position of someone that he/she has been close to: father, brother, sister, close friend, lover, or whatever relationship - to draw out the fundamental truth from the analysand in speech and, eventually to get the analysand to articulate and understand both their fundamental fantasy(s) and how the symbolic order tends to work and shape him/her as a subject. In doing so, this constitutes the completion of the psychoanalytical process for Lacan. It does not cure your traumas or whatever. It gets you to talk about any traumas you experienced, what you really want to do with yourself, and how you may gain an understanding of being manipulated by the society. So, you can understand where you are coming from and why you act in certain ways. If you act out, you can understand why you do so. Basically, it’s a Lacanian psychoanalysis process of self-enlightenment being deployed here. In the process in which the analyst listens and talks with the patient, so that the analysand can discover themselves, any repressed traumas that may be causing dysfunction and what their true desires may be.

CW: But how can you connect with planning studies?

MG: Well, if you try to analyse what goes on in society, you can take the bridge that Lacan offers about the individual patient that Žižek (1989) takes and expands explain the two sides of ideological critique: 1) analyse the discourse deployed, and 2) how this grips the subject unconsciously through *jouissance* and fantasy. With these Žižekian tools we can analyse how the world works through ideology; how do we get national or societal fantasies that structure desire and our ambitions; what manifests these type of things; if you can search to expose the underlining structuralist mechanisms at work, we can gain better understanding of what's going on (just as with the analyst's discourse).

We cannot really use the university discourse in the analysis of the academic, because it's a bureaucratic discourse. What are the structures embedded in fantasies and desires? For me and other members of my city, my culture and my society with this kind of analysis we can begin to articulate how we are being manipulated. Just like *Dasein* or the analysand being manipulated by the They/big Other, or the early 20th century industrial society that Heidegger wrote about. How can we figure out how society is manipulating us? How can things like Foucauldian governmentality tell us about how other things are shaping and manipulating us? We can get an awareness of that. We can start to see what we really want and so on. I suppose I am arguing metaphorically, but that can be an academic role using that, helping the shift of the way that society functions. I am pushing that and exaggerating that. When you're asked, that is what you try to do as an academic.

CW: From my understanding, Lacan's hysteric's discourse seems more academic than the analyst's Discourse. I am trying to ask the question through master signifiers. As you mentioned in your writing, the hysteric's discourse enquires why you use this master signifier through challenging the existing knowledge. I think it's more academic research than the analyst's discourse.

'Although I am pushing that, I think the analyst's discourse is probably the weakest of the four... I think the analyst's discourse is a bit of cop-out in Lacan's theory of Four Discourses.'

MG: But you can deconstruct ideology and see how ideology works. Although I am pushing that, I think the analyst's discourse is probably the weakest of the four. The hysteric's discourse makes a lot of intuitive sense. It is structured by interactions. As for the master's discourse, I can buy into that. The university discourse, yes, although I prefer to call it 'bureaucratic discourse'.

CW: Yes, I think the same.

MG: I think the analyst's discourse is a bit of a cop-out in Lacan's theory of Four Discourses. I can't remember what symbol goes where. I am like yourself that I need to have my *Seminar XVII* book open and look it up. Around the diagrams, it informs me too much that I copy my book off the shelves here. If you look at the elements, you get the truth of the analyst's discourse is systemic knowledge, and you get the simplest *jouissance* from the alienated subject. What is the master signifier up to in regards to desire? What is the fundamental fantasy? What is the fundamental desires there? To me, that is the consciousness of all the discourse. How do you call out the hidden truth? How can aesthetic knowledge be a hidden truth? To me, that is a bit quirky.

The master's discourse is supposed to be the subject: in it I don't know what my unconscious was at when I made arguments. Therefore, I use master signifiers to impose that on the knowledge to produce the split subject. That makes sense.

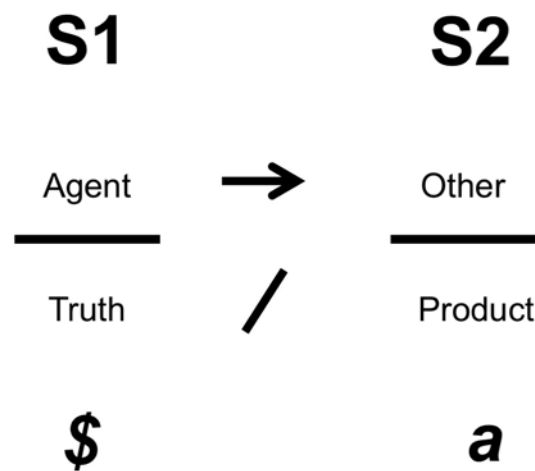


Figure 7 Diagram of the Master's Discourse
(Graphics: Chuan Wang)

But how can I call the systemic knowledge - S2 - from my unconscious? To me, the analyst's discourse doesn't work well. You can transfer the simplest *jouissance* to be the *objet petit a* and impose on the alienated subject to produce a master signifier (see Figure 6). I can kind of see it, but it is in a forced container. When I look at that, I say to myself, 'okay, well, what we can apply to academics?' We basically put our credit on master signifiers. Systemic knowledge, PhD thesis or in my case, Lacanian research for 20 years, maybe somehow in the drive that circles *jouissance*. But, how can I track that down from a discourse that is quirky? It doesn't work. It is no less quirky than being the object to desire, the stuff of *jouissance* of the analysand. Again, you can transfer everything else into the diagram. But it's clunky. Let's make that argument by guessing. So, I don't have any defence on it. Because you can have any defence if you have already a constructed ideology.

FOUR DISCOURSES IN A BROADER CONTEXT

CW: According to my reading, in most cases, you employ Four Discourses to analyse planners, the planning profession and a little bit of politicians. But do you think it is also a powerful tool to analyse other social positions in the planning activities? For instance, in my research, I used this approach to analyse estate developers, planning officers and the residents of the selected urban projects. Do you think it's possible to extend this research method beyond the planning discipline?

MG: Of course, this can be used in the analysis of political processes and other wider dimensions of planning or in applications that has nothing to do with planning or the built environment. Well, since my text is for AESOP and I am a planning theorist, I use the Four Discourses in the planning context. In the wider planning context, Phil Allmendinger and I essentially did that in an article about 12 years ago about political *jouissance* and the planning consenting process for New-Age Yurts in Somerset in *Planning Theory* (Allmendinger and Gunder, 2005). And Jean Hillier and I did it something similar about consenting for funeral homes in Perth, WA for *Environment and Planning: A* in the same year (Hillier and Gunder, 2005). Neither articles explicitly used the Four Discourses in their analysis, but both easily could have. Indeed, in our 2009 book – *Planning in Ten Words or Less*, Jean Hillier and I did use the Four Discourses to investigate globalisation and multiculturalism, as I did in my article in *Journal of Planning Education and Research* on planning education (Gunder, 2004).

THE LIMIT OF FOUR DISCOURSES

You can almost use it anywhere. But there are also a kind of limit. It's useful to analyse speech-acts and be constructive. But it is only a small sub-set of Lacan – one Seminar only – XVII. In the future, I might say something about the seminars in the 1970s, if it is a useful approach. As you know, there is also a fifth discourse, which was somehow a one-off. Lacan did the capitalist's discourse in the one-off lecture in Milan. Until a couple of years ago, no one talked about it. It's kind of an outlier. Again, just fiddling around with the diagram, he came up again with other subjects. I am purely hypothesising, but I think, on the train to Milan, Lacan just fiddled with the diagram of the Four Discourses and came up with this. It's constructive to talk about that. There is a recent published book on that from Verso Book – which is an important Žižek and Lacanian publisher – on the fifth discourse (Tomsic, 2016). But probably, it's not that interesting, nor that relevant, in the wider wide body of all the Lacanian discourse and thought, although it might be a useful citation to understand. But I think the part that is relevant to deconstructive capitalism is much more useful stuff in Lacan, than just the Four or Five Discourses.

For me, the most pioneering, crucially brilliant things Lacan ever did are the four diagrams I sent to you, particularly for me because I am analysing ideology with Žižek. The foundation of Žižek's discussion on ideology in all his thirty books written since *The Sublime Object of Ideology* in 1989, are those four diagrams because they're the underlying basis of all. This is how language and ideology works on subject and binds us all together in the symbolic order constituting social reality. And it is a start in the way of choosing how you get your head around ideology but it's largely the foundation of everything that is Lacanian thought in those four diagrams.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This text has sought to introduce the reader to some of Lacan's ideas and how they can inform our understanding of planning. I am afraid that in my 12,000 odd written words and in my discussion with Chuan you can only illustrate the tip of the iceberg in this regard. Many of Lacan's key concepts have not really been discussed, such as the *objet petit a*, matheme and his other schemata – apart from the four discourses, *sinthome*, *phallus* (and it means something other than you might think!), nor has it engaged with Lacan's important discussions around various literary or philosophical subjects, such as *Antigone*, *The Purloined Letter* and *Kant avec Sade*. All of which potentially provide additional avenues for engaging with an understanding of *planning theory* through a Lacanian lens. However, hopefully, this text has begun to demonstrate how Lacan's theoretical conceptualisation of human identity and desire can provide insight into planning formulation and implementation.

Planning and its associated urban policy disciplines not only supply 'scientific' knowledge and analysis, but also inform the public's views by providing, and even imposing, desirous 'master signifiers' and supporting narratives, perhaps constituting a fantasy or visionary dream, that emotively, as well as rationally, frame and define what constitutes our major urban planning issues and their scope for viable 'reasoned' resolution (Gunder and Hillier, 2009). Planning master signifiers such as 'sustainability' or 'liveability' first provide points of anchor from which to construct and constrain the spatial planning process. These are often transcendental signifiers beyond human experience and knowledge, but the value and knowledge arrays that underwrite them construct our strategic urban visioning narratives, plans and solutions. These signifiers and their discourses shape and contain the urban planning debate. They shape issues as deficiencies, or as a lack, detracting from a whole, complete, 'good' city and then provide the content of our urban policies to fill these identified deficient voids, or at least make the promise of a fantasy that will. These prescriptions, in turn, set the limits of our social realities and desires of what ought to be, at least for the production of the spaces constituting our built environments. Desire and fantasy are central components within this practice and, of course, this is blatantly an ideological process.

Lacanian insight thus would suggest that planning is more than just delivering facts from the expert to the public. Rather planning policy formulation and its implementation also involves the partial shaping of the public's identity as urban residents and actors through shaping their adoption of narratives and master signifiers that produce specific modes of urban behaviours – i.e. urban practices and submission to regulatory compliance (Gunder, 2003b); and, as this text suggests, the resultant production and loss of pleasure – *jouissance* – that this incurs.

Yet planning and urban policy formulation should not be dismissed because they are comprised of ideological ideas and even fantasies that might be imposed on the public. Rather their ideological nature is a consequence of planning being central to a key dimension of society's fundamental desire for harmony and security in a 'better' future city, even if this dream can only be fulfilled through fantasy and illusion (Gunder and Hillier, 2009). For dreams and fantasies are necessary to envision and then to create change. Further, those who know – planning experts and their political masters – can only survive because the public believes in them (Hillier and Gunder, 2003). Planning policy formation constitutes the production of new narratives for a better future city and hence new urban realities because this is socially desired.

Of course, the concern, as always, is: whose desires achieve address. It seldom appears to be the public's aggregate desire (Gunder, 2011a) and unlike classical socialist critique, Lacanian theory suggests in this text that more than just the interests of economic capital are beneficiaries of urban policy formation. From the perspective of desire, the beneficiaries of planning policy formation may also include the institutional actors involved, or perhaps the class, creative or otherwise, that they are trying to specifically cater for, perhaps because planners themselves are part of this catered group, as are also the academics that first indoctrinated the planning policy experts with their own urban fantasies, desires and dreams during their education. Political and judicial processes notwithstanding, should the professional beliefs, desires and even ideological fantasies of bureaucrats and academics primarily shape and construct the narratives that construe everyone's urban realities? This author suggests that there is a need and value in Lacan's final discourse – that of the analyst – to continually critique and exposure the underlying values, fantasies and desires of urban planning. But this begs the hysteric's fundamental question: who can be trusted to undertake this task?

GENERAL DISCUSSION I: DISCOURSE, LANGUAGE AND THE SYMBOLIC

CW: For many readers, it is very difficult to read Lacan's theory if it's their first time to come across his writing as he came up with numerous new concepts in his public seminars. In this section, I'd like to ask you some questions about the key concepts in Lacan's theory. Although you've elucidated some of them in your text, I want to use this chance to clarify some difficult concepts. The first question is about the difference between 'discourse', 'language', 'symbolic' and 'symbolic order'. Do you think they are very similar to each other? From my reading of Lacan's theory, I find they are very similar sometimes. Lacan didn't use them perfectly consistently in his writing. How do you distinguish these four similar concepts concerning language?

Particularly, when we talk about planning discourse, 'discourse' seems to be the particular discourse in planning activities. But when we talk about the Four Discourses in Lacan's theory, it seems that 'discourse' is very different from what we talk about planning discourse.

'[T]he way [Lacan] used key terms inherently shifted in meaning as his arguments and positions developed. This occurred for a range of reasons attributable to his continual self-questioning of his own practice, thought and agency.'

MG: First off, Lacan's meaningful body of work stretched at least from the late 1930s until the start of the 1980s. Over these forty or more years, the way he used key terms inherently shifted in meaning as his arguments and positions developed. This occurred for a range of reasons attributable to his continual self-questioning of his own practice, thought and agency. He was always reflectively thinking what he was doing. First, it was via his always increasing clinical experience. He was foremost a practicing and teaching psychoanalysis, not only in seeing patients but also in doing training analyses of trainee psychoanalysts himself. He did that for forty to fifty years, developing his practical knowledge of psychoanalysis and how people reacted to it through their speech. Psychoanalysis is all about language and speech. As his psychoanalysis process developed, Lacan's linguistic dimension became stronger in his work. Second, his increasing psychoanalytical and philosophical and related intellectual knowledge increased profoundly with time, as he was a voracious reader and interpreter of ideas across a very wide range of subjects. For those reasons, he is psychoanalytical thinker, or philosopher, if you will.

'Put it simply: [Lacan] was a really difficult person!'

It would also be negligent of me, not to mention the other professional and related political influences on his life and practices. Put it simply: he was a really difficult person! If you wanted to be seduced into the Lacanian-Freudian thing, he was a very good sales person. 'Come to my seminar, come to my lecture, what do you think about that?' If you put any resistance or you didn't understand him, as most intellectual Americans like Chomsky and other did not, he was really difficult. Particularly in psychoanalysis, he alienated many conventional Freudian psychoanalysts. Because he wanted to go beyond Freud. He alienated many psychoanalysts, particularly in America, because he was very critical of their preponderance to focus on the 'quick-fix' of ego-psychiatry – changing your ego so you can be more functional in the existing world. Of course, this approach did not really resolve your fundamental problems, it was a typical American simplistic, dogmatic and often very commercial approach. In being so difficult, he was forced to resign from more than one psychoanalytical professional associations, including the one that he founded. Just like in planning, particularly in the Anglo world, it is really important that planners need be accredited by the New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI), the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) or the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). You need all these accreditations to be fully accredited, similar for psychoanalysts. He was kicked out from the Freudian School. He created his own school, and made it re-legitimise back to the mainstream. He was kicked out from his own institution he founded and he started his third one. He also alienated a lot of non-psychoanalytical intellectuals. Hundreds of French intellectuals came to his seminars in the 1960s. But over the years, he alienated himself from some of those, including many feminists.

‘[Lacan uses discourse] to underline the inter-subjective nature of language: discourse is always between speakers, multiple speakers.’

Discourse: When Lacan uses this term, rather than the terms speech or language, he does so to underline the inter-subjective nature of language: discourse is always between speakers, multiple speakers. We use language *qua* discourse to have an affect/effect upon the Other. If you go back to the Four Discourses, the secured nature of the discourse’s circulation is in the subjectivity (The circular/revolving, but always distorted/disrupted responses occurring between the subjects involved within a discourse.). We are always made to adopting ourselves to a pre-existing language that exists external and prior to ourselves. In doing so, adoption of this external means of conveying our wants and needs to the Other profoundly shapes and truncates our subjectivity at an unconscious level. As Lacan (2006) famously states from 1953 onwards: ‘the unconscious is the discourse of the Other’. From 1969 onwards, Lacan’s (2007) concept of ‘discourse’ especially represents the social bonds created between subjects within language, and he especially notes the four social bonds represented by his famous Four Discourses. Each of these discourses is a type of social bond in the speaking and interaction between people. These are the discourses of the master, the university, the hysteric and the analyst. It should be noted that the seminar in which he developed the Four Discourses was presented shortly after the near breakdown of French society in May 1968 when the students revolted in Paris. Hence it was somewhat symptomatic of the prevalent tensions of the day, where he famously said to the students at that time that they simply were trying to ‘replace one master with another’ (Lacan, 2007, p.207). He tried to analyse the symptoms of being prevalent at that time and to engage with the world. That’s the Four Discourses came from where and materialised. So, discourse is about the interaction between people using language, speech or even written language.

CW: When you talk about discourse, you mentioned the interactions in different social bonds. This means that discourse is definitely beyond language itself in Lacan’s theory, isn’t it?

MG: Yes, it is. It’s about social inter-subjectivities, social interactions. For him, language is a language of others. It’s all about that. That’s an important thing. We don’t speak language isolated. The language we use is imposed by the others. When you cry as a baby for the needs from your father and mother, you can’t communicate with your parents apart from screaming. Gradually, you are forced to adapt yourself to the strange noises, the existing language you parents speak. But language doesn’t express what you want. It only approximates what you try to convey with what you said. You are forced to shape yourself into becoming this alienated and colonised other thing, shaped by what is external to you.

CW: What about language?

‘When an English text refers to language, Lacan is generally referring to this structuralist meaning, but not always’.

MG: Language: First off, in French this English word has two different meanings: '*langue*' which refers to a single language, e.g. French or English; and '*langage*' which refers to the universal structures of language, not the differences between individual languages, e.g. English and French. When an English text refers to language, Lacan is generally referring to this structuralist meaning, but not always, and it is important to keep this in mind when reading Lacan in English. Lacan began to focus on language in the early 1950s. In his 1953 Rome seminar (Lacan 2006: 197-268), he differentiates between speech (*parole*) and language (*langage*). Lacan found his full stride with Saussurean linguistics – sign = signifier/signified – from 1955 through 1970, prior to making mathematics core to his thought and argument so as to remove the ambiguity of language (e.g. the inherent difference/fuzziness intrinsic to language due to signification/connotation, that does not exist in codes such as those used in mathematics, not to mention his arguments of *la langue* [S20], which is non-communicative language, such as noise).

'Unlike Saussure's linguistics, Lacan considers langage and signifier, not langue and sign, as core to his linguistic psychoanalytic thought...'

But unlike Saussure's linguistics, Lacan (1998: 20 – italics on original [S11]) considers *langage* and signifier, not *langue* and sign, as core to his linguistic psychoanalytic thought. He looks at the universal structure – language, rather than the meaning of words. So that '*the unconscious is structured like a language*'. In other words, the unconscious is a structure of signifiers. If you read about Freud's works on dreams, you start to think about dreams as a kind of mental work - they're working signifiers.

I give you a personal example: A decade ago, I wrote about a little bit of Freud's dream work. When you do that, you also dream a lot because you pay attention to the psychoanalysis of the analysand in dream work. Just as, if you are in analysis, the psychoanalysis clinician gets you to work all that out. The analyst encourages you to dream more about what's going on. In my example, ten years ago, I had some troubles in a course I was teaching. I had a dream in which some of my students from that class were in it. We were in a power sub-station with bright glowing pink things representing the big structures (normally painted black in reality) that you always see in power sub-stations. The big bright pink things were chasing the students and chasing me. I woke up and analysed what was going on, thinking: what are these bright pink things? They were big gigantic oil tanks (oil is a coolant) that contains transformers that drop the hundred-thousand-volt distribution lines down to 240-230 volts for local distribution. That's the slippage of signifiers. I had to 'transform' the way I was teaching my then students, who in the dream were being chased around the space by these big pink things. But the signifier 'transform' was represented by the bright pink voltage transformers in the power sub-station. I could not even think what these things were, at first. So, I thought about that.

The need for transformation in my teaching practice was somehow morphed in my dream to be represented by the gigantic room-size oil-filled boxes containing high voltage power transformers. The signifier was constructing the dream, rather than the meaning. The meaning was totally different. So, representing the signifier 'transform' were these big cartoonish transformers chasing us around. Not the meanings of the signifiers *per se*. Because the dream slipped the signifier of 'transform' into pink voltage transformers. It is actually the signifier 'transformer' within the dream rather than the meaning (signification) of 'transformation' constructing the dream. Hence for Lacan, it's the signifier (the sign), not its signification (the meaning) that is important, unlike Saussure, who would have placed the importance of significance the other way around.

CW: Do you think that the division between signifiers and signified in Lacan's theory was derived from Saussure's writing, the new linguistic ideas since the late 19th century?

'These are signifiers without necessarily explicit signification, as signification is always a convention of the Other.'

MG: Yes, I mean this underlays Lacan's work. Other linguists that took Saussure's thoughts further also influenced Lacan's work as well. But Lacan took different aspects on that and developed further by forging into Freud's dream work. However, these are signifiers without necessarily explicit signification, as signification is always a convention of the Other. If we go back to ideology, it's about hegemony, or hegemonic ideology according to Ernesto Laclau. What are the dominating meanings of words? 'Neoliberal' meaning is very different to the socialist meaning and the Marxism meaning. Whatever is hegemonic is the meaning that the group that are dominate define through language. If you look at the media more pragmatically, BBC uses language in a different way compared with Fox News, even though both use the signifier 'neoliberal'. This difference underlines ideology. Signification is determined by the signifier chain, which makes us together, via the 'laws' (such as the law of association constituting metonymy) inherent within language! Further, for Lacan (1988: 243 [S2]) language is not just symbolic but has both dimensions of the other symbolic and of the imaginary registries, as represented by his Schema L, where the imaginary dimension disrupts, obscures and distorts the discourse of the Other and the significations they are attempting to impart into this discourse.

'[The Symbolic] is the linguistic dimension of communications, including speech, writing and language, and everything else that this dimension constructs constituting our perceived virtual and actual social reality.'

Symbolic [Order]: Symbolic and symbolic order are the same. This is one of the three Lacanian registries (the others are the Imaginary and Real). Simply, it is the linguistic dimension of communications, including speech, writing and language, and everything else that this dimension constructs constituting our perceived virtual and actual social reality: laws, norms, values, customs, culture, things, knowledge, and even death, lack, the Other, and the unconscious (which is the discourse of the Other). As Žižek said, through registries, we use the metaphors of chess. He said chess engages three registries, the Symbolic are the rules of Chess, the Imaginary is the shape of knights, bishops and others, the visual stuff, and the Real is everything outside of the actual board, such as the intellectual ability of the players, situation, humanities and weather... all the things affect the game.

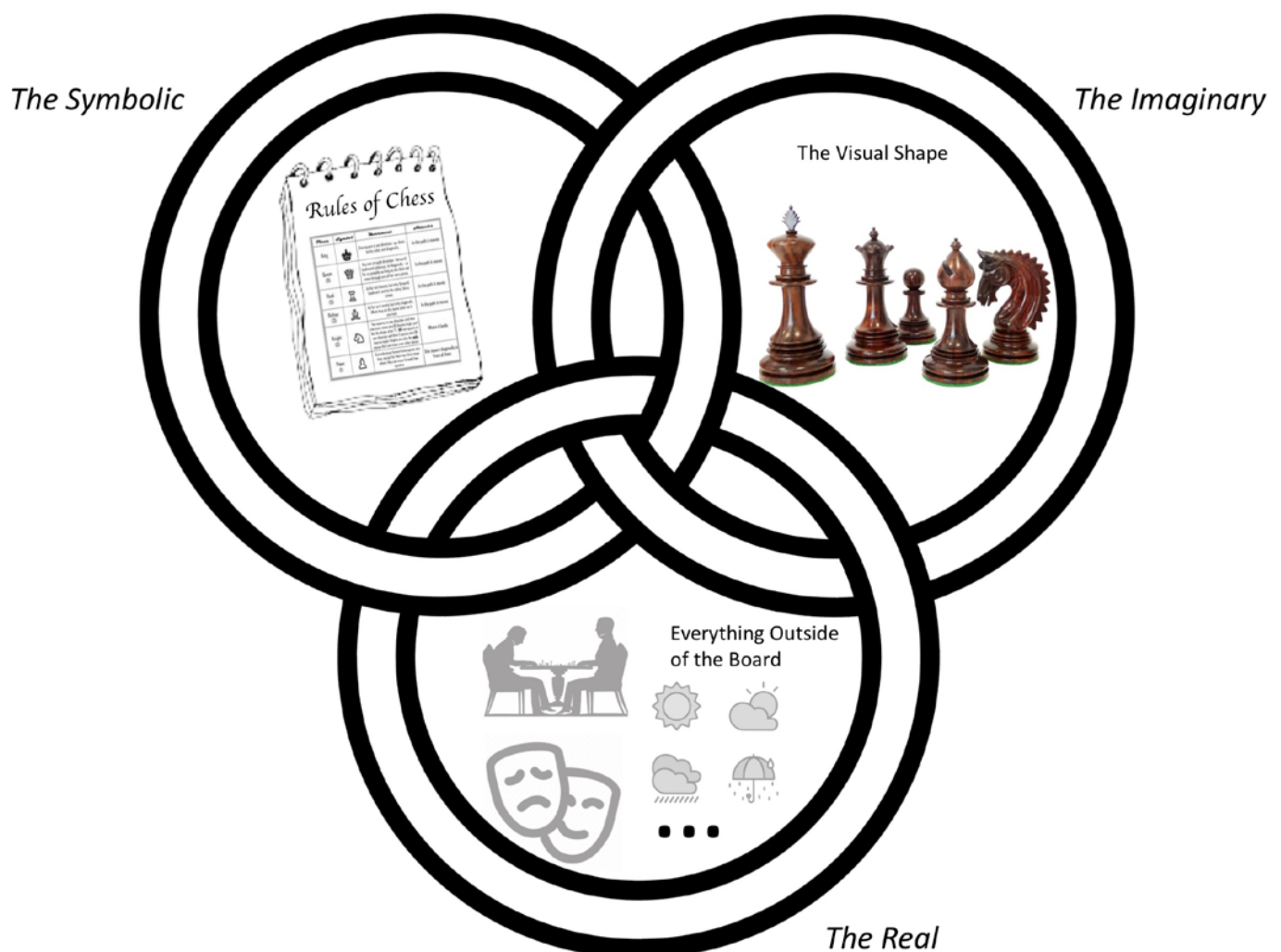


Figure 8 The Chess Example of Lacanian Three Registries
(Graphics: Chuan Wang)

GENERAL DISCUSSION II: DUALISTIC DIVISION IN LACAN'S THEORY

CW: In Lacan's theory, he always divided things, such as the conflict of conscious and unconscious, the psychological conflict between the biological human organism and the influence by society when we become possible to speak language. Many of these divisions are dualistic thoughts. Do you think this dualistic division has some limitations? The reality might be more than complex than the dualistic division between biological factors and the societal factors. For example, when we get trained in planning school, I think we get more influence from the educational knowledge of the planning professions and this education may also separate this special group of people from the rest of people. I feel like this division is very similar to the relationship of infants to the human society to some extent. For human beings, there are many types to separate one group from other people, rather than the dualistic division between the infants and people can speak language.

'[W]e're all lined up through language... Language links us with others consciously but also profoundly unconsciously, shaping our unconscious.'

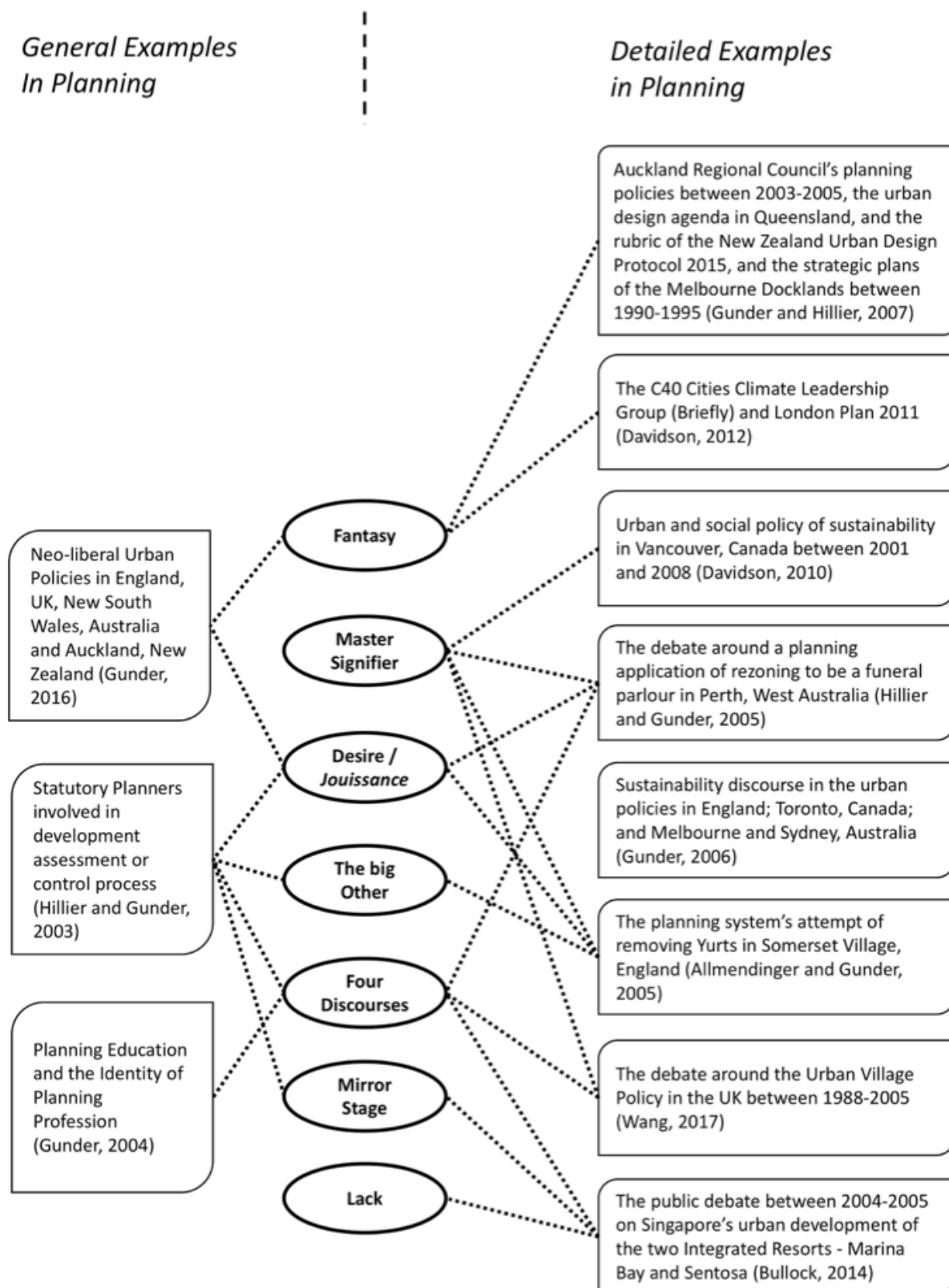
MG: First of all, I think when we talk about the whole Lacanian thing, we are talking about our language which is the discourse of others. We're not separated. Instead, we're all lined up through language, just like the example of infants and adults. Language links us with others consciously but also profoundly unconsciously, shaping our unconscious. This structure in the way that the unconscious process works and is materialised through language from the Other. It is not separated *per se*. Also, I talk about the dualistic division between conscious and unconscious. It has simply been that way since Freud. Freud talked about the ego as conscious, and everything else as unconscious. Maybe not exactly the same as what we talk about language and everything else. Do you know the famous Freudian image of the iceberg of the mind? You get 10 percent of the mind above the water which is the conscious mind. For the rest of the iceberg, you get 90% of below the water which is the unconscious.

This assumes that the mentality in our head is unconscious. This is Lacanian *per se*. This model is all working in our head. In our brain, there is a small part which is the conscious part. This model is actually similar to the British Parliament where you get different MPs to make their vote. The Prime Minister and the Speaker of the House are the conscious part taking the vote, and the hundreds of voting MPs are the unconscious components. Even in positivistic psychology, through brain scans, you can see that a small part of the brain is in charge with cognition while other large parts of brain are concerned with the movement of your body and other unconscious things. In experiments, someone's lie in a bed, being their brain scanned by an MRI machine. The part of your brain that motivates you to move your legs and get up the bed, actually turns on several milliseconds before the brain recognises consciously that you are getting up. Your mind only consciously knows that you will get up several milliseconds after you mind starts making your body get up. It is an unconscious action that is only then perceived consciously.

CW: I'm wondering whether it is something in the middle, or even within the unconscious, there might be something divisions.

MG: Of course, yes. There are a whole bunch of things in the unconscious going on. Its mind deals with things back and forth in the unconscious. The conscious bit is just a small tip on the top. Actually, the unconscious makes the decision what you are going to do. And again, these are all types of ways in psychoanalysis. I know from myself and my personal experience. Say you like someone and personally have an interest in them. But you're in a relationship and they're in a relationship. There is no way that you can break your relationship. That will be totally inappropriate. But you do like that person. Somehow, when talking with them, your hand just goes up by itself and touches a brooch on that person's shoulder. You ask yourself: why did I do that? Again, that's your unconscious. Because you actually know what you want, that you really like this person and that I like to be with that person. Then your unconscious brain makes you physically act. And the way the ego functions is as a kind of filter that stops you from doing those human, but not politically correct, behaviours. But that often only happens after the fact. Sometimes your unconscious gets away with things that your conscious behaviour knows is inappropriate. Same kind of things when you make a Freudian slip. But that is what it means to be human!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

EXAMPLES OF LACANIAN ANALYSIS IN PLANNING



References

- Allmendinger, P. (2017) *Planning Theory*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Allmendinger, P., Gunder, M. (2005) Applying Lacanian Insight to Planning's Dark Side. *Planning Theory*, 4(1), pp. 87-112.
- Althusser, L. (1996) *Writings on Psychoanalysis: Freud and Lacan* (New York, Columbia University Press).
- ARC (2003) *Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2003*, Auckland Regional Council.
- ARC (2004a) Minutes Monday 26 April, Auckland Regional Council.
- ARC (2004b) Minutes Monday 28 June, Auckland Regional Council.
- ARC (2004c) Minutes Monday 27 September, Auckland Regional Council.
- Auckland Council. (2011) *Draft Auckland Plan*. <<http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz>> [Accessed 6 October 2011].
- Auckland Council. (2012) *Auckland Plan* (Auckland, Auckland Council).
- Bloom, P., Cederstrom, C. (2009) 'The sky's the limit': fantasy in the age of market rationality. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 22(2), pp. 159-180.
- Blum, V., Nast, H. (1996) Where's the difference? The heterosexualization of alterity in Henri Lefebvre and Jacques Lacan. *Environment and Planning: D*, 14(4), pp.559-580.
- Blum, V., Nast, H. (2000) Jacques Lacan's two-dimensional subjectivity, in M Crang, N Thrift (Eds) *Thinking Space* (London, Routledge) pp.183-204.
- Boothby, R. (2001) *Freud as Philosopher* (London, Routledge).
- Bounds, M. (2003) *Urban Social Theory: City, Self, and Society* (Oxford, Oxford University Press).
- Bourdieu, P. (1998) *Practical Reason* (Stanford, Stanford University Press).
- Bourdieu, P. (2000) *Pascalian Meditations* (Cambridge, Polity).
- Bowie, M. (1988). *Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Bowie, M. (1991) *Lacan* (London, Fontana).
- Bracher, M. (1993) *Lacan, Discourse, and Social Change* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press).
- Bracher, M. (1994) On the Psychological and Social Functions of Language: Lacan's Theory of the Four Discourses, in M. Bracher, M. Alcorn, R. Corthell and F. Massardier-Kenney (Eds.) *Lacanian Theory of Discourse* (New York, New York University Press), pp.107-137.
- Bracher, M. (1999) *The Writing Cure* (Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press).
- Bracher, M. (2000) How Analysis Cures According to Lacan, in K. Malone and S. Friedlander (Eds.) *The Subject of Lacan* (Albany, SUNY Press), pp.189-208.
- Bullock, N. F. (2014). Lacan on Urban Development and National Identity in a Global City: Integrated Resorts in Singapore. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 35(2), pp. 213-227.
- Butler J. (1997a) *The Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford, Stanford University Press).
- Butler, J. (1997b) *Excitable Speech* (London, Routledge).
- Catlaw, T., Jordan G. (2009) Public Administration and 'the Lives of Others': Towards an Ethics of Collaboration. *Administration & Society*, 41(2), pp. 290-312.
- Caudill, D. (1998) The future of Freud in law, in Elliott A. (Ed.) *Freud 2000* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press), pp.262-293.
- Cederstrom, C. and Hoedemackers, C. (2010), *Lacan and Organization* (London, MayFlyBooks).
- Contu, A. (2008) Decaf Resistance: On Misbehaviour, Cynicism, and Desire in Liberal Workplaces. *Management Communications Quarterly*, 21(3), pp. 364-379.
- Copjec, J. (1994) *Read My Desire* (Cambridge, MIT Press).
- Copjec, J. (2002) *Imagine There's No Woman* (Cambridge, MIT Press).

- Davidson, M. (2010). Sustainability as Ideological Praxis: The Acting Out of Planning's Master-Signifier. *City*, 14(4), pp.390-405.
- Davidson, M. (2012). Sustainable City as Fantasy. *Human Geography*, 5(2), pp.85-99.
- Dean, J. (2001) Publicity's Secret. *Political Theory*, 29(5), pp.624-650.
- Dean M. (2010) *Governmentality*, 2nd Edition, Sage, London.
- Dean, T. (2000) *Beyond Sexuality* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press).
- Elliot, A. (2001) *Concepts of the Self* (Cambridge, Polity).
- Evans, D. (1996) *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London, Routledge).
- Fine, G., Sandstrom, K. (1993) Ideology in Action: A Pragmatic Approach to a Contested Concept. *Sociological Theory*, 11(1), pp. 21-38.
- Fink, B. (1995) *The Lacanian Subject* (Princeton, Princeton University Press).
- Fink, B. (1998) The Master Signifier and the Four Discourses, in D. Nobus (Ed.) *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (New York, Other Press), pp.29-47.
- Fink, B. (2002) Knowledge and *Jouissance*, in S. Barnard, B. Fink (Eds.) *Reading Seminar XX*, (Albany, SUNY Press), pp.21-46.
- Fink, B. (2004) *Lacan to the Letter* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press).
- Flyvbjerg, B. (1998a) Habermas and Foucault: thinkers for civil society? *British Journal of Sociology*, 49(2), pp.210-233.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (1998b) *Rationality & Power* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press).
- Forester, J. (1989). *Planning in the Face of Power*. (Berkeley, University of California Press).
- Fotaki, M. 2009. Maintaining the illusion of a free health care in post-socialism: A Lacanian analysis of transition from planned to market economy. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 22(2): pp. 141-158.
- Fotaki, M. 2010. Why do public policies fail so often? Exploring health policy-making as an imaginary and symbolic construction. *Organization*, 17(6), pp. 703-720.
- Foucault, M. (1970) *The Order of Things* (New York, Vantage).
- Foucault, M. (1981) *The History of Sexuality: an introduction* (Harmondsworth, Penguin).
- Foucault, M. (1998) On the Ways of Writing History, in J. Faubion (Ed.) *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology* (London, Penguin), pp.279-295.
- Foucault, M. (2000) Space, Knowledge, and Power, in *Power* (London, Allen Lane), pp.249-364.
- Freeden, M. (2003) *Ideology* (Oxford, Oxford University Press).
- Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, Basic Books).
- Glynos, J. (2010) *Lacan at Work*. In: C. Cederstrom and C. Hoedemackers, eds. *Lacan and Organization* (London, MayFlyBooks), pp. 13-58.
- Glynos, J. (2001). The Grip of Ideology: a Lacanian Approach to the Theory of Ideology. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 6(2), pp.191-214.
- Glynos, J. (2011) On the ideological and political significance of fantasy in the organization of work. *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society*, 16(4), pp. 373-393.
- Glynos, J., Howarth, D. (2007) *Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory* (London, Routledge).
- Grosz E. (1989) *Sexual Subversions* (Sydney, Allen and Unwin).
- Grosz E. (1990) *Jacques Lacan: a feminist introduction* (London, Routledge).
- Gunder, M. (2002) Auckland's Motorway System: A New Zealand Genealogy of Imposed Automotive Progress 1946-66, *Urban Planning and Research*, 20(2), pp.129-142.
- Gunder, M. (2003a) Passionate Planning for the Others' Desire: An Agonistic Response to the Dark Side of Planning, *Progress in Planning*, 60(3), pp. 236-319.

- Gunder, M. (2003b) Planning Policy Formulation from a Lacanian Perspective, *International Planning Studies*, 8(4), pp. 279-294.
- Gunder, M. (2004) Shaping the Planner's Ego-Ideal: A Lacanian Interpretation of Planning Education, *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 23(3), pp. 299-311.
- Gunder, M. (2005). Lacan, Planning and Urban Policy Formation. *Urban Policy and Research*, 23(1), pp.87-107.
- Gunder, M. (2006) Sustainability: Planning's Saving Grace or Road to Perdition? *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26(2), pp. 208-221.
- Gunder, M. (2010) Planning as the Ideology of (Neo-Liberal) Space. *Planning Theory*, 9(4), pp. 298-314.
- Gunder, M. (2011a) A Metapsychological Exploration of the Role of Popular Media in Engineering Public Belief on Planning Issue. *Planning Theory*, 10(4), pp. 326-245.
- Gunder, M. (2011b) Fake It Until You Make It, and Then... *Planning Theory*, 10(3), pp. 201-212.
- Gunder, M. (2014) Fantasy in Planning Organisations and their Agency: The Promise of Being at Home in the World, *Urban Policy and Research*, 32(1), 1-15.
- Gunder, M. (2016). Planning's 'Failure' to Ensure Efficient Market Delivery: A Lacanian Deconstruction of This Neoliberal Scapegoating Fantasy. *European Planning Studies*, 24(1), pp.21-38.
- Gunder, M., Hillier, J. (2007). Planning as Urban Therapeutic. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 39(2), pp.467-486.
- Gunder, M., Hillier, J. (2009) *Planning in Ten Words or Less* (Farnham, Ashgate).
- Habermas, J. (1984) *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol.1 (Boston, Beacon).
- Habermas, J. (1987a) *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol.2 (Cambridge, Polity).
- Habermas, J. (1987b) *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge, MIT Press).
- Hajer, M., Versteeg, W. (2005). A Decade of Discourse Analysis of Environmental Politics: Achievements, Challenges, Perspectives. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 7(3), pp.175-184.
- Healey, P. (1999). Sites, Jobs and Portfolios: Economic Development Discourses in the Planning System. *Urban Studies*, 36(1), pp.27-42.
- Hillier, J. (2002) *Shadows of Power* (London, Routledge).
- Hillier, J. (2003) Agon'ising Over Consensus – Why Habermasian Ideals Cannot be 'Real', *Planning Theory*, 2(1), pp.37-59.
- Hillier, J., Gunder, M. (2003) Planning Fantasies? An Exploration of a Potential Lacanian Framework for Understanding Development Assessment Planning, *Planning Theory*, 2(3), pp.225-248.
- Hillier, J., Gunder, M. (2005) Not Over Your Dead Bodies! A Lacanian Interpretation of Planning Discourse and Practice. *Environment and Planning: A*, 37(6), 1049-1066.
- Jacobs, K. (1999). Key Themes and Future Prospects: Conclusion to the Special Issue. *Urban Studies*, 36(1), pp.203-213.
- jagodzinski, j. [sic] (2002) A Strange Introduction: My Apple Thing, in j. jagodzinski (Ed.) *Pedagogical Desire*, (London, Bergin & Garvey), pp.xiii-lx.
- Jameson, F. (2003) Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan: Marxism, psychoanalytic criticism, and the problem of the subject, in S. Žižek, (Ed.), *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory*, Volume III (London, Routledge), pp.3-43.
- Johnston, A. (2014). Jacques Lacan. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2014 ed.). Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/lacan/>.
- Kant, I. (1951) *Critique of Judgement* (London, MacMillan).
- Kristeva, J. (2000) *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* (New York, Columbia University Press).

- Lacan, J. (1988a) *The Seminar, Book I, Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-1954* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Lacan J. (1988b) *The Seminar, Book II, The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Lacan J. (1992) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960* (London, Routledge).
- Lacan J. (1993) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses 1955-1956* (London, Norton).
- Lacan J. (1994) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (London, Penguin).
- Lacan J. (1998) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX, On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge 1972-1973* (New York, Norton).
- Lacan J. (2006) *Ecrits* (London, Norton).
- Lacan, J. (2007) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII, The Other Side of Psychoanalysis: 1969-1970* (London, Norton).
- Laclau, E. (1989) Preference, in S. Žižek *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London, Verso), pp.ix-xv.
- Laclau E. (1996) *Emancipation(s)* (London, Verso).
- Laclau E. (2002) Democracy and the question of power, in J. Hillier, E. Rooksby (Eds.) *Habitus: a sense of place* (Aldershot, Ashgate), pp.37-50.
- Laclau, E. (2003) Why do empty signifiers matter to politicians? in S. Žižek (Ed.) *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory, Volume III* (London, Routledge), pp.305-313.
- Laclau, E. (2005) *On Populist Reason* (London, Verso).
- Laclau, E., Mouffe, C. (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London, Verso).
- Lacan J. (1992) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960* (London, Routledge).
- Lacan J. (1993) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses 1955-1956* (London, Norton).
- Lacan J. (1994) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis* (London, Penguin).
- Lacan J. (1998) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX, On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge 1972-1973* (New York, Norton).
- Lacan J. (2006) *Ecrits* (London, Norton).
- Lacan, J. (2007) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII, The Other Side of Psychoanalysis: 1969-1970* (London, Norton).
- Laclau, E. (1989) Preference, in S. Žižek *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London, Verso), pp.ix-xv.
- Laclau E. (1996) *Emancipation(s)* (London, Verso).
- Laclau E. (2002) Democracy and the question of power, in J. Hillier, E. Rooksby (Eds.) *Habitus: a sense of place* (Aldershot, Ashgate), pp.37-50.
- Laclau, E. (2003) Why do empty signifiers matter to politicians? in S. Žižek (Ed.) *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory, Volume III* (London, Routledge), pp.305-313.
- Laclau, E. (2005) *On Populist Reason* (London, Verso).
- Laclau, E., Mouffe, C. (1985) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London, Verso).

- Marini, M. (1992) *Jacques Lacan* (New Brunswick, Rutgers).
- McGowan, T. (2004) *The End of Dissatisfaction?* (Albany, SUNY Press).
- Mitchell, J. (1974) *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (London, Allen Lane).
- Moi, T. (2004) From Feminism to Finitude: Freud, Lacan, and Feminism, Again. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 29(3), pp. 841-878.
- Morel, G. (2000) Science and Psychoanalysis, *Umbra(a): A journal of the unconscious – Science and Truth*, pp.65- 79.
- Mouffe, C. (2000) *The Democratic Paradox* (London, Verso).
- Mouffe, C. (2005) *The Return of the Political* (London, Verso).
- Parker, I. (2004) *Slavoj Žižek: A Critical Introduction* (London, Pluto Press).
- Popper, K. (1963) *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (New York: Harper Torchbooks).
- Ragland, E. (1996) The Discourse of the Master, in W. Apollon, R. Feldstein (Eds.) *Lacan, Politics, Aesthetics* (Albany: SUNY Press), pp.127-147.
- Ragland-Sullivan, E. (1986) *Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press).
- Ragland-Sullivan, E. (1991) Stealing Material, in A. Leupin (Ed.) *Lacan & the Human Sciences* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press), pp.59-105.
- Reade, E. (1987) *British Town and Country Planning* (Milton Keynes, Open University Press).
- Rees, W. (1992). "Ecological footprints and appropriated carrying capacity: what urban economics leaves out". *Environment and Urbanisation*. 4 (2): 121–130
- Rickert, T. (2007) *Acts of Enjoyment* (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press).
- Roudinesco, E (1990) *Jacques Lacan & Co: A History of Psychoanalysis in France, 1925 -1985* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press).
- Roudinesco, E (1997) *Jacques Lacan*, (Cambridge, Polity).
- Rose, N. (1998) *Inventing Our Selves: Psychology, Power and Personhood*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).
- Ruti, M. (2010) Life beyond Fantasy: The Rewriting of Destiny in Lacanian Theory. *Culture, Theory and Critique* 51(1), pp. 1-14.
- Salecl, R. (1994) Deference to the Great Other: Discourse of Education, in M. Bracher, M. Alcorn, R. Corthell and F. Massardier-Kenney (Eds.) *Lacanian Theory of Discourse* (New York, New York University Press), pp.163-175.
- Sandercock, L. (2003) Planning in the Ethno-cultural Diverse City: A Comment. *Planning Theory and Practice*, 4(3), pp.319-323.
- Sandercock, L. (2004) Towards a Planning Imagination for the 21st Century, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 70(2), pp.133-141.
- Sarup, M. (1993) *Poststructuralism and Postmodernism* (Harlow, Longman).
- Schön, D., Rein, M. (1994) *Frame Reflection* (New York, BasicBooks).
- Sharp, L., Richardson, T. (2001). Reflections on Foucauldian discourse analysis in planning and environmental policy research. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 3(3), pp.193-209.
- Stavrakakis, Y. (1999) *Lacan and the Political* (London, Routledge).
- Stavrakakis, Y, 2003, Laclau with Lacan: comments on the relationship of discourse theory and Lacanian psychoanalysis, in S. Žižek (Ed.) *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory, Volume III* (London: Routledge), pp.314-337.

- Stavrakakis, Y. (2007) *The Lacanian Left* (Albany, SUNY Press).
- Styhre, A. (2008) Management Control in Bureaucratic and Postbureaucratic Organizations: A Lacanian Perspective. *Group and Organizational Management* 33(6), pp. 635-656.
- Swyngedouw, E. (2010) Trouble with Nature: 'Ecology as the New Opium for the Masses', In: J. Hillier and P. Healey (Eds.) *The Ashgate Research Companion to Planning Theory* (Farnham, Ashgate), pp. 299-318.
- Swyngedouw, E. (2011) Depoliticized Environments: The End of Nature, Climate Change and the PostPolitical Condition. *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, 69(10), pp. 253-274.
- Taylor, N. (1998). *Urban Planning Theory Since 1945* (London: SAGE Publications).
- Throgmorton, J. (2003) Planning as Persuasive Story telling in a Global-Scale Web of Relationships. *Planning Theory*, 2(2), pp.125-151.
- Tomsic S. (2016). *The Capitalist Unconscious: Marx and Lacan*. (London, Verso Books).
- Van Haute, P. (2002) *Against Adaptation* (New York, Other Press).
- Verhaeghe, P. (2001) *Beyond Gender* (New York, Other Press).
- Verhaeghe, P. (1995). From Impossibility to Inability: Lacan's Theory on the Four Discourses. *The Letter: Lacanian Perspectives on Psychoanalysis*, 3, pp.91-108.
- Wackernagel, M. (1994). *Ecological Footprint and Appropriated Carrying Capacity: A Tool for Planning toward Sustainability* (PhD thesis). (Vancouver, The University of British Columbia).
- Waddell, B., Pollock, G. (1999) Auckland's Internal Growing Pains, *Planning Quarterly*, 135, pp.9-11.
- Wang C. (2017) Deciphering planning concepts from a perspective of Lacan's Four Discourses. In: *Proceedings of AESOP 2017 Annual Conference* (Lisbon, University of Lisbon), pp.166-176
- Žižek, S. (1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London, Verso).
- Žižek, S. (1993) *Tarrying with the Negative* (Durham, Duke University Press).
- Žižek, S. (1997) *The Plague of Fantasies* (London, Verso).
- Žižek, S. (1998a) Cyberspace, or, How to Traverse the Fantasy in the Age of the Retreat of the Big Other. *Public Culture*, 10(3), pp. 483-513.
- Žižek S. (1998b) Four Discourses, Four Subjects, in S. Žižek (Ed.) *Cognito and the Unconscious* (London, Duke University Press), pp. 74-113.
- Žižek S, (1999a) *The Ticklish Subject* (London, Verso).
- Žižek, S. (1999b) Fantasy as a Political Category: A Lacanian Approach, in E. and E. Wright (Eds.) *The Žižek Reader* (Oxford, Blackwell), pp.89-101.
- Žižek, S. (2001) *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism?* (London, Verso).
- Žižek, S. (2002a) The Real of Sexual Difference, in S. Barnard, B. Fink (Eds.) *Reading Seminar XX* (Albany, SUNY Press), pp.57-75.
- Žižek, S. (2002b) *For they know not what they do* (London, Verso).
- Žižek S, (2002c) *Revolution at the Gates* (London, Verso).
- Žižek, S. (2004) *Organs without Bodies* (London, Routledge).
- Žižek, S. (2006a). *How to read Lacan* (London: Granta).
- Žižek, S. (2006b) *The Parallax View* (Cambridge, MIT Press).
- Žižek, S. (2008) *In Defence of Lost Causes* (London, Verso).
- Žižek, S. (2010) *Living in the End Times* (London, Verso).
- Žižek, S. (2012) *Less than Nothin*. (London, Verso).
- Zupančič, A. (2000) *Ethics of the Real* (London, Verso).
- Zupančič, A. (2003) *The Shortest Shadow: Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Two* (Cambridge, MIT Press).
- Zupančič, A. (2008) *The Odd One In: On Comedy* (Cambridge, MIT Press).

LACAN READING LIST

- Bracher, M. (1993) *Lacan, Discourse, and Social Change* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press).
- Evans, D. (1996) *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, (London, Routledge).
- Fink, B. (1995) *The Lacanian Subject*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press).
- Gunder, M. (2004) Shaping the Planner's Ego-Ideal: A Lacanian Interpretation of Planning Education, *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 23(3), 299-311.
- Gunder, M. (2010) Planning as the Ideology of (Neo-Liberal) Space, *Planning Theory*, 9(4): 298-314.
- Gunder, M. (2014) Fantasy in Planning Organisations and their Agency: The Promise of Being at Home in the World, *Urban Policy and Research*, 32(1), 1-15.
- Gunder, M. (2016) Planning's 'Failure' to Ensure Efficient Market Deliver: A Lacanian Deconstruction of this Neoliberal Scapegoating Fantasy, *European Planning Studies*, 21(1): 21-38.
- Gunder, M., Hillier, J. (2009) *Planning in Ten Words or Less: A Lacanian Entanglement with Spatial Planning*, (Farnham, Ashgate).
- Lacan, J. (2006) *Ecrits* (London, Norton).
- Lacan, J. (2007) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XVII*, (London, Norton).
- Stavrakakis, Y. (1999) *Lacan and the Political*, (London, Routledge).
- Stavrakakis, Y. (2007) *The Lacanian Left*, (Albany, SUNY Press).
- Žižek, S. (1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, (London, Verso).

Postscript Note

I discovered Lacan's theory when I came cross with Michael Gunder's writings on 'sustainability' as a master signifier in planning. At that time, I was struggling with the research method of my doctoral project, in which I was exploring popular concepts that aim to shape our urban futures, such as 'ecocity', 'smart growth' and 'sustainable development'. I used linguistic morphology to understand the coinage, the polysemy and the translation of these fashionable terms. However, this linguistic approach faces challenges when my research aims to probe the complex social bonds behind these popular concepts. Lacanian theory opened up a new perspective for me to probe the role of the signifiers of popular concepts ('master signifiers' in Lacanian terms) in the planning discourse. The reading of Gunder's writings were the pivotal inspiration in the development of my research method.

After immersed in Lacanian theory for almost two years, I presented my research outputs of the application of Lacanian Four Discourses to the British urban village policy in the AESOP's 2017 Conference in Lisbon (Wang, 2017). Surprisingly, Gunder presented in the same *planning theory* session, which provided me a precious chance to communicate with Gunder in person about my research progress and to resolve some of my confusions in my reading and employing of Lacanian theory. This opportunity helped me to have a deeper understanding of Lacanian theory and to be invited to co-write this booklet from the editors of AESOP YA Booklet Series. Here, I'd like to thank AESOP for this opportunity, Dr. Abdelwahab for this invitation, Dr. Radinger-Peer for her coordination and Prof. Gunder for his inspiring and passionate collaboration.

Chuan Wang

Endnotes:

¹ This is what Lacanians often refer to as 'the big Other' for textual clarity, but Lacan simple called (with capitalisation) the 'Other'. This big Other constitutes the totality of the intangible public realm comprising 'the symbolic order, the order of *symbolic* fictions that operate at a level different from direct material causality', which 'correlates strictly to the notion of belief—of symbolic trust, of credence, of taking what others say at their face value' (Žižek, 1998a, p. 496 – emphasis in original). Fundamentally, while we might believe in the big Other, for Lacan (2006, p. 688) the big Other is just an illusion, it does not exist, for 'there is no Other of the Other'.

² The 'Real' is a concept consistent with Plato's ideal form, or Kant's noumenon of the 'Thing-in-Itself', unknowable to the human subject. 'The Real is thus the disavowed X on account of which our vision of reality is anamorphically distorted. It is simultaneously the Thing to which direct access is not possible and the obstacle which prevents this direct access; the Thing which eludes our grasp and the distorting screen which makes us miss the Thing. More precisely... the Lacanian Real is not only distorted, but *the very principle of the distortion of reality*' (Žižek, 2008: 287-288 – emphasis in original).

³ Michael Gunder's presentation 'Places of Dignity: Shaped by Knowledgeable Rules or Expressions of Aesthetic Equity?' in Track No.1 '*Planning Theory: Conceptual Challenges and Planning Evaluation*' of the 30th annual conference of The Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP 2017), Lisbon, Portugal.

⁴ The formation of Mont Pelerin Society is the starting point of neo-liberalism after a conference organised by Friedrich Hayek in Mont Pèlerin village, Switzerland in 1947. The society aims to advocate economic and political liberalism from the Western perspective. See more details in <https://www.montpelerin.org/>.

⁵ The concept of 'ecological footprint' was firstly introduced in William Rees' article 'Ecological footprints and appropriated carrying capacity: what urban economics leaves out' (Rees, 1992) and further developed by his PhD student Mathis Wackernagel in his PhD thesis *Ecological Footprint and Appropriated Carrying Capacity: A Tool for Planning Toward Sustainability* (Wackernagel, 1994).

⁶ Although the Chinese name of this ministry - ‘中共中央宣传部’ (*zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu*) – has not changed since its establishment in 1928. Its English name has changed from Central Propaganda Group/Department/Ministry to Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China recently.

⁷ For Lacan and Freud the ‘death drive’ produces *jouissance* by exceeding the pleasure principle. Situated beyond what Freud would call the reality principle – of rationality and constraint moderating satisfaction – and even beyond the pleasure principle – the limits of the ‘permitted’ enjoyment of the law – the death drive is ‘an attempt to go beyond the pleasure principle, to the realm of excess *JOU-SSANCE* where enjoyment is experienced as suffering’ (Evens, 1996, p. 33 – emphasis in original).

⁸ Michael Gunder’s presentation ‘The Injustice of Ideological Power: An Interrogation of Lacan’s *Chè Vuoi?* and its Implications for Planning in a Neoliberal World’ in the 4th World Planning School Congress (WPSC 2016), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

⁹ Lacan discussed Antigone in ‘The essence of tragedy: a commentary on Sophocles’s *Antigone*’ (Lacan, 1992: pp.243-290; originally in the seminars in 1960), *The Purloined Letter* in ‘Seminar on “The Purloined Letter”’ (Lacan, 2006, pp.6-50; originally in seminars in 1955) and Kant avec Sade in ‘Kant with Sade’ (Lacan, 2006: pp.645-670; originally in seminars in 1963).

¹⁰ See more details of the chess example between pp.8-9 in *How to read Lacan* (Žižek, 2006a).

Conversations in Planning Theory and Practice

JACQUES LACAN: Introducing thinkers for planners – a narrative and conversation

Michael Gunder

Chuan Wang

ISBN/EAN: 9789082819137

Jacques Lacan (1901 –1981) was one of the most influential intellectuals in French cultural life during the 1960s and 1970s. As a renowned philosopher and a controversial psychoanalyst, his yearly seminars in Paris (1953-1980) and concomitant writings (the series of *Écrits*) further explored Freudian theory based on the study of language and established his celebrity status in France and beyond. In connection with a broad range of other disciplines, his ideas have immensely benefitted critical theory, linguistics, French philosophy, feminist theory, sociology, literary theory and film theory. For urban planning, Lacanian theories enlighten the studies on the unconscious and irrational dimension of theory and practice, which is so often neglected in planning research.

Editorial Board

Chandrima Mukhopadhyay (Editor-in-Chief)
Verena Peer (Editor of the booklet)
Chiara Belingardi (Editor)
Giusy Pappalardo (Editor)

Mona Abdelwahab (Senior Adviser)

YA Coordinators:
Graphic Design (Cover and Layout):
Shaimaa Refaat