

Seminar IV : 27th February 1957 - The Anorexic Gap

by Julia Evans, 1st February 2022

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Summary

The 'Anorexic Gap' refers to a gap in the typewritten transcript, following Jacques Lacan stating '... explains the true function of symptoms such as mental anorexia [*anorexie normale*]'. This gap is filled with 3 words in unedited transcripts and a page of 'interpolated' text in all Jacques-Alain Miller edited publications. It is argued that the 'interpolated material' is not Jacques Lacan's & has no place in Seminar IV.

List of Seminar IV publications

a) The original manuscript typed from short-hand notes by a stenographer, probably given to Jacques Lacan to check and then filed. Copies may be available on the internet.

b) Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller

- *Livre IV, La Relation d'Objet, 1956 to 1957* : Jacques Lacan : Éditions du Seuil, (Mars 1994), Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller

- *Jacques Lacan – The Object Relation, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book IV*, translated by Adrian Price, Polity Press (2020), Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller

- *Seminar 4 The Object Relation 1956-1957*, translated by L.V.A. Roche :

www.Freud2Lacan.com /Lacan /52 (Creation date is given as 15th November 2007), Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller

c) Unedited transcripts of tape-recordings

- *La Relation d'Objet et les Structures Freudiennes 56-57*, Jacques Lacan, l'Association Freudienne Internationale (**afi**),

- *La relation d 'objet, 1956-57*, Jacques Lacan, STAFERLA <http://staferla.free.fr/S4/S4 LA RELATION.pdf> (This text is updated)

- Jacques Lacan, *Seminar IV (1956 - 1957) - The Object Relation & Freudian Structures* (began in 2016), translated from unedited transcripts, by Alma Buholzer, Ganesh Anantharaman (from August 2021), Greg Owen, Jesse Cohn, Julia Evans & Grace Weber (from January 2022) - Translation Collective.

From 21st November 1956 to 30th January 1957, inclusive, is published.

Sessions 6th February 1957 & 27th February 1957 are being prepared for publication probably in April 2022

& 6th March 1957 is in process of translation.

See [Seminar IV : The Object Relation & Freudian Structures 1956-1957 : begins 21st](#)

[November 1956 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here](#) <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=11980> for up to

date information on progress. This text available [Seminar IV : 27th February 1957 – The Anorexic Gap](#) by Julia Evans on 1st February 2022 or [here](#)
<https://lacanianworks.net/2022/02/seminar-iv-27th-february-1957-the-anorexic-gap/>

Note : The quotes in this text are from this translation of unedited transcriptions from original tape-recordings.

Background (many discrepancies)

Back in 2016, Greg Hynds & Julia Evans decided to translate Seminar IV, starting from L. V. A. Roche's translation. In examining 28th November 1956 session, the text did not appear to make sense. A copy of an unedited transcription from tapes recorded during Jacques Lacan's presentation, was obtained.

Many discrepancies between the unedited transcription and the published version, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller (1994ⁱ), have been found. Further, the unedited transcription made logical sense. The decision was taken to restart using the unedited transcription.

The team has expanded to include Alma Buholzer, Jesse Cohn, Ganesh Anantharaman (from August 2021) & Grace Weber (from January 2022). This team, translating from an unedited transcription, is referred to as the Translation Collective (from 2016).

There are many examples where the two versions differ slightly. Some of these differences can be seen in Appendix 1.

However, when adding the page numbers from the edited 1994 publication, to the unedited Translation Collective's working document of 27th February 1957, these differences took on a more serious dimension. A page-worth of material has been added or as Adrian Price (2020) states, 'interpolated'^[ii] or see Footnote 2, Appendix 1].

This material does not appear in any of the unedited transcriptions.

This text explores this (anorexic) gap, what causes it and what fills it.

Note : the sessions of 6th February 1957 & 27th February 1957 are currently being added to the existing document and will be published shortly. Covid has intervened in this process so publication date is April 2022 at the moment. Watch <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=11980> for further details. Therefore paragraph numbers have been given, as page numbers do not yet exist.

The Anorexic Gap

This gap is shown in Appendix 1, where the unedited transcript, the Translation Collective's translation & the translated, edited, 2020 publication are put side by side – three columns.

-Paragraph 21–22, 27th February 1957 : 'This - and this alone - explains the true function of symptoms such as mental anorexia.'

[Two lines from bottom of p184 (1994), p177 of Adrian Price's translation (2020)]

- 'interpolated' material (1994 & 2020 & L. V. A. Roche's translation) to

- 'I spoke to you of the primitive relation to the mother, who at this moment becomes a real being, precisely because in being able to refuse indefinitely, she can do literally everything.'
[16 lines down, 2nd paragraph of p185 (1994), p177 (2020)]

The ‘interpolated’ material

This is given in the right-hand column of Appendix 1. It includes such familiar passages as :

‘I’ve already [Footnote 2] told you that anorexia is not a matter of *not eating anything*, but of *eating nothing*. I insist - it means *to eat nothing*. *Nothing* is precisely something that exists on the symbolic plane. It’s not a *nicht essen*, but a *nichts essen*. This point is indispensable if one is to understand the phenomenology of anorexia. ...’ (1994 & 2020)

It is certain that Jacques Lacan never said this and its addition is not justified. It is not part of the argument he is making, of which symptoms of mental anorexia are an example.

Adrian Price, Footnote 2, p437 of *Seminar IV* (2020) (see Appendix 1) describes it as ‘an interpolation based apparently on the conjecture that this lacuna must correspond to an entire missing page.’

So the interpolated material is the Editor’s conjecture of what Jacques Lacan should have said.

The Stenographer

The ‘lacuna’ referred to by Adrian Price is as follows:

‘In the stenographer’s paginated typescript, *Je vous ai* falls at the end of page 13, and page 14 begins *relation primitive de la mère, &c.*’

Adrian Price’s Footnote 2 : p437 of *Seminar IV* (2020) (see Appendix 1)

The unedited transcript states ‘C’est ceci qui peut, et qui peut seul expliquer la véritable fonction de symptômes tels que ceux de l’anorexie mentale. Je vous ai parlé de la relation primitive à la mère, qui devient au même moment un être réel, précisément en ceci que pouvant refuser indéfiniment, ...’

Translation Collective’s text : ‘This - and this alone - explains the true function of symptoms such as mental anorexia. I spoke to you of the primitive relation to the mother, who at this moment becomes a real being, precisely because in being able to refuse indefinitely, she can do literally everything.’

So it seems that the stenographer omitted ‘parlé de la’.

How might this have happened?

Transmission is not guaranteed to be exact and perfect (neither is translation nor transcription). It depends on the subject receiving, then transcribing or translating. From time to time, the Translation Collective has come across errors in transcribing from the tape-recording to text. Certainly, the punctuation has been altered many times.

What is a stenographer’s role?

In the 1950s the photocopier had not been invented, neither the computer. Typewriters were manual, by and large, & with some ingenuity, it was possible to get up to 5 carbon copies from one typed page. If a mistake was made, tough, the page was restarted. Changing from one page to the next was a palaver. The completed page was released from the machine and the next page, carbons and carbon copy pages were inserted into the machine – a very skilled process.

Definition of a stenographer :

‘A stenographer is a person trained to type or write in shorthand methods, enabling them to write as quickly as people speak. Stenographers can create lasting documentation of everything from court cases to medical conversations. This is obviously useful in many legal settings, but the skill is also used for live closed captioning on television or captioning for hard-of-hearing audiences at events.

The word “stenography” is older than any of our modern stenotype keyboards or machines. It comes from the Greek “steno” meaning narrow and “graphy” meaning writing. “Narrow writing” described systems of shorthand, back when conversations were transcribed by hand. Hence, what does “stenographer” mean? Simply, a shorthand writer.’

From <https://www.naegeliusa.com/blog/what-is-a-stenographer> Downloaded February 2022.

So it is assumed that a stenographer was present at each of Jacques Lacan’s sessions and took down his words in shorthand writing. She (almost certainly a ‘she’) then created a typewritten document from her shorthand notes. This document would then have been given to Jacques Lacan to check and then it would have been filed.

Adrian Price notes that the stenographer put the page number on each page. So after she has typed ‘Je vous ai’ at the end of p13, she would then have paused to take the completed page from her typewriter and put in a fresh page with carbons. Indeed, she may have had lunch or gone home or whatever, before starting on p14. She omits 3 words, in transcribing from her shorthand notes and starts typing up p14 minus ‘parlé de la’.

In short, she makes a mistake, just as those transcribing from tape-recordings make mistakes & translators do as well.

Is the ‘interpolation’ of a page’s worth of invented material justified to cover 3 missing words? Absolutely not.

A further word on ‘anorexie mentale’

- ‘Anorexie mentale’ in Seminar IV

Jacques Lacan uses ‘anorexie’ twice in this session **Seminar IV : 27th February 1957**

– **27th February 1957** : bottom of paragraph 21 (Two lines from bottom of p184 (1994)),

‘This - and this alone - explains the true function of symptoms such as mental anorexia.’

- & **27th February 1957** : 2nd sentence in paragraph 27 (beginning of p187 (1994))

‘This is where what I was alluding to earlier, about mental anorexia, can make an entrance.’

The term ‘anorexie mentale’ Adrian Price translates with the psychiatric label ‘anorexia nervosa’. Since the mid-1970s, this psychiatric label has come into common parlance.

However, anorexie mentale is the French non-psychiatric term which still can be used. In the context of the argument Jacques Lacan is making, referring to the true function of symptoms of anorexie mentale, the Translation Collective have chosen to translate ‘anorexie mentale’ as ‘mental anorexia’ as Jacques Lacan is not referring to the psychiatric stamp.

- ‘Anorexie mentale’ in Seminar XI

Anorexie mentale makes a further appearance in **Seminar XI**, again translated, this time by Alan Sheridan, as ‘anorexia nervosa’.

- ‘At the oral level, it is the nothing, in so far as that from which the subject was weaned is no longer anything for him. In anorexia nervosa, what the child eats is the nothing. This will enable you to grasp obliquely how the object of weaning may come to function at the level of castration, as privation.’

p103-104 of Alan Sheridan’s translationⁱⁱⁱ : **Seminar XI** : 4th March 1964 : See [Seminar XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts: 1963-1964 : beginning 15th January 1964 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1145](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1145)

- ‘Now, to reply to this hold, the subject, like Gribouille, brings the answer of the previous lack, of his own disappearance, which he situates here at the point of lack perceived in the Other. The first object he proposes for this parental desire whose object is unknown is his own loss—*Can he lose me?* The phantasy of one's death, of one's disappearance, is the first object that the subject has to bring into play in this dialectic, and he does indeed bring it into play—as we know from innumerable cases, such as in anorexia nervosa. We also know that the phantasy of one's death is usually manipulated by the child in his love relations with his parents.

One lack is superimposed upon the other. ...’

p214-215 of Alan Sheridan’s translation : **Seminar XI** : 27th May 1964 : See [Seminar XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts: 1963-1964 : beginning 15th January 1964 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1145](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1145)

So in Seminar IV, Jacques Lacan uses symptoms of mental anorexia to illustrate the child’s feeling of impotence. In Seminar XI, the child eating nothing illustrates how the object of weaning functions at the level of castration, as privation. (which echoes the argument in and following Seminar IV : 6th February 1957) Secondly in Seminar XI, mental anorexia is given as an example of phantasy that the subject has to bring into play in order to create the first object. Both these points use mental anorexia to develop Jacques Lacan’s arguments about the function of the object. The psychiatric use of anorexia nervosa is not being examined.

The Translation Collective’s aim is

‘The translation proceeds from this unedited text and, as such, aims to represent Lacan’s spoken French without abridgement.’

[Preface to *Seminar IV* (from 2016) see Appendix 1]

Baldly, Jacques Lacan is redefining the position of the object, the process of castration, and its relation to frustration and the symbolic.

This does not seem to be apparent in the edited texts (1994) & (2020).

Advice/Conclusion

For over 15 years, unedited translations of transcriptions of tape-recordings, have been relied on by Julia Evans. During the 1990s, much prized photocopies of Cormac Gallagher’s work were passed around in brown envelopes - the use of them was forbidden which naturally made them much more attractive! Cormac Gallagher was extremely generous when in 2010, he made his unedited translations available at www.LacanianIreland.com. This easy access transformed work in the English Lacanian field but not for all the Seminars.

Unfortunately, there is no unedited translation of Seminar VII & Seminar XI – though tape-recordings exist – an opportunity for someone else!

Seminar I, Seminar II, & Seminar III do not have easily accessible recordings, so the edited, published text has to make do.

For Seminar V, Seminar VI, Seminar X, Seminar XVII, Seminar XX & Seminar XXIII, there is in posts at www.LacanianWorks.net the equivalent page numbers in the published edited texts & Cormac Gallagher's translations, to enable the tracing of citations, etc.

Advice : Use unedited texts when researching in the Lacanian field, especially for Seminar IV. The edited text does not reproduce Jacques Lacan's argument used to develop his clinic. Further, the process of editing adds an additional, unnecessary layer of distortion to those occurring anyway through transcription and translation.

This has been my practice for 15 years or more.

Julia Evans

Practicing Lacanian Psychoanalyst

Tuesday 1st February 2022

www.LacanianWorks.net & www.LacanianWorksExchange.net &
<http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=12365>

<p>APPENDIX 1</p> <hr/> <p>From La Relation d'Objet et les Structures Freudiennes 56-57, Jacques Lacan, l'Association Freudienne Internationale (afi), a transcription from tape-recordings of Jacques Lacan giving this session.</p>	<p>This text has been aligned <u>where possible</u> to 2020 text. From <i>Seminar IV (1956 - 1957) - The Object Relation & Freudian Structures</i> Translation by the Earl's Court Collective: Alma Buholzer Ganesh Anantharaman (from August 2021) Greg Hynds Julia Evans Jesse Cohn This is due to be published in April 2022, so paragraph numbers are given rather than page numbers. [] give page numbers in Séminaire IV (1994)</p>	<hr/> <p>Text from Jacques Lacan – <i>The Object Relation, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book IV</i>, Polity Press 2020, Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, Translated by Adrian Price.</p>
<p>P145 Tout ceci n'est pas simplement vaine articulation rhétorique, car il est tout à fait impossible de passer autrement qu'en les éludant, sur des objections que des gens pas très fins ont pu faire à certaines remarques analytiques, sur le sujet de l'érotisation du sein, par exemple Mr. Ch. Blondel¹. Dans le dernier numéro</p>	<p>Seminar IV : 27th February 1957</p> <p>Paragraph 20 All this is not simply vain rhetorical articulation, for it is completely impossible to get by, without eluding them according to the objections that some not-so-subtle people have made to certain analytic remarks - on the topic of the eroticization of the breast, for example, by Charles Blondel.³ In the latest issue of <i>Etudes Philosophiques</i>, focused on Freudian commentary, Favier-Boutonnier⁴ reminds us in one of</p>	<p>[p171] XI THE PHALLUS AND THE UNFULFILLED MOTHER The gift manifests itself on appeal Substitution of satisfactions The eroticisation of need The mirror, from jubilation to depression The signifying role of the imaginary phallus ... P176 All this is not merely some nugatory rhetorical articulation. because it responds to certain objections - and in a different way, in a way that does not evade them - voiced by people who are certainly not especially astute, regarding certain analytic</p>

¹ Blondel Ch., *La psychanalyse*, p.150-15, Félix Alcan, Paris 1924.

³ Charles Aimé Alfred Blondel (1876-1939), a French philosopher, psychologist, and doctor, was a virulent critic of psychoanalysis.

⁴ Juliette Favez-Boutonnier was a French academic, psychologist and psychoanalyst who founded the organization Société Française de Psychanalyse (French Society for Psychoanalysis) in 1953 and remained its Vice President for 10 years until its dissolution in 1964

<p>des Etudes philosophiques fait à propos du commentaire de Freud Mme Favez-Boutonnier nous rappelle dans un de ses articles², que Mr Ch. Blondel disait : je veux bien tout entendre, mais que font-ils du cas où l'enfant n'est pas du tout nourri au sein de sa mère, mais au biberon ? C'est justement à ceci que les choses que je viens de vous structurer répondent. L'objet réel, dès qu'il entre dans la dialectique de la frustration, n'est pas en lui-même indifférent, mais il n'a nul besoin d'être spécifique, d'être le sein de la mère, il ne perd rien de la valeur de sa place dans la dialectique sexuelle, d'où il ressort l'érotisation de la zone orale, car ce n'est justement pas l'objet qui là-dedans joue le rôle essentiel, mais le fait que l'activité a pris cette fonction érotisée sur le plan du désir qui s'ordonne dans l'ordre symbolique.</p>	<p>her articles⁵ that Blondel said: “I am quite open-minded, but what do they make of the case in which the child is not fed by the mother’s breast, but by a bottle?” This is precisely what the things I have just been laying out respond to.</p> <p>Paragraph 21 The real object, as soon as it enters the dialectic of frustration, is not in itself indifferent, but there is no reason for it to be specific - to be the mother’s breast - it loses none of the value of its position in the sexual dialectic, the mainspring of the oral zone’s eroticisation. For what plays an essential role in this is precisely not the object, but the fact that the activity took on this eroticised function at the level of desire, which orders itself in the symbolic order.</p>	<p>remarks on the eroticisation of the breast. One such objector is Charles Blondel. In the most recent issue of <i>Les Etudes philosophiques</i>, dedicated to the centenary of Freud's birth, Mme Favez-Boutonnier quote. Blondel from one of his articles where he says that he's quite prepared to entertain all of this, but still wonders what analysts make of those cases where the child is not suckled at his mother's breast. but is instead bottle-fed. What I've just structured for you provides a reply precisely to this. Once it has entered the dialectic of frustration. the real object is not in itself irrelevant, but it has no need to be specific. Even if it is not the mother's breast, it will lose nothing of the value of its place in the sexual dialectic, from which emanates the eroticisation of the oral zone. The object is not what plays the essential role here, but rather the fact that the activity has taken on [p177] this eroticised function on the plane of desire, and which becomes organised in the symbolic order.</p>
<p>Je vous fais également remarquer au passage que</p>	<p>I also ask you to notice in passing that this goes so far that</p>	<p>I shall also point out to you in passing that this</p>

² Favez-Boutonnier J., *La psychanalyse et les problèmes de l'enfance*, Etudes Philosophiques, 1956 n° 4 ; p. 628 - 633. *Psychanalyse et philosophie*, in Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie, 1, janvier - mars 1955.

⁵ Favez-Boutonnier, Juliette “La psychanalyse et les problèmes de l’enfance” *Les Études philosophiques*, Nouvelle Série, 11e Année, No. 4, Psychanalyse (Octobre/Decembre 1956), p628-633

<p>cela va si loin, qu'il y a possibilité pour jouer le même rôle qu'il n'y ait pas d'objet réel du tout, puisqu'il s'agit en cette occasion de ce qui donne lieu à cette satisfaction substitutive de la satisfaction symbolique. C'est ceci qui peut, et qui peut seul expliquer la véritable fonction de symptômes tels que ceux de l'anorexie mentale.</p>	<p>it is possible for the same role to be played even if there is no real object at all, since what's important here is what makes way for the substitutive satisfaction proper to symbolic satisfaction. This - and this alone - explains the true function of symptoms such as mental anorexia^{6,7}</p>	<p>reaches so far that it is quite possible for the same role to be played when there is no real object whatsoever, because what is at issue here is to give rise to a substitutive satisfaction for symbolic saturation. This and this alone can explain the true function of symptoms like those of anorexia nervosa. I've already [Footnote 2] told you that anorexia is not a matter of <i>not eating anything</i>, but of <i>eating nothing</i>. I insist - it means <i>to eat nothing</i>. <i>Nothing</i> is precisely something that exists on the symbolic plane. It's not a <i>nicht essen</i>, but a <i>nichts essen</i>. This point is indispensable if one is to understand the phenomenology of anorexia. What is at issue in the detail is that the child eats <i>nothing</i>, which is something other than a negation of activity. From this savoured absence as such, he makes use of what he has in front of him, namely the mother on whom he depends. In virtue of this <i>nothing</i>, he makes her dependent on him. If you do not grasp this, you cannot understand anything, not only about anorexia but about</p>
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⁶ 'anorexie mentale' can also be now translated as 'anorexia nervosa'. It is probable that this psychiatric term, which was brought into common use when German-American psychoanalyst Hilde Bruch published *The Golden Cage: the Enigma of Anorexia Nervosa* in 1978, would not have been used by Jacques Lacan 1957.

⁷ In Jacques Lacan - *Séminaire IV* Éditions du Seuil (1994) p184-185, two paragraphs are included which have not been translated as they do not appear in the original transcript used for this translation. Adrian Price refers to this as 'interpolated material' in Translator's Notes, 'XI The Phallus and the Unfulfilled Mother' – Note 2, *Jacques Lacan – The Object Relation, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book IV*, Polity Press 2020, p437

		other symptoms besides, and you will make the gravest errors.
<p>P146 Je vous ai parlé de la relation primitive à la mère, qui devient au même moment un être réel, précisément en ceci que pouvant refuser indéfiniment, elle peut littéralement tout, et comme je vous l'ai dit, c'est à son niveau et non pas au niveau de je ne sais quelle espèce d'hypothèse d'une sorte de mégalomanie qui projetterait sur l'enfant ce qui n'est que l'esprit de l'analyste, qu'apparaît pour la première fois la dimension de la toute-puissance, la Wirklichkeit qui en allemand signifie efficacité et réalité, l'efficace essentiel qui se présente d'abord à ce niveau comme la toute-puissance de l'être réel, dont dépend absolument et sans recours, le don ou non don.</p>	<p>Paragraph 22 [185] I spoke to you of the primitive relation to the mother, who at this moment becomes a real being, precisely because in being able to refuse indefinitely, she can do literally everything. And, as I told you, it is at her level - and not the level of some hypothesis of a sort of megalomania, which projects onto the child what is merely the analyst's mind - that the dimension of total power appears for the first time. This <i>Wirklichkeit</i>, in German, means efficacy and reality. This essential efficacy first presents itself in this guise, as the total power of the real being on which the gift or absence thereof depends absolutely and irrevocably.</p>	<p>So, I have located for you the moment of reversal that brings us into the symbolic dialectic of oral activity. Other types of activity are then seized upon in like fashion in the libidinal dialectic. But this is not all that happens. Conversely, and consequently, at the same time as the symbolic reversal of the substitutive activity is introduced into the real, the mother - who hitherto was the subject of the symbolic demand, the simple locus where presence or absence could manifest itself, which raises the question of the unreality of the primary relationship with the mother - becomes a real being. Since she can endlessly decline, she can literally do anything. As I said, it is at this level - and not at the level of goodness knows what hypothesis of some kind of megalomania, which merely projects onto the child what is in the mind of the analyst - that there appears for the first time the dimension of almightiness, <i>Wirklichkeit</i>, which in German means what is really and effectively so. The essential effectiveness initially presents as the almightiness of the real</p>

		being upon whom the gift or the non-gift depend, absolutely and with no recourse.
<p>Je suis en train de vous dire que la mère est primordialement toute-puissante, et que dans cette dialectique nous ne pouvons pas l'éliminer pour comprendre quoi que ce soit qui vaille. C'est une des conditions essentielles. Je ne suis pas en train de vous dire avec Madame Mélanie Klein, qu'elle contient tout. C'est une autre affaire à laquelle je ne fais allusion qu'en passant, et dont je vous ai fait remarquer que l'immense contenant du corps maternel dans lequel se trouvent tous les objets fantasmatiques primitifs réunis, nous pouvons maintenant entrevoir comment c'est possible. Car que ce soit possible, c'est ce que Madame Mélanie Klein nous a généralement montré, mais elle a toujours été fort embarrassée pour expliquer comment c'était possible, et bien entendu c'est ce dont ne sont pas privés ses adversaires d'arguer, pour dire que là sans doute Madame Mélanie Klein rêvait. Bien entendu elle rêvait, elle avait raison de rêver car le fait n'est possible que par une projection rétroactive dans le sens du corps maternel, de toute la lyre des objets imaginaires.</p>	<p>I am telling you that the mother is primordially all-powerful, and that in this dialectic we cannot understand anything at all worthwhile if we eliminate her. This is one of the essential conditions. I am not, as Melanie Klein does, saying that she contains everything. Paragraph 23 Another thing I'll allude to in passing is that we can now start to understand how the immense container of the maternal body, where we find all the primitive fantasy objects, is possible. That it is possible has generally been shown by Melanie Klein. But she has always been hard-pressed to explain how it is possible. And, of course, her adversaries have made use of this in order to say that surely she was dreaming.</p> <p>Of course she was dreaming - she was right to dream, for these facts are possible only through a retroactive projection within the sense of the maternal body, of the whole range of imaginary objects. But they are there, in effect, since it is in the virtual field, in the symbolic nullification through which the mother constitutes herself that all subsequent objects [186] will in turn take on their symbolic value.</p> <p>Paragraph 24 Seen from a slightly more advanced level of a child of two, it is not at all surprising that he finds them</p>	<p>I'm telling you that the mother is primordially all-powerful, and that this cannot be eliminated from this dialectic if we are to understand anything worthwhile. It's one of its essential conditions. I'm not telling you, as does Mrs Melanie Klein. that the mother contains everything. That is another matter, to which I'm alluding only in passing. I will note, however, that we are now afforded a glimpse of how & all the primitive phantasmatic objects can be found gathered [p178] together in the immense container of the maternal body. Mrs Klein has always shown us quite wonderfully that this is possible, but she has always been in a great bind when it comes to explaining <i>how</i> it is possible, and her opponents have not held back from arguing as much in order to say that she is surely daydreaming. For sure, she has been daydreaming, and she has been quite right to, because the fact is possible only through a retroactive projection of the whole gamut of imaginary objects into the heart of the maternal body. But these objects</p>

<p>Mais ils y sont bien en effet puisque c'est du champ virtuel, néantisation symbolique que la mère constitue, que tous les objets à venir tireront chacun à leur tout leur valeur symbolique.</p> <p>A prendre simplement à un niveau un peu plus avancé, un enfant vers l'âge de deux ans, il n'est pas du tout étonnant qu'elle les y trouve projetés rétroactivement, et on peut dire en un certain sens que comme tout le reste, puisqu'ils étaient prêts à y venir un jour, ils y étaient déjà.</p> <p>Nous nous trouvons donc devant un point où l'enfant se trouve en présence de la toute-puissance maternelle. Puisque nous sommes au niveau de Madame Mélanie Klein, vous observerez que si je viens de faire une allusion rapide à ce qu'on peut appeler la position paranoïde, comme elle l'appelle elle-même, nous sommes déjà au niveau de la toute-puissance maternelle dans ce quelque chose qui nous suggère ce qu'était la position dépressive, car devant la toute-puissance nous pouvons soupçonner qu'il y a là quelque chose qui ne doit pas être sans rapport avec la relation à la toute-puissance, cette espèce d'anéantissement, de micromanie, qui bien au contraire de la mégalomanie, s'ébauche</p>	<p>projected retroactively, and we might say that in a sense, just like all the rest: since they were ready to be there one day, they were there already.</p> <p>We thus find ourselves at a point when the child ends up in the presence of maternal total power. Since we are dealing with Melanie Klein, you will notice that even though I just made a quick allusion to what might be called the paranoid position, as she herself calls it, we are already at the level of maternal total power with this 'something' that suggests to us what was the depressive position.</p> <p>For, before total power we can suspect that there is something there that is not without relationship with the relation to total power; this sort of disappearance, this micromania - which indeed, contrary to megalomania, takes shape, according to Melanie Klein, in this state.</p>	<p>really are there, because the mother constitutes a virtual field of symbolic annihilation, from which each of the objects to come will in turn draw their symbolic value. If we simply take the subject at a slightly more advanced level, for example a child at around two years of age, it is not surprising in the least that Mrs Klein should find here objects that are reprojected retroactively. And one can say in a certain sense that, just like all the others, since they were ready to appear there one day, they were indeed already there. So, we find ourselves before a point at which the child is faced with the presence of maternal almightiness. Since we are on Mrs Melanie Klein's level, you will note that if I have just alluded briefly to what can be called the paranoid position, which is what she herself terms it, we are already at the lever of maternal almightiness in what is suggested to us as constitutive of the depressive position, because, faced with this almightiness, we may suspect that there is something that cannot be unrelated to the relationship to almightiness, this kind of annihilation, this kind of micromania, which contrary to megalomania, takes shape, according to</p>
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aux dires de Madame Mélanie Klein, à cet état.		what she tells us, at this stage. ...
	<p>P3 Preface to Translation Collective's text – www.LacanianWorks.net & www.LacanianWorksExchange.net</p> <p>Note on the translation This English translation has been produced from a transcription of the original stenographs of the fourth year of Lacan's public seminars. The translation proceeds from this unedited text and, as such, aims to represent Lacan's spoken French without abridgement. For reference, page numbers have been given in the left margin that correspond to the French version of the seminar, published by <i>Éditions du Seuil</i> in 2007 and edited by Jacques-Alain Miller.</p> <p>It should also be noted that this will be an evolving work, not a definitive translation, and that sessions will be added to the collection as and when they are completed.</p> <p>The work is offered for personal and private use only and <i>not</i> for commercial publication.</p>	<p>Adrian Price's Footnote 2 : p437 of <i>Seminar IV</i> : 2020. In the stenographer's paginated typescript, <i>Je vous ai</i> falls at the end of page 13, and page 14 begins <i>relation primitive de la mère, &c.</i> The discussion on <i>anorexie mentale</i> in the <i>Seuil</i> edition is thus an interpolation based apparently on the conjecture that this lacuna must correspond to an entire missing page. The interpolated material features in the present translation as the text leading up to '...primary relation with the mother ...' in the following paragraph.</p>

ENDNOTES

ⁱ See [Seminar IV : The Object Relation & Freudian Structures 1956-1957 : begins 21st November 1956 : Jacques Lacan](#) or [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=11980](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=11980) for up to date information on the progress of the translation from unedited transcription. The texts quoted in this article are from this translation project. *Livre IV, La Relation d'Objet, , 1956 to 1957* : Jacques Lacan : Éditions du Seuil, Mars (1994), Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller

Jacques Lacan – The Object Relation, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book IV, Polity Press (2020), Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, Translated by Adrian Price.

ⁱⁱ Adrian Price's Footnote 2 : p437 of *Seminar IV* (2020) or see Appendix 1

ⁱⁱⁱ 'The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis', translated by Alan Sheridan, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, London, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis (1977) or [Seminar XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts: 1963-1964 : beginning 15th January 1964 : Jacques Lacan](#) See [here http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1145](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=1145)