

Complicating the Happy Cure: Psychoanalysis and the Ends of Analysis

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This chapter explores the relative sidelining of psychoanalysis in critical approaches to Happiness Studies thus far. It argues that this stems from an American strand of psychoanalysis known as ego-psychology which forms an unacknowledged element in the genealogy of Happiness Studies itself. However, the chapter focusses primarily on Jacques Lacan's critical interventions into ego-psychology and his elaboration of a contrasting psychoanalytic theory and practice. It is claimed that Lacan's criticisms of happiness as an ego-based therapeutic ideology, and his related suspicion of models of 'cure', constitute a crucial resource for critical approaches to Happiness Studies. Finally, it is argued that, to this end, psychoanalysis is best approached as a clinical practice involving a tact with the subjective demand for happiness, rather than as a social or cultural theory that supports a generalised critique of happiness as a neoliberal ideology but misses, thereby, the affective hold over intimacy and sociality contemporary happiness has.

Psychoanalysis: Friend or Foe to Critical Happiness Studies?

Although there are now numerous critiques of the social, political and economic agendas behind the field of Happiness Studies and its allied discourses of 'resilience' and 'well-being' (Davies: 2015, Binkley: 2014, Evans and Reid: 2014, Berlant: 2011, Ahmed: 2010; Bruckner: 2010, Ehrenreich: 2010; Whippman: 2016; Wright: 2013 etc.), there has as yet been insufficient reflection on the theoretical frameworks that might found an opposing discipline of *critical* happiness studies. This chapter argues that while a number of approaches have been utilised effectively in recent interrogations of happiness - from Feminist cultural studies to critical phenomenology; from Foucauldian biopolitics to discourse analysis; from cultural history to the sociology of health and of work; and from critical psychology and psychiatry to theories of affect inspired by continental philosophy - one resource has been notable for its relative absence: psychoanalysis, as a body of theory but particularly as a *clinical practice*.

On the one hand, this seems very surprising. Psychoanalysis offers one of the richest and most flexible conceptual frameworks available for engaging with the question of human happiness and its obdurate opposite; one that has, moreover, played a central part in the Frankfurt School tradition of 'Freudo-Marxist' critical theory (Held: 1980; Wolfenstein: 1993). Furthermore, the *rejection* of psychoanalysis is a gesture constitutive of the fields of positive psychology and Happiness Studies themselves. Figures like Martin Seligman regularly claim that Freud's big mistake was focussing on pathological suffering rather than on potential self-improvement, rendering psychoanalysis in his eyes nothing less than a "rotten-to-the-core doctrine" (Seligman: 2013, p. xii). Though never as dismissive as this, the critics of Happiness Studies have often found themselves in counter-intuitive agreement that psychoanalysis is somehow part of the problem. Thinkers such as Eva Illouz date the rise of what she calls 'emotional capitalism' from 1909, "the year Sigmund Freud went to lecture in America at Clark University" (Illouz: 2007, p.5); while others, such as Sam Binkley, follow Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari in locating psychoanalysis squarely within the governmental apparatus of the Oedipalising 'psy' disciplines (Binkley: 2014).

Yet on the other hand, this sidelining of psychoanalysis as a critical framework is not surprising at all, because Illouz and Binkley are right: an utterly diluted version of 'Freudianism' has indeed been co-opted by the very 'therapy industry' (Moloney: 2013) that now sustains the discourse of happiness, even as it seems predicated, paradoxically, on a rejection of Freud. This pertains to the knotty history of psychoanalysis in America specifically, which there is no hope of disentangling much here (although

see Hale: 1971; Makari: 2008; and Burnham: 2012). Nonetheless, it is thanks in part to what might be called 'Freud lite', promulgated in the United States since the early 20th Century, that a neoliberal conception of happiness is now experienced as a new *sensus communis* in the 21st.

However, this entanglement of psychoanalytic ideas with the globalisation of the American pursuit of Happiness does *not* call for the wholesale abandonment of Freud's invention. On the contrary, it necessitates a careful parsing out of psychoanalysis 'proper' from its problematic deviation. Despite the often ossified psychoanalytic theory to be found mainly in the Arts and Humanities Faculties of many universities today, I would argue that the *clinical practice* of psychoanalysis represents an ongoing engagement with happiness too valuable to be ignored by this new field. The consulting room is also a site of knowledge-production, albeit an overlooked and peculiar one, in which the 'knowledge' produced does not lend itself to "university discourse" (Lacan: 2008).¹ My own experience as a psychoanalyst suggests the importance of a tactful pragmatics *with* the subjective demand for happiness, rather than the relative ease of an academic dismissal of it as a neoliberal 'ideology' (true though that undoubtedly is).

Luckily, much of the work needed for this parsing out has already been undertaken by the French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, as long ago as the 1950s and 1960s. His polemics regarding the adaptationist tendencies of what he called the "other psychoanalysis" (Lacan: 2006a), which pertained primarily to an American variant called 'ego psychology' (see Bergman: 2000 and Hale: 1995), echo our positivity-preoccupied present and we can learn a great deal from re-visiting them. Lacan foresaw the transformation of happiness into a therapeutic ideology (Lacan: 2007), and his distancing of psychoanalysis from the psychiatric and medicalised notion of 'cure', central to the therapeutic culture in which 'flourishing' now flourishes, arguably redeems psychoanalysis as a theoretical resource for critical happiness studies.

It is therefore towards Lacan's complication of the 'happy cure', and his related reflections on endings of analysis other than straightforwardly happy ones, that this chapter will ultimately make its way.

Baby and Bathwater: The Psychologization of Psychoanalysis

First, however, a brief review of some exemplary critical texts on Happiness Studies will illustrate the relative sidelining of psychoanalysis to which I have referred. In so doing, I certainly do not want to suggest that psychoanalysis is a panacea: Freud himself was insistent that it should not be a *Weltanschauung* or overarching world-view (Freud: 1963). Evidently, psychoanalysis does not hold all the answers and critical happiness studies must continue to draw on an inter-disciplinary array of theoretical frameworks and research methodologies to triangulate its protean object of study. Yet I do want to argue that psychoanalysis, especially clinical psychoanalysis, should claim a more prominent place among them if the politics of the (un)happy subject are to be more adequately theorised.

Progress has certainly been made in the appraisal of the happiness agenda. Its intimate overlaps with neoliberalism have been outlined in a number of publications now. For example, William Davies' excellent *The Happiness Industry: How the Government and Big Business Sold Us Well-Being* (Davies: 2015) offers a critical history of the 'happy' present. It situates the emergence of Happiness Studies in relation to the common denominator between Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism and Gustav Fechner's mathematical 'psycho-physics' in the 19th Century: namely, the numerical measurement and comparison of administered pleasures and satisfactions. Davies shows how experimental behavioural

¹ Briefly, university discourse is defined by Lacan as a form of the social link that situates *knowledge*, often technical, disembodied knowledge, in the place of mastery once occupied by more vertical modes of traditional authority.

psychology, an affective style of management within the corporate sphere, and a behavioural economics increasingly decoupled from the welfare state, each attempted to actualise the statistical capture of affect that Bentham had only imagined with his ‘felicific calculus’.

However, in this otherwise comprehensive account of contemporary happiness, psychoanalysis barely features at all. It appears primarily as what is excluded by mainstream psychiatry in the process of medicalizing depression with the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (p.164); or as what a figure like the psychosociologist Jacob Moreno was reacting *against* in his development of so-called ‘sociometrics’ (Davies: 2015, p. 199). But this is true only in relation to a caricature of psychoanalysis which needs to be seen in context if the proverbial ‘baby and bathwater’ problem is to be avoided. Indeed, the presence of psychoanalysis only within *a descriptive narrative of its rejection* is a motif one can also find in the very Happiness Studies texts Davies is so critical of. To give just one example, in Jonathan Haidt’s *The Happiness Hypothesis: Putting Ancient Wisdom and Philosophy to the Test of Modern Science* (2006), Freud and psychoanalysis are present primarily as what Aaron Beck contradicted when he created cognitive therapy (Haidt: 2006, p.37); as a theory of rigid developmental determinism that had to be overcome to arrive at the apparently universal ‘happiness formula’ (p.91); and as what had to be refuted so that psychologists Harry Harlow and John Bowlby could “humanize the treatment of children” (p.109).

Something similar happens in Sam Binkley’s equally excellent book, *Happiness as Enterprise: An Essay on Neoliberal Life* (2014). Binkley is convincing in his advocacy of the relevance of a Foucauldian framework for the analysis of the rise of institutionalised positive psychology. Foucault helps us to see the latter as an apparatus of neoliberal individuation functioning across diverse domains such as health, education and the military. Drawing on Foucault’s *Collège de France* lectures on *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Binkley demonstrates that happiness has become “a purely plastic attribute of a psychosomatic self” (p.2), one modelled on the entrepreneur who continually undertakes cost-benefit analyses of affective as well as monetary transactions. This approach arguably builds on the work of Nikolas Rose exploring the rise of the psychological self as a mode of, and target for, biopolitical governmentality (Rose: 1998; 2007). Indeed, I myself have argued for the pertinence of the concept of biopolitics for understanding contemporary happiness in a special issue of *Health, Culture & Society* (Wright: 2013).

However, as I also suggested there, this Foucauldian framework is helpful descriptively and analytically, but not necessarily critically or in relation to the crucial question of subjectivity. I would argue that psychoanalysis is much better attuned to this issue. Yet in *Happiness as Enterprise*, psychoanalysis almost always appears next to a minus sign: it is what was rejected by Rogerian humanistic psychology (p.131); it is an integral element of what Foucault called the ‘psy-function’ (p.137); it is an Oedipalizing technology of the self (p.139); it is perfectly compatible with the industrial psychology pioneered by Elton Mayo (p.140); and it is a normative framework that reinforces the institution of the family and marriage through counselling and then family systems theory (p.144). In such arguments, Binkley is of course faithful to Foucault’s trenchant critique of psychoanalysis as an aspect of disciplinary and then biopolitical power (Foucault: 1998; 2003). And yet, seen as a critique of institutionalised forms of precisely what Lacan called “the other psychoanalysis”, Foucault’s argument need not be taken as a dismissal of psychoanalysis *tout court* and can even compliment Lacan’s critique.

What both of these motifs – the inclusion of psychoanalysis only within the narrative of its exclusion, and that of its containment without remainder within the ‘psy-function’ – arguably have in common is a rapid conflation of psychoanalysis and *psychology*. In the clinical field this is enabled by the ambiguity introduced with the term ‘psychotherapy’, which in practice covers a vast range of eclectic

approaches almost all of which are decidedly non- or even anti-psychoanalytic (see Loewenthal: 2015 and Parker: 2015). The effects of this are noticeable in Eva Illouz's otherwise perceptive arguments in *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism* (2007). Although not focussed specifically on happiness, this illuminating text is a crucial reference point for a discipline of critical happiness studies, as indicated by her welcome participation in this volume. Drawing on a sociological tradition very much informed by Frankfurt School critical theory, Illouz demonstrates the ways in which the management of emotions became, from the early 20th Century onwards, a central concern in the workplace and in the home, resulting in a blurring between these realms. This commodification of emotion extends into the very pores of supposedly intimate, affective life. She shows this in the sphere of love, through an analysis of online dating sites where one can discern the imposition of normative social scripts regarding emotional exchanges ultimately figured as 'profitable' in some sense.² Illouz is absolutely right to identify experimental psychology and its emphasis on statistical measurement and the management of affect as the catalyst behind these developments; but in so doing, she is perhaps a little too quick to absorb psychoanalysis into this narrative, to conflate Freud with a perceived 'Freudianism'.

But I would argue that, again, a slight shift in perspective can reframe Illouz's analysis in *Cold Intimacies* as a much-needed critique of *the psychologization of psychoanalysis in the United States*, without at all accepting that this very real and powerful process exhausts what psychoanalysis 'is'. Just as Foucault's view of psychoanalysis can be illuminating if framed as a critique of the 'other psychoanalysis' rather than of psychoanalysis as a whole, so Illouz's analysis of the rise of 'emotional capitalism' can be extremely relevant if contextualised in relation both to the vast distance between mainstream clinical psychology and psychoanalysis (see Parker: 2015), and to the history of psychoanalysis in America which has arguably minimised this distance to the point of attempting to erase it (Hale: 1971; Hale: 1995; Burnham: 2012).

It is no surprise that the 'can do' attitude and down-to-earth pragmatism of American culture should have given birth to positive psychology and Happiness Studies. What *is* surprising is that such a culture could have previously welcomed the deeply European pessimism of psychoanalysis with open arms. Arguably however, psychoanalysis State-side was from the beginning a less than faithful psychologization of Freud's ideas, and it was essentially this development to which Jacques Lacan objected so vehemently in the 1950s and 1960s.

Contesting the 'Other Psychoanalysis'

Lacan famously declared the need for a "return to Freud" in his Rome Discourse of 1953 (Lacan: 2006b). This clarion call was motivated by an intense dislike - not uncontaminated by a European cultural prejudice he shared with Freud himself (see Falzeder: 2014) - for the 'neo-Freudian' wave that emerged in America in the 1940s, but began to exert considerable influence within the *International Psychoanalytic Association* and well-beyond in the 1950s.

Over that period, Lacan had observed American (or naturalised American) psychoanalysts such as Erik Erikson, Karen Horney, Harry Stack Sullivan, and Clara Thompson, openly rejecting Freud's drive theory and thus the centrality of psychosexual conflict in psychoanalytic theory (Hale: 1995). In so doing, they paved the way for a much greater focus on the socio-cultural factors involved in ego-formation, and thus on developmental psychology and attendant notions of 'maturity', 'adaptation' and even 'normality', rather than the unconscious per se. Despite many differences between them, these 'neo-

² Illouz has since developed this argument further (see Illouz: 2013), effectively pitting sociology against psychoanalysis, or at least a certain version of it, as an explanatory framework for difficulties in love.

Freudians' broadly came to advocate a therapeutic approach based on *strengthening the ego* and even *identifying with the strong or 'healthy' ego of the analyst*. This evolved into a specific orientation of American psychoanalysis called 'ego-psychology' which is associated primarily with another émigré analyst, Heinz Hartman (see Bergman: 2000), but also - not insignificantly - with Lacan's own analyst, Rudolph Loewenstein. Based on Freud's metapsychological writings and what we know of his own clinical technique however, we can say with some confidence that these 'neo-Freudians' were in fact 'anti-Freudians' in all but name. Nowhere was this more apparent than in their insistence on a 'mature' and 'conflict-free' ego as a desirable therapeutic goal. As we will see in a moment, the conflict-free ego is an out-and-out oxymoron for Lacan. Nonetheless, the notion of an ego-based 'cure' made sense in an American cultural context in which 'self-esteem' had started to be conceived, within a much broader self-help movement, as a kind of psychological capital (Cruikshank: 1993; Rimke: 2000). Until its declining influence in the 1970s with the rise of cognitivism, ego-psychology effectively presented itself as *the* pre-eminent psychotherapeutic framework with which to facilitate the constitutional right to the pursuit of a happy ego...

This cluster of concepts, clinical practices, analysts and analytical institutions then, is what Lacan gathers under the pejorative heading of "the other psychoanalysis". He was not alone in recognising its dangers however. Around the same time, Herbert Marcuse developed his own critique of this "revisionist school" in *Eros and Civilization* (Marcuse: 1987), centring his discussion on the question, precisely, of happiness-as-cure. Marcuse noted that whereas Freud identified the structural impossibility of happiness in conditions of modernity in *Civilization and its Discontents* – limiting the clinical ambitions of psychoanalysis to the attainment of that "ordinary unhappiness" referred to as long ago as *Studies on Hysteria* of 1895 - the so-called neo-Freudians had begun to "proclaim a higher goal of therapy", nothing less than "an 'optimal development of a person's potentialities and the realization of his individuality'" (Marcuse: 1987, p.258). This should sound very familiar to readers of positive psychology and the Happiness Studies literature today, so much so that neo-Freudianism can be seen as part of their *shared yet disavowed* genealogy. There are vast differences of course, particularly the positivism of positive psychology that lays such stress on measurement, but at the level of the higher goal Marcuse mentions,³ we can certainly speak of a close 'family resemblance'. Would this not cast new light on the almost *symptomatic* nature of the repeated rejection of psychoanalysis by happiness gurus such Seligman and Haidt?

To my knowledge, there is little to no scholarship on this subterranean connection between today's positive psychologists and the neo-Freudian wave of American ego-psychologists. Any doubt, however, could probably be dispelled by reference to the work and considerable influence of yet another émigré American psychoanalyst, Heinz Kohut (see Strozier: 2001). Not long after his forced migration from Vienna to Chicago during World War Two, Kohut began to develop what he called a 'Self Psychology', the central postulate of which was a 'healthy narcissism' (Kohut: 1985). In stark contrast to Freud's own position on narcissism in 1914 (Freud: 1957), Kohut conceptualised this 'healthy narcissism' as a kind of psychic fuel powering ambition and self-realisation, even as a "bank account of self-esteem" (Lunbeck: 2014, p.219) on which to draw during trying times. Does this not sound like both flourishing and resilience *avant la lettre*? And does not the bank account metaphor translate Freud's quintessentially 19th Century thermodynamic understanding of 'economics' into a very different 20th Century financial register? Thanks partly to his powerful position as president of the *American Psychoanalytic Association*, by the 1970s Kohut's 'Self Psychology' seemed to have absorbed the author of *The Interpretation of Dreams* into the *American* dream. One is inclined to look

³ Marcuse's critique of the neo-Freudians is remarkably perceptive but also problematic in its own ways. Rather like Adorno, he much prefers psychoanalytic theory to its clinical application, viewing the latter as intrinsically normative.

back on Freud's alleged comment to Jung as they approached the American coast back in 1909 – "They do not know that we are bringing them the plague!" – and wonder who, in fact, was unaware of where 'the plague' really lay in wait ...

That, in any case, would be Lacan's polemical position, which he developed in a number of texts and seminars over twenty odd years. Here, I will restrict myself to a few comments on just four references: his 1958 text 'The Direction of the Treatment' (Lacan: 2006a); his seventh seminar on *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* from 1959-60 (Lacan: 2007); the series of lectures he gave in 1967 which have been gathered together as *My Teaching* (Lacan: 2008b); and finally, his gnomic observations on the differences between psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in the televised interview from 1973, entitled, simply *Télévision* (Lacan: 1990).

From the Imaginary to the Symbolic, and Away from Happy Endings

Lacan's 'Direction of the Treatment' is a classic combination of acerbic wit, iconoclasm, and conceptual innovation, but his overall aim is ostensibly to intervene into the then dominance of the ego-psychologists. Via 'strong readings' of Freudian texts but also through his own idiosyncratic deployment of structural linguistics, Lacan criticises the assumptions of the ego-psychologists at the same time as elaborating a contrasting theoretical and clinical framework.

The first key difference is that, in keeping with the famous 'mirror-stage' paper (Lacan: 2006c), Lacan understands the ego *as structurally alienated in an external Other*: the ego is not there from the beginning as a locus of adaptation but only emerges in and through a dialectical relation to an Other. It is not that this alienation befalls the ego as a kind of tragic accident, but rather that the ego *is* this alienation. This makes any notion of egoic harmony as a model of happy 'cure' completely wrong-headed from the start. For Lacan, the ego is entirely *imaginary*. This is not to say that it doesn't exist - far from it - but rather that the mode of existence it has is inescapably entangled with the demands of this external Other, which is often a conduit for social values around everything from sexuality, to love relations, to what counts as 'productive' or 'worthwhile' work ... in other words, for normative understandings of happiness. From this perspective, the self of Kohut's 'Self Psychology' would be the result not of 'healthy narcissism', but of a narcissism marked by a constitutive misrecognition that renders the ego vulnerable to rivalry, aggression and exhaustion. The ego then is a non-identity that uses consoling fantasies, individual as well as social, to pretend that it is in fact an autonomous, non-alienated identity. One can quickly see how the 'promise of happiness' (Ahmed: 2010) comes in at this imaginary level in order to prop up *imagos* of wholeness, plenitude and the happiness-to-come of complete satisfaction; yet simultaneously, one can also see how such an inherently *false* promise of happiness leads to an even deeper alienation in the Other's demands. This would bring us back to the dialectic of repression and sublimation Freud identified in *Civilization and its Discontents* as a deadlock for modern happiness.

From Lacan's perspective therefore, prescribing a *strengthening of the ego* to 'cure' neuroses is like to trying to put a fire out with petrol: it is a recipe for frustration, acting out, or even a serious *passage à l'acte* on the patient's part. Hence his question: "How can the ego, whose aid they [these 'other psychoanalysts'] claim to enlist here, not suffer, in effect, from the blows of further alienation they induce in the subject?" (2006a, p.534). This is because the ego is constitutively blind to the *subject's* unconscious desire, which is what is 'speaking' in a roundabout way in the neurotic symptom. This relates to the fundamental conceptual opposition organising the argument in 'Direction of the Treatment', and indeed much of Lacan's work in the 1950s, namely, that between the imaginary and the symbolic. If the ego is imaginary, the unconscious is symbolic - structured, as he famously put it, like a language. That the ego and the subject are two distinct entities, that, in other words, the un-

conscious exists, is a fundamental hypothesis of psychoanalytic theory. Yet it is precisely this that is set aside by the neo-Freudians when they formulate concepts such as the 'total personality' or a putative 'non-conflictual sphere'.

For Lacan then, directing the treatment would consist in handling the transference so that the neurotic patient can move beyond the ego's imaginary demand for happiness and towards the unconscious desire that really animates them as a speaking subject. This is not at all a matter of telling the patient they are wrong to imagine some possible happiness in life, to educate them in the tragic nature of human existence, or indeed to point out that happiness is a mirage of neoliberal ideology. It is hard to imagine this being of any use to the patient! Such sermonising would rest upon a position of assumed knowledge, of a pre-existing and very universal type, which the analyst should resist if she is to truly listen to the patient's speech, where a very different kind of knowledge can emerge. Rather, it is a matter of giving some space – and, crucially, some words - to the frustration implicit in the demand for happiness. Why would one be demanding happiness, after all, if one already had it? Demanding happiness already implies unhappiness, but addressing it to an analyst who knows how to work with the transference can enable the initial complaint to crystallize into a subjectively assumed question which has no ready-to-hand answer in off-the-shelf tropes of happiness. This question can then propel the analytic work away from imaginary fantasies and towards unconscious, symbolic desire. The direction of the treatment, then, involves the *transformative tact with happiness* to which I referred in my opening remarks.

These may seem like narrow issues of clinical technique, but Lacan never stops underlining the broader ethical and political consequences intrinsic to the 'other psychoanalysis'. For example, he discerns very clearly the link between ego-psychology and the exercise of a certain kind of power and authority. Its theoretical framework implies an insight into the nature of *reality* on the analyst's part that the patient needs to learn from. Therapy can then be modelled along didactic lines as a kind of re-education, with the analyst teaching the patient about what reality is: "They gauge the patient's defection from it [this reality] using the authoritarian principle which has been used by educators since time immemorial" (p.493), namely, that their own teachers taught them about this reality, so it must be true. Imagining a 'good' therapeutic outcome as 'identification with' or 'introjection of' the 'healthy part of the analyst's ego' stems from this same assumption of superior insight into reality. And yet, for Lacan *reality is itself an imaginary category*: our experience of reality, he argues, is constructed using fantasy co-ordinates of what the ego would like to be in the eyes of the Other. This self-centred take on 'reality' is a common enough condition of course, but it becomes a serious ethical problem in an analyst who ends up imposing it onto the patient, especially when this imposition is raised to an analytic principle by a whole training school. Lacan does not pull any punches in targeting what he perceives to be the truly narcissistic self-authorisation at work in the schools of ego-psychology across the pond:

A team of egos [in English] [...] offers itself to Americans to guide them towards happiness [in English], without upsetting the autonomies, whether egoistic or not, that pave with their nonconflictual spheres the American [in English] way of getting there (2006a, p.494).

The use of English in the original French text here indicates the perceived effects on psychoanalytic theory of an Anglophone cultural as well as philosophical (empiricist, pragmatist) context. This could certainly be read as European snobbery on Lacan's part and it would be hard to deny that something of the sort is at play, yet he does take the time to detail the consequences of the distortions of Freudian doctrine of which he believes ego-psychology to be guilty.

From his insistence that 'reality' is an imaginary lure, it follows that the pseudo-Darwinian notion of *adaptation to reality*, by which Freud himself was arguably tempted at times, should have no place in psychoanalytic theory or practice. On the contrary, Lacan says that the ego is "only too well adapted to [this reality]" (p.498), meaning that it is already thoroughly alienated in the imaginary. In analysis, it is vitally important that "what is at stake is something altogether different than the relations between the ego and the world" (p.499). Moreover, because the notion of adaptation lends itself to the explanatory frameworks that define developmental psychology, Lacan is also critical of the 'geneticism' common in the 'other psychoanalysis'. Geneticism refers to the latter's tendency to appeal to developmental stages in offering causal explanations of psychopathologies, as if Freud's psychosexual phases (oral, anal, phallic etc.) could be reduced to the more or less successful unfolding of an organism's nature. Notwithstanding the scientific credibility gained from this supposed overlap, psychoanalytic 'geneticism' has ultimately been very damaging. Lacan does not discuss it, but an illustrative example would be Bruno Bettelheim's incautious postulation of 'refrigerator mothers' in the pathogenesis of autism, as if 'bad parenting' at a crucial developmental stage were the underlying problem. As well as crude 'mother blaming' with dreadful consequences for parents caught up in this discourse, this has the even more pernicious effect of denying the autistic child any subjectivity of their own.⁴ In 'Direction of the Treatment', Lacan expresses his disappointment that this intersection between 'geneticism' and developmental psychology has not led to a "fruitful critique of the relations between development and the obviously more complex structures Freud introduced" (p. 504). Elsewhere, he draws on these 'more complex structures' to develop a recursive model of psychic causality, combating thereby the simplistic model inherent to the developmental perspective (Lacan: 2006d).

Each of these interventions go a long way toward disentangling psychoanalysis from the happy ego conceived within American ego-psychology. However, it is also noticeable in 'Direction of the Treatment' that on the specific issue of happiness, Lacan retains a rather nuanced position:

[P]eople imagine that a psychoanalyst should be a happy man. Indeed, is it not happiness that people ask him for, and how could he give it, commonsense asks, if he does not have a bit of it himself?

It is a fact that we do not proclaim our incompetence to promise happiness in an era in which the question of how to gauge it has become so complicated – in the first place, because happiness, as Saint-Just said, has become a political factor (2006a, p.513)

Imaginary though it might be, it seems the analyst would be unwise to dismiss the question of (un)happiness that leads someone to seek analysis in the first place: it is this nuanced pragmatism with the demand for happiness which I believe offers useful lessons for critical happiness studies.

Furor Sanandi: The Cure Sickness

A related lesson can be drawn from Lacan's careful separation of psychoanalytic practice from dominant paradigms of medical cure. As health is increasingly framed in terms of economic productivity, risk assessment and something akin to customer satisfaction today, this positioning becomes more and more important (Polzer and Power: 2016).

The question of what a psychoanalytic 'cure' is has long been a pressing one. During a debate about the requirements of a psychoanalytic training sparked by American analysts who insisted that a full

⁴ As some of the work with autistic subjects undertaken by Lacanian analysts demonstrates, psychoanalysis must proceed the other way, identifying and supporting what of a subject is already there precisely where other orientations would see only the 'disorder'. See Maleval: 2009.

medical degree ought be a precondition, Freud argued in 'Questions of Lay Analysis' that psychoanalysis must not belong solely in the hands of the medical sciences: he stressed instead the value of a broad knowledge of the Arts and Humanities, including literature and the visual and plastic arts (Freud: 2001). At stake in this debate was the disease-model of cure which enjoyed the scientific credibility of the biological and health sciences, but was totally inadequate for conceptualising the psyche. It is clear from his recommendation of a literary training for the would-be analyst that, in a very 'Lacanian' way, Freud considered the psyche in symbolic rather than organic terms: the psychoanalytic symptom is *not* like a virus one can catch, and cure, if such there is, is not like a vaccination. In several late papers on technique, Freud insisted that in the same way that there is a 'navel' of a dream that permanently resists interpretation, so the psychoanalytic 'cure' encounters an ineradicable limit in what he called the "bedrock of castration" (Freud: 2001b). Castration cannot be cured. Indeed, Freud warned of the dangers of the opposite assertion, terming it a *furor sanandi*, a kind of fury or rage to heal which can stymie analytic work. Now that in the era of quick-fix Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, 'cure' often means little more than getting back into the workforce, Freud's warnings about *furor sanandi* take on a decidedly political relevance. This is brilliantly captured in the title of Cederström and Spicer's book, *The Wellness Syndrome* (2015), and should be contextualised in relation to neoliberalism and the health effects of austerity politics (Shrecker and Bamba: 2015).

Lacan's own work echoes these Freudian debates. The original French title of 'Direction of the Treatment' is actually 'La Direction de la *cure*', and the broader psychoanalytic literature in French tends to use this term, whereas, for reasons which warrant further investigation, English texts generally use 'treatment'. A year or so after 'La Direction de la *cure*' was published however, Lacan took up again the problematic overlap between the notion of cure and prevailing ideas of happiness in his seventh seminar, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (Lacan: 2007). This rich reflection on Aristotle, the Stoic tradition, Antigone but also the Marquis de Sade, Kant and Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism, is centred on the classical question of the good and its relation to pleasure, making it an extremely relevant source for critical approaches to happiness.

We find there the same reference to Saint-Just's quip mentioned above, but Lacan provides a deeper historical context which links the *modern* demand for happiness to the radical egalitarianism of the French Revolution. At the height of the *Ancien Régime*, feudal subservience, monarchical absolutism and the church's theological justification for deferring bliss until the hereafter, combined to prevent worldly happiness becoming an existential question as such. The revolution in which Saint-Just participated changed all that, but not without ambivalent consequences. For example, Lacan seems to see Benthamite utilitarianism as a nullifying response to the revolutionary dimensions of the demand for happiness, transforming the latter into the top-down administration of aggregated pleasures organised around a notional average (the famous 'greatest good for the greatest number'). Some see Happiness Studies as an updated utilitarianism (Veenhoven: 2010), and the role of Happiness and Wellbeing indexes in health and social policy supports this (Bok: 2010). It is already for these reasons that Lacan, in *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, calls happiness a "bourgeois ideology" (Lacan: 2007, p.359) which analysts must have nothing whatsoever to do with.

Towards the end of the 1960s, Lacan is making similar points but with a renewed awareness, post-Kinsey report and the Sexual Revolution, that the notion of the happy cure has been sexualised, paradoxically through a truly perverted reading of Freud. In *My Teaching*, a text which brings together three lectures delivered during 1967 - the year of the 'summer of Love' that preceded the outburst of 'revolutionary' desire in May '68 - he attacks what I have already called 'Freud lite':

Sexuality is something much more public. In truth, I do not think that psychoanalysis had much to do with that. Well, let's argue that if psychoanalysis did have something to do with that, and that is precisely what I am saying, then this is not really psychoanalysis (Lacan: 2008b, p.18).

He follows this attempt to distance psychoanalysis from what is being done in its name with a series of puns which only work in French. He begins by arguing that "*Sa vie sexuelle*", his or her sexual life - the centrepiece of a certain counter-cultural inflection of the other psychoanalysis - should be written "using a special orthography" so that it reads "*ça vice exuelle*", 'this sexual vice'. Although more or less homophonous, this foregrounds the deeply unfashionable idea that there is some link between sexuality and vice. However, it is crucial that we do not imagine Lacan is here being a reactionary and calling for a return to Victorian morality. On the contrary, the vice referred to has nothing to do with the act of sex itself, but rather with appealing to the image of sex and sexuality as a new version of the 'happy cure', a new realm of non-conflictual harmony and non-repressive expression. Lacan is not convinced by the equation of 'free love' with the supposedly untrammelled 'joy of sex', and thus unimpressed by the model of cure tailored around such ideas:

[Y]ou have to ask yourself if the ideal end of the psychoanalytic cure really is to get some gentlemen to earn a bit more money than before and, when it comes to his sex life, to supplement the moderate help he asks from his conjugal partner with the help he gets from his secretary (Lacan: 2008b, p.20).

Still targeting the ego psychologists, he directly addresses Franz Alexander of the Chicago School, noting the huge effort of theoretical revisionism it took him to "inaugurate this extravagant therapeutic fashion" (p.21) which promises that "when the ego is strong and at peace, when the obsession with tits and bums has signed its little peace treaty with the superego [...] everything is fine" (p.20). This notion of psychoanalytic cure as sexual healing is in total contrast to Lacan's assertion that "sexuality makes a hole in truth" (p.21), meaning, among other things, that the real of sex is akin to Freud's 'bedrock of castration'. This is what the last in the series of puns in this talk is getting at: following the logic of the signifier, Lacan gets to the more or less nonsensical "*ça visse sexuelle*" (p.18) which might be rendered as "it screws". Screwing doesn't fill a hole or compensate for a lack, but makes a hole, a real, which everybody has to find a singular way of dealing with.

By the 1973 interview transcribed as *Télévision*, Lacan is even more circumspect about the notion of cure, primarily because it has become entangled in psychotherapeutic ideas which are in turn contaminated by the American pursuit of happiness. Once again, he does not dismiss the notion of cure but he is careful with it: "The cure" he argues "is a demand that originates in the voice of the sufferer, of someone who suffers from his body or his thought" (Lacan: 1990, p.7). As in 'Direction of the Treatment', this situates the cure not in a disease-model but in the patient's demand, as a means of articulating his or her suffering. To push this novel understanding of cure further, Lacan then reflects on the differences between psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. This has become important precisely because "[t]hese days there is no psychotherapy that is not expected to be 'psychoanalytically inspired'" (*ibid.*). He refuses the usual lazy differentiator, namely the use of the couch in psychoanalysis and its absence in psychotherapy. Since a bit of furniture does not seem to offer a robust criterion, he makes a deeper distinction pertaining to two different understandings of language.

Psychotherapy, Lacan argues, emphasises the side of language that facilitates meaning and what we imagine to be transparent 'inter-subjective communication'. After the Sexual Revolution and in the wake of a certain reading of Freud which Lacan terms "sexo-leftism" (p.31), sex has become a kind of transcendental meaning, the meaning behind all others, so that a pseudo-Freudian mode of psychotherapy "pours out a flood of meaning to float the sexual boat" (p.8). And yet this focus on

meaning is ultimately an imaginary phenomenon: “not that it doesn’t do some good, but it’s a good that’s a return to what’s worse” (*ibid.*). By contrast, psychoanalysis emphasises that “meaning [...] acts as speech’s screen” (*ibid.*), which is to say that it is where meaning fails, in slips of the tongue or dreams or symptoms, that the screen of meaning falls and the unconscious is seen or heard to speak. Faithful to Saussure then, Lacan argues that “to the side of meaning the study of language opposes the side of the sign” (*ibid.*). Rooted in clinical practice and thus speech, psychoanalysis offers not the cure for a disease per se, but an exit from the interminable imaginary labyrinth of happiness as the false promise of both a final meaning and of the sexualised commodity’s illusory claim - ‘satisfaction guaranteed’.

Conclusion: The Politics of the Subject and the Symptom

At the beginning of this chapter I pointed out that critical approaches to Happiness Studies have tended to reduce psychoanalysis either to a narrative of its exclusion in the rise of positive psychology, or to a central component of the ‘psy’ disciplines that specialise in a neoliberal form of individuation. However, by demonstrating that clinical psychoanalysis, and the theory arising from it, is in fact reducible to neither of these roles, I have made the case for the pertinence of psychoanalytic perspectives, especially Lacanian ones, for this emerging field of critical happiness studies. Allow me, in closing, to briefly enumerate some of the potential gains of utilising psychoanalysis as a critical theoretical framework.

Firstly, in revisiting the complex schisms within the international psychoanalytic movement, one gets a sense of the stakes in the commodification of Freud’s ideas. Simplifying enormously, it is possible to discern two potential models of the subject. On the one hand, the truly Freudian subject which, far from coinciding with the socialised ego, constitutes a kind of singular excess, a remainder left outside of ‘discourse’ understood in a Foucaultian manner. On the other hand, we can perceive a subject that is essentially identical with a resilient ego deemed to be well adapted to its reality, and fully entitled to pursue its market-based right to happiness. As Binkley (2014) shows very clearly, this ego, as supposed apex of individualism and self-identity, is in fact fundamentally empty, a hollow, that offers little more than a plastic and malleable receptacle for the demands of today’s Other, the market. Secondly then, as well as exposing the genealogical origins of this hollow subject in the Neo-Freudian wave of ego-psychology, psychoanalysis helps us to focus on the persistence of the truly Freudian subject today, the divided subject who is made unhappy by the impossible demand to be happy in this new superegoic way. Thirdly then, some dialogue with *clinical* psychoanalysis allows critical happiness studies to push beyond the discourse of happiness and wellbeing in order to engage with their subjective effects, including the well-documented rise of what Lacanians call the ‘new symptoms’: depression, anxiety, addiction and eating disorders. For one of the most pernicious effects of the new discourse of happiness is its all-encompassing logic: indexing everyone *somewhere* on a continuum of happiness effectively eliminates the right to unhappiness, precisely as it enjoins individuals to be entrepreneurs of their own wellbeing. Accentuating the positive really does mean eliminating the negative. Clinical psychoanalysis, therefore, facilitates the attunement of critical happiness studies to the politics of the unhappy subject. Fourthly and finally, I believe that critical happiness studies stands to gain from an engagement with that *tact with happiness* I have discerned in Lacan’s recommendations for the ‘direction of the treatment’ (and in my own practice as an analyst): the signifier ‘critical’, with which this new field intends to distinguish itself, can perhaps move beyond ideology-critique and towards the transformative creativity of the analytic experience itself ... without, of course, the promise happy endings.

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