

## EDITORIAL

### *Something Other: The relationship between psychoanalytic theory, art, visual culture, and pedagogy*

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Within the last several decades, theorists, pedagogues, artists, and practitioners from diverse fields have embraced and appropriated Lacanian psychoanalytic theories. An indelible mark (or stain) has been made through writing on art pedagogy from a Lacanian perspective, as well as new intellectual interventions into the broader crossroads of psychoanalytic theory, art, and contemporary visual culture. With all the work that has been done, how might we continue to develop ideas informed by Lacanian theory, and interrogate images, objects, events, and the unknown? What might new forms of Lacanian theory do for the force of art, education, and the broader visual culture in our contemporary era?

In this special issue of *Synnyt/Origins*, authors present their unique perspective on Lacanian psychoanalytic theory and something—“something Other.” The issue begins with Sydney Walker’s *Artmaking and the Sinthome*, where she interprets of the work of Alfredo Jaar as *sinthome*. Walker contemplates how art and art pedagogy might go beyond something that makes sense, toward the Real. In the article, she asks us to consider something other than symbolic representation, something other than meaning making. The next article, *The Lacanian Real in Lars von Trier’s Antichrist*, by Henriikka Huunan-Seppälä, continues the task of vanquishing the symbolic—through something truly Other. In the article, the film *Antichrist* is explored through the abhorrent depths of the psyche, specifically through notions of the grotesque and the Lacanian Real. This analysis provides intriguing insights into the relationship between nature, evil, and jouissance. For a Finnish audience, especially, interesting questions might be raised between love and the “forest.”

In the next essay, the concept of love is made explicitly problematic. Juuso Tervo’s *Real Love: Fragments on Art Education, Politics, and Jacques Lacan*, sketches out what Lacanian psychoanalytic theory can bring to art education research, via an

entryway between desire and discourse. Tervo uses lyrics from “love songs” to point to the limits of the phantasmic image of art education, and the affective investments to its outcomes. Laura Hetrick also takes up the fantasies around art education in her article, *The (Art) Teacher as Lacan’s Subject-supposed-to-know*. Hetrick addresses the question: what does it mean to become an educator and embody representations and identifications, as seen through the gaze of the field of art education? The article deals with constitution of the subject who is supposed to “know” art education— how language and images are intimately bound up in the social imagination and unconscious imaginary of what it means to become a teacher.

The next article, *The secret language of art education: Academic language and Lacanian discourse theory*, by Beth Thomas, continues to investigate discourse from a Lacanian perspective. Thomas focuses on ways that discourse relies on the formative function of “master signifiers” to enable not only the subject’s access to discourse, but also a reading of the subject within discourse. The article examines a specific instance of pedagogic discourse being applied in art education in the U.S. (a large scale standardized teacher assessment), to consider the potential impact on students’ subjectivities and pedagogic visibility, in relation to language and art learning. The subsequent article, *Violence and the Other in Contemporary Art: A Question of Ethics for Art Education*, by Kevin Tavin and Mira Kallio-Tavin, interrogates the issue of subjectivity from a different perspective; again, “something Other.” Otherness, in this case, is considered through Lacanian Ethics of the Real, and Levinasian theories of ethics and the Third. Two contemporary artworks, which address objective and subjective violence, are interpreted through theories of the Other.

The next article by Jan Jagodzinski, *When Deleuze and Lacan {finally} Meet: The Singularity (Life) of Art in [Art] Education*, brings together an impossible but productive meeting between Deleuze and Guattari, and Lacan. Jagodzinski discusses a variety of concepts and (mis)applications from both “camps,” and brings out the tension between them, through, for example, (post)humanist thought and posthuman thought. This essay can be seen as something Other in terms of a missed encounter, a new encounter, and Jagodzinski’s own Otherness, through a re-calling of past to present scholarship.

Building on Lacanian scholarship in visual culture studies and new media studies, the next article, *Interactivity in Desire*, by Aaron Knochel, looks at theories of interactivity and desire, toward a deeper understanding of art education in a network ontology. Knochel interrogates theories of interactivity that come from televisual, hypertextual, and gaming media, and provides provocations for rethinking teaching and learning in a digital visual culture. The final article in this journal also takes up the concept of desire, through Lacan's focus on *jouissance*. Mikko Koivisto's *Ableism and Jouissance: Imag(in)ing the Pleasure of the Psychiatrically Disabled Subject*, combines psychoanalytic theory and concepts from disability studies, to search out implications of "enjoyment" in the logic of ableist thought. Through an analysis on the social mechanisms of discrimination and violence, the article tackles the ableist fascination with an assumed enjoyment of the psychiatrically disabled subject, and treatment for the disability. In this sense, something Other is both understood through the ableist notion of Otherness, and the Other's enjoyment, which has been stolen and left only as something other (different than something Other)—something that, after all, is not it!

With this said, it is, ultimately, up to the reader to assess how the contributions in this special edition address the journal's mission: "to create a contemporary archive of texts that are seminal to the discourse in the area of knowledge in art and mediating art and introduce new themes, new ideas and controversial presentations to both academic research and discussions within practice." In the case of these articles and the focus on psychoanalytic theory, perhaps the concept of knowledge, like discourse itself, dislocates the knowing subject within the fields of art, visual culture, and art education, allowing for a certain reflection on forms of knowledge as an obstacle to knowing oneself. In this sense, the "true" impact of these articles cannot be fully said. "Truth is only a fall of knowledge . . . the fall of knowledge alone is certain" (Nobus & Quinn, 2005, p. 110).

Nobus, D. & Quinn, M. (2005). *Knowing nothing, staying stupid: Elements for a psychoanalytic epistemology*. London: Routledge.