**Lacanianism / Lacanian Psychoanalysis**

**Introduction**:

✓Lacanianism or Lacanian psychoanalysis is a theoretical system that explains the mind, behaviour, and culture through a **structuralist** and **post-structuralist** extension of classical psychoanalysis, initiated by the work of Jacques Lacan from the 1950s to the 1980s.

•Lacanian view the STRUCTURE of the mind as defined by the individual’s entry as an infant into the world of language, the symbolic, through an Oedipal process.

• Like POST-STRUCTURALIST approaches, Lacanianism regards the subject as an illusion created when an individual is signified (represented in language), but distinctively, this initial signification is incomplete, as there is always something about the subject which cannot be properly represented in language.

**Lacan’s Theory of the Psychological Development:**

✓ In its early months, Lacan maintains, the infant experiences both itself and its environment as a random, fragmented, formless mass.

✓ Psychoanalytic development started at a point between six and eight months.

**Stages of Psychological Development by Lacan:**

I. Mirror Stage

i. Imaginary Order

ii. Symbolic Order

II. Real Stage

**Mirror Stage**:

✓Mirror Stage initiates what he calls the ‘Imaginary Order’.

1. **Imaginary Order**:

• It means ‘world of images’.

• Its the world that the child experiences through images rather than rather than through words.

• It is a world of fullness, completeness, and delight because with the child’s sense of itself as a whole comes the illusion of control over its environment.

✓ “***Desire of the Mother***”:

• My mother is all I need and I am all my mother needs.

• A world of illusion, a union of mutual satisfaction.

1. **Symbolic Order**:

• It refers to the child’s acquisition of language ( as language is the symbolic system of meaning-making ).

• First meaning we make is that ‘I am seperate being’ and that I have a gender (I am a girl or boy).

• We experience separation. Separation from others.

• **The biggest separation we experience is the separation from most intimate union we experienced with our mothers.**

**•** FOR LACAN, THIS SEPERATION CONSTITUTES OUR MOST IMPORTANT EXPERIENCE OF LOSS, AND IT IS ONE THAT WILL HAUNT US ALL OUR LIVES. It is termed as **“*objet petit a ”* for LOST OBJECT OF DESIRE.**

**• So, we will seek SUBSTITUTES great or small for that LOST UNION with our mother.**(May be I will recapture that feeling of union if I find the perfect mate;if I acquire more money; if I convert to a different religion; if I become better looking; if I become popular; if I get a new car etc).

• But, we will never be able to sustain a feeling of complete fulfillment. It is because the kind of fulfillment we seek is that feeling of completeness, union with our mother that disappeared from conscious experience when we entered the Symbolic Order, that is when we acquired language.

• This experience of LACK just described, marks **the split into conscious and unconscious.**

• According to Lacan, **“ the conscious is structured like a language”**.

✓ This new world is one in which there are **rules** we must obey and restrictions by which we must abide.

• Mother belongs to Father and not to me.

• There is **desire** of replacement of the Desire of the Mother.

• Our desires, beliefs, biases etc are constructed for us as a result of our immersion in the Symbolic Order, this immersion is carried out by our parents, we are much influenced by their  **responses.**

• So, according to Lacan, **“desire is always the desire of the Other”.**

• It means that what we desire is what we taught to desire . If we were raised in a different culture that has a different Symbolic Order, we would have different desires.

• So, the concept of ourselves, ‘subjectivity’ or ‘selfhood’ based on society’s ideologies: its beliefs, values, and biases, its system of government, laws, educational practices, religious tenets etc.

II. **Real Stage**:

• Both the Symbolic and the Imaginary Orders attempt to **avoid what he calls the Real.**

**•** The Real is as that is beyond all our meaning-making systems, that which lies outside the world created by the ideologies society uses to explain existence.

**• Analogy:** We sense that ideology is like a curtain upon which our whole world is embroidered, and we know that behind that curtain is the Real.

**•** It is an uninterpretable dimension of existence.

• Lacan called this kind of experience as “**trauma of the Real**”.

• The trauma of the Real gives us only the realization that the reality hidden beneath the ideologies society has created is a reality beyond our capacity to know and explain and therefore certainly beyond our capacity to control.