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*‘Oranges and Lemons’: Art, therapy, subjectivity**Abstract*

*Recent developments in the theory and practice of psychoanalysis have identified Creative Writing as a means of understanding subjectivity through what the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan has called *suppléance*, a stand-in which helps the ego cohere and in some cases prevents subjective dissolution, as may have been the case with Joyce. Following on from my own previous theoretical and creative research in this area, the story ‘Oranges and Lemons’ addresses the question of the mechanism of *suppléance* from the concept of art therapy by contrasting the symbolic dimension of language with the imaginary dimension of art making. In doing so, it confirms that *suppléance* arises out of the need to overcome an anxiety which veils the shadow of Das Ding, hence also the threat of subjective dissolution. Further, ‘Oranges and Lemons’ suggests that there may be different structural types of *suppléance* and that as an organising principle *suppléance* may be both a temporary or permanent device.*

Keywords: art, psychoanalysis, writing, subjectivity, suppléance

Preamble

The research for this paper began with papers on writing as trace, its function as symptom and its relation to anxiety and *jouissance* – a form of enjoyment that is often closer to pain than pleasure (Hecq 2005). It then moved on to explore Lacan’s concept of *suppléance* (sometimes translated as ‘suppletion’), namely, a practice that acts as substitute and hence prevents the subject from ‘falling apart’ as may have been the case with Joyce (Lacan 2005 [1974-75]). This in turn led to an investigation of the *mechanism* of *suppléance* itself as applied to my own creative practice (Hecq 2010a, 2010b). Based on the premise that *suppléance* is both a device and a process, this paper continues in a similar vein. It focuses on *suppléance* and agency as it is deployed in the story ‘Oranges and Lemons’, which I invite the reader to read after situating it in the larger research context. I then proceed with theorising the findings sourced from the creative piece by drawing on psychoanalytical concepts.

‘Oranges and Lemons’ is the seventh chapter in *Hush*, a self-styled memoir of cot death which works by association, linking the real with the imagined, upsetting the conventions of autobiography within a frame delimited by global concerns. As such, *Hush* is a hybrid work of fiction with lyrical overtones. The book relates the key experiences that befall the main character, a writer, in the wake of the event that will change her life and the life of those around her. She enters a fog she must navigate, between action and paralysis, inspiration and grief, guilt ... and the phantom, love. This, she achieves through writing.

We tell stories of our lives through the cultural scripts available to us (what Lacan calls the ‘Other’), and as writers we accept that we are mostly governed by cultural strictures about self-presentation in public. But if we are constituted through discursive practices, how can we control the stories we tell about ourselves? By focusing on the notion of ‘being lost’ and by highlighting this ‘lostness’ at a time when grief takes hold of the narrating persona, thereby turning her into a self-proclaimed fiction (Hecq 2010a), *Hush* as a whole scrutinises the complexities at the heart of human agency, including memory, embodiment, cultural and linguistic allegiance, as well as psychic and sexual identity. The narrative sees the mythical-psychological meet the social; and bodily in an individual woman’s struggle to survive the ‘lostness’ that defines her experience of being a migrant, a woman, a mother and a spouse in a world short of words. It then traces how this character constantly needs to re-make herself and re-configure a sense of agency through writing in a language which is not her mother tongue. The critical importance of the foreign language to this re-making is constantly flagged, for the experience of losing a child had robbed her of her native tongue. This in turn deeply affects the ways in which she nurtures the incipient selfhood of her first-born and surviving child. Thus ‘Oranges and Lemons’ re-thinks the making of the Lacanian ‘I’ in two protagonists enmeshed with each other and within the intersubjectivity of a language not their mother tongue while highlighting the Lacanian symbolic dimension at the heart of agency.

We like to think of human beings as agents of their own lives, rather than passive pawns in social games or unconscious transmitters of cultural scripts and models of identity. Consequently, we tend to read autobiographical narratives as proofs of human agency, relating actions in which people exercise free choice over the interpretation of their lives and expressing their ‘true’ selves. In fact, traditional autobiography has been read as a narrative of agency, evidence that as subjects we can live freely. However, ‘Oranges and Lemons’ demonstrates that the issue of how we claim, exercise, and narrate agency is far more complicated, for here the narrating ego is shown to feed on signifiers which are both *available* through the Other and *made available* by the other through a process of mirroring and doubling.

The reader is immersed in the protagonist’s search for a home in words as the narrative explores the relationship between loss and the act of creation. We witness the narrating persona’s attempt at defining that which specifically transmutes grief into mourning in the creative process. As I have shown elsewhere, the narrative arrives at the conclusion that writing arises out of the need to overcome the anxiety activated by loss (Hecq 2009, 2010a, 2010b). Further, it suggests that this anxiety can be overcome by breaking up prose into fragments and in turn by switching over to poetry. In fact, making full use of figures of speech seems to enhance the healing process. *Hush* suggests that the act of writing may be both an uninterrupted *and* necessary work of mourning, and more importantly, that finding a particular *form* suited to speaking about such loss is the key to survival.

At the core of *Hush* is the question of the relationship between art-making and subjectivity as well as a desire to go beyond psychoanalysis’ understanding of subjectivity. Consonant with Lacan’s theory of *suppléance*, three hitherto published chapters demonstrate that writing is that which enables the ego to cohere. Again, ‘Oranges and Lemons’ addresses the question of the *mechanism* of *suppléance* by contrasting the Lacanian symbolic dimension of language with the imaginary dimension of art making in order to test the conclusion reached in earlier papers, namely that *suppléance* arises out of the need to overcome an anxiety which veils the shadow of *Das Ding*, and that it counters

the threat of subjective dissolution through a knotting of the imaginary and the symbolic.

‘Oranges and Lemons’, however, differs from previous work in that it illuminates the process of creation and its role in what we call agency from the inside-out by focusing on the interaction between ego, Other as well as other. *Suppléance* is thus shown to be brought about by the re-inscription of the body in the world of language via two different means, one being imaginary; the other symbolic. Indeed, while the mother (and narrating ego) re-claims her own ‘I’ through writing, her child does so through drawing and through identifying with the Name-of-the-Father passed on by his mother. In so doing, the narrative highlights the distinction between metaphorical process and metaphor as such. Metaphorical processes are shown to be an active and dynamic aspect of the mind as opposed to metaphor, which is the verbal and linguistic aspect of this process, bound to language and symbol formation. In other words, it suggests that what Lacan calls *suppléance* may be but a process of progressive re-organisation of mental functions set off by defence mechanisms. It also suggests that one dominant type of defence mechanism may determine the structural form of *suppléance*.

Oranges and Lemons

I Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
Che le diritta via era smarrita
– Dante, *Inferno I*, i-iii

The child has picked lemons from our backyard that smell so sweet and rhyme with storms. He is the king of the universe and because of him clouds darken and when you look out the window the world is like a painting.

Drop by drop, the sky, full of gossamer and grey, pours its heart out. Millions of baubles of sparkling water dazzle on the city. With each pelting clouds seem to vanish and you can nearly hear a rainbow whooshing up from the earth’s *omphalos*. The flame tree in the back garden is afire. A downpour of gold.

After the rain, a murder of crows, blue and green and gold as oil and as violet swoop on the tree where the child speaks to angels and ghosts. The whole house sways and it seems to rain again except that it’s raining light. Leaves rustle and make a loud crackling on the roof. The day is stitched with points of light and all the threads make the lining of our world.

The child sits against the light at the table opposite me. He draws triangles in bright yellow. Looks up. His eyes are deep blue and glowing. He is not sad, but I can tell he is angry, for his pupils are smaller and look accusing. His brother’s life; his brother’s death, has made us strangers to each other.

Mummy, how do stars die?

Stars die when they've used up all their fuel, love.

The child gathers himself back into rhythm and resumes drawing. He draws a set of traffic lights. The amber circle is the largest one. He draws a boy with long saffron spidery limbs and hands with six fingers. He draws a purple sky full of pale yellow stars.

He draws and I write.

Soon, he will fidget on his chair. Soon, he will want to go for a walk. Soon, he will run amuck and wreck the cardboard boxes we save for making a *humongous* cubby-house.

The child does not know how to return to his place in his own life.

Outside the window, two kookaburras are circling together. One bird veers away, the other not seeming to notice. The first, larger bird returns to join the other's attentiveness. They fly on falling into distance until they break across a clump of she-oaks.

It is as though the child's imagination always stops short of some revelation.

It is as though he is lost in his thoughts just as you dream or suddenly drift off in thought. And he draws.

Mummy, what will happen to the universe when the sun dies?

I don't know, love. That would be catastrophic.

What does *cataftrofic* mean?

Terrible, I guess.

As the child draws, the mother, formerly myself, writes, for it makes sense. It coheres. It can be read.

There are signs in the Australian sky I cannot decipher. As a child the vast and tangled ant-nest of triangles drawn through points of light in the northern hemisphere held the language of god. Never was I more enthralled than when I raised my eyes to the night's milk-stained dark purple and imagined a gold smattered blue atlas more awe-inspiring than the one Columbus owned – with its ocean the earth seemed to navigate. Now I know there are days great shipwrecks come while we stretch out our necks as does old mother goose in our favourite book.

The child fidgets on his chair. The mother suggests a walk, but he doesn't **want** to.

Reluctantly I gather myself, get up and make my way to the laundry. I fill a discarded ice-cream container with cold water, reach for the packet of Lux, pour a handful of soap flakes in the container and whisk them up in the water until they dissolve and thicken.

When I return to the living room, a mere extension of the kitchen, the child is furiously sketching a tree whose branches are a bunch of thick straight spikes opening up from a gnarly trunk. It looks like a deep brownish-red woodcut and I want yet don't want to touch it.

Looks dangerous.

Leave it alone. It **is** dangerous.

Okay. What is it?

A **dragon's blood** tree.

Now I see, but do not comment. I am so impressed. Dragon's blood tree, so called because its resin is so dark that it must be reptilian and therefore perilous. How the imagination crosses cultures and centuries. And I feel silly because I didn't listen properly to the story of safflower whose coloured resin is still highly prized for violins today as the child's father said last night.

Strangers to each other. A comedy of errors.

Mummy, one more picture and we can go for a walk. I need to.

Great. I'll fix us some lunch. Honey sandwich?

No. An egg to dip in. And we need to buy lolly fruit. Apricots. Oranges, too, real ones because dad likes them and it's winter. We could also make a vitamin C cake.

Yes, child I will prove that I love you out of my cheer impotence, the mother does not say, but writes. Food as love's metonymy. The more complex the task of cooking, the better. Not that boiling an egg is a complex task, though it is when you are breast-feeding a little rival.

Yes. An egg to dip in sounds great. With sand bread fishes.

I like soldiers better.

All right love, let's soldier on.

I get up and I feed our cheap stereo system Mozart's symphony in F major, wash my hands, fetch a small pot from the drying rack, fill it with water and plunge three small eggs in – one for the child and two that I will boil hard for tomorrow's asparagus *à la flamande*. As I work I cannot help but watch the child, trying to inhabit his head, dreading it.

Writing is like walking, a single step dissolves what sticks into motion. The eye here and there rests on a leaf, gap, sign. Writing and walking as ways of connecting; of finding out the life of whatever it is one might accompany, either present or absent. Through constancy in change, through form and movement, the connective tissue of liveliness.

But what of drawing? Why does it stop short? Or am I asking the wrong question?

The dimension of writing – which has to do with the real and with time, separates itself from language. But so does drawing. You symbolise time. Subjectivise it – if such a verb exists.

Still, when the child walks it is as though he starts where his drawing left off. And when he sticks his hands in the whipped up Lux, the anger leaves him.

So, what is it? The world has been given to us and it is here, not new, though renewing, growing and decaying. Also greatly dying; and we are in it, longing for freshness, for the new, and anxiously impelled by Orpheus to see it anew.

The navel of the world.

Omphalos. Omphalos. Omphalos...

I glance at the new picture: a red house with no door, no windows.

Why is your house red?

Because the music is red, you silly, the child says, pointing to the speakers that flank our ormolu clock.

The child's egg is ready. I scoop it up and flick it in his Humpty Dumpty eggcup. I slice off the crown and butter the sourdough, cut up the soldiers and serve him.

Voilà, mon roi.

Speak English.

I rest my hands on the table. He dips his buttery soldiers one by one into the soft orange yolk. When the eggshell is empty he plunges the spoon through to the bottom of the eggcup so that no witches can get hold of it and use it for a boat. He passes on the crown to me and I eat it.

Let's go!

We rug up and burst out the front door.

The child is running away from me. His hair is all spiked up like a field of wheat in the moody August afternoon. It is

surprisingly windy and chilly. I catch his right hand, reminding him of the safe side of the road, though conscious I am not too sure whose safety I am talking about. At the end of our street, we veer left. It is almost instinctual.

Though you don't believe in god, or at least say so, you are not surprised when the child climbs the steps to St Clements.

Mummy, are clouds made of snow?

By the lonely steep climb towards the summit where the angels dwell to feed on nothing but honeyed snow...

The child's hand leads you straight to the sacrament chapel, the part of the church where the sacrament is reserved and where the physical becomes sublime and the sublime becomes physical.

Around the sacrament chapel is a carved procession of three violins and several lutes marching up the bare columns. In the choir stalls curving around the back of the altar I am drawn to some glowing spectacle.

You slip under the rope and see that behind each choir stall is a different picture made of the delicately-varnished maple woods, spruce, cherry and walnut. A few scenes only are biblical. Most are secular. The distinctive one is the image of a lute, alone, on some mythical plain, waiting to be played.

Your breath is wasted on the air.

And then you realise the child is tugging at your hand.

When we get out, the world has a new internal juncture. The child runs ahead on the disabled ramp. I cup my hands around my eyes against the glare and I shiver. I walk down the steps of the square and into the universe the king my child makes; and in becoming the walking itself, an inner world opens up in me.

Suddenly, I feel myself accompanied. It is an intimate acquaintance.

Absent. And death is present in the pupils of the absent eyes, the holes in the mask that summons them, not us: he who advances masked and she who advances veiled.

Emptied of images I turn porous to absence. Become vast with absence. Then there is this momentarily arrested breath in the gasp of surprise. The child has broken into song.

*Gay go up and Gay go down,
To ring the bells of London Town.*

Bull's eyes and targets...

The child is about to run across the road.

The mother grips her son's hand. Firmly.

Tomorrow we'll buy modelling clay.

What's modelling clay?

It's like *play-dad*.

Okay. Tonight then, let's not sing 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star'.

The endless turns searching for a centre which continues to recede. The pursuit with or without a thread, with or without a pen, threatens collapse, slippage, loss at every turn.

Therapy as art, art as therapy: a question of mirrors

The conjunction between art and psychoanalysis is as old as psychoanalysis itself. In 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable', Freud (1937) described the practice of psychoanalysis as being closer to an art than a science. This position was highlighted by Lacan when he stated in his Rome Discourse that 'the art of the analyst must be to suspend the subject's certainties until their last mirages have been consumed' (Lacan 2001: 43) so that he or she might make conscious decisions that are more in keeping with having a dynamic relationship with unconscious desire. A psychoanalyst herself, Susan Langer said that 'the primary function of art is to objectify experience so that we can contemplate and understand it' (Langer 1962: 90). Moreover, that art 'serves a social function' (Kramer 2000: 17) is the premise which underpins the project of art therapy within a psychoanalytical framework:

Art therapy is conceived primarily as a means of supporting the ego. It harnesses the power of art to the task of fostering a psychic organisation that is sufficiently resilient to function under pressure without breakdown or the need to stultifying defensive measures. Thus conceived, art therapy constitutes an element of the therapeutic milieu that complements or supports psychotherapy but does not replace it. (Kramer 2000: 18, my emphasis)

Thus art therapists encourage their patients to complement the unstructured and fluid play and talk of clinical sessions with aesthetic rigour, as 'form and structure' are here 'equally important', constituting as they do 'a powerful aid in sorting out and mastering experience (Kramer 2000: 18). It might be argued that this idea is at the heart of Lacan's concept of *suppléance*, which also *supports the ego*. However, *suppléance* operates at the unconscious rather than conscious level, and although it might have a socialising effect or support psychotherapy, its social function is not its *raison d'être*. Thus the relationship between art therapy and suppletion is but a mirage or day-dream whose structure is metaphor. Or to put it differently, the relationship between the two is a purely metaphorical one, predicated as both are on the paternal metaphor, or Name-of-the Father.

But why are some people content with just their daydreams or psychotherapies, while others are driven by the desire to practice their art in order to feel alive? This desire, argues Michel de M'Uzan, often stems from an intense experience that must be worked through again if a traumatic situation is to be resolved

(M'Uzan 1977: 3-27). It is this idea which underpins the whole design of 'Oranges and Lemons'. Art-making, including writing, is the sublimatory effort to transpose onto an Other stage the conflictual universe in which mother and child find themselves at a moment of family crisis and personal trauma. I am, however, taking M'Uzan's idea further here (as in the story) by comparing and contrasting the processes at work in the acts of writing and drawing to ascertain their possible structural affinities and differences, predicated as these are on the difference between metaphor itself and metaphorical processes. This may lead us to explain why some art-forms seem to be more effective as palliative devices than others.

Indeed, as 'Oranges and Lemons' suggests, we need to distinguish metaphorical processes from metaphor as such. Metaphorical processes are an active and dynamic aspect of the mind. Metaphor is the verbal and linguistic aspect of this process, as is, for instance Lacan's Name-of the Father, bound as it is to language and symbol formation. This would imply an inherent process of progressive organisation of mental functions at play in the act of writing, which is inexistent in the act of drawing. This would in turn imply that metaphor is the final stage of a larger process of progressive symbolisation and differentiation of mental structures, which is inexistent in pure image-making. If this is the case, *suppléance* is but an elaborate defence mechanism whose organising principle is 'the mirror stage' (Lacan 2006 [1949]).

The British psychoanalyst Bion hints at such an organising principle. What he calls the α -process, present in the mother and later internalised, transforms β -elements, namely, unmentalised fragments that have no connection to each other into more complex elements such as pictograms and eventually into proto-symbols or metaphors (Bion 1962). This would imply a progressive organising function of the mind whereby in the trauma of non-representation and nothingness the *figuration* is a binding together of a sensory whole – as is the case when *suppléance* is achieved through painting or dancing, for instance. Thus representational thinking would be a 'higher level of organisation – possibly arising first out of the mirroring and doubling of mother and child.

Oranges in the mirror: creativity and subjectivity

For psychoanalysis, creativity is the flip-side of defence mechanisms. Creativity consists in the active shaping of unconscious mentation into new and surprising forms. Defence mechanisms, on the other hand, are an unconscious shaping of what is allowed to consciousness. Interestingly, the main purpose of defence mechanisms is *not seeing*. For Freud and the post-Freudians, the primary defence is repression, a force preventing the movement from unconscious to conscious – the unconscious is always forcing its way into consciousness and must be continually resisted. For Freud and his followers, then, creativity arises from a relaxation and reshaping of defensive structures. However, Lacan's later writings, that is, from Seminar XVII onwards, are less clear on the topic as these suggest a radical re-thinking of the topology of the human subject that excludes the Oedipus conflict, and therefore repression (Lacan 2007 [1968-69]).

'Oranges and Lemons' postulates that the primary defence mechanism for writers, particularly writers who rely heavily on metaphor in their work, may be dissociation, a selective including or excluding of contents from consciousness. This is conveyed by the charting of different notions of language that highlight a disjunction between the imaginary and the symbolic. Thus the instability of pronouns in the text, the careful selection of English and

foreign words, the selected literary references and the flagged deletions in the margins of the text all seem to refer to the avowed quest for ‘the navel of the world’, which is but a search for an anchoring point, of which the Greek word ‘omphalos’ is the prototype, in the symbolic world of language just as Lacan’s ‘quilting point’ is for psychoanalysis (Lacan 2006: 503). As *suppléance*, writing here is a selective sublimatory effort to transpose trauma onto an Other stage, just as the child repeats the mirror-stage in an elaborate process of individuation.

In ‘Oranges and Lemons’ the development from the imaginary to the symbolic is charted through different notions of language. In a rhetorical swerve that is reminiscent of ‘Glitter’ (Hecq 2010a) and ‘Alabaster’ (Hecq 2010b), English as a second language is seen as a central element in this process; it is another, broader example of the Other. The relinquishing of the mother tongue in favour of or a new allegiance to, and gradual familiarity with, English via the *Mother Goose* nursery rhymes is charted in terms of the relationship between mother and child as they ‘stretch out [their] necks as does old mother goose in [their] favourite book’. Interestingly, *Mother Goose* becomes part of the child’s sense of selfhood as he ‘breaks into song’. It is as if the different sign-system has made its mark on the child’s sense of self, by changing the focus and direction of that sense of self through sheer identification.

Similarly the mother intimates and then goes on to explain how another dimension of the symbolic order, another sign-system, was to become internalised, as she looks for clues in the Australian sky, one where letters are compared to the natural world in the second paragraph:

Drop by drop, the sky, full of gossamer and grey, pours its heart out. Millions of baubles of sparkling water dazzle on the city. With each pelting clouds seem to vanish and you can nearly hear a rainbow whooshing up from the earth’s *omphalos*. The flame tree in the back garden is afire. A downpour of gold.

Thus the initially unfamiliar is seen in terms of familiarity. What we see in this chapter of *Hush* is that progression from the referent, the thing in the world, to the sign, the linguistic or poetic symbol of that physicality which Lacan deems the progression from the imaginary to the symbolic. Here, as the strangeness of a different language begins to affect the subject of the text, that strangeness is familiarised by the prosopopeic description of this language as a ghost pouring its heart out. It is through such linguistic systems, the Lacanian symbolic, that selfhood and identity become (re)socialised and eventually translate the world for the two protagonists.

This development into the symbolic is clear from an image in this section where the scopic field of the subject is now mitigated by the structures of language as the physical world of home, of the familiarity of food, is now described through the cultural code of the English alphabet of *Mother Goose* which is naturalised as it were through reference to the natural and supernatural world by way of associations conveyed throughout by the bird imagery with uncanny reference to the world of the living and the dead (angels and ghosts):

After the rain, a murder of crows, blue and green and gold as oil and as violet swoop on the tree where the child speaks to angels and ghosts. The whole house sways and it seems to rain again except that it’s raining light. Leaves rustle and make a loud crackling on the roof. The day is stitched with points of light and all the threads make the lining of our world.

Here, language is mediating the vision of reality: the sign, or signifier has become dominant over the referent, as Lacan has noted: 'it is the world of words which creates the world of things' (Lacan 1968: 39). This is echoed by the constant reference to the creative process as the mother processes experience and speech into language that 'coheres'.

Hence, the self, and the movement from ego to subject, is defined in terms of the development and increasing complexity of the Other, a process which is made familiar through using different tropes to denote 'the navel of the world', which for the narrating ego is also a refashioning of the Lacanian quilting point, her *suppléance*.

Far from repossessing some home place, or from establishing it as a frame of reference from which to map the past and present, from the very outset 'Oranges and Lemons' is opening up a symbolic home place anchored in the Western tradition via its epigraph to the wideness of the world, and defining subjectivity with respect to a broad culturally polyvalent sense of the Other. The seemingly constative sentences that place the child at the centre of the universe and 'our world' are, in fact, in need of some conceptual unpacking. The homely image of 'our backyard', 'table' and 'kitchen' as 'extension of the living room' is contrasted with the mythological force of the Greek notion of the central point of the earth ('the earth's *omphalos*' and 'the navel of the world'), and with the phonetic and semantic strangeness of the repeated signifier '*omphalos*'.

In fact, the *omphalos* is not evoked by any process of reification which equates world with stars as it is in Greek mythology, rather it is brought about by the voice of the narrating ego speaking to itself, and attempting to find its bearings in the Australian landscape, later repeating the word '*omphalos*' like a mantra as though this foreign word could conjure up the very idea of home. However, it is the phonetic properties of the signifier as spoken by the voice, properties which dissolve in the moment of translation, which evoke the notion of centrality and home. Instead of grounding a sense of definition in home, the narrative begins this discussion of the narrating ego's preoccupations by opening out the mother's experience of home to the signifiers and signifieds of difference and alterity. It is as though she is revisioning the foundations of her own subjectivity through the sound of the Greek word, standing in synecdoche, for the Greek origins of Western European culture as she watches rain falling on an Australian city. It is as if she is gesturing towards the point that different cultures have different centres, and it is only through interaction and dialogue that she can be loosened from the roots of her previous identity. The imaginary empty speech of the first paragraph has been replaced with the symbolically-driven full speech of the second paragraph which sets the tone for the rest of the chapter as 'play' and 'dad' alternate in a triangular dialectic dominated by the Lacanian symbolic.

The temporal duality introduces a complexity to the text that deepens the layers of meaning of the Other, and I would further suggest that the notion of *suppléance* is here connected with this very broadening of selfhood that writing allows, with its focus on levels of culture which are not identical to themselves. The narrating ego works with an internal force – her symbolic peers and audience – with whom she maintains relations that bear on the very process of creation and which enable her to fend off the anxiety that besets her in the last scene of 'Oranges and Lemons'. It is worth pointing out this is contrasted to the fact that her child's anxiety cannot be quelled by image-making alone as this activity stops short of the symbolic.

Here, writing is not only seen as a vehicle in the search for truth of the subject, it is also constitutive of being: it is a discourse which, like that of Lacan, probes the meanings of language and subjectivity. Both discourses realise the complexity and opacity of the subject, and while realising that full knowledge is probably impossible, through their disparate but parallel hermeneutic processes, they both develop the cultural conversation of humanity, one that is only incipient in image-making.

Notes

1. See Robert Harari's book on Joyce and Lacan, *How James Joyce Made his Name*, tr. Luke Thurston (Other Press: New York, 2002) for an illuminating analysis of Lacan's twenty-third seminar on James Joyce and the phenomenon of *suppléance*. See also a paper I first presented at the 9th AAWP Conference in Brisbane for an exploration of *suppléance* in the context of the discipline and pedagogy of Creative Writing. The paper addresses a set of related questions pertaining to the potential usefulness of psychoanalysis for the creative writer, why write, and what is writing in particular. It then teases out what a pedagogy of creative writing is as a 'practice of the letter' (Hecq 2008).

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