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The Other Side of Weight Loss:  
A Lacanian Autoethnography of Weight-anxiety

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Organisation Studies

at Massey University, Manawatu,  
New Zealand.

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2011

## Abstract

This thesis critically re-thinks the organisation of the weight loss industry using a psychoanalytic framework derived from the work of Jacques Lacan, including his discourse theory. Further, I develop critical methodology by focusing on my own experiences and culture. I do this by gathering and analysing autoethnographic data. The main findings of this thesis occur in three broad topic areas. First I re-conceptualise the unconscious processes of the weight-loss subject and subsequently re-focus on the weight loss industry's unconscious target: anxiety. Second I re-think the gender of the weight-anxious subject, moving past biology and hegemony to think psychoanalytically about those subjects who identify as weight-anxious. Third I tackle the ethics of the wider weight loss industry, critically analysing its capitalistic focus and suggesting instead an ethics based on the desire of the weight-anxious subject. Finally I attempt to look at my thesis in reflection, by concluding in line with Lacan's four discourses, finishing as the psychoanalyst might by placing the thesis on the couch.

## Acknowledgements

Anna – you have been incredibly supportive of me over the past years, right from the beginning you have helped me form and unform my ideas. You listen to my rants, rages and whinges and never fail to tell me to shut up when I am boring everyone within earshot. I wouldn't have an appreciation of the unconscious without you. We have humans in our family now, Ben and the little one in utero. I simply cannot imagine a world without you all.

Craig – you have supported me academically for a long time now, first in my Masters project and now during the PhD. You have always been totally supportive of my ideas, and most supportive of the 'fringe' ones. As you know, being in the 'knowledge' production game is both a privilege and a burden. There are few people who have a sophisticated understanding of this tension – you do and you have taught me well.

Mandy – Your insight into me is comforting, alluring and revealing, in that order. These three of course make a solid friendship and that is what I feel has developed between us. Most of the analytical moments in this thesis have been developed in some way as a result of your guidance. I wish all PhD supervisors could have sat-in on our meetings, then they would see how to supervise. It's a bit like Lacan's couch – suspend judgement, follow desire.

Finally, thanks also to the Massey University Doctoral Scholarship and the College of Business Doctoral Scholarship for funding my thesis. It would have been a long and painful process without this support.

The Massey University Human Ethics Committee has given approval for this project, their letter is attached as appendix A.

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