

Hurly-Burly
Analysis and New Lacanian School

The Lacanian Review

Hurly-Burly

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FAMILY DRAMAS FAMILY TRAUMAS

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GROWING PAINS

This issue on family opens with Jacques Lacan's "Note on the Child", a text which combines two short notes written by Lacan at the request of Jenny Aubry. It is followed by Daniel Roy's formalisation of the axes that the Note offers for child analysis in the Lacanian Orientation. Véronique Eydoux then takes us through the successive stages of the logical construction which Lacan makes of the Augustinian vignette of the child seeing his little rival suspended to the mother's breast to elicit the structural stakes of the intrusion complex.

NOTE ON THE CHILD

Jacques Lacan

It seems that if we look at the failure of utopian communities, Lacan's position evokes the following dimension.

The function of residue that the conjugal family supports (and thereby maintains) in the evolution of societies highlights the irreducibility of a form of transmission – one that is of a different order than that of life considered as the satisfaction of needs – but one that has a subjective constitution, implying a relationship to a desire that is not anonymous.

The functions of the mother and the father are to be judged on the basis of such a requirement. For the mother: insofar as her care bears the mark of an individualised interest, even if via her own lacks. For the father: insofar as his name is the vector of the embodiment of the Law in desire.

In the conception of it developed by Jacques Lacan, the child's symptom is located in the position of a response to what is symptomatic in the family structure.

In this context, a symptom, which is the fundamental fact of analytic experience, can be defined as representing the truth.

A symptom may represent the truth of the family couple. This is the most complex case, but it is also the one that is most open to our intervention.

Originally published as "Deux notes sur l'Enfant", *Ornicar?* No. 37 (1986), pp.13-14, and as "Note sur l'enfant", *Autres écrits*, Seuil, Paris, 2001, pp. 373-375. First published in English in *Analysis*, No. 2, Melbourne Centre for Psychoanalytic Research, Australia, 1990.

Growing Pains

The articulation is much more limited when the symptom that comes to dominate arises from the subjectivity of the mother. In this case the child is directly concerned as the correlate of a fantasy.

If the gap between the identification with the ego ideal and the piece taken from the mother's desire lacks the mediation that is normally provided by the father's function, it leaves the child susceptible to every kind of fantasmatic capture. He becomes the mother's 'object' and his sole function is to reveal the truth of this object.

The child realises the presence of what Jacques Lacan designates as *objet a* in fantasy.

By substituting himself for this object, the child saturates the mode of lack whereby (the mother's) desire is particularised, whatever her specific structure – neurotic, perverse or psychotic.

He alienates in himself all possible access by the mother to her own truth through giving it body, existence and even the requirement to be protected.

The somatic symptom gives the greatest possible guarantee to this misrecognition [*méconnaissance*]; it is the inexhaustible resource that, depending on the case, may testify to guilt, serve as a fetish, or incarnate a primordial refusal.

In short, in the dyadic relationship with the mother the child gives her, in immediately accessible form, what the masculine subject lacks: the very object of his existence appearing in the real. As a consequence, the child is open to greater subornation in fantasy in a manner commensurate with what is real in what he presents.

Translated by Russell Grigg



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INTRODUCTION TO "NOTE ON THE CHILD"

Daniel Roy

Jacques Lacan wrote the "Note on the Child" in 1969 at the request of Jenny Aubry, a paediatrician who headed a hospital unit in paediatrics, and a psychoanalyst member of the École Freudienne de Paris. This fundamental text lays the foundations for child analysis in the Lacanian orientation. It was first known to French readers as two separate notes, before being brought together, as they are in the English version here, when Jacques-Alain Miller edited the *Autres écrits* collection in 2001. Prior to Jacques-Alain Miller's careful revision, these two texts, taken as distinct from each other, produced a disjunction between two elements that precisely need to be considered together in the analytic practice with children: on the one hand, the family structure; and on the other, the child's symptom.

What are the main axes of the "Note"?

1. Lacan does not shy away from placing the family in a category that precludes all forms of idealisation. It has a "function of residue" in the evolution of societies. This gives psychoanalysts a lot of freedom when it comes to accepting the most diverse family configurations.
2. For it is on this residue that rests a necessary function that is "irreducible" to any subjective constitution: transmission. To the question of what is passed on in a family, Lacan's answer is *an embodied desire*, not an anonymous one.
3. This is what gives way to a diffraction into two avenues for this embodied desire: the path of lack, and the path of the name. The distinction made here by Lacan between the function of the mother and the function of the father makes no claims as to the gendered identity of whoever comes to embody these functions.
4. The only truth that a family can give a child is a transmission operating on the vectors of lack and name. It is an enigmatic, "symptomatic" truth, always falling short of a response that would say what the transmission of life is.

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