

[Note on the Child: October 1969: Jacques Lacan](http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=382) by Julia Evans on October 1, 1969 or here: <http://www.lacanianworks.net/?p=382>

## Note on the Child: October 1969: Jacques Lacan

*This note, given in manuscript form by Jacques Lacan to Mme Jenny Aubry in October 1969, was published for the first time by Mme Aubry, with my authorisation, in her book published in 1983.*

*- Jacques-Alain Miller*

In the conception developed by Jacques Lacan the child's symptom is found to be in a position of answering to what is symptomatic in the family structure.

The symptom, which is the fundamental fact of the analytic experience, is in this context defined as the representative of truth.

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

The articulation is much reduced when the symptom that comes to dominate stems from the subjectivity of the mother. In this case the child is concerned directly as the correlative of a fantasy.

The distance between identification with the ego ideal and the portion taken from the mother's desire, should it lack the mediation which is normally provided by the function of the father, leaves the child open to every kind of fantasmatic capture. He becomes the mother's "object" and has the sole function of revealing the truth of this object.

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

In substituting himself for this object, he saturates the mode of lack in which the (mother's) desire is specified, whatever its special structure - neurotic, perverse or psychotic.

In it he alienates all possible access by the mother to her own truth, through giving it body, existence and, even, the requirement of protection.

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, the child in the dual relationship with the mother gives her, immediately accessible, what the masculine subject lacks - the very object of his existence, appearing in the real. As a consequence, it is offered to greater subordination<sup>1</sup> in the fantasy in proportion to what is real in what it presents.

It would seem, in seeing the failure of communal utopias, Lacan's position recalls to us the dimension of what follows.

The function of residue that the conjugal family sustains (and by the same stroke maintains) in the evolution of societies emphasises what is irreducible in a transmission - which is of another order than that of life according to the satisfaction of needs - but which is of a subjective constitution, implicating the relation with a desire that is not anonymous.

It is according to such a necessity that the functions of the mother and the father are to be judged. That of the mother: in so far as her needs bear the mark of a particularised interest, even should this be so by the path of her own lacks. That of the father: in so far as his name is the vector of an incarnation of the Law in desire.

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<sup>i</sup> Julia Evans suspects that subornation should be subordination