

Review Article

Adolescence with Freud and Flaubert[☆]

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ABSTRACT

The text approaches two fundamental aspects of the adolescent crisis from the works of Sigmund Freud and Gustave Flaubert: their encounter with their object in desire, pleasure, sexual act, and the causes the detachment from parental authority and their effects. A study was made on the work of Flaubert on the causes of the enigma, which the author suggests in his *Memoirs of a Madman: Am I another or myself?* That feeling of strangeness the adolescent experiences on waking up in a dream, with a new feeling and desire of the love object. The ardent desire of being like a grown-up, and the motions towards their parents, influence decisions for which the young are not prepared, given their cradled education and the unsatisfactory answers to their infant sexual investigation. Lacan notes that the sexual relationship does not exist. Freud rates love as being narcissistic and childish. The first amorous manifestations, given the fantasy that cloaks them always remain the same, as explained by Flaubert and Lacan's comment to Wedekind, in *The Spring Awakening*. In childhood the enjoyment of body is not involved. For this reason, it is so simple, the adolescent would be a representation of the division of the subject, the cut made by their unconscious, which their body, in certain cases, will carry the marks. They will be surprised, puzzled by this new desire that produces their unconscious to step towards the sexual act.

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La adolescencia con Freud y Flaubert

RESUMEN

El texto aborda dos aspectos fundamentales de la crisis en la adolescencia desde las obras de Sigmund Freud y Gustave Flaubert: su encuentro con su objeto del deseo, el goce, el acto sexual y las causas del desprendimiento de la autoridad paterna y sus efectos. Se estudiaron en la obra de Flaubert las causas del enigma que el autor deja entrever en su texto *Memorias de un loco: ¿Soy Otro o yo mismo?*, ese sentimiento de extrañeza en el adolescente enfrentado en el

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Crisis en la adolescencia
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despertar de un sueño, con un sentido y un deseo nuevo del objeto de amor. El deseo ardiente de ser como un grande y las mociones hacia los padres, influyen las decisiones para las que el joven no está preparado, dadas la educación acunada y las respuestas a sus investigaciones sexuales infantiles no satisfechas. Lacan puntúa que la relación sexual no existe y Freud puntúa el amor como siendo narcisista e infantil; las primeras manifestaciones amorosas, dado el fantasma que las recubre, continúan siendo las mismas, lo que se explica a través de Flaubert y del comentario de Lacan a Wedekind, en *El despertar de la primavera*. En la infancia el cuerpo de goce no está comprometido, por eso es tan simple; el adolescente sería ya una representación de la división del sujeto, del corte hecho por su inconsciente, del cual su cuerpo en ciertos casos portara las marcas, estará sorprendido, desconcertado por ese deseo nuevo que produce su inconsciente hasta el paso al acto sexual.

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In *Memoirs of a Madman*, Gustave Flaubert, in relating his awakening to love, enunciates an enigma: these pages “enclose an entire soul – is it mine, is it that of another?”¹

The author is 17 years old, an age when no one is serious (Rimbaud²), leaving us the task of imagining the reasons. Our wish here will be precisely to begin to isolate these reasons. In other words, nothing of what is in the field of the Other is serious, neither the expected thought, nor the scheduled project; rather the subject that wanders.² The dimension of the new, the unprecedented, emerges suddenly in this young man intoxicated by the awakening of desire and love, affected at the same time by the boredom and melancholy that also constitute the hallmark of adolescence. We then have to ask what it is that the awakening of love introduces like an uprising in the subject, that surprises him and pushes him to his first act?

Childhood love

First observation: love, according to Flaubert, would be plural. “There are so many loves of our life for man! At the age of four, love of horses, the sun, flowers, shiny weapons, the way soldiers look. At ten, love for girls who play with them, at thirteen, the love for a big woman with full bosom, since I remember that what all adolescents love to distraction is the breasts of a woman, white and matte (...). I almost fainted when I saw for the first time the naked breast of a woman. At fourteen or fifteen, the love of a young girl who arrives at your house; more than a sister, less than a lover. At sixteen, another woman’s love until he’s twenty-five. Then one loves perhaps the woman he’ll marry”.¹

Then there would be the loves. Does psychoanalysis adhere to the writer at this point? Freud confirms it in a first thesis, stated in his *Three essays of a sexual theory*: The sexual and loving life of the child is characterised by the absence of the trait of otherness.³ Although the difference of the sexes can be recognised in the imaginary, it is not in the plane of desire or pleasure. In other words, childhood friendship is not distinguished from childhood loves. It is true that they may be important; children in preschool have “lovers”, without the body they enjoy being engaged. Freud, however,

recognised the existence of a sexual life in the child, as well as in the adult, except that the realisation of this desire does not go through the encounter with the Other in their sexual difference.

To demonstrate the fact, we see that in the *Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud says desire in the child is completely egoistic.⁴ Self-love in the child is unlimited,⁴ a radical narcissism, and in this the child shows us the truth of love, always narcissistic underneath. The child, agitated by the joys that go through his body, wishes to repeat them without that desire having even turned to the Other sex. The body of enjoyment is sufficient for itself, and if it passes through the other, it will be short-circuiting its dimension of otherness. Movement games have an “extraordinary attraction” for the child, Freud tells us. “What uncle has not helped to fly a child across the room with him at full speed with arms outstretched, or swinging on his knees and extending his leg abruptly or lifting him in the air and releasing him as if withdrawing support? Children shout with joy, complain without fatigue, repetition”. “... when they see the gymnastic prowess in the circus, this memory is activated. The hysterical access of some children reproduces such feats, executed skilfully. It is not uncommon that in the course of such movement games, innocent in themselves, sexual sensations will also have been awakened. The hugs”.⁴ Thus, it is the hugs of childhood and other clashes together which, in relation to the others, will cause the sexual emotions of our children to sprout. Freud puts it this way, “The first sexual motions often find their root in fighting games and fights in the childhood years”.⁴ In Jensen’s *Gradiva*, of the childhood love of the young archaeologist Norbert Hanold and his beautiful Zoé, he says, “again, (...) friends, meeting us every day to run together and, sometimes even, to exchange punches or kicks”.⁵

Childhood love is not that of a man and a woman, although his body calls to enjoy, driven by his ardent desire to be grown up, “to obtain things like grown-ups”.⁴ A subject is marked by his childhood loves without the narcissistic wounds letting him ask what it is to be a man, and what it is a woman wants. These loves are simple; the misunderstandings of sex are heard less, each one will be able to find their each one, and leave them without being very divided. It is another love that the child glimpses: that of his parents and, eager to question

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