The Location of Anxiety

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> I'm having a real day of it.
> There was
> Something I had to do. But what?
> There are no alternatives, just
> the one something.
> Frank O'Hara, "Anxiety" (1995, p. 268)

Abstract

This paper offers an alternative to the Freudian and Lacanian conceptions of anxiety by tracing a middle ground between their accounts of signification and object-attachment. Both psychoanalysts work with a limited understanding of the cognitive complexity which underlies infants' expressive behaviors during the pre-Oedipal stage as well as the dynamics influencing the development of the ability to know other minds. After analyzing anxiety as both a concept and operative affect in Freud and Lacan, this paper turns to the folk psychology notion of the theory of mind and a specific experiment called the false belief task to show how psychoanalysis might rethink the encroachment of the symbolic in view of the more complex cognitive developmental dynamics. Rather than framing the onset of the symbolic order as a swift *entry* into language, this paper proposes rethinking it as a process with a longer temporality and a more complex set of expressive behaviors (language, gesture, embodied expression).

Introduction

Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan place great importance on anxiety as part of the Oedipal drama in their psychoanalytic accounts. Anxiety for both theorists is related to whether objects can preserve their autonomous existence once they are ushered into a discursive framework and entangled as signifiers within representational systems. But there are also critical differences in how they define anxiety and situate it in the developmental process. This paper traces these differences in order to stage a middle ground between their frameworks and to explain how the structure of anxiety as an affect relates to the threshold between object-attachment and symbolic signification. To reveal the incompatibilities between Freud and Lacan's discussions of anxiety, I shall investigate anxiety not only through its conceptual elaboration but also through locating self-conscious moments in their works which reveal anxiety to be an operative rhetorical effect. At the end of the paper, I shall attempt to consolidate this middle ground between the two theoretical frameworks through recourse to studies in modern psychology (e.g., theory of mind, the problem of other minds) since these studies offer more complex accounts of the cognitive and behavioral dynamics that accompany the onset of the Oedipal period.

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Let me begin with a brief comparison of Freud and Lacan's methodology. Freud typically prioritizes the *presentation* of symptoms in order to establish the rules of overdetermination. He also believes in the power of imagery and metaphor to encapsulate certain psychoanalytic ideas. In other words, he characteristically treats images as the presentation or manifestation of underlying issues. By utilizing the laws of energy and entropy to keep track of the investments of the ego, he further maintains faithful alliances to the images and objects that prompt identification with the ego. Freud describes this process (cathexis) as "a synthesis in the course of which free energy is transformed into bound energy" (1949, p. 21). Freud's appeal to the autonomy of these image-complexes is similar to how modernist artists concentrated rhetorical energies on the sensuous presentation of specific objects. Charles Altieri describes this modernist mode of valuation as basing success on the "power to preserve complex intellectual and emotional structures of ordered energy" (1979, p. 49).

Unlike Freud's emphasis on presentation, Lacan, influenced by Saussurean linguistics, emphasizes the arbitrary relations between the linguistic signifier and the signified. Rather than characterizing language as a tool used by subjects to convey ideas, he believes that language constantly resists signification. In "Beyond the 'Reality Principle'", Lacan characterizes Freud's rhetoric of libidinal "energy" as "merely the symbolic notation for the equivalence between the dynamics invested by images in behavior" (2006, p. 73). Freud was using a symbolic instrument to explain the structure of reality, all the while acting as if the artificial instrument must also be a part of reality itself. Thus, in "Metaphor of the Subject", Lacan holds that "enunciation can never be reduced to what is enunciated in any discourse". Speech "signifies nothing" (2006, p. 758) but upholds the symbolic structure which keeps mediating the subject's desires and traps the subject in chains of signification. It is through a "positioning of symptoms" rather than a systematic Freudian explanation of manifestations that the subject is revealed (Grosz, 1990, p. 114). For Lacan, a metaphor is the archetypal exemplar for the evasions of language. It is used "in order to signify something quite other than what it says" (Lacan, 1977, p. 155).

In short, where Freud studies the unconscious like a positivist scientist through its symptomatic manifestations, Lacan eventually characterizes it as a linguistic structure. But Freud's attempts to understand the unconscious foreshadow Lacan's post-structural interventions based on the metaphorical and metonymic axes of semiosis. Let us turn to two examples which establish important differences in their conceptual and rhetorical style. These examples will show Freud and Lacan dealing with concepts or objects which do not fit neatly into a discursive structure. Yet, they will anxiously attempt to work with the object and interpolate it into discourse. In the first example, Freud tries to find a compelling metaphor for the unconscious, while in the second Lacan tries to develop his own original theory of anxiety out of Freud's concepts. These examples not only establish differences in their conceptual approach but also demonstrate the different ways in which anxiety as an affect disturbs their rhetoric.

Halfway through *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud (1961) searches for a metaphor to capture the dynamic mechanisms of the unconscious. (Lacan will applaud Freud for recognizing that the unconscious has a *structure*. Freud, of course, did not talk about this structure in Saussurean terms or as a language. Nevertheless, it is important to understand the *kind* of structure Freud had in mind when he turns to language for possible metaphors.) Freud's first candidate is Rome. His battle with the Rome metaphor would be the perfect demonstration of the operations of the unconscious in the Lacanian sense: Freud painstakingly constructs the city as a metaphor only to realize "how far we are from mastering the characteristics of mental

life by representing them in pictorial terms" (1961, p. 19). What is at stake here is not the urban image and its representational limits. Rather, it is Freud's unconscious relationship to the ancient city of Rome as an object of desire that keeps him returning to it. Had Freud thought about Rome and its landmarks as he does in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (2010)*,* "the same space" could indeed have "two different contents" (1961, p. 19). But his desire to construct a sturdy physical image that captures the dynamics of unconscious gets the better of him and he treats Rome as nothing more than a physical entity.

In his handling of the Rome metaphor, Freud constructs an imaginary version of the city in which "nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one" (1961, p. 17). Freud seeks a metonymic image which will comprise all the archeological layers of history. Jane Gallop's distinction between metaphor and metonymy proves informative here: "Whereas a metaphoric interpretation would consist in supplying another signifier which the signifier in the text stands for (a means b; the tie represents a phallus), a metonymic interpretation supplies a whole context of associations" (1985, p. 129). Though Freud turns to Rome as a conceptual metaphor, he wants it to offer a metonymic "context of associations" (1985, p. 129) which can attest to the endurance and coexistence of various psychic processes. This way, he can demonstrate how the unconscious accumulates experience, stores them and reveals their structural force to the psyche in arbitrary combinations.

The image of Rome initially provides a satisfying thought experiment. However, Freud is not entirely comfortable with the way each historical structure retains visual autonomy. Their seeming independence creates the illusion of there being separable representations of things in the unconscious, whereas, Freud holds that the unconscious has a relational structure. Ultimately, Freud decides to abandon the metaphor: "There is clearly no point in spinning our phantasy any further… if we want to represent historical sequence in spatial terms, we can only do it by juxtaposition in space: the same space cannot have two different contents" (1961, p. 18). It is hard to agree with Freud's conclusion because, surely, spatial meaning is always a social construct and *has* different "contents" for different subjects. We might turn to Freud's original wording for further clarification: "…derselbe Raum verträgt nicht zweierlei Ausfüllung" (1997, p. 37). What Freud really means here is that the same room cannot tolerate two different fillings or occupants. In other words, he is not talking about associational meaning we might ascribe to a space. He is talking about metonymic arrangement - what happens to be physically occupying or filling up a certain space.

We can make sense of Freud's conceptual impasse and nervous oscillation between metaphor and metonymy with a brief reference to Fredric Jameson's account of "structural antagonism" (1983, p. 97). In *The Political Unconscious,* Jameson characterizes "the task of cultural and social analysis" (1983, p. 97) with an emphasis on the perpetual struggle between different manifestations of insights and truths. "Moments of truth" (1983, p. 97) when a set of intuitions about a cultural or textual object prevail are always only a part of the perpetual struggles which determine their intelligibility. When Freud pulls Rome into his discursive framework as metaphor, he restricts his imagination of the urban space to the physical dimensions of architectural structures. However, ironically, the very mobility of this urban image in Freud's discourse (the dynamic of its presentation and retraction) speaks to the concept of perpetual struggle that Jameson elucidates in *The Political Unconscious*. Ultimately, Rome emerges from this discursive oscillation with a kind of empirical agency which prevents it from being completely interpolated into the realm of the symbolic.

Slavoj Žižek's *Parallax View* offers a similar theoretical apparatus. Žižek describes his notion of the parallax as "the apparent displacement of an object (the shift of its position against a background), caused by a change in observational position that provides a new line of sight" (2006, p. 17). As Žižek explains, the change here cannot simply be restricted to the subjective position of the seer. Rather, both the subject and the object are "mediated" in such a way that the subject's way of seeing or noticing must already be inscribed into the cultural object through "a blind spot, which indicates my inclusion in it" (2006, p. 17). Though the term parallax offers a refreshing conceptual horizon, Žižek's account often recaps the usual lessons of cultural theory and discursive meditation. Of special importance to my account, however, is Žižek's discussions of anxiety where he claims that "anxiety emerges not when this object is lost, but when we get too close to it" (2006, p. 198). It is precisely when Rome turns from being a metaphorical exercise into an agent that claims a spot in Freud's metonymic chain of association that it acquires an empirical valence and escapes his grasp: Rather than deepening the metaphorical import, Freud begins to wonder whether there is enough *space.*

Freud was writing *Civilization and its Discontents* towards the end of the 1920s, when modernist movements such as Cubism, Surrealism, and Expressionism were having tremendous impact on the aesthetic imaginary in Europe. One of modernism's main strategies was the distortion of imagery. In the various modernist movements' shared preference for presentation over representation, dialectical tensions between surface and depth were foregrounded. The Cubist emphasis on geometric relations, the Surrealist obsession with chance interactions to delineate new contexts, and the Expressionist desire for distortion were, in essence, motivated by a goal to turn visualization into a compositional process. By obviating the 'rules' of seeing which make up the surface (through geometry, relational networks, and distortions), modernists turned surface into a set of *a priori* limits on aesthetic judgment. What can and cannot be said about certain relations became more important than any talk of specific images or objects. Modernist artists sacrificed the invitations of the objective for the very force of objectivity. Their insistence on delaying representational unity ended up in a paradoxical fetishization of unity as an imaginary force. The *what* of the represented was replaced by what could be said about its representability.

In Freud's discontent with the urban metaphor, we can see the limitations of a modernist aesthetics and what Altieri calls "modernism's reliance on objectified witnessing" (2006, p. 8). Freud argues that the "the same space cannot have two different contents" (1961, p. 18) because the distorted *surface* of the visual image has an overdetermining force on the imagination. The apparent organization of the surface comes to dictate what can and cannot be said about its manifest relations. In contrast, the unconscious resists the identification of individual forces or a narrativization of its historical process. What is missing from Freud's portrayal of Rome are the subjective processes that frame and inform his choice of individual landmarks. From the outset, he announces a desire to present Rome "not [as] a human habitation but a psychical entity" (1961, p. 18). He disregards the human inhabitants of the city but still catalogues those structures which were historically recognized as bearing cultural and political importance; structures, in other words, which are already imbued with human significance. Had Freud foregrounded the subjective and performative accounts of their significance – and how their contents are already historically proliferated – the ancient city of Rome would have made a successful metaphor for the unconscious. Freud's project is paradoxical because it presents inherently subjective content under the guise of *a priori* necessity: "A city is thus *a priori* unsuited for a comparison of this sort with a mental organism" (Freud, 1961, p. 19).

By introducing the metaphor and then retracting it, Freud turns Rome into an object of desire that refuses to be admitted into the chain of signification. When cut off from Freud's psychoanalytic discourse as unfit for the universal argument, Rome, the object of desire gives rise to anxiety: an anxiety that manifests itself as the feeling of being 'far from mastering' a discourse, which is, according to Lacan, where one always is and has to be. In his lectures on anxiety, Lacan argues that "the universal affirmative is only meaningful in defining the real on the basis of the impossible" (2014, p. 78). In other words, it is only when there is a factor resisting a universalizing argument that we feel the need to invest in preserving the integrity of a universal judgment. When something threatens the totalizing mission of discourse and appears cut off from it, we try preserve the veracity of the discourse.

Lacan summarizes this theory in his account of Little Hans, who initially supposes that all living beings must possess a phallus only to realize that his mother lacks one: "There are living beings. Mum, for instance, who don't have a phallus. So, this means that there are no living beings – anxiety" (2014, p. 78). When a counter-example defies a universalizing belief, there is of course a possibility that the belief itself should fall apart. However, Lacan argues that we simply do not choose this path: "The most convenient thing is to say that even those who don't have one have one. That's why by and large we stick to this solution" (2014, p. 78). After the father, or the Law, intervenes, one has to learn to be satisfied with language as an inherently metaphorical entity. Even if the mother does not have a phallus, well, she must have one because she seems to have one, she acts like she has one, or she strikes me as someone who simply must have a phallus. When the mother is reintegrated into discourse in this metaphorical (as if) fashion, she turns into an associative source for desire and transference. This liminal space where the mother is both cut off from discourse and is being pulled back into the chain of signification is the place of anxiety. As Lacan says, "anxiety is the radical mode by which a relationship to desire is maintained" (2015, p. 365).

Let us now examine the affective constitution of this liminal space, which does not receive adequate elucidation by either psychoanalyst. In Lacan's framework, once the symbolic mediation occurs, things can only exist in language as signifiers among which meaning is arbitrarily transferred. The brief autonomy of an object and its ability to avoid the chain of signification presents an anomaly. Anxiety thus forces him to return to the inescapable legacy of the 'original', the Freudian systematic, which he acknowledges to be an uneasy undertaking. In Freud's *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety,* Lacan says, "everything is spoken about, thank goodness, except anxiety" (2014, p. 9). Lacan establishes the position of anxiety as somehow unaccounted for, or cut off from Freud's framework. What to do with this object?

Lacan's goal to absorb anxiety back into psychoanalytic discourse is itself a performance of anxiety, since anxiety elicits this very desire to reintegrate the cut-off object back into discourse. The question of where to place anxiety becomes, for Lacan, an anxiety-inducing question of where to place Freud: He even compares himself to a tightrope walker, with the title of Freud's essay, as his "only rope" (2014, p. 9). Lacan's language clearly expresses the Oedipal struggle he experiences with the Freudian legacy: "What provokes anxiety is everything that announces to us, that lets us glimpse, that we're going to be taken back onto the lap" (2014, p. 53). Reproducing Freud's vocabulary unsettles Lacan for his framework is based on a *lack* that motivates desire. The substantial *presence* of a cut-off object threatens his theory.

Therefore, when anxiety proposes objects that are – even if briefly – cut off from the chain of signification, Lacan has to find a way to affirm the integrity of his own universalizing discourse on desire. He turns to double negation to avoid the language of presence and describes anxiety as "not being without an object" (2014, p. 88). Lacan acknowledges that "anxiety isn't about the loss of the object, but its presence. The objects aren't missing" (2014, p. 54). Yet, he also wants to keep this blatantly present object unnamable: "Although anxiety sustains this relationship of not being without an object, it is on the condition that we are not committed to saying, as one would of another object, which object is involved – nor even to being able to say which" (2014, p. 131). If one could talk about the object involved fully, "as one would of another object" (2014, p. 131), that is, as one would of signifiers, we would be back in Lacan's discourse on desire. There is something about the object of anxiety that resists naming. Frank O'Hara captures this resistance brilliantly in his poem titled "Anxiety", where he refers to the object of anxiety as "just / the one something" (1995, p. 268).

Lacan's performative gestures throughout the lecture demonstrate the unease with which he maintains the discourse. He often asks the audience to bear with him as he makes theoretical jumps that will obviate the presence of lack, which is how he characterizes anxiety: "There's another jump to be made now, which I ask you to note, since, as with the others, we're going to have to justify it afterwards" (2014, p. 51). It is worth noting here that Freud interrupts his lecture "Anxiety and Instinctual Life" with similar remarks: "'Stop a moment!' you will exclaim; 'we can't follow you any further there!' You are quite right; I must add a little more before it can seem acceptable to you" (1965, p. 90); "I fear, Ladies and Gentlemen, that you will find this exposition hard to follow, and you will guess that I have not stated it exhaustively. I am sorry to have had to rouse your displeasure" (1965, p. 92); "I feel sure you are rejoicing, Ladies and Gentleman, at not having to listen to any more about anxiety. But you have gained nothing by it: what follows is no better" (1965, p. 95).

Lacan's restless engagement with Freud results from the systematic incompatibility between their frameworks. For Freud, anxiety is an affect that serves the needs of the ego. In *An Outline of Psycho-analysis,* he argues that "[the ego] makes use of the sensations of anxiety as a signal to give warning of dangers that threaten its integrity" (1949, p. 57). Similarly, in his lecture "Anxiety and Instinctual Life", Freud reiterates that "the ego is the sole seat of anxiety – that the ego alone can produce and feel anxiety" (1965, p. 85). This poses a problem for Lacan because the idea of the ego that Freud associates with anxiety has realistic, not narcissistic, undertones.

Elizabeth Grosz (1990) observes a fundamental difference between Freud and Lacan's theories on the ego. Grosz shows that Freud tends to talk about the ego alternately as realistic or narcissistic. In the realistic version, "the ego protects the id by shielding it from harmful or excessively strong stimuli coming from reality – from external criticism, harsh judgements, the absence of desired objects" (1990, p. 25). In the narcissistic version, "the ego has no direct relation to reality and no privileged access to the data of perception. Its primary relations are libidinal" (1990, p. 25). In other words, the narcissistic ego is driven by a continuous dialectic between pleasure and unpleasure. As Grosz shows, the realistic ego responds to the pressures of the reality principle and is capable of taking a perceptual account of physical reality without the symbolic mediation of the narcissistic libido. Lacan posits an entirely narcissistic version of the ego which develops during the mirror phase. He does away with any Freudian emphasis on the ego's reality-testing functions. Since Freud repeatedly associates anxiety with the realistic ego, Lacan's return to Freud has to come to terms with this distinction.

I argue that we should locate anxiety between these two discursive structures: Between a realistic Freud and narcissistic Lacan. This way, we can define the status of objects anew on this intermediary platform. If Freud believes that the ego can take account of objects as such and Lacan rejects this possibility, there may be a middle ground where the object as such is present, though also threatened by the encroachment of the symbolic. Let us think about where and how the ego develops in both frameworks. I shall follow the psychoanalytic methodology of returning to the microcosm of childhood in search of an alternative metaphorical vocabulary to conceptualize the process of linguistic acquisition.

Lacan's mirror phase, which takes place between six to eighteen months of life, is the pre-Oedipal stage during which the infant develops identifications with deceptively complete and autonomous images. These images work, as Lacan claims, to "establish a relationship between an organism and its reality" (2006, p. 78). The infant recognizes the objects around him as merely existing *for* him. Other individuals' intentional activities are not yet a part of his judgmental process. The child desires the mother and the father's feelings are not yet a part of this affective equation. With the onset of the Oedipal stage, the child is hard-pressed to find a way to account for the father's desire as well. How does the child adjust his desires based on this new factor? He cannot desire the same way anymore. There is now another intentional attachment to the same object. After the father's intervention, the mother turns into a metaphorical force, a linguistic signifier through which the child can represent his desires back to himself.

In Freud's terminology, an awareness of others' intentions emerges with the onset of the phallic phase (onset around age three) which succeeds the anal phase. Whereas the phallic phase is characterized by a metonymic relation (part/whole – does the mom have a phallus?), the anal phase is characterized by how things separate from the body. In *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Julia Kristeva recognizes the importance of this chronology for the "Freudian topography" (1984, p. 130):

> We would like to stress the importance of anal rejection or anality, which precedes the establishment of the symbolic and is both its precondition and its repressed element. (…) the acquisition of language and notably syntactic structure which constitutes its normativeness, is parallel to the mirror stage. Language acquisition implies the suppression of anality: in other words, it represents the acquisition of a capacity for symbolization through the definitive detachment of the rejected object, through its repression under the sign (1984, pp. 149-152).

As Freud explains, "defecation affords the first occasion on which the child must decide between a narcissistic and an object-loving attitude" (1955, p. 129). Lacan is aware of this Freudian dynamic because he relates this cutting of an object to defecation: "This cut is what gives its value, its accent, to the anal object, with everything that it can come to represent, not simply as they say, on the side of the gift, but on the side of identity" (2014, p. 67). The cut-

off object is not necessarily a signifier within the symbolic (not yet, at least) because it exists for one person, and does not absorb a multiplicity of intentional states. The anal phase enacts an elementary dialectic between object attachment and detachment. As the symbolic order encroaches, the retention of the object becomes the marker of a narcissistic attitude that prevents the child from 'entering the conversation'. Thus, as Kristeva argues, the anal phase gradually comes to involve a decision-making process and becomes the precondition for the Oedipal theater of the phallic phase. Anxiety should therefore be located as the governing affect between the anal and the phallic phases.

Indeed, Kristeva's concept of the semiotic *chora* serves as a corrective to the limited imagination Lacan has granted to the cognitive dynamics governing the pre-Oedipal periods. Both in her own theoretical accounts of poetic language and assessment of Melanie Klein, Kristeva posits an understanding of a subject's responsiveness which synthesizes Lacanian signification with rhythms of embodiment that undergird the experience of an infant in the "pre-verbal functional state" (1984, p. 27). Kristeva proposes that we "restore this motility's gestural and vocal play" (1984, p. 26): "The kinetic functional stage of the *semiotic* precedes the establishment of the sign; it is not, therefore, cognitive in the sense of being assumed by a knowing, already constituted subject" (1984, p. 27). In Kristeva's framework, this kinetic awareness is not superseded with the onset of the Oedipal and the establishment of the symbolic. This rhythmic potentiality continues to manifest in certain types of experience and thus, the dynamics of the pre-Oedipal stage have a way of lingering and informing our responsiveness.

Kristeva's account is pioneering for psychoanalytic thought because it offers a corrective to Lacan's privileging of linguistic signification as establishing the totalizing dynamics of the symbolic after the Oedipal period. Recent false-belief task experiments in modern psychology which try to differentiate between the effects of linguistic, gestural and bodily responsiveness seem to corroborate some of Kristeva's emphasis on the need for offering more complex accounts of the cognitive and pre-cognitive process which do not fold neatly into the category of linguistic signification. In my reading, the root of Kristeva's theory also has to do with anxiety, as shown in her account of Melanie Klein. When Kristeva distinguishes between Freud and Klein, she argues the following: "Whereas for Freud the unconscious foundation of psychic life is centered on desire and on the repression of desire, all of Melanie Klein's work is dominated by an interest in anxiety" (2001, p. 82). This anxiety arises in response to the "fear of annihilation of life" (2001, p. 83). Though objects are internalized during the Oedipal stage and risk losing their independent existence, the child is also often overwhelmed by a "desire to *make reparation to* objects" (2001, p. 79). Surely, the cultivation of this desire depends partly on the manifestation of the *chora* and the various gestural, bodily, and kinetic lines of responsiveness which characterize pre-Oedipal existence.

What is absent, then, from both Freud's and Lacan's frameworks is an account of the behavioral transformations taking place *during* the anal phase, between the ages of one and three. In order to fill this gap, I will turn to the folk psychology notion of the theory of mind, and a specific experiment called the false belief task. As Martin J. Doherty explains in *Theory of Mind* (2009)*, the first experiment was conducted by Heinz Wimmer and Josef Perner in 1983, which found that children show an ability to predict how others will behave based on their beliefs starting "at around or 4 or 5 years old" (1983, p. 9). The more frequently cited experiment is the famous 1985 Sally-Ann test, conducted by Simon Baron-Cohen, Alan M. Leslie and Uta Frith. This test builds on Wimmer and Perner's experiment but with the added aim to observe whether

there would be a delay in how autistic children "impute beliefs to others and to predict their behaviour" (1985, p. 37).

Let me create my own version of the Sally-Ann experiment for explanatory purposes. There is a box and a bowl. Emma puts a piece of chocolate in the box and leaves the room. While she is gone, somebody takes the chocolate from the box and puts it in a bowl. When Emma comes back, where is she going to look for the chocolate? The right answer, of course, is the box: That's where she left it and she is going to think it is there. This is the answer given by most children older than three. Remarkably, most younger children think that Emma is going to look in the bowl, the last observed location of the object. The younger children do not yet have the ability to factor in other's people's beliefs when they develop judgments.

There are numerous variations of this experiment. For instance, the 2005 experiment by Carlson, Wong, Lemke and Cosser demonstrates that gestures help to enhance children's performance. "Children who are in transition with respect to theory of mind might find transparent representations such as gesture more accessible for reasoning about mind-world relations" (2005, p. 84). Though psychologists have not isolated the specific mechanisms that lead younger children to ignore others' beliefs, Mark Jary argues that these experiments show that after a certain age "what ultimately guides behaviour is a representation of how the world is, rather than the state of the world" (2010, p. 19). Martin J. Doherty offers an informative summary of the numerous variations of this experiment which, since the original experiments in the early 1980s, have tried to complicate our understanding of the cognitive developments and dynamics involved in the process of children acquiring "the ability to predict behaviour based on false beliefs" (2009, p. 33). These different studies show that there are serious categorial ambiguities in these experiments' definitions of certain mental tasks or capabilities (Southgate, 2013), that many factors can indeed accelerate the development or show signs of early abilities to process others' beliefs. However, as Doherty recaps, there is on the whole a notable consistency in the results: "Children start to do all these things at around the age of 4 years. Some procedural alterations can improve performance, but never by very much. Three-year-olds continue to perform at or below chance" (2009, p. 33).

I turn to the false belief task because, given its timing in children's development, it offers a corrective to the psychoanalytic misconceptions of language acquisition. At some point between ages two and three, children learn to absorb other people's beliefs into their own judgments and can better appreciate other people's affective attachments to objects. In the psychoanalytic framework, this ability is necessary for the onset of Oedipus complex when the child begins to recognize that his desires conflict with those of the father's, directed towards the same object. I associate anxiety with this period where the symbolic gradually encroaches on the ego and its imaginary identifications start to turn into signifiers with values constantly mediated by societal pressures. This is also the transitional period whose affective dynamics (i.e., anxiety) have elicited seemingly incompatible descriptions from Freud and Lacan. A fuller understanding of this transition which takes into account differential cognitive capabilities can extend the temporality of an infant's relationship to objects and other minds.

Donald Winnicott's, in particular, offers compelling theoretical models for seeking reproachments between modern cognitive studies and psychoanalysis since Winnicott's account of object relations avoids the linearity Lacan ascribed to the Oedipal turn. Winnicott's framework, in other words, makes space for the retention of the ability to recognize "an entity in its own right" (2005, p. 120). Here, too, anxiety emerges as one of the primary affects. For

example, in "Birth Memories, Birth Trauma, and Anxiety" Winnicott claims that "…the individual has to have reached a certain degree of maturity, with capacity for repression, before the word anxiety can be usefully applied" (1975b, p. 181). Winnicott resists the standard association of birth trauma with anxiety. He holds that for anxiety a sense of independent individuality has to emerge. Relevant self-object relations are simply not present at birth. Interestingly, just as Lacan's "not without" in his lectures on Anxiety (2014, p. 131), Winnicott in "A Note on Normality and Anxiety", also runs into a negation problem while articulating his theory. He remembers haphazardly uttering the line, "there is no such thing as a baby" (1975a, p. 99) while defending his theory at a conference and describes his immediate reaction: "I was alarmed to hear myself utter these words and tried to justify myself by pointing out that if you show me a baby you certainly show me also someone caring for the baby, or at least a pram with someone's eyes and ears glued to it. One sees a 'nursing couple'" (2014, p. 99).

This line of thinking which both dilates the pre-Oedipal stage to reconceptualize the misleading unity assigned to the symbolic and equips post-Oedipal subjects with some recognitional capacity of "an entity in its own right" (Winnicott, 2005, p. 120) feature prominently in other recent psychoanalytic accounts as well. For example, if we trace the evolution of Jessica Benjamin's thought from her discussions of intersubjectivity to the idea of recognition, we can see a consistent and powerful interest in the rhythmic, gestural and, as Kristeva says, "kinetic" (1984, p. 95) elements which undergird the process of acknowledging the reality of the Other. Benjamin theorizes a "nascent, energetic form of the Third" (2018, p. 30) which stems from the relationship between the mother and the child. Benjamin attaches a "rhythmic" element to this concept of the Third to elucidate "the principle of affective attunement and accommodation to share patterning that informs such exchanges" (2018, p. 30). Most important, in Benjamin's account, anxiety also emerges as a central generative affect with the power to establish "meta-communication", where subjects can become aware of the symbolic and "hold two meanings at once" (2018, p. 149).

Finally, Carrie Noland's work on embodiment and gestural communication proves crucial because it consistently demonstrates the way gestures and embodied reactions can provide "access to an interiority that culture cannot entirely control" (2009, p, 205). Recently in an essay titled "Earliest Gestures", Noland asks: "What were my earliest gestures and where, in me, are they now?" (2019, p. 158). She then pursues a middle ground between Daniel Stern and Judith Butler's ideas of corporeal existence. For Stern, corporeality grants us "access to earlier orders of experience. That is, because gesturing offers an experience of kinetic (and, often, tactile) sensation, it can call up an earlier motor memory" (2019, p. 159). For Butler, however, there is something "culturally overdetermined" (2019, p. 160) about gestures, just like the perpetual mediation that takes place in Lacan's post-Oedipal structures of signification. Noland's search for a middle ground between these two positions informs my own thinking about the transitional "period during which we travel from being primarily a bundle of reflexes and dispositions to being more active, expressive, intentional subjects" (2019, p. 161).

Most psychoanalytic accounts, including Lacan's, ignore the cognitive complexity of the developmental process and characterize the encroachment of the symbolic as a sudden *entry* into language. As modern psychology shows, however, this is a steady process where uses of gesture and body language have differential effects on the child's ability to pass the false belief task. The adoption of a representational worldview, therefore, is not a case of being *thrown* into discourse. Different modes of communication (language, gesture, body) play different roles throughout this process. The characterization of all such modes as purely representational,

and therefore equally mediated by the symbolic order, is misleading. This transitional period, where anxiety is the dominant affect, situates the psyche in a mutable relationship to objects. Most objects are available for the child's desire without being entirely endangered or mediated by the intentional attachments of other subjectivities. Depending on the communicative situation and the resources that the child brings to a situation, objects may occupy this intermediary state or slide into the position of a signifier. Anxiety, then, is an affect caught between two modes of object-oriented awareness organized by perceptual autonomy and the proliferation of intentional states.

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