THE STATUS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BODY IN LACAN'S IMAGINARY AND SYMBOLIC ORDERS

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> *... the subject of the unconscious is only in touch with the soul via the body, by introducing thought into it.... Man does not think with his soul... He thinks as a consequence of the fact that a structure, that of language... carves up his body, a structure that has nothing to do with anatomy* (Lacan, *Television*).

For the phenomenologically minded reader, the name of the renowned French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan evokes reactions ranging from accusations of irrelevance to testimonials bordering on reverence. The present chapter will steer clear of these two ultimately unproductive positions. My concern is instead to explicate an aspect of Lacanian theory which I believe to be particularly pertinent to a phenomenologically conceived psychology-- the status and significance of the body. The body has been a relatively neglected area for interpreters of Lacan's corpus, with far greater heed being given to his more plentiful references to the role of language in constituting human subjectivity.' Yet, as the above quote suggests, Lacan proposes a profound relationship between language and the body in the coming-to-be of the subject.[1]

It was in his earlier work that Lacan (1938/1988, 1949/1977,1953) most explicitly explored the place of the body. Not coincidentally, these earlier papers have also been regarded as best reflecting the influence of phenomenology -- an influence which Lacan and his interpreters have at times sought to dismiss in favor of his later emphasis on structural linguistics. For example, Lee (1990) claims that "despite their theoretical sophistication, these early papers nevertheless betray Lacan's own inability to escape fully the presumptions of phenomenology" (p. 30) ln contrast to this type of claim, Thompson (1985) has contended that phenomenological concepts continued to serve

Lacan even in his later preoccupation with structural linguistics. lndeed, Thompson (1985) declares that "... Lacan's indebtedness to phenomenology is so vast that one must conclude that he divorced himself from it for political reasons" (p. 177).

More recently, Boothby (1993) and Samuels (1993) have maintained that phenomenological categories are virtually synonymous with the concepts required to explicate the perceptual functions that are such an essential aspect of Lacan's imaginary order. This point will be illustrated in the chapter's opening section, which presents a detailed developmental description of the relation between bodiliness and ego formation in the mirror phase. Lacan's convergence with Merleau-Ponty (196a) is also underscored in this first section. The two subsequent sections will retain a developmental focus in tracing the pivotal role played by the body in facilitating the subject's accession to symbolic modes of functioning, which come to supplement the previously established imaginary modes.

1. Body lmage Formation and the Phenomenology of the lmaginary in the Mirror Phase

Furthering Freud's (1923, p.26) contention that "the ego is first and foremost a bodily ego...", Lacan is particularly innovative in accounting for the relation between the infant's bodiliness and ego formation. ln setting up his discussion of the ego's genesis, Lacan (1938/1988, 1949/1977, 1953, 1988a, 1988b) punctuates the 'specific prematurity' of the human infant's birth compared to other species. Focusing upon the infant's anatomical incompleteness, Lacan accentuates

> ... the ontological status of *beance,* an abyss, gap, lack, or dehiscence marking the human being from birth, which... dispels any talk of a preformed, preadapted, or harmonious relationship of man to his environment (Muller, 1982a, p.234).

Lacan emphasizes how the infant's intra-uterine body organization is deficient relative to The demands of extra-uterine life, with there being insufficient coordination among his

sensory systems and motor movements. ln Lacan's view, the infant's birth irrevocably disrupts the homeostasis that-- at least retroactively-- is experienced by the infant as having characterized intra-uterine existence. Therefore, contrary to what has been posited and presupposed in countless developmental theories, Lacan conceives extra-uterine life as introducing a 'fundamental discord' that cannot be understood to include any inherent sense of unity or self.

ln specifying the ways in which the infant's bodily and perceptual experience is chaotic and fragmentary, Lacan first highlights the host of bodily discomforts related to being fed and being weaned. During approximately the first six months of life, through the 'oral fusion' established with his mother during feeding, Lacan sees the infant as retroactively experiencing a fantasy of intra-uterine fusion (Muller, 1988). However, this fusional fantasy is frustrated by the disruptive discontinuities associated with feeding, weaning, and other somatic experiences. ln an attempt to minimize or refuse this frustration of his desire for wholeness, the infant incorporates what Lacan (1938/1988) called the 'imago of the maternal breast'-- which he took to be an essential aspect of the 'weaning complex', within which a dialectical tension is set in motion between the soothing qualities of the maternal imago and the chaotic bodily experience created by the cleavage of premature birth. Lacan (1938/1988) alludes to this dialectic when he notes that "the maternal imago cannot be separated from the chaos of interoceptive sensations from which it emerges" (p.15).

ln addition to the discomforts related to feeding and weaning, Lacan also describes the infant's lack of motor coordination-- giving particular attention to how the infant experiences his body as consisting of discrete parts without a sense of their interrelation. That is to say, the infant experiences himself at one moment as a hand, at another as a foot, a leg or an arm. With his motor incoordination, the infant is of course

profoundly helpless and dependent. The infant's sensory life likewise lacks coherence, with the world consisting of the predominantly dissociated experiences provided by the following three categories of sensory receptors:

1) the interoceptive receptors- which are related to such visceral sensations as breathing, eating, and digestion.

2) the proprioceptive receptors-- which are related to sensations produced by the body's movement, including sucking and gripping.

3) the exteroceptive receptors-- which are related to external stimuli as they impact upon the senses of sight, sound, and smell.

Particularly during the first 6 months of life, Lacan notes how the infant's "... extero-proprio- and interoceptive sensations are not.,. sufficiently coordinated to allow recognition of one’s own body to occur, nor, correlatively, to allow any idea of what is outside the body,' (Lacan, 1938/1988, p.14). lndeed, in viewing others, the infant before 6 months tends to focus upon and scrutinize discrete body parts rather than being oriented to the other's bodily totality (Merleau-Ponty, 1964).

ln the midst of the infant's sensory-motor incoordination, Lacan (1938/1988) is impressed by the precocious ability the infant demonstrates in recognizing his mother figure's face, an ability which is evident within the first 10 days of life (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). Lacan (1938/1988) further observes how "the reaction of interest that a child shows in the presence of the human face... cannot be separated from the development by which the human face will assume its value as a mirror of psychic expression" (p.14). Lacan here anticipates the superiority that the sense of sight will gradually gain relative to the infant's other, less developed sensory-motor modalities. With the advent of what he called the 'mirror phase' between 6-8 months, Lacan will attribute profound developmental consequences to the precocity of the infant's visual perception.

That is to say, Lacan (1953, 1949/1977) seizes upon the fact that by the age of

6-8 months the infant's visual perception is sufficiently superior to his motor coordination that he becomes fascinated by the sight of his image in a mirror. Not yet able to stand up, and supported by a caregiver or a prosthetic device, the infant enthusiastically responds to the upright posture presented by his mirror image *as if* he has already achieved the motor mastery depicted by the image. For Lacan and his followers, the infant's behavior in front of the mirror provides a profound metaphor of how he comes to experience his mother's more coordinated movements as bestowing upon him a unity that he otherwise lacks (Ragland-Sullivan, 1986).[2] Through his reflection in actual mirrors and the metaphorical mirror of his mother's image and reactions, the infant is for the first time able to imagine himself as a corporeal unity or Gestalt (Muller & Richardson, 1982; Jalbert, 1983), henceforth allowing him to experience his body parts and movements as integrated and coordinated in a way not yet physically possible.

With its placidity and stability, the infant's mirror image offers a seductive Alternative to his motoric insufficiency and incoordination. As Benvennuto and Kennedy (1986) have described, "the mirror image is held together, it can come and go with a slight change of the infant's position, and the mastery of the image fills him with triumph and joy" (p.54). The infant's mirror image thus provides the promise of a bodily mastery of which he is not yet capable. As Lacan (1949/1977) puts it, through his mirror image the infant "... anticipates in a mirage the maturation of his power ..." (p.2). ln jubilantly identifying with the unified body-image of the other, the infant borrows an 'envelope of mastery' (Lacan, 1988a, p.170-71) which serves to contain and coordinate the anarchy of his otherwise chaotic bodily experience (Boothby, 1991;Jalbert, 1983; Lacan, 1988a; Ver Eecke, 1989).

Lacan thus clearly posits a primacy of the visual in the construction of the body-image. Such senses as hearing, touching, and smelling make a less dramatic

contribution to this construction since they only permit partial experiences of the body. ln contrast, the sense of sight alone allows the child access to a totalized body-image (Grosz, 1990; Merleau-Ponty, 1964; Ver Eecke, 1975, 1989). Research on the development of children born blind reveals that it takes them significantly longer to appropriate a unified body-image and to subsequently learn the stable use of the pronoun 'l' (Fraiberg & Adelson, 1973; cited in Ver Eecke, 1989). Further, even once this appropriation is achieved, blind children's "... postural schema... [and] image and experience of... [their bodies]... vary considerably from that of sighted subjects" (Grosz, 1990).

To substantiate his theory of the mirror phase, Lacan integrated empirical Research from numerous fields- including ethnology, anthropology, and physiology (Ver Eecke, 1983). The empirical support for Lacan's theory of the mirror phase has continued to accumulate, as Muller (1982b, 1986) has documented in his reviews of numerous contemporary studies from experimental and developmental psychology. These studies have confirmed that the mirror phase typically unfolds between 6-18 months-- a period which coincides with the consolidation of object permanence and with the developing capacity for long-term memory of visual forms (Muller, 1986).

Among the most significant references for Lacan was the work of French Psychiatrist Henri Wallon (1984). Wallon's work included extensive observations and descriptions of infants' and young children’s' behavior before mirrors. From Wallon's work, a developmental delineation of the mirror phase is possible (Jalbert, 1983; also reviewed in Merleau-Ponty, 1964), with three movements of the mirror phase being summarized as follows:

1. The infant perceives the mirror image *as if* it were real, attempting to grasp it as though it were an object. During this part of the mirror phase, which lasts until about age 1, the child has not yet learned to "... discriminate between the proprioceptive sensations of its body and the exteroceptive experience of its body image" (Jalbert, 1983, p.138), in this way making possible the identification of the one with the other. It is during the early months of the mirror phase that the child forms an identification with the mirror image and exhibits reactions that Lacan characterizes as jubilant.

2. Through experimenting with the mirror image and the mirror surface, especially by noting the absence of anything behind the mirror surface, the child recognizes the non-reality of the mirror image. The child is thus confronted with the difference between "... the proprio-interoceptive [i.e. felt] experience of the body and the exteroceptive [i.e. seen] experience of the body image" (Jalbert, 1983, p,139)

3. By age 18 months, the child has usually determined-- at least cognitively-- that the exteroceptively perceived body-image is an effect or consequence of the body as "... located in the space of proprioceptive sensations..." (Jalbert, 1983, p.136), in this way subordinating the two dimensional body-image to the body as experienced in three dimensional space. Within this 'rapport of subordination', then, the child maintains *both* a differentiation between the experienced body *and* the body-image and the previously established identification between these two domains.

This developmental sketch of the mirror phase, though, is already somewhat of An idealized account insofar as it posits a primacy of cognition in the infant's coming to comprehend the "non-reality" of the specular image. Merleau-Ponty (1964) warns against this understanding when he states that "if the comprehension of the specular image were solely a matter of cognition, then once the phenomenon were understood its past would be completely reassimilated" (p.138). To substantiate this point, Merleau-Ponty (1964) cites observations of a 5 year old boy touching, licking, and striking his mirror image. The cognitive perspective- exemplified for Merleau-Ponty by the work of Wallon (1984)-- assumes that the influence of the specular image disappears once the child understands that it is 'simply' a material reflection of his introceptively experienced body. However, Merleau-Ponty maintains that "... the operations that constitute the... [specular image] involve not only the intelligence proper but, rather, all the individual's

relations with others" (p.138), with the specular image therefore becoming generalized as the child grows increasingly aware of himself as' seen by others.

Merleau-Ponty (1964) credits Lacan with surpassing Wallon's limited interpretation of the specular image, particularly insofar as Lacan's account recognizes the affective and intersubjective implications of the child's specular identification. The mirror phase inducts the infant into what Lacan (1988a, 1988b) called the 'imaginary order', from which only varying degrees of escape will ever be possible. lt is therefore Lacan's (1949/1977) contention that the mirror phase culminates in "... the assumption of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development" (p.4). The infant's identification with the specular image provides the foundation for the formation of the ego as well as for subsequent identifications, introducing a "... formal stagnation... which constitutes the ego and its objects with the attributes of permanence, identity, and substantiality" (Lacan, 194911977, p.17). That is, Lacan's imaginary order is relevant not only to the ego's relations with others, but to the perceptual relation of the ego to objects-- wherein the perceived unity of the ego comes to be correlative with the perceived unity of objects in the perceptual field. Along these lines, Boothby (1993) has accentuated how "a key aspect of the imaginary function, perhaps it's very essence, consists in its capacity to adumbrate the unitary contour of perceptual objects" (p.11).

Here Lacan converges with the Husserlian phenomenology of consciousness Insofar as there is an intentional relation between the ego and the perceptual unities constituted by the ego (Husserl, 1982). However, in Lacan's phenomenology of the imaginary, the unity of the ego and consciousness is equally dependent upon the perceived unity of the perceptual field. Samuels (1993) makes this point by noting that ",,. the unity of the self is dependent upon the establishment of unities in the outside

world and vice versa" (p. 63). Lacan's account of the mirror phase therefore speaks to how the constituting ego is itself constituted by the perceived unity of others and objects- a perceptual Gestalt which Lacan (1949/1977) notes is "... certainly more constituent than constituted" (p, 2). With this radical dependency of the ego *qua* consciousness on others and objects, the ego's status is potentially reducible to nothingness. Samuels (1993) has noted how"... consciousness is always consciousness of the other.... without the reflected image of the other, the ego is nothing. .." (p.73-74). The ego's potential nothingness is one of several alienating effects Lacan attributes to the infant's specular identification. The next section will focus on the body's fate within the intrasubjective and intersubjective dimensions of imaginary alienation.

2. The Body's Fate Within the Intrasubiective and Intersubjective Dimensions of Imaginary Alienation

In Lacan's view, the mirror image is a *mirage* in that it has no depth, it is not real, it is imaginary. Still, the infant is convinced that his image is *really him*, and longs to incarnate its unity, completeness, and tranquility. Lacan maintains that in being so captivated by his image the infant effects an alienation of himself from himself-- not primarily because the image represents him as other, but due to the way in which the assumption of the imaginary Gestalt entails the exclusion and restriction of the heterogeneity of bodily experience and desire. Boothby (1991, p.57) has most eloquently explicated this aspect of Lacanian theory:

> .... the unity of the imago remains forever inadequate to the fullness of desire, There is always a remainder, always something left out. Desire is split against itself insofar as only a portion of the forces animating the living body find their way into the motivating imaginary *Gestalt*.

Lacan introduced the category of 'the real' to designate the undifferentiated and unsymbolized dimensions of bodily existence, those that Boothby specifies as initially

alienated by the formation of the ego in the mirror phase. ln phenomenological terms, the identification with the specular image effects an at least partial alienation from the lived body.

As already noted, the infant's experience and expressions of jubilation are particularly notable during the early months of the mirror phase, when the infant has identified himself with his mirror image without yet differentiating it from his body as experienced in space. The jubilant aspect of the infant's initial identification with the mirror image is emphasized by Lacan (1953, p.15) when he declares that

> We cannot fail to appreciate the affective value which the gestalt of the vision of the whole body-image may assume when we consider the-e fact that it appears against a background of organic disturbance and discord, in which all indications are that we should seek the origins of the image of the 'body in bits and pieces'.

By the phrase 'body in bits and pieces', Lacan is referring to what in other places he has described as the 'imagos of bodily fragmentation' to be found in dreams, fantasies, and paintings-- i.e. "... the images of castration, mutilation, dismemberment, dislocation, evisceration, devouring, [and] bursting open of the body...', (Lacan, 1948/1977, p.11). However, Lacan does not appear to take these fragmented body images to actually be present in the experience of the pre-mirror phase infant. ln temporal terms, it is important to accentuate how the infant's jubilant albeit illusory anticipation of bodily unity *retroactively* determines the images of pre-mirror phase experience to be those of bodily fragmentation (Gallop, 1995; Jalbert, 1983; Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967). Lacan (1949/1977) alludes to this important point when he states that

> The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation- and which *manufactures for the subject,* caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic... (p.4, my emphasis)

By 'orthopedic', we can understand Lacan to be referring to the corrective function

Played by the totalized body-image relative to the fragmented body-images that it retroactively manufactures. Gallop (1985) articulates this subtle and complex point with particular clarity when she states that "the image of the body in bits and pieces is fabricated retroactively from the mirror stage. lt is only the anticipated 'orthopedic' form of its totality that can define-- retroactively-- the body as insufficient [and fragmented]" (p.86).[3]

Along with this retroactively defined sense of bodily insufficiency, the infant's Body image also assumes a defensive function. That is, contained within the infant's Anticipation of bodily unity, there is a defense against the anxiety of bodily fragmentation. A dialectical tension is constituted between the unified body-image presented by the mirroring other and the images of bodily fragmentation retroactively engendered by the infant's identification with this unified image (Bonner, 1991, 1993; Grosz, 1990; Lacan, 1988b). The mirror phase infant's unified body-image promises an imaginary immunization against the anxiety of bodily fragmentation but, like any inoculation, it harbors traces of the very ailment against which it is intended to provide protection. Lacan (194811977) speaks to this point when he notes how the mirror image "... is invested with all the original distress resulting from the child's intra-organic and relational discordance during the first six months [of life]..." (p.19).[4]

The infant's initially jubilant experience of his mirror image is thus relatively fleeting, since this image is so soon also invested with the ongoing and retroactively revitalized distress of his discordant bodily experience (Gallop, 1985). Within a few months, a significant supplementary experience of distress develops. Having recognized that he possesses an external appearance, the infant next becomes aware that this external appearance is actually much more readily available to be viewed by

others than viewed by himself. That is, as the infant begins to distinguish between his proprio-interoceptively experienced body and his unified body-image as revealed in the mirror, it becomes apparent that only he can directly experience the first corporeal dimension, while his outer appearance must always be mediated by the gaze of an other. A split is therefore introduced into the child's experience of his body, a split which will eclipse the previous sense of jubilation with one of anxiety.

The’ infant’s jubilation in identifying with its mirror image had indicated that he initially experienced "... his exteriority as an enrichment" (Ver Eecke, 1984, p.75). However, following this initial experience of enrichment, the infant gradually discovers the alienating and threatening dimension of depending upon others for the appropriation of his body as a unity. This discovery is usually made by age 8 months and is exemplified by the phenomenon of 'stranger anxiety', which was first described by developmental theorist Rene Spitz and has also been referred to as stranger wariness'(Kaplan, 1978). Spitz (1965) observed how at 8 months many infants for the first time engaged in various anxious behaviors upon the approach of strangers, such as covering their eyes or hiding their heads under pillows-- the purpose of these behaviors being to erase the visual image of the approaching stranger and, correlatively, to stage their own imagined disappearance.

It has been philosopher Wilfried Ver Eecke (1975, 1984, 19Bg) who, based upon a systematic study of Lacan, has seized upon the relation of stranger anxiety to the mirror phase. Ver Eecke has in essence revised Spitz's original observations within Lacan's theoretical framework. Ver Eecke speculates that the look of the stranger serves to alert and remind the infant of the alienating experiential split engendered by the fact that his external appearance is accessible predominantly through the eyes of others. As the child comes to see himself as being seen by others, the drama of the

mirror phase therefore enters a significant new scene.

Ver Eecke (1984, 1989) makes the important observation that during the 'stranger anxiety' phase the child does not usually experience the gaze of his mother with anxiety. Further, who in the presence of his mother, the child does not typically experience anxiety in the face of a stranger's gaze. Ver Eecke speculates that this is so since it is the mother who, hopefully, has already recognized and responded to the infant's inner experience, in this way reassuring the child that he will not be reduced by her to his exteriority-- which is precisely the anxiety-inducing threat posed by the gaze of a stranger (Ver Eecke 1975, 1984, 1989).

The infant thus depends on his mother to affirm and support the appropriation of his body both as a unified body-image and as a body-subject with experiences and desires distinct from her. ln addition to the infant's radical dependence on the mirroring mother for facilitating the exteroceptive appropriation of his body as a unity, the infant is therefore also profoundly dependent on her for recognizing his inner bodily experience as valued in its own right-- in this way allaying the experiences of anxiety, shame, and paranoia that can come to characterize a more problematic relation to bodiliness (Lacan, 1953; Sartre, 1953).

The phenomenon of stranger anxiety thus exemplifies the intersubjective dimension of the alienation that Lacan considered to be an essential dimension of the mirror phase's transformative effects. ln initially identifying with the specular image, the infant had already to some extent become alienated from his interoceptive bodily experience and captured by the 'imaginary me' offered by the image. Merleau-Ponty (1964) has described this dynamic as a 'de-realizing' function of the specular image, within which there is a 'confiscation' of the 'immediate me' by the 'imaginary me'-- that is to say, in intersubjective terms, there is a "... 'confiscation' of the subject by the others

who look at him" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.137). Particularly insofar as the infant's desire becomes invested in-- if not fused with-- the specular image, there exists the danger of his desire becoming alienated in and rigidified by the desire of the other who most incarnates this image (who, at least initially, is typically the mother figure).

Lacan (1978, 1988a) acknowledges the significance of Sartre's (1953) phenomenology of 'the look' for his ideas on the intersubjectivity of the mirror phase-- particularly the sense in which the other's gaze objectifies and alienates the subject. Ver Eecke (1975, 1985), though, deems Lacan's account to be more developmentally accurate than that of Sartre since Lacan allows the look of the other to be more than the site of alienation. lnsofar as there is the possibility for desire to be recognized, Ver Eecke affirms that the Lacanian look can facilitate the child's appropriation of his body as both a unity and a subjectivity.

Lacan (1978) further critiques Sartre for limiting his conception of 'the look' to an intersubjective field in which the positions of observed and observer are potentially reversible. Lacan exceeds Sartre's understanding by granting a primacy to the position of 'being seen', maintaining there is a radical "... dependence of the visible on that which places us under the eye of the seer" (1978, p.72).[5] There can be no reciprocity between the other's gaze and the subject's perceptual experience, since the latter permits vision from a single perspective while the former submits the subject to being simultaneously seen from all sides. lt is partly for this reason that Lacan (1978) speaks of "... the split between the eye and the gaze..." (p 6Z). This split has an ontological status for Lacan that is irreducible to an intersubjective relationship, with the structure of the gaze by no means limited to the visual field. Explicating Sartre's famous phenomenology of the look, Lacan (1978) observes how "the gaze I encounter.... is, not a seen gaze, but a gaze imagined by me in the field of the Other" (p. 84).Lacan notes how Sartre's (1953)

description of the look includes such auditory cues as hearing "... a rustling of branches, or the sound of a footstep followed by silence..." (p. 346). Beyond the sensory and intersubjective dimensions of the imaginary order, Lacan (1978) ultimately defines the gaze as a function of desire-- a definition which will be fleshed out through the next section's discussion of the symbolic order and the Oedipalization of the subject.

3. The Acquisition of Language. Gender Identity Formation. and the Deconstruction of the Body-Image

During the course of the mirror phase the child gradually recognizes that others are not completely responsive to his or her primarily inarticulate demands for love and compliant mirroring. lt is at this time, usually between 15-18 months, that the child begins to appropriate language as the means to make his demands. The mother's ability to affirm her child's claim to autonomy will become especially significant as the child begins to appropriate speech as the main means of claiming a distinct point of view.

Ver Eecke (1984, 1989) has cogently described how the period of 'no-saying' initiated between 15-18 months is the most significant linguistic index of the child's effort to ameliorate the alienation of the mirror phase. lnitially in the form of shaking his head from side to side, and soon with the vigorous use of the word 'no', 'no-saying' by the child conveys the attempt to claim an autonomous viewpoint and to rupture the symbiotic bond with the mother. As Ver Eecke (1984) asserts, "to say no to a demand of the mother.... means that the child is no longer in need of his mother in overcoming the alienating dimension of appropriating his body" (p.72).ln saying 'no' to the mother, the child is affirming ownership of his body as a source of desire separate from the image his mother and others may have of him. That is, "the child refuses to automatically be [or want] what his mother thinks him to be [or want]" (Ver Eecke, 1984, p.80).

The crucial question during the child's period of negativism is therefore whether and to what extent the mother can tolerate the aggressive refusal of her desire contained within her child's no-saying.[6] The aggressive intention of no-saying is clearly described by Ver Eecke (1984) when he states that "to say no is precisely to make use of a linguistic expression whose first function is to destroy the point of view taken by another..." (p.80). Here we see an intersubjective instantiation of Lacan's famous dictum that the word is "... the murder of the thing..." (1977 , p. 104), with the specification that the word can also execute the symbolic murder of the other.

Ver Eecke (1984) emphasizes how the child's ability to productively employ 'no-saying' depends upon his already having experienced his desires as frustrated by the prohibitions and no-saying of his parents. That is, the child identifies with the parents' prohibiting position and imitates their no-saying as a way to frustrate them as he has been frustrated- in more traditional psychoanalytic terms, there in an 'identification with the aggressor'. Although the no-saying of the mother is initially of greatest consequence for the child's ability to begin separating from her, the mother's capacity for no-saying is in turn dependent upon her recognition of the law of the father-- a law which dictates that her child is not the exclusive focus for the fulfillment of her desire, which is instead delimited by a 'third term' often but not necessarily occupied by the child's actual father.[7] Ver Eecke (1984) summarizes this cluster of Lacanian concepts when he states that ".... the mother's no is possible only through her recognition of the phallus of the father..." (p.81), a recognition which acknowledges her finitude and permits the child through his own no-saying to affirm the phallic attributes of the father.[8]

In referring to the father figure, I am of course alluding to the imminent Oedipalization of the child's desire. For Lacan, the Oedipal and castration complexes

are intrinsically related to the child's acquisition of language. let is with the beginning of speech and the gradual entry into the Oedipal drama that the mirror phase subsides and the child passes from specular to the social forms of identification (Lacan, 1949/1977,1988a). ln becoming a speaking subject', the child no longer lives exclusively in the 'imaginary order', but accedes to what Lacan (1988b) called the 'symbolic order'—that system of signifiers that constitute the subject's native language.

Lacan places particular importance on the influence of the signifier in the symbolic order insofar as the signifier is defined by the "... interplay of opposition between sameness and differentness" (Jalbert, 1983, p.65), an interplay which assists the child in differentiating himself from others in a way that is problematic during the mirror phase. Where the imaginary order had previously been characterized by sameness, unity, continuity, and immediacy, the child's entry into the symbolic order therefore introduces difference, multiplicity, discontinuity, and mediation. This shift has significant consequences for the Oedipal child's identity formation insofar he can no longer exclusively define himself as the sole object of his mother's desire. ln this connection, Ver Eecke (1988) describes how the Oedipal child gradually

> ... accepts deprivation of an original but illusory identity and conquers a new identity. Even though this is a new identity, the child must create a kind of continuity for itself and must therefore feel that it is both the same and not the same as before. (p.113)

Particularly important for this period of transition and transformation is the child's assumption of a sexual identity, a process which is initiated during the waning months of the mirror phase when-- concurrent with the period of 'no-saying'-- there is an incipient awareness of sexual difference (i.e. of having or not having a penis). Contemporary psychoanalytic research on the infantile origins of sexual identity agrees that the second half of the second year is an especially critical period for the establishment of a core

gender identity (Roiphe & Galenson, 1981). Between the ages of 15-19 months, the genital zone "... emerges as a distinct and differentiated source of endogenous pleasure...." (Roiphe & Galenson, 1981, p.284). There follows a burgeoning awareness of genital difference, with clear divergences becoming apparent between the way the male and female infant symbolize this nascent knowledge.

The significant fact for Lacan is that the discovery of genital difference itself Engenders symbolization insofar as this discovery fragments the previously established unified body-image and calls upon child to name through speech the discrete body parts that subsequently become apparent-- with the penis or lack of penis of course being of particular concern. lndeed, the child's oedipalization and concomitant castration complex entail the reappearance of the fragmented body images that had previously been contained by the imaginary bodily unity constituted in the mirror phase. Boothby (1990) has documented how during the Oedipal period there is a preoccupation with fragmented body images and fantasies of dismemberment. This preoccupation, rather than being a regressive event, plays an essential role in the child's transition to symbolic modes of functioning insofar as this transition entails a shift from the homogeneity of desire defined by the imaginary unity of the ego to the heterogeneity of desire engendered by the diversity of signifying elements available through the linguistic system-- a system "... in which meaning [and desire] is free to circulate among associated elements without necessarily referring to a particular object or signified" (Boothby, 1990, p.219). This shift from the homogeneity to the heterogeneity of desire "... finds a perceptual analog in... [the] contrast between the integrity of the body gestalt and its dismemberment into fragments" (Boothby 1990, p.222). Boothby (1990) is particularly articulate and suggestive in summarizing this aspect of Lacanian theory, describing how

> ... Lacan's theory locates the birth of the symbolic function in relation to a certain deconstruction of the lmaginary [order], The fantasmatic violation of the body imago effected by castration furnishes a precondition for the unfolding of the capacity for signification. It is upon the site of the body image, or better, upon the sight of its dismemberment that the insertion of the subject into the symbolic order begins. The first movements of signification find their material support in the parts of the fragmented body (p.227).... The imaginary body-gestalt provides an initial organization of unitary form upon which the differentiating function of linguistic signification can go to work. The body imago functions as an originary frame or matrix against which difference within identity can first be registered (p.224).

Thus, whereas the formation of the unified body image and ego identity had functioned to quell the anxiety of fragmented body images in the mirror phase, these fragmented body images in turn function to incite both the castration anxiety in and the symbolic transformation of the Oedipal child.

To illustrate these points, Boothby (1990) cites the behavior and drawings of children three- to six-years-old, who he initially notes "... relish tearing off doll's heads... gleefully threaten to pluck out the eyes and bite off the fingers of caretakers and peers... [and] squirm with giddy but delighted fascination at fairytale scenes of violence" (p.221).[9] ln the drawings of a boy aged three and a half, though, Boothby notes how Much attentiveness there is to including all bodily appendages and preserving the body's wholeness. Boothby (1990) wonders whether this attentiveness reflects "... a dawning anxiety about the body's integrity" (p.228), a suspicion which seems supported by the dramatic differences in the drawings of the same boy beginning at age 5. These later drawings consist of dismembered body parts which have been personified with faces and names, such as "Fingerman" and "Footman". Boothby (1990) observes how "… when compared to the earlier drawings, which so conscientiously rendered the body's wholeness, this [later] series seems to suggest a sort of deliberate experimentation with the body's fragmentation, as if the challenge were to see how far

the body could be cut up and still retain a sense of self" (p.229). Clearly, the child's symbolic ability to name each body part is an essential aspect of pushing the boundaries of bodily fragmentation without undue anxiety about the body's actual integrity. Boothby (1992) further describes how the child's collection of body part drawings, "... each with a face and a name, comprises a sort of compendium of experimental identities, a playbill of provisional subjectivities" (p. 26).

The child's Oedipalization therefore entails the anxiety evoking edict that the previously constructed 'unified body-image' must fragment and be reassembled in a less rigid form-- a form which of course must now also include the recognition of being either a male or a female. Ver Eecke (1984) frames the child's discovery of sexual difference as a confrontation with the fundamental bodily dimension of his finitude-- that of either being a boy or a girl, but not both. Fantasies of bisexuality or the denial of sexual difference represent the child's ambivalence about accepting bodily finitude and renouncing the desire for absolute fulfillment.

In a sense, Lacan develops an existential definition of castration. Boothby (1990) suggests this meaning in noting how for Lacan "castration involves coming to terms with what one is not, with what one does not have, with what one cannot be" (p. 217). As we have seen, the identity transformation entailed by the castrating assumption of the symbolic order is intrinsically related to a fundamental shift in how the child experiences his or her bodily integrity-- an integrity originally constituted through the identification with the specular image during the mirror phase. For Lacan, then, the body by no means disappears with the accession to the symbolic order. lndeed, Samuels (1993) has highlighted how "a constant theme in Lacan's handling of the castration complex is its relation to a threat of bodily harm or fragmentation" (p. 153). Thus, at both the developmental and metapsychological levels, the body retains different yet significant

roles in Lacan's imaginary and symbolic orders.

This point can be further illustrated by returning to and completing the discussion which concluded the previous section-- that regarding the split between the eye and the gaze. On the one hand, the perceptual functions of the eye are but species of Lacan's imaginary order-- where the illusion of unity, dominance, and presence reigns. On the other hand, seen from all sides by an invisible gaze, the subject submits to the symbolic order's multiplicity of often hidden significations. lndeed, it has been noted how for Lacan "... seeing involves an already being-seen within the circuit of signification" (Kochhar-Lindgen, 1992, p.472). The circuit of signification includes much to which the Subject cannot be perceptually present. Further, in contrast to the image, the function of The signifier requires continual reference to that which exceeds the perceptual presence of the signifier itself. ln this connection, Boothby (1993) has noted how

> ... linguistic signification is characterized by a special kind of continuously shifting play of presence and absence. The functioning of the signifier, the very heartbeat of signification, is bound up with a constant oscillation of appearance and disappearance, a continuous formation and breakdown of perceptual gestalts (p. 30).... For the symbolic, by contrast [to the imaginary], the unity and phenomenal presence of the image are instantaneously evacuated or metastasized in favor of reverberation in an immensely complex network of associations... The symbolic breaks the enthrallment with the presence of the object that characterizes the imaginary (p. 34)

Despite the subject's accession to the symbolic order, the imaginary order as constituted in the mirror phase will nonetheless continue to structure the subject's desire and identity. Boothby (1990) has commented that "... even after the Oedipal transition, the lmaginary [order] and its reverberations continue to orient the Symbolic process as Lacan conceives it..." (p.225), and he concludes by raising the question of whether "... even on the far side of the Oedipus complex, the play of fantasy that lures desire... [retains] the stamp of the body image that originally structured imaginary identity" (p.226). Here, Boothby accentuates the significant role the body image and its

concomitant perceptual functions continue to play in the constitution, and possible pathology, of human subjectivity.

lnsofar as the' imaginary order remains an inescapable and indispensable dimension of psychological functioning, the insights afforded by phenomenology cannot be dismissed as irrelevant to the Lacanian enterprise. At the same time, as I believe this chapter has demonstrated, Lacan's work reveals the limits of an exclusively phenomenological perspective on psychological functioning. Since the symbolic function operates according to a different set of rules than does the imaginary function, the categories of phenomenology must be supplemented by those developed in other disciplines-- including psychoanalysis and structural linguistics.[10]

Returning to Freud's (1923, p.26) formula that "the ego is first and foremost a bodily ego...", we can conclude with Lacan that the bodily ego is fated to be carved up by language and inscribed within a symbolic order which exceeds somatic and intersubjective boundaries. The status of the bodily ego in Lacan's imaginary order is supplemented by the significance it assumes in permitting passage to the world of language. lt is in this connection that Lacan's early ideas on ego formation during the mirror phase remain relevant to his later focus on the subject's accession to the symbolic order. Correlatively, the phenomenological foundations of Lacan's imaginary order did not disappear with the structural linguistic formulations required to explicate the symbolic function. Rather, having been among his first intellectual loves, phenomenology is not to be forgotten for the mark it made on the Lacanian corpus.

ENDNOTES

1. This chapter's introductory quotation is from Lacan's 1973 television interview, which was translated into English as *Television* (Lacan, 1990). J-A Miller (1990) has noted how “the central problem of *Television,* which is not resolved this text, is this: how come the signifier, language... has an effect on the body?" (p.23). The present chapter will of course offer only partial replies to this question, in addition to addressing the way in which the body offers itself to be carved up by language.

2. Jalbert (1983, p.125) nicely articulates the metaphorical character of Lacan's conception of the mirror phase, an essential corrective to the incredibly common misunderstanding that Lacan was only concerned with literal mirrors. Jalbert states that

> ... the mirror phase is *not* merely an empirical, concrete event which consists of The child observing his or her self-image as it is reflected in the mirror surface. The mirror phase is also a *metaphor* which describes the child's psychological relationship with a primary care-taker who 'reflects' the child's 'image' to the child.... The main point Lacan seeks to make concerning the mirror phase is that the child or the subject comes to see himself or herself *as being seen*, as an object who knows that he or she is being seen (Lacan, 1975, p.240). This reflecting process is first of all interpersonal or intersubjective in that it occurs as the child relates to his or her primary caretakers. *The reflective process essentially takes place by means of the parents' response to the child's presence and uniqueness.*

3. ln focusing here upon such concepts as 'anticipation' and 'retroaction', it must be acknowledged that Lacan employed a distinctly existential-phenomenological understanding of human temporality in his explication of the mirror phase, as well as in several other major theoretical contributions. Lacan was especially influenced by Heidegger's (192711962) emphasis on the primacy of the future in structuring human temporal experience and constituting human history. With this understanding of temporality, Lacan often criticized psychological theories which posited a chronological

or natural progression of human development and maturation-- theories frequently built on biological concepts alien to the human order.

4. Lacan (1953) speaks at more length to this point when he declares how the ego's

> illusion of unity, in which a human being is always looking forward to self-mastery, entails a constant danger of sliding back again into the chaos from which he started; it hangs over the abyss of a dizzy Assent in which one can perhaps see the very essence of Anxiety. (p.15)

5. Similarly, Lingis (1984) has spoken to the limits of Husserlian phenomenology for comprehending the Lacanian look, noting how

> the eye is not moved by an intentionality of need, but of desire.... it is not on the lookout for things, for sense-data, for hyletic material, but on the lookout for a look, a look forever outside, exterior, the look of the other (p. 157).

6. An example from the work of Ver Eecke illustrates this point. Ver Eecke (1975) recalls

> an incident he observed in which a mother had before her a cake that was to be divided among her family and guests. She started by asking her youngest son, between 2and 3 years old, if he wanted a piece. After saying “no” to the surprised mother, the mother repeated the question two more times, with the same result. When the child said "no" for the third time, he took the mother's hand and kissed it. The mother then divided up the cake and some was left over. After most had finished their piece, the mother asked if anybody wanted another. Before anybody could answer, the child said: "l want a piece" (p.234).

Ver Eecke (1975, 1984, 1989) goes on to note how the child's no-saying in this situation signified an effort to differentiate his desire from that of his mother and declare a point of view independent of her without yet clarifying how his perspective is different from hers. Saying “no” to his mother's request did not mean that he didn't want a piece of cake. Rather, his "no" meant that he did not want his mother assuming that she knows what he wants or when he wants it. Further, his kiss on her hand following his third "no', expressed mild guilt about the aggressiveness expressed in his refusal of her offer.

7. Smith (1991) speaks to this point when he writes that

> ... in general, a third term can be taken as any factor that unsettles the oneness and self-sameness presumably experienced in moments of symbiotic tranquility. Any primarily given or secondarily established trait, function, or structure that serves to maintain nondefensive differentiation is a third term. By nondefensive differentiation I mean differentiation in which loss, lack and limit are owned. (p. 96)

8. The no-saying child thus initially encounters his father through his mother as a phallic attribute (Ver Eecke, 1984) and in so doing begins to differentiate between himself and his mother. The child next turns to the father with the hope that the father's sole task will be to fulfill the child's desires. However, this hope is dashed by the child's discovery that the father is a figure distinct from his mother and that he has an affective relation with her. The father is no longer experienced by the child as merely a phallic attribute of the mother but as a person who possesses the phallic attribute. ln now being confronted with not just the attribution but the existence of the father, the child of course enters the Oedipal complex wherein the father is seen as an intruder who must be eliminated (Ver Eecke, 1984).

9. Lacan (1977) makes direct reference to this phenomenon when he observes how

> ... one only has to listen to children aged between two and five playing, alone or together, to know that the pulling off of the head and the ripping open of the belly are themes that occur spontaneously to their imagination, and that this is corroborated by the experience of the doll torn to pieces (p.11).

10. This position has of course been previously advocated by numerous philosophical heavyweights, with Ricouer (1970) probably being the most compelling proponent.

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