

Is Adolescent Love a Crossing?

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The moment I heard the theme of the forthcoming NLS Congress entitled "Painful Loves", my association was with adolescent love. Those first tremors, the desire, the frustration, the anxiety, the sadness. That love that ends but marks the subject for a lifetime. Lacan places the function of absence at the heart of the problem of love. He derives a definition, "love is giving what you do not have."¹ At the same time, he points out that the lack of one is not the lack of the other. There is a gap between the beloved and the lover. Increasingly, in my practice with adolescents, I hear them refer to this as "different love languages."

Jacques-Alain Miller in his text *In the Direction of Adolescence* draws attention to the fact that psychoanalysis is interested in three moments in respect of the direction of adolescence: the moment of puberty, a moment biologically and psychologically proven; sexual differentiation; and the ways of connecting the ideal ego with the Ego-Ideal.² It is in this third moment that the question of adolescent love, often painful, seems to be located.

To talk about love, Jacques Lacan refers to the poetry of Arthur Rimbaud.³ At the heart of this delicate passage, the adolescent sees emerging for him the essential question of a new love, beyond that of parental love. The passage from the position of the beloved to that of the lover reveals the "metaphor of love." How does the child, hitherto existing in the position of loved object, agree to choose to move to the side of lover? How does this new state arise? The subject encounters something new, a real that arises in him, a hole, a lack, something that causes the child's body to change. It is no longer the body of a child bound to its parents.⁴ Entry into adolescence implicates a desire to grow up, to go through the centrifuge called love, and emerge transformed from an object that is loved to a subject that loves.

The love that arrives in the transition of adolescence provokes the emergence of a new relationship with the real. This is the point of encounter with jouissance, a point of pure contingency where the body, the signifier and jouissance are linked together in a new way, creating the new "knot of love."⁵

Today, adolescents seem to have to cope with their bodies on their own, entering the world as adults and to take responsibility for their sexuality and enjoyment. To take the risk of going beyond childhood, without the safe protection of a parent, to take the risk without a guarantee.

¹ Bosquin-Caroz, P. *Painful Loves*: Presentation of the Congress Theme 2025.

² Miller, J.-A. "In the Direction of Adolescence" *Family Dramas, Family Traumas, The Lacanian Review*, 4, 2018, pp.23-33. Retrieved from https://www.lacan-universite.fr/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/en_direction_de_ladolescence-J_A-Miller-ie.pdf

³ Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore*, ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. B. Fink, New York/London: Norton 1998.

⁴ Lacadée, P. "Le nouvel amour." Retrieved from <https://psychanalyse-map.org/2014/04/05/philippe-lacadee-le-nouvel-amour/>

⁵ *Ibid.*