

## Play and Experience

Mabel Marcinavicius

"Sometimes I felt that all kept going, that all kept getting soft,  
giving ground, accepting without resistance that one could go  
just like that ... from one thing to another "  
Julio Cortázar (The other sky)

It was my first Hour of play with Maria Belen. I had already interviewed her parents. She was referred to me by a pediatrician because of a persistent skin disease.

While I was getting ready the children's office, a storm, that ended in a flood, burst. Could they make it to the office? I remembered a similar situation, when a 6 years' old little patient kept the whole session repeating, over and over again, a traumatic experience, when the taxi that brought him got stuck in a "huge lake" (read Juan B. Justo Ave., flooded). I checked if the Playmobil were in the basket. Although I thought that probably, Belén wouldn't play.

Thirty minutes after the scheduled time, the doorbell rings. I see before me a little girl -small for his 8 years- livid, stiff. I invite the father to take a sit in the waiting room, but he, without any comment on what had happened, asks me permission to go to smoke to the courtyard.

As soon as I accompany the child to the table where the basket with the play materials in sight is, she starts spouting: the "unbearability" that different girlfriends, children "discriminated", different situations and problems at school, in tennis, generate her. While his parents were asleep, she saw a movie of a fairy that wanted to get wings. In a corner of a sheet of paper, she draws a half-moon with many stars agglomerated, both the moon and the stars on a dark and tense blue, she explains to me that the drawing was made for her by God. She wondered whether God's appearance was a dream; she felt Him so real. She also dreams about things that "are going to happen in the past." Another day, a strong storm began and she said to Him "Come" (to God) the window got opened and she woke up with glittering hands ... when it rains she feels weird, she feels a strange sound and thinks it's God. In the meanwhile, outside, the rainfall continues being powerful. But she doesn't seem to register it. I think about a strong denial. They are not hallucinations. Although there are fabulations -the parents have already told me about it- I find and collect from my "basket" of psychoanalytic concepts,

what Winnicott calls "fantasizing". I reread chapter II of "Playing and reality." A primary dissociation case. Winnicott's patient, when she was very little, when "borning to the playroom", she found herself in a world already organized by his older brothers, where she couldn't get in; because of that the creation of a playing space couldn't take place. The only refuge left to her was fantasizing. Maria Belén has neither brothers nor "playroom", she moves in the world of adults and its omnipotent fantasies.

Very different from the daytime fantasies described by Freud, that appear in puberty. If he says they are heirs of children's play, it is because there was play, and repression too. Repression that always accompanies dreaming, and Winnicott adds living, so dreams may also be poetry. It's in this way that, in this author, imagination is linked to creative playing, whose origin is shapeless.

But the little girl who was the patient described by Winnicott, obeyed the roles given to her in another people's playing, while internally she was fantasizing, a fantasy where, due to her omnipotence, wonderful things happened. Just the opposite of the *experience of omnipotence*, lived in dependence on the mother. Fantasizing is a desperate response to the failed dependence, to the abrupt disappointment experienced in relation to the mother. But it's only a part of what, properly speaking, this author considers internal world. And, precisely, not his true living core.

The transitional space (intermediate space between inner and outer world), whereas, it's a subject that deletes the differentiation inside-outside. The fantasy is built there in the "play-playing" space-time (privileged) of the experience, which forms Unconscious and is formed by it.

However I prefer, with Lacan, to talk about "phantom", because of the logical articulations to which it responds, despite the "spectral" resonance that it has in English. However, imagination allows to be qualified, colloquially, as lush, and consequently the slippage to fantasizing, in its conceptualization of Winnicott, is possible.

### **Why "experience"?**

To rescue the experiential value of the psychoanalytic encounter, without straying from the concept of Unconscious. And whereas, I consider that there cannot be children's analysis without playing.

Then, let's go back to María Belén: a "fantasizing" girl. The uninterrupted flow of words continued: that when it rains nobody "exceeds" her and that she gets

nervous when her mother throws her water ... I associated<sup>1</sup> with what her parents had already told me about her delay in sphincter control, and about the diaper that, one day, she threw into the toilet, causing a flood in the bathroom. By now, signifiers of the Other on one side, trauma in the Real on the other. If this girl started a therapy, the analyst's task would be to create the conditions in which the analyst would be able to make her play, only chance to create a scene in which could take place the *subject's response* to the signifiers imposed by the Other, the one who has given the child a place as a subject.

I think these are the most difficult cases for a child's analyst and the necessary valid analytic intervention will be promoting the game. At first, playing favours a scene other (the Other scene), and more than that, is a experience shaper, as indivisible unity in its various aspects: intellectual, ethical, aesthetic, etc<sup>2</sup>. Just as Agamben, Benjamin and others think, that, being able to renounce to that ideal so dear to philosophers, which is to achieve the absolute knowledge, help us to re-position ourselves in that same direction, in our field.

### **Imagination and experience in Giorgio Agamben**

Before Descartes (ego cogito) and modern science, that made of conscience a single subject bringing together knowledge and experience, that were separated<sup>3</sup>.

Imagination, that currently is expelled of knowledge as unreal, was in ancient times the medium by excellence to achieve knowledge by way of experience. We must take into account that, in the medieval philosophy vocabulary, cogitare designated the discourse of fantasy rather than the act of intelligence. Agamben says that modernity "expropriates" the experience and makes out of it scientific experimentation at the service of science, its project, its ideal. It plans the experiment that will allow it to achieve "objectivity". For humanity, a consequence of this is that the appropriability of the object of desire becomes impossible, desire appears, as always unsatisfied, and reality is perceived as fragmented, defective.

Experimentation is the construction of a real road, the application of a method. The medieval quête (search) as that of the Holy Grail, for example, is the recognition, whereas, the absence of road is the only possible way for man.

Psychoanalysis recovers fantasy's mediator character<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The associaton was mine. Because -beyond we are talking of a little girl- the predominance of dissociation in María Belén is what disturbs her associative connection.

<sup>2</sup> Bataille G. "La experiencia interior" quoted by Barredo, C. in Psicoanálisis: "la experiencia de la alteridad", APDEBA, Ateneo Central, june 2011

<sup>3</sup> Lacan is going to insist in separating them, by dividing knowledge and unconscious learning, I (moi) and subject of the Unconscious.

For Agamben in fantasy it's given the coincidence of the objective and the subjective, the internal and the external. In that sense there is homology between phantom and experience. The phantom is the subject of experience. That's why for the speaking being reality is only phantasmatic. Winnicott would coincide, but this doesn't satisfy, at all, the scientific speech of positivist roots. Lacanian theory leaves positivism explicitly aside<sup>5</sup>. Then, Lacan thinks that even in the scientific experimenter, is "*lalangue*"\* (he writes it all together, in a growing effort to differentiate his theory of structuralism, and therefore of linguistics) what makes him cogitare. The Unconscious is made of *lalangue*. We could also say that *lalangue* is what we call the mother tongue. That is the only *language* the child knows and while using it, it becomes his own tongue, the one he uses to express himself. Then the experience it's about learning to learn. For both the child and the experimenter with his rat.

### **The prosaic realism of Don Quixote**

But let's go back to Agamben, to the beginnings of modernity, when the crisis of experience took place. He remarks that not by chance, Cervantes wrote Don Quixote in that period. As it was believed until then, nothing of what was visible and palpable represented the real and essential reality. Like all artists did, Cervantes denounced it. Quixote, the character, -faithful to the reading of Amadis of Gaul and other books of chivalry, of Amadis' poetry of landscapes- is launched by Cervantes, its time and its narrators, to the dusty roads of Castile and its taverns, in a sort of "prosaic realism", as Borges says. It would be as if a person of our times described us a journey only through service stations where he filled up the gasoline tank of his car. Then, his planned adventure, that of the Knight of La Mancha, it's only built of hallucinations and magic phenomena, that has been expelled, pure and simple, from that reality. He is alienated, he has been "bewitched" as his house keeper and his barber conclude. And playing the role of a double, appears Sancho Panza, a pragmatic counterpoint.

But...isn't that what happens to us, analysts, that having been instructed, for years, in an extreme positivism, we get shocked when the Unconscious is thought as

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<sup>4</sup> There is no difference with kleinian psychoanalysis when it states that the world is known through projection and introjection processes, in dealing with the formation of symbols.

<sup>5</sup> Milner in "*L'Oeuvre Claire*" says that for Lacan, in what to psychoanalysis is referred, science is only an hypothesis, while for Freud it was an ideal.

\* "*Lalangue*", from French, "la langue". In English: "the tongue". (N. de las T.)

poetic? When, in the interest of science, it's difficult to recognize the true value of conjectures?

### **The loss in the playing experience**

There is symbolization only if there are losses. The lost mother in the "fort da" of Freud's grandson. The mother, lost forever and from always, it's a metaphor. It is symbolized by these two signifiers "fort da", it's introjected, while we consider that introjection is always symbolic. Then, it's a loss-gain that goes beyond the internal representation of the mother image, while she takes a significant value<sup>6</sup>.

But the **experience of loss is more than that.**

If we start by Freud's *Beyond the pleasure principle* is to highlight the repetition of the loss, that, then, can be again symbolized, although always dropping something more than the fort-da, a real, impossible to symbolize. It's to the encounter of that real that one goes in the repetition, encounter that's always going to be unsuccessful.

The reel with which the child recreates the mother, throwing it over and over again, alongside her void-absence next to the crib. Then, that void marks a place. There's neither picture, nor signifiers, it's a moat around which he has to begin playing the "leap game" (Wallon) and it's a part of the structure that turns out now. Although the signifier is the subject's first mark, it's in that object that Lacan will call *object a*, in that reel, where from the game, we are going to designate the subject, and achieve a support that gravitates, given the unbearable lightness of its "lack of being", product of language.

The incidence of improvisation, of the chance, it's essential in playing. It's the encounter with the real, the absolutely first and determining in the function of repetition, beyond the repetition of symbols. So it's on this side of repetition where the "experience" takes strength and value, the repetition as *tyché* (taken by Lacan of the Aristotelian vocabulary). It's much more than making active the passive, in the Freudian sense. It's in that way how the loss of the mother is built in **experience** and reality begins to signify.

**Playing is then the infans' encounter of experience with the language and with the real object.**

It's also the attempt of the child's solution of the enigma in relation to the desire of the Other, to the feeling of anguish. Because if the mother is gone it's because "one

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<sup>6</sup> Maybe in another moment, he might have been with his eyes full of tears, sucking her thumb and staring at the door, making of his nostalgia the expectation of a new encounter with his mother.

other thing" has taken her away. It's like this, that the third is included, and as such, the desire in the psyche.

And as Cortázar's flâneur in the epigraph when he starts walking-playing<sup>7</sup>, aimlessly, without predetermined journeys by the Other's signifier, he may let himself be carried away by the unexpected, by chance, and it's because of that reason that he gets to know what experience is. The medieval knight who goes in search of the Holy Grail, Cortázar's flâneur in "*The other sky*", contemporary with psychoanalysis and free association, that lets himself be carried on by the Parisian galleries of the late nineteenth century, and finally **the child that plays**, have in common the absence of a predetermined way.

### **The Imaginary. Disassemble and reassemble**

For Valeros the predominant sense of creative play is the "increase in the skill and the development of new forms." I want to emphasize that "skill" implies movement, and it has the ability to break the frozen imaginary significations. So in the significant articulation that requires from the Other, there is an imaginary that disarms itself to achieve "new forms" with which the child builds his subjective world or the supporting phantoms. The illusion is then permanently renewed "in ludere" (etymologically illusion)

Then, it isn't that phantoms are in his mind and are "realized" in the play. Phantoms are built in the very act of playing. And while, that psychic operation of symbolization is taking place, there is always a nonsignificant rest falling, support of the phantom.

Thus, creative play is a response to the Real that tones down with the phantom and in that way allows the pulsional ordering and reordering.

The subject is placed in the object and it builds a veil with new signifiers. Is the Other as castrated (with a fault) what gives place to the fantasmatic response, in which the child constitutes itself in signifier of that fault and no longer the pure object that completes it.

He wanders from the time (logical) in which he requires the look and the presence of the others, for the construction of dreams and fantasy, where shame operates as a dike.

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<sup>7</sup> It's in this sense that Klein's idea of playing, as free association, can be taken.

Creative play is not intentional, it isn't pure projection<sup>8</sup>. The toy puts a limit to the projective mechanisms. And in turn the material "allows" itself to be handled, "it gets soften and gives ground" as in Cortázar's epigraph . Valeros gets to say that the game is what happens to the material.

### **Lautaro**

Lautaro is an 8 years old boy. Everyone calls him Latu. He has difficulties to sleep and systematically sleeps in his parents' bed because he says he has fears. His father doesn't believe him. He was for a "long time an only child" until his little brother was born when he was 6. At that moment his tendency to gain weight appeared. Identified with his mother, who hates being pregnant because during pregnancies she gets very fat. At school he's very absent-minded. He doesn't copy well (he swallows the letters, as his parents the "u" of Lautaro). He doesn't want to study and because of that "he was slapped several times... never too strong", although parental violence soon became visible (also he used to hurt himself, frequently). He doesn't like to play football (his father is really into sports) His little brother has recurrent respiratory problems.

I had some interviews with the parents, in which they brought their concern about "the boy sleeping in their bed" and since then Lautaro began to sleep in his bed. I thought that during the interviews there had been a movement from that place of "boss" where he had been placed, signifier that I had been pointing out, repeatedly, trying to reinforce (install) the exercise of the paternal function in the father. However it turned out to be that -by means of transference- I turned out to be the "boss" that put Latu in his place. It was notorious the difficulty, that both parents had, to leave the place of children. As the child stops going to his parents bed, the mother begun again with her "panic attacks" related to the separation of her own parents. On the other hand, the father was being handled by a mother that was professional and rich, and that controlled his life. The life of their children too. For example, taking Latu to Disneyworld during the school term, with negative consequences for the child.

Lautaro began the treatment and soon after his parents relate that he had, significantly, improved in school and also in the relationship with his peers and that he had started playing rugby. This usually happens at the beginning of an analysis

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<sup>8</sup> The psychotic child, however, may see in a little car a terrifying monster. The material's characteristics are not contemplated by the projection

-by means of suggestion- and puts the analyst in his princeps task: to leave the place of that all knowing Other.

Predominantly, in the first sessions he used Scotch tape and thread, linking different parts of the office (chairs, tables, doorknobs). Perhaps showing-creating paths to guide him in that open space between his parents room and his own, that had left him separately-lost. Generally, he included my chair, and sometimes myself and himself. As he consumed them all, there was a waiting time until I considered it was reasonable to replace the material. During that time, he played with table games, shareable materials used by "grown up people", thus the packing, of his suitcase and of his privacy, was very slowly done.

Choosing the bonding material was probably a response to the behavior of the parents that denied him the access to their bed. But other times he tied himself crying while he was asking me for help, telling about his experience of being trapped in the Other. Flagrant paradox. But the beginning of the possibility of playing while it was sustained in the analysis.

Sometimes, when the end of the hour was approaching, he stopped the work in session and got ready to wait for his mother to come and fetch him, watching his watch's second hand, and complaining because it had been "chattering" with another. But suddenly he began to jump like a furious gorilla (the metaphor isn't mine, it's his dramatization). While he is a gorilla, he is not himself: beginning of the fiction. Some other days, hearing the footsteps of his mother coming, he marched like a triumphant soldier returning from war to meet his beloved one. The stage was ready. He was the character, and, at that moment, I was the witness audience .

When during three years he had not been ill, he had had a strong viral disease with complications, revealing the somatic way that could had taken what had not yet reached symbolic processing.

### ***Lautaro starts playing***

*One day balloons appeared in Lautaro's analysis, inflated first with air and with water later. They were newborns. Violetine, Orangine and Intestine (interestingly pink colored) followed one another. They were big, fatty and heavy. Then, came little Greeny. The cradle was the trash can. Different scenes followed one another where they received several cares, but above all they had a bath because they were very dirty.*

*The game turned after into a water bomb war. But, quickly, he rejected conventional water bombs that he have brought and he used the balloons to fill them with water. It was a competitive game. It was important to hit the target; to beat me when he achieved to touch me -not to hit me- with the balloons more times than I did. And the balloons, with thicker walls than the water bombs, never exploited. After the session, he untied them with the scissors, to put them back into the suitcase, with a surprising skill. This required a great caution and thoroughness. He took a break to tidy up his suitcase. However he included -much to my regret-, among the "disposable" things, drawings and, and above all, modeled figures made with great skill.*

*After a few sessions I was surprised when I realized that the analysand was furtively saving a balloon, which was taken away from the "arsenal" we had for our war. I understood that this was already happening and I didn't notice it. Although I pointed out to him "one more for the collection," as saying: "I'm not blind", I felt I should appreciate this concealment to my eyes as a form of subjective mark.*

### **Trauma and experience**

From a child disoriented and untied, -rather than coming back to that bed, source of intense anguish by the entrapment in the Other-, session after session, we find a subject that produces its own signifiers, in response to the objects, the balloons that populate his space, and to the Other that determines it. Then it's produced the letter, the writing, and the subject recreates himself, he rewrites himself out of the place where he was located by the Other. In a semi-saying that skirts around the region of the unspeakable.

The real sexual motorizes Lautaro's game, that became symbolic now, while installs the deprivation of a present enjoyment: the bellies inflated with babies, which he also wants to burst. Water, basically, prevents balloons explosion making a noise that scares him. Thus, he avoids presentification of trauma, probably related to the primal scene, but also allows him to acquire, to implement psychical resources to process it (and not just defensively). For example, filling with water "softens" the balloon impact, deflating carefully with the scissors for them not to explode. Then, the experience of playing is circumscribing the trauma, while it limits enjoyment. But this was more evident when he started to "like the little sound" that makes the popcorn when exploding.

The libidinal became relevant over the thanatic.

### Construction of a phantom

At the same time, a series of ludic scenes played in the transference with the dirty balloons-babies led to the construction of a phantom anal pregnancy (the phantom is constructed on logical times). In turn that implies the creation of a dike, a path to repression. At first the game was "in sight". But, later he started not to want to show it. Lacking the structure that allows him to preserve it, unable to tone it down, he hides it.

What I found most disconcerting is the "rejection" of his modeled figures. Moreover, I had valued them as a progress in the analysis from the figures-strokes on the Playing Hour and I have even passed it on like this to his parents.

Ambivalence was redirected toward babies, and to a particular baby, his little brother, toward himself? Or they didn't constitute genuine subjective production? Maybe it was about destroying the senses imposed from the Other, since there was no cruelty in this behavior. I think we should revise with Winnicott the destroying complexity, and its usefulness in the psyche structuring, separating it from sadism. Provided the object survives (another constitutive paradox).

### "Playing with fire"

Playing with fire has had a privileged place in the analysis with children stories. Although the child proposes it, to some extent analysts have always been aware about the importance of this experience. The function of the question here, as in any analysis, is "the desire of the analyst" as Lacan has conceptualized it.

However, I think that it is more difficult its transmission to younger generations. Not only because there are, and there always were, many obstacles to the analysis with children –parents willing- but because, today, the professionals have generally a suspicious attitude. In a context framed by threats of malpractice suits this is a common response to parents attitude, who feel the institutions and the various professionals involved in the health and the education of their children as persecutory and unreliable; thus, transference doesn't happen. Analysis of children doesn't happen without the parents' transference<sup>9</sup>. From the analyst's side, is not

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<sup>9</sup> The Kleinian analysts are careful not to have interviews with parents, in order not to generate transferences; this has to do with the imaginary transference and not with the symbolic one, that is the one that sustains the analysis

without the analyst's desire. It's neither the desire of an analyst in particular, nor a particular desire. It's the desire as dimension that shapes the subject, the defining desire of the analyst as such, that goes beyond the fears and prejudices in the person of the analyst, for example, to use fire as a material.

It's known that the origin of many games comes from ancient sacred ceremonies. Ball games have to do with ancient ceremonies around the sun, for example.

Agamben speculates, however, an opposition between play and ritual, in the sense that the ritual sets and structures the calendar, while the game destroys it.

But in the analytic session the game with fire must be framed in firmly stated rules, given the actual risks of destruction and spreading. Once installed, the start of each session evokes something like a ritual.

On the other hand, there is no game that maintains us on the alert because of the possibility of an overflow. We have to regulate how many matches, how much smoke, which elements, some are more flammable than others, some may be more irritating than others, or may be toxic, where to do it (if on a ceramic floor, if in a suitable container), what we allow the patient to manipulate and what we keep for us. It brings up absolutely what refers to edges, to the establishment of limits and their transgression or overflowing. The risk is recorded specifically by the skin, confirming the ban that, then, becomes real.

But once installed the game with fire in the psychoanalytic session, there is something ritual, sacred, symbolic as foundational. Both for the child and their parents. We are often surprised by the almost reverent attitude of a father for what happens in these sessions. Fire is a social being, as Bachelard says, in "*Psychoanalysis of Fire*".

But law and desire are the same thing. To ban playing with fire, is to stimulate the desire to transgress.

Benveniste (quoted by Agamben) says that the sacred combines the myth that history states and the ritual that reproduces it. While in the game only remains the rite, without the words of the myth that have been forgotten. Then he concludes that it comes from the sacred, but inverts it.

In the **current pathologies**, while the absence of edges, the incestuous tension and the hostile rivalry in Oedipal deployment predominate, therapists we are, above all, forced to "work" in what is called framing. I think that playing with fire, in particular, enables a framework for the construction of boundaries (there are not pathologies that are organized like the formations of the unconscious). It allows us to position ourselves as analysts more easily and to move away from imaginarized

adult as the one who punishes and sanctions. Unlike regulated games, where, especially from latency, it's more common to follow socially established rules, in the game with fire, in the analytic session, the design of both the frame and the game itself is not without the subject

### **"I like the little sound"**

*Lautaro had brought a slingshot (that belonged to his paternal grandfather) and that day I brought the corn he had asked me for to use it as missiles to shoot balloons. But it turned out to be ineffective as a projectile, as it was to be expected. Then he asked me for a "microwave" (i!) to make popcorn. "I like the little sound," he said.*

After some hesitation, I thought, as Valeros says, that games that are not played are as seeds that haven't ripened. I decided to bring him matches and took out of the closet the equipment I use to play with fire. And I had hesitated, because fire was not exactly what he asked for and because now I already know -not when I started working with children and "playing with fire"-, that the fire is part of my family history. As Winnicott says, the analyst also analyses himself with patients. And maybe that contributes to hold him in the analyst desire.<sup>10</sup>

*The popcorn was done, and Lautaro was in his dotage because "it worked: Let's take everything out, let's put some water, a paper carpet and, then, the popcorn on top!!"*

*Due to a practical matter, I think, -not due to risk- I suggest him another thing. But he springs me on that it's his father who taught that, whereupon I accept without a word the procedure suggested.*

*The second time we do that, at the time the smoke becomes irritating (in spite of the fact that the children's office is installed in the space of a garage and it's quite airy), I say we have to stop the game and I open the windows and turn on the fan. He continues tracking little pieces of matches on the floor, there are all put out, but just the same he throws them inside, to "continue making popcorn".*

*He starts a monotonous complaint or request (please, please) already known by me. Then he puts burned matches in his mouth, a gesture probably widely used with her mother, who always feels guilty and yields. I kept quiet.*

*Then he found a cut match that had not been lighted and he was surprised when he*

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<sup>10</sup> Lautaro continued his research on baby production for a while. First with water, now with fire. The sexual nature of playing with fire is confirmed by the early and frequent demand of treatment of enuretic boys.

*brushed it past the blackboard, and the match lighted. "I'm a crack!. I saw it on TV ...It's a lie! ... (but he continued wondering) ... "suddenly it happened, I didn't know it was going to happen."*

*A: As when your mom got pregnant ... you don't know how it happened.*

*We had a "metaphoric" little exchange about what he may have seen on TV (parents' bed): the origin of fire, how the man (primitive) discovered it by chance by rubbing two little stones, but now we know how to produce it.*

*L: "Oh, that's it, in the pool, we put them out with water" (he has two quenched matches in his hand). One of them goes through the sink's grating. Then he throws the other on purpose. "It would get pregnant?" I say. He remains seriously concentrated in the holes of the grating. End of the session.*

Beyond the significant repetition, the chance, the contingency, can produce something new. For example, we might think that from this finding, something like a phallic exercise -recovered after the failure of the corn and the slingshot begins to develop. And the father has a place in it. He is the one that says how things are.

*In the subsequent sessions he restarted the game with fire, leaving the "popcorn" behind. It took time setting the framework. That if the matches were 15, 7 or 8, if the large pot or the little pot, if paper or tissue paper. He considered it a game in which certain boldness is important, in his desire to be like his father that "has no fears". But the flip side, a strong tendency of his parent to the accidents, appears when one day he brings a candle, and tells me that he has burned himself during a power outage. The bonfire lightened at that moment was bigger than usual, so I was forced to do a special effort in taking care of Lautaro. Another day he was distressed because his eyes were stinging and I heard then that his grandmother was a persistent smoker, to the point that she has separated from the grandfather, when he had a heart attack and had to ensure that the air he inhaled was smoke free.*

A symbolic border, that established the coordinates among which he should move, was being constructing. Limits and rules were constructed together.

This game occupied the first ten minutes of each session (Lautaro measures them with his stopwatch) but it was modified in its details.

### **"The operation"**

A Monday session, (in the context of a great disappointment in front of the discovery that "Santa doesn't exist") and the last before the holidays of the first year of treatment, which was interrupted by the father a couple of months after

taking up in March (foreshadowing the end?): <sup>11</sup>

*He throws into the fire, that he had lightened in a hurry, the whole tissue paper package.*

*As the bonfire has a considerable size, I insist him to be careful. However, he throws impulsively the whole matchbox (I put eight matches per session in a little box). When hearing the matches' explosion, I say that it seems babies crying. He retorts me: No! Bring water ... maybe not. When smoke begins to go out, I open the window and we discover that his parents are chatting inside the car.*

*L: I will come on Wednesday?*

*I remember him that holidays begin; that he goes on a trip, and that also it's the Three Wise Men's Day.*

*L: I'm going to celebrate it the 7. We will buy the gifts there. I choose my brother's gift because I know more. I am bored! Tell me what to play. Do you have the Battleships? All these games are old. Santa Claus brought me the Battleships! But he has an idea: He tries to build a clip, unsuccessfully with two ballpoints first, then with scissors (at my suggestion), to thereby separate the very thin different layers of the tissue paper leaves semi-burned and still sparkling, while he puts them out with the "injection" (a syringe that he commonly used for water). Although I had also to rescue him from the frustration of not finding the syringe in his suitcase at that time of separation and loss and to "find" it myself.*

*He quenched and separated them leaf by leaf, in what I nominated "a real operation" while imitating a careful surgical dissection.*

*When he finished, he started throwing water with the syringe to see how far it could get, then he tried to wet me again, the anguish-boredom. The rest of the session he tied me again with thread and Scotch tape, as he used to do before.*

I want to rescue, however, how valuable were the little pieces of game achieved in the context of parental disappointment -idealized Magi (also the analyst fall from the place of a whole Other in the imaginary side of transference)- and the imminent separation due to holidays.

This piece of successful "operation", as I nominated it at that session takes place as it's directly linked to the location of the lack in the Other. As it can be clearly seen

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<sup>11</sup> In this case, and with my agreement, pointing to sanction paternal authority. It was hard to know, without a monitoring process, if it had an effect. But I learned, incidentally, a posteriori, that the father managed to cancel a new trip abroad (untimely) of the child scheduled by his grandmother. Any children analysis mobilizes the other family members positioning and, eventually, achieves a change. It is important to clear that the demand for analysis was made by the father from a short personal analysis experience he had had.

in a fragment of another session of L., and that not for being a cliché in the latents has its structural importance: he takes a Scotch tape, he sticks it on the blackboard and he covers it completely with a blot made with chalk scratching very strong. He unsticks it and he observes with great pleasure the Scotch tape silhouette that has remained in a "negative" box.

The "lack" makes possible the game allowing to bear the disappointment; also the anguish due to the supposed phallic impotence (a syringe that doesn't go as far as he would wanted to or "would have to" ... to substitute the omnipresent father).

### **Play as *erfahrung* (experience)**

Let's recall then the medieval *cogitare* as speech of the fantasy and as means of knowledge. The fire was part of that experience. In the antiquity it was the flame of a candle that made the wise think and the poet create.

In the fire it's characteristic the mobility among rapidly changing forms; they are easily configured and they are also easily destroyed. Contingency, the possibility of a surprising finding that precipitates a change prevails. But also the fascination and reverie, that in Bachelard words, joins "the home to the volcano." And while moments of contemplation also occur, because of its expressive power, we can speak of an "aesthetics" of this experience.

Can we then suppose children psychoanalysis has a place in the experience rescue? Moreover ... in the living itself? (Winnicott).

Soldiers returning from World War I, came speechless, helpless and deprived as to be able to exchange experiences. Thus, Walter Benjamin announces that the art of storytelling, which he understands as the art of sharing experiences, has reached its end.

*Erfahrung* (one of the words in German to refer to experience) contains the *Fahrt* (travel), but also *gefahr* (danger).

Courage is needed to let go his mother's hand to take the toy.

Also to become a toddler facing the risk of a fall. The toddler, set out to conquer the world and also the language and the sophisticated figure of the flâneur in Benjamin, the two make experience.

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