

Transference and Otherness
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In this paper, I put forward some questions that have come up in the work with a patient and which are related to the difficulty to distinguish whether her structure should be treated as neurotic or psychotic.

She is a 14-year-old teenager who suffers from anxiety attacks that manifest at school, to the point that her teachers have to take her classmates outside of the classroom because they cannot make her leave and are afraid of the impact her anxiety can have on the rest of the students. When this happens at home, she isolates herself in her bedroom away from her siblings, her father and, particularly, her mother. She has suicidal ideation in the form of throwing herself out the window or off of a bus.

Her anxiety is catastrophic. When in session, in the face of a discrepancy between what she says and what I tell her, she curls up, grabs her head and cries inconsolably. My silence has a calming effect and she frequently asks me what I think. That breach allows her to continue talking. I understand that there is a lack of discrimination, a transparency between her and the Other, like the children who think their parents know what they are thinking so it is a sign of progress when they realize that they can lie. In one session, faced with a reproach from her mother, she stared at her mother and says that her mother insisted, which she interprets as proof that her mother does not understand her. I tell her that she has to say something to her mother, that just looking at her is not enough, she has to say. That intervention allows her to demand something from the mother.

The lack of discrimination between her and the Other is not alike that of Isabella, the schizophrenic that Lacan mentions in the Seminar on Anxiety, who says, "*io sono sempre vista*," where the participial adjective *vista* plays a role, not only in that she is being seen but also in that she is a sight, as a view. There the look as an object little *a* is not withdrawn, it is always there for her.

Since she was very little, the patient would play a game in which she hid under the tables. Now when she gets anxious at school, she hides in the toilet, finding a way of withdrawing herself from the look of the Other.

Her anxiety is triggered by what she calls "the voices," which appear when there is a misunderstanding in the shape of a mistaken action or word and which refer back to what she calls "the way things have to be." "The way things have to be" entails that what she says coincides with what she wants to say, that there is nothing more nor less, which is impossible. She does not accept the loss there is when speaking. The voices appear as a polyphony of inner voices which consist of enunciations which reproach the times she made a mistake and also how she

should have resolved the situation. There may appear one enunciation, or many at the same time. Her own voice is the support for these enunciations.

This confrontation of the superego differs from the superego in the obsessive neurosis, which appears in the form of the categorical imperative must-be, must-do that is heard in these enunciations. The superego in neurosis implies a command that provides order and simultaneously commands to enjoy, following the homophony between *j'oui* (I hear) and *j'ouis* (I enjoy). The patient's superego also differs from the imperative in psychosis, faced with the invocation of the self, the response is a void in the subject corresponding to the signification that could not happen. Faced with the interruption of the phrases the answer comes from the Real, regardless of whether the verbal hallucinations are of code or of message.

The superego, as stated by Freud in *Civilization and its Discontent*, is an instance in which everything that is heard and seen, whether a desire or an action, the superego blames it on the subject. Freud says that the superego blames the Id and Lacan says that it also dislodges the ego.

I have intervened in two ways regarding what to her are "the way things are:" on the one hand, by saying that mistakes are par for the course of those of us who speak and that it is so for everybody –enunciating the law of the signifier– and, on the other, pointing out that the voices accompany her, to which she responds, "what a surprise, I always say that the voices are there."

To her, the voices have the function of a threat, she cannot withdraw from them. Lacan in *Seminar 3: The Psychoses* when discussing the superego differentiates "Thou art the one who wilt follow me" from "Thou art the one who will follow me". The first, gives rise to a choice: you can follow or not, whereas the second one functions as a mandate with respect to which the subject cannot withdraw, it is the power of discourse.

The superego for her, always there and as a threat, makes her distance herself from her friends, her peers, her fellow people for fear of a misunderstanding and, therefore, she can rest in the isolation from social bonding.

The superego works as a threat in another of its functions, as the nonsensical law. It operates at the level of "the way things are." Her father becomes infuriated when things do not go according to plan, that is to say, he "knows" how things should be, by way of a whim.

She says about her father that, "my father cannot stand that something exists." Here the Schreberian god resonates, one who does not understand human things, the absolute Other without which, however, he would fall in the abyss if he stayed silent.

The superego as a nonsensical law is the opposite of the function of the Name-of-the-Father which represents the prohibition against incest. That law is the vehicle for desire, it forbids the mother the satisfaction from taking the child as a

phallus and the child from consisting of being the phallus. With regard to school work, the patient does not have the distance-time to distinguish one task from another, they appear as having to be answered at the time they are formulated, which is impossible so she is invaded by a weariness of living. I have told her not to strain herself, that she can ask a friend later. She interprets the intervention by asking a friend what she was for her and her friend responds "best friends." That response brought her back to life, she got down to doing things. The signifier "best friends" places her in the chain, links her Self to the signifier. You are that... best friend and not the You which makes me you, which in-discriminates the Other, the one which removes the self, the one which *tuer*, the you that kills.

Discontent presents to her in relation to the pleasure implied in the function of the superego and with respect to the otherness insufficiently constituted. In the transference the otherness, the analyst in the place of the agent as an object little *a*, leads to voicing that which in-discriminates her in the Other.