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Título: The body “given to be seen”: considerations upon phobia

Dispositivo: Mesas Simultáneas de Trabajos Libres

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The phobia interrogates the body and space boundaries, as well as of what gathers both most intimately: the look.

The brief text here presented approaches phobia as a way through which the subject escapes from a point in which the *jouissance* is announced as an emergence of one's own body “given to be seen” nude. To be assured of the boundaries of one's own body, the phobic turns anxiety into fear and gets support on one element that he can name and link to other elements. It is said of the phobia that it is a disease of the imaginary and that it designs a private geography – from traced marks, abstracts the symbolic. From these ideas, I propose to further question the symbolic effect of tracing images upon the body.

March, beginning of the first grade - Anna cries alone among other children, that don't seem to see her, waiting in line for the teacher to enter the classroom. Nearby, Caroline arrives with the mother. The two get closer, and the mother then hugs the crying child with tenderness, in an attempt to calm the girl's suffering, that she interprets as helplessness. With her, in a second plan, always looking, Caroline says: “It could be me, right, Mom?.”

A couple days later the mother calls me because Caroline is School phobic.

Caroline says she feels bad in the playground but doesn't know why. Then she draws on the board “the day she fell”. She draws the playground, her friend Fernanda and herself, upon the “Mountain”. Then, describes:

-“*Fernanda's hair is messy, I am here on the mountain. Fernanda says: -*

*“Caroliine...” and I say: - “Fernaaannndaaa...”*

Steps back, looks at the drawing on the board and says: - “*It is not well, the Mountaline<sup>1</sup> turned out ugly*”. Then, she erases the drawing of herself and that of the mountain (Mountaline). Tries to remake it, but doesn't think it is well and erases.

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<sup>1</sup> Mountaline, as in a conjunction of Mountain + Caroline.



Soon after draws the little houses where the girls play outdoors and the pathways connecting them.

In the first scene, with the phrase “it could be me”, Caroline stresses the point in which she sees herself taken with anxiety after which it is she the one who cries, helpless as Anna, her double. In the second scene drawing, gives image to “the day in which she fell”. It happened in the playground area of the school, place that since then is the space to be avoided. In the description, the ugliness emerges – Fernanda’s hair and the mountain. In the parapraxis, though, it is the *Mountaline* that turned out ugly, and Caroline must be erased along with the mountain. As a way out, she draws the map connecting the girls’ houses, escape route geography. The sequence illustrates the moments of the phobia emergence: in the first, she sees herself seen in the other helpless/consolated, suspended between anxiety and an inappropriate *jouissance*; in the second, falls her own image, ugly and erased; at last, she replaces the scene with the tracing of a particular map, where the girls’ circulation takes place. She escapes from anxiety making a fear of the school playground.

In another clinical situation, the Young woman Bibiana presents herself as “with panic syndrome” because she cannot leave the house without the company of the mother or the groom. Her looks call attention due to the orange dyed hair, the unusual clothing and the tattooed body. Different from what could be expected from someone with such exuberant look, lives a very simple life at home. During the cure, has a dream that points to a change: it is an erotic dream with the man that made her tattoos. After this dream, passes to describe a series of sexual fantasies, in which sees herself dressed as other women, different and sensual. In a short while she realizes she is circulating unaccompanied around the town, moved also by the project of making another tattoo, of a woman, in an entire body image, a woman that smiles.

We could say that, if Caroline points to the moment in which she fell and saw herself ugly, Bibiana talks about the moment in which dressing fantasies and composing a series of images to prep a woman’s body has given her the necessary support to see and to walk around.



The body is “given to be seen” before “sees”, says Lacan, given that the anxiety comes when it appears nude<sup>2</sup>, offered to the look (evil look). Deprived from a subjective distance, the body emerges crude, ugly, constrained, very close to the offering to the spoiled *jouissance* of the Other.

From the sight of the holed body – being that because of the sensations, invasive, that rise, or because of the birth of a sister (as for Hans) – a child around three or four years old sees herself fallen from the preceding place. Differently from what had happened in the moment of the subject division, she is not dealing with differentiating herself from the ideal child that could please the mother anymore – during the oedipal period one has to place the ideal somewhere else, sexed.

The look gains importance here – the sublimated scopic drive supports the investigation towards the constructions of a sexual *savoir*, and even of the knowledge. It is the sight of sex that freezes or gives room to her. The phobic plays with the images seen and given to sight, draws and traces the boundaries of the body with some privileged images, in a way that he can take from there the necessary and sufficient conditions to assure a place in the world. This happens in a way that one may think that what supports the castration is in the imaginary, different from the normal way, in which what supports castration remains symbolic, in the metaphor.

In Seminar XI, Lacan reminds us that sexuality is always bizarre, ...polimorfa, actualized by the drive operation, and that it is interpreted as sex with the operation of castration, that thus makes it possible to desire. If the gain of the operation of castration is to desire, to interpret the sex from sexuality passes through the body – plenty of holes.

Curiously, the phobic, as Bibiana makes us note, suspends interpretation and builds a scene in which what plays regards the distance between seeing and being seen. Beyond a game with the other sex, the game with the partner gives priority to the metonymy, the fluid unfolding of images. Although, different from a perversion, the images preserve castration and support the lack in the *jouissance* of the Other.

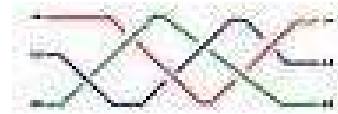
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<sup>2</sup> Costa, Ana M. M. *Rasura e angústia: a função do velamento do corpo*. No prelo.

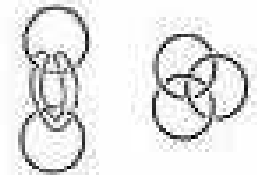


We can reflect upon this moment from the Borromean knot, built from the simple braiding. To compose it, we take each one of the three threads. As each one of the instances: real, imaginary, symbolic. To braid, we consider the six first movements, detached as movements of the subject constitution, that we illustrate on the right, and describe briefly as follows:<sup>3</sup>

0. Three loose threads, respectively: R (real), S (symbolic), I (imaginary).
1. Appearance of a real (baby's real body) – R
2. Imaginary covering (the mother lends images to her baby) – RI
3. Symbolic tie (seeing being seen in the mirror, the subject and the ideal child split) – RIS
4. emergence of the real dimension of the sexed body – RISR
5. Imaginary covering with the fabling in large profusion to build sexual theories – RISRI
6. Symbolic tie by the paternal metaphor – RISRIS



At the end of the sixth movement, the threads are united in each of their extremities, respectively, resulting in the Borromean knot. The structure gains stability.



Using this model, to approach phobias, it is of interest to point that, from the emergence of the real dimension of the sexed body, as in 4, the following movements necessary to the neurotic subject are those of covering the hole, as in 5, and the symbolic abstraction through the effective passage from the mother to the father and the paternal metaphor.

The movement that follows the falling of the body, submitted to the Other's sight, in which the child leads through the path of the predominant imaginary, exuberant in its production, gives room to the rather concise and minimalist condition of the

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<sup>3</sup> Vorcaro, Ângela. *A criança na clínica psicanalítica*. Rio de Janeiro: Cia. De Freud Ed., 2004.



symbolic... symbolic that is not visible, but abstracted – present as structure, unconscious.

How does this passage happen? “as a crushed giraffe”, we could read in Lacan<sup>4</sup>. Hans’ father does not understand how a giraffe could be wrinkled, and the son needs to show him how it can be done, *this way: drawn on the paper. Or as a woman in an entire body figure that smiles can be tattooed on the skin*, and that could make the whole sense, Bibiana might say.

Is there symbolic effect abstracted from the imaginary? As the child in her passage from the mother to the father, until sex makes sense, the fables, the fantastic creations, the masks and dress ups predominate. The Symbolic had been in the structure even before the child is born, but in the sixth movement ties through the metaphor and writes its preceding history, making possible the sexual *savoir*. From the many narratives in metonymic succession some very few theories are made, theories that work as myths.

Bibiana talks about the dream and about her sexual fantasies, as well as, and one might pay attention to this, a good portrait of a Young lady nowadays. She stresses the value of the tattoo, that means to her the lack on the body marked by the scar, which is drawing, covering, clothing, and representing of a writing trace.

As the paper that one draws and writes on, crushable, the body appears appropriate to receive the Writing: flexible surface, affectable and profanable. The body is properly a surface where one writes and, as such, a space with boundaries that are modified according to the means through which the social tie affects it.

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<sup>4</sup> Lacan, J. LACAN, Jacques . *O Seminário: Livro IV*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Ed., 1997.



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