
THE FEROCITY OF GUILT IN THE OBSESSIONAL NEUROSIS: FROM THE HELPLESSNESS TO THE MORAL ANGUISH¹

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ABSTRACT. The aim of this paper is to investigate one of the most relevant aspects of obsessional neurosis, the moral issue. This is due to the importance that guilt gets in this pathology, expressed through self-accusation. Our investigation will focus mainly on the issue of guilt starting from the relationship between the agencies of ego and superego. We will have a theoretical elaboration of this issue through a critical analysis of the literature, according to a methodological model of a qualitative type. We seek to show that the violence of the superego, characteristic of obsessional neurosis, is not primarily linked to the question of law in the sense of morality. We examine the essential aspects that underlie the settlement of guilt in this modality of neurosis, taking into account the drive dynamics implied. Aiming at demonstrating the action of a dimension of psychological violence in obsessional neurosis, we analyze the determinations of the violence of the guilt characteristic of this neurosis, considering the topical, dynamic and economic features involved. The superego relentlessly attacks the ego, putting it in a position of passivity. In an attempt to overcome such passivity, the ego responds to this attack by convening a categorical morals.

Keywords: Obsessive acts; guilt; superego.

A FEROCIDADE DA CULPA NA NEUROSE OBSESSIVA: DO DESAMPARO À ANGÚSTIA MORAL

RESUMO. O objetivo deste artigo é investigar uma das vertentes mais relevantes da neurose obsessiva, a problemática moral. Isso se deve à importância que o sentimento de culpa adquire nessa patologia, expresso por meio de autoacusações. Nossa investigação centrar-se-á principalmente na questão do sentimento de culpa a partir da relação entre as instâncias do ego e do superego. Realizaremos uma elaboração teórica desta questão por meio de uma análise crítica da bibliografia consultada, segundo um modelo metodológico de tipo qualitativo. Procuraremos mostrar que a violência do superego, característica da neurose obsessiva, não está atrelada, de forma prioritária, à questão da lei, no sentido da moralidade. Examinaremos os aspectos essenciais que embasam a instauração do sentimento de culpa nessa modalidade de neurose, levando em conta a dinâmica pulsional subjacente. Visando demonstrar a ação de uma dimensão de violência psíquica na neurose obsessiva, analisaremos as determinações da violência do sentimento de culpa, considerando os aspectos tópicos, dinâmicos e econômicos envolvidos. O superego ataca o ego de maneira implacável, colocando-o em uma posição de passividade. Na tentativa de superá-la, o ego responde a esse ataque pela convocação de uma moral categórica.

Palavras-chave: Atos obsessivos; culpa; superego

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LA FEROCIDAD DE LA CULPA EN LA NEUROSIS OBSESIVA: DEL DESAMPARO A LA ANGUSTIA MORAL

RESUMEN. El objetivo de este artículo es investigar uno de los aspectos más relevantes de la neurosis obsesiva, la cuestión moral. Esto se debe a la importancia que el sentimiento de culpa adquiere en esta patología, expresado a través de autoacusaciones. Nuestra investigación se centrará principalmente en la cuestión del sentimiento de culpa a partir de la relación entre las instancias del ego y del superego. Haremos una elaboración teórica de este problema a través de un análisis crítico de la literatura consultada, de acuerdo con un modelo metodológico de tipo cualitativo. Trataremos de demostrar que la violencia del superego, característica de la neurosis obsesiva, no está vinculada, prioritariamente, a la cuestión de la Ley, en el sentido de la moralidad. Examinaremos los aspectos esenciales que fundamentan al establecimiento del sentimiento de culpa en esta modalidad de neurosis, teniendo en cuenta la dinámica pulsional subyacente. Para demostrar la acción de una dimensión de violencia psíquica en la neurosis obsesiva, analizaremos las determinaciones de la violencia del sentimiento de culpa, considerando los aspectos tópicos, dinámicos y económicos implicados. El superego implacablemente ataca al ego, poniéndolo en una posición de pasividad. En un intento por superar tal pasividad, el ego responde a este ataque mediante la convocatoria de una moral categórica.

Palabras clave: Actos obsesivos; culpa; superego.

Our reflection addresses the issue of guilt in the obsessional neurosis, seeking better understanding of what would be the base of its violent and fierce character. To this end, we will lean on the question of the superego, in particular about the uniqueness of this platform in the obsessional neurosis.

We will carry out a theoretical study located in the metapsychology and psychopathology "borders", inseparable dimensions into the psychoanalytic knowledge, to its own particular method of analysis. Through a methodology that involves these plans, it is possible to expand the knowledge of the central issues involved in our research, developing the issues that make up its problem situation. The theoretical elaboration of these issues will be made through a critical analysis of the literature reviewed, which has eminently theoretical nature and we will use a qualitative methodological model, from a method essentially hypothetical-deductive research. It is seeking to break with the supposed evidence that the ferocity that would be adhered to the superego is exclusively related to the problem of internalization of the Oedipal law. Therefore, our main goal is to investigate the nature of the "law" that would trigger the ferocity of the superego in this neurosis.

Severe morality, characteristic of the obsessional neurosis, caught Freud attention and still continues to call us today, especially in functions of the violent self-accusations which are features of this clinical picture. The man of the rats is the most eloquent example of this relentless moral, as he assumes the role of the executioner of himself, engendering a self-punishing circuit from which he cannot get rid of it. As Laplanche states (1980/1987), the subject in question makes the symptoms a torture machine, and the blame is at the heart of this self-punishing logic. Would not the guilt feeling be giving evidences of a violent instinctual attack that the ego tends to inflict itself?

The feeling of guilt is commonly associated, in a direct way, to the problem of the domestic law, leading us to investigate some aspects of the superego question. We aim to analyze the uniqueness of this formation on this situation in the obsessional neurosis, but, as we announced, we intend to overcome the supposed evidence that the very ferocity to this instance is exclusively related to the problem of the internalization of the Oedipal law. This proposal is, in our opinion, of significant importance in a study on the obsessional neurosis.

Compulsive ceremonials: guilt avatars

In "Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices" (Freud, 1907/2006), Freud explores one of the symptomatic poles of the obsessional neurosis: the obsessional rituals or compulsive acts. It shows the proximity between the obsessive acts and the practices by which believers express their devotion. The obsessional rituals have as main characteristic the fact of obeying unknown laws which govern what is allowed and what is forbidden: "... one of the disease conditions is the fact that the person who obeys

a compulsion, does not understand its meaning - or at least, the primary sense "(Freud, 1907/2006, p. 113.).

Ferraz (2005) points out that "In obsessional neurosis the symptoms - obsessive actions - are a formation whose purpose is to reconcile antagonistic instinct waves, lived as forces that induce to the contradictory actions" (p. 127). The strength of the repressed instinct is experienced, as a dangerous temptation against which the ego must defend itself, surrounding itself with protective measures, such as the neurotic ceremonials.

In the obsessional neurosis the ego is constantly under the threat of the failure of the repression, which to prevent such an emergency as well as to combat the anguish, it is required constant effort, with great expenditure of energy. The protection measures may become insufficient against the temptation; then, the prohibitions arise, aiming to maintain distance from the situations that may lead temptations. "In this regard, the obsessional neurosis seems a caricature, comic and sad at the same time, from a particular religion" (Freud, 1907/2006, p. 111). The work of repression extends here in a sterile and endless struggle, in which compulsive ceremonials play a fundamental role, as underlined by, for example, Chervet (2011) in an article dedicated to the genealogy of the concept of compulsion in Freudian theory.

Neurotic ceremonials consist, at first, in mere meaningless formalities. But, they always run as if the subject had to obey certain secret laws that cannot be disregarded, without intense anguish. This is linked to the expectation of punishment which plagues the subject, and that would arise from the unconscious sense of guilt.

We can say that the one who suffers from compulsions and forbidden behaves as if he were dominated by a sense of guilt, from which, however, he knows nothing, so we can call it as an unconscious sense of guilt, despite the apparent contradiction of the terms (Freud, 1907/2006, p. 113).

In his most famous case study about the obsessional neurosis, "Rat Man" (1909), Freud attitude in relation to the obsessional neurosis is modified. We realize his finding about the complexity of such pathology which was little considered so far. In this study, Freud indicates that the nodal point of obsessive conflict is an aggressive desire, the death wish addressed to a loved object (Laplanche, 1980/1987). This desire is connected to the regression to the anal-sadistic organization, which causes the transformation of the sexual instincts led to the object in aggression, in hate feeling. An early opposition between love and hate is highlighted here, indicating the key role that the ambivalent conflict will have in this condition.

The death wish addressed to the father is in the heart of the problem of "Rat Man", especially the intense feeling of engendered guilt. The fact of thinking of his father's death puts the rat man in a position to organize this death. Pirlot states (2012) that the fight against this desire is done by the violent self-accusations, which are closely articulated to the anal-sadistic fantasies.

It is through the concept of regression that Freud (1909/2006) understands the importance of the sadistic fantasies related to the anal-sadistic organization in the obsessional neurosis. The libido confronted with the Oedipal conflict, according to the intensity of the incestuous desires, regresses to the anal-sadistic organization. In a double regression of the object and the libido, the subject starts to fetch the objects and the goals that characterize this organization. This is not a topical regression, operated by the ego, but a regression in relation to the libidinal organization, triggered defensively (Andrew, 2009).

In the anal-sadistic organization which prevails is not the opposition between masculine and feminine, but active and passive. It is essential to pay attention to the role of the genital organization, from the Oedipal problem, which does not disappear with the regression to the anal-sadistic organization. As stated by Green (2005), the regression makes us hear the language of the genitality in the anal-sadistic transcription. There is no definitive disconnection of the incestuous objects. The Oedipal problem follows infiltrated into the anal-sadistic logic. Therefore, the clash is established between the ego and the incestuous desires disguised in aggressive desires, anal-sadistic, i.e., the Oedipal issue passes to lead the anal-sadistic logic.

The obsessive self-accusations are linked to the return of the repressed representations, they are addressed to the objectionable impulses that were repressed, linked to anal-sadistic satisfaction, to the hostile wishes addressed to the object - that bring underlying incestuous desires - which were separated from the emotional charge, which is still operating in the consciousness. The affection moves from one representation to another, in the form of anguish (Pirlot & Cupa, 2012). This is one of the keys to the understanding of the obsessional neurosis: anguish generated by the instinctual demand.

Laplanche (1980/1987) points out that precisely in an attempt to contain this anguish that the ego makes use of a defense with moral connotation, especially through the culpability, through the severe self-accusations. The feeling of guilt is closely linked to that incestuous desires, which depending on the regression to the anal-sadistic organization, turn into aggressive desires, death wishes addressed to the object. The obsessive self-punishment indicates the satisfaction of sadism trends and the hate related to the object, and then return on the own self.

The guilt feeling signals the conflict between the ego and the moral consciousness. This addresses to the ego its relentlessly requirements, its ferocity is related to the crime of thought, to the repressed desires (Laplanche, 1980/1987). Then, it is established an intrapsychic battle of trial and conviction, of power exercising and of subjugation, while interior and violent scene.

After 1920, with the construction of the new model of the instinct theory and subsequently with the second topic, the notion of regression has changed its meaning, first from the notion of instinctual desintrication. Freud will place the action of the death instinct as a result of the regression, pointing it as a decisive factor, fundamental aspect in the obsessional neurosis. Let's see what he says in this regard:

As for the metapsychological explanation of regression, I search for it in a desintrication of the instincts, i.e., in the fact that the erotic components, which had come to join themselves with the onset of the genital phase to the destructive investments of the sadistic phase, see themselves separated from them. We came to understand that the instinctual defusion and the pronounced rise of the death instinct require specific consideration among the effects of some severe neuroses, such as, for example, the obsessive neurosis (Freud, 1923/2006, p. 54-55).

Even after the action of the death instinct has been articulated to trauma in 1920, as states Borges (2012), the regression remains the mechanism on which is grounded Freud's understanding of the obsessional neurosis.

Depending on the regression, the aggressive childhood motions are reactivated and new libidinal motions will express themselves, in part or in whole, in the form of aggressive and destructive intentions (Pirlot, 2012). The sadistic components of instinctual gain autonomy, starting to act off the sexual instinct, intensifying the violence and the destructiveness. The aggressive desires are not accepted by the ego, which fights against them, repressing them.

Considerations for obsessional neurosis made by Freud, already considering the relocation topics that the second topic introduced, enabled that the obsessive dynamics, especially its violence and destructiveness, was described more clearly. The ego fight against the repressed, which requires satisfaction from an increasingly powerful way, searching, at the same time, to obtain the desired object and to destroy it. In addition, the ego is constantly in struggle with the cruel and intolerant superego, which attacks it permanently. It should be remembered that in the context of the second topic, the conflict becomes situated between the ego and the superego.

The effects of regression are not limited to the id, but they act predominantly in the superego. The regression indicates the instinctual desintrication; the ego represses the sadistic instincts, however, the effect of this settlement is that they begin to act not only in the id, but become the core of the superego. Therefore, in the obsessional neurosis, we are facing the preponderance of the superego.

Fierce superego and obsessional neurosis

In the obsessional neurosis, the superego has special character, the responsible instance by the return of the destructive instincts on the ego. The superego is presented here in its fierce and violent

side, attacking the ego in a ruthless way. In the obsessional neurosis, "the situation of danger from which the ego must escape is the hostility of the superego, ... the danger is fully internalized" (Freud, 1926/2006, p. 127).

The genesis of the guilt feeling and its unique connection with the dimension of the domestic law deserves careful study, attentive to the nuances and specificities of this connection and, in particular, to the violence that characterizes it. Thus, it will be necessary to understand the nature of the "law" that underlies the formation of the superego in this neurosis. To this end, let us focus on the role it plays in the intrapsychic dynamics also taking as reference some contributions from Freud about the superego, with the intention to underline the complexity of this body in terms of certain contradictions that we could identify in the theory he proposed us.

In the obsessional neurosis the subject builds a self-punishment circuit around which the psychic life remains siderated. However, as Laplanche (1980/1987) suggests, one must look beyond the executioner of himself - as exemplified by the "Rat Man" - and try to understand the uniqueness of the intrapsychic dynamics involved.

... It is necessary to design, in the 'I make myself suffer', the establishment of a subjective scene with at least two characters: 'I make myself suffer' is always, in one way or another, 'I make suffer in me the other that I put into me. There is an internal split. And not only the "myself", of 'I make myself suffer', is another, but it is necessary to understand - and this is the theme of the superego - that the "I", too, is another (Laplanche, 1980/1987, p 278).

In Freud's work, the superego is treated, mainly, as heir to the Oedipus complex. However, we also found in Freud, albeit less clearly in a line of argument - closely linked to the obsessional neurosis - in which the superego would be an expression of the most powerful instincts and libidinal vicissitudes of the id.

The defusion of love in aggression was not effected by the action of the ego, but it is the result of a regression that occurred in the id. This process, however, extended beyond the id, up to the superego, which now increases its severity to the innocent ego (Freud, 1923/2006, p. 67).

The effects of regression are not limited to the id, but act in a dominant way in the superego, and this regression is the result of an instinctual desintringation. Freud adds that the severity of the superego in the obsessional neurosis stems from the importance of the instinctual desintringation caused by regression to the anal-sadistic organization which, in turn, results from the oedipal problem. This makes that the incestuous and violent logic pass to dominate the psyche, as the incestuous desires would disguise themselves in aggressive and destructive tendencies.

Thus, the Oedipal scenario becomes a sadistic-anal scene. Due to the desexualization, the erotic component loses the power to unite all the aggressiveness with which it was combined, being this aggressiveness released. In this destructive component, resulting from the instinctual desintringation, the sadistic instincts designed to be out come to be reintroyected by the ego in formation, constituting the superego.

In 1930, the relationship between the superego and the instincts in the obsessional neurosis will be addressed by Freud in more detail. The instinctual renunciation would be the source of the severity of the superego. This is closely linked to the instinctual dimension, which would justify the fact that this instance turn against the ego in such a cruel way. Freud will highlight that "... the effect of instinctual renunciation on consciousness, then, is that each of aggression whose satisfaction the subject gives up is assumed by the superego and increases the aggressiveness of this (on the ego)" (Freud, 1930 / 2006, p. 132).

This intensification of the superegoic aggression is felt by the ego by the exacerbation of the guilt feeling. The higher the instinctual renunciation, the more pressure that the superego has on the ego, which indicates that the instinctual renunciation is, actually, directly proportional to the superegoic requirement. In "(...) the formation of the renunciation agreement to the immediate satisfaction of the instinctual goals, the obstacle to the aggressive instincts motivates the growth of the guilt feeling" (Kaës, 2014, p. 98).

This finding opens important question on the idea that the superego would just be an heir to the Oedipus complex. Thus, it is laid down the instinctual part of the superego, questioning, therefore, its origin. At this time, as shown by Cardoso (2002), the contradictory aspects of Freudian theory on the formation of the superego are shown, revealing to us the complexity that involves this issue, which demands more accurate reflection.

The renunciation to the aggressiveness satisfaction, that is, the return of sadistic instincts shall constitute and feed the superego. Freud shows us (1930/2006) that the regression and the instinctual desintrication - which, he says, result from the poor development of the Oedipus complex - make the destructiveness gain strength and is effective through the attack that the superego addresses to the ego. The need to the instinct satisfaction comes to dominate the superego, which directs itself mercilessly to the ego (Freud, 1930/2006). The instinctual renunciation is treated as a source of energy for the superego, placing particular emphasis on the assumption of an instinctual source for this instance. His ferocity just would come from the violence of the sadistic impulses.

We are facing the dual polarity of superego theory in Freud: heir to the Oedipus complex on the one hand; instinctual aspect, sadistic, on the other. This expresses, according to Cardoso (2002), the paradox that characterizes the problem of the superego in Freud's work: "... the superego as a representative of the 'reality' and as an instance that draws its strength from the impulses" (Cardoso, 2002 p. 21).

In the obsessional neurosis there is a constant attack, originated by the fierce superego against which the ego must defend itself. To the onslaught of the superego, the ego tends to respond calling the morality, through the guilt feeling. Let's see what would be the base of this feeling of guilt.

Moral anguish: "barrier" to the instinctual passivity?

Freud (1930/2006) deals with the guilt feeling in the obsessional neurosis as moral anguish or anguish before the superego. He states that "... may be welcome, here, the observation that the guilt feeling is not, at bottom, nothing but a topical variant of anguish and that, in its later stages, is absolutely identical to the anguish before the superego " (Freud, 1930/2006, p. 138). We find in this passage an important clue about the intimate link that would be between the guilt feeling and the anguish in this pathology.

Such articulation first appears in Freud's work in the text "Some character-types met with in the psycho-analytic work" (Freud, 1916/2006), when it is consolidated the design of the foundations of the guilt feeling from the fact that its intensity would not necessarily be linked to the acts committed. The guilt feeling could be, instead, the factor that leads the individual to practice a crime.

In this text Freud maintains that the convening of the feeling of guilt is to make sense to the anguish that torments the ego; the crime would justify the action of such a feeling. In the latter case, such a feeling is thought as a connecting factor: the ego, dominated by the anguish, calls the moral as a way to placate it, to dominate it.

Then, the feeling of guilt would come as an egoic possibility of confrontation with the anguish, as a way to try to regain control of the internal world, of its instinctual dynamics. On this point, Cardoso says:

Placing the guilt on the topic, here is an essential task. In this regard we would say that the guilt is always to make sense, even when it presented itself as 'categorical', 'in any case you are guilty.' However, it should, in this case, be referred to the ego record, the one who is affected by a 'reality' that surpasses it. *In this sense, all guilt belongs to the ego and all the guilt is secondary to the anguish* (Cardoso, 2002, p. 154. Emphasis added).

The ego dominated by a diffuse anguish, when appealing to blaming, there seems to seek a binding factor in an internal overflow which threaten its borders. According to Cardoso (2002), the moral anguish would allow a first containment of the instinctual attack, giving it a form, an outline. Therefore, anguish and guilt feeling does not lie in the same plane; there would be a passageway from the anguish to the guilt.

Could the affection caused by the superegoic attack be effectively considered as anguish?

"Scare", "fear" and "anxiety" are words improperly used as synonymous expressions; they are, in fact, able to distinguish clearly in their relationship with danger. "Anxiety" describes a particular state of waiting for the danger or preparing for it, even though it may be unknown. "Fear" requires a defined object that you have fear. "Scare", however, is the name we give to the state in which someone is when entered into danger without being prepared for it, giving emphasis to the factor of surprise (Freud, 1920/2006, p. 23).

The notions of "scare" and anguish are opposed, as the "scare" points to an unpreparedness situation contrary to the anguish, which implies preparation for danger. When this preparation does not occur, excessive amounts of excitement invade the ego, leaving it submerged and passive, indicating overflow, which is the traumatic brand (Green, 2011).

The anguish protects the ego of a sudden invasion of its borders; already the "scare" indicates extreme situation in which the ego is passive. The term "scare" sheds light on the surprise factor, the lack of protection before the instinctual attack. As we will explore below, it is here, in our view, of a psychic helplessness situation.

The notion of helplessness is very important when thinking about the origins of the guilt feeling, taking as its starting point the precious Freudian statement at the beginning of his work: "... the initial helplessness of human beings is the primary source of all moral grounds" (Freud, 1950/ 2006, p. 370).

In Freudian theory, the notion of helplessness appears linked to the organic dimension, to the necessary prematurity of the human being, the initial state of absolute dependence from baby to another adult to meet his needs and survival. After 1920, under the second theory of anguish, the helplessness state comes to be regarded as a prototype of the generating traumatic situation which generates the anguish. Freud acknowledges that a progressive increase from the tension to the point where the subject is unable to master it, being submerged by it, is what defines a situation that comes to reissue the state of helplessness, thus understood, as traumatic situation.

Restricting the understanding of the issue of helplessness to a biological perspective - which is opposed to the psychoanalytic understanding of this notion - would mean, among other mistakes, to consider the psychic life from an evolutionary perspective according to which, with the development process, the helplessness of situation would be overcome, being disregarded, thus, its status as essential and inevitable experience in the psychic functioning.

The state of helplessness is the prototype of all traumatic situation, as Freud argues (1926/2006) in "Inhibitions, symptoms and anxiety." In this work, he refers to the helplessness as that state in which the subject is flooded by too much excitement, exceeding his binding capacity. From this contribution, the question can be enlarged. We consider the condition of helplessness concerns, ultimately, to the question of the egoic passivity in the face of the instinct, whose issue, after all, related to the limits of representation as well as the symbolization of the instinct power. Helplessness is linked to disability: in principle, psychomotor inability of the baby, but above all, the psychic apparatus inability to account for the excess of excitations, of the instinct excess.

What defines helplessness "is the situation of total passivity that is the subject, the inability, with his own resources, to find a way out to his impasses" (Rocha, 2000, p. 130). Already in the Freudian propositions, there is the idea of impossibility to get an answer by the ego as most fundamental aspect in the situation of helplessness. However, as indicated by Jacques André (2009a), it is Laplanche who really comes to highlight that joint, definitely disconnecting the understanding of the concept of psychic helplessness, from the biological context and placing it in the context of the relationship with the other.

So, the moral anguish can be thought of as a barrier to helplessness, to the instinct transgression. That phrase was coined by Marta Rezende Cardoso when referring to "... an instinctual crossing in the egoic territory" (Cardoso, 2010, p. 103). The author was inspired by the idea of marine transgression, which is the invasion of the continent stretch by the sea. The idea of instinct transgression helps us to show what underpins to the moral anguish.

Laplanche (1980/1987) argues that, underlying to the anguish and to the guilt there is the instinctual, which, from the interior, attacks the subject. The moral anguish, the guilt, comes to signal the struggle of the ego against an instinctual transgression, which is the first confrontation of the instinctual attack. Thus, the guilt feeling would be secondary to the helplessness, as an egoic response

to the instinctual attack. This is a defensive feature through which the ego comes to give it a "figure", delimiting its violence, that is, it is an attempt to tackle the instinctual attack.

In an attempt to contain the superegoic attack, the ego makes use of the guilty. In this context, the dimension of intra-psychic violence, of self-attack, concealed, in a way, in the sense of guilt, becomes relevant. The ego uses mechanisms of basic defense involved in this passage to the guilty, to the moral anguish: return on itself and opposite inversion, when seeking to move away from the passive position, to defend itself from the superegoic attack. Through the guilt feeling, the ego returns upon itself the superegoic imperatives - but already symbolized; with it, it comes out from the passivity position, becoming supposedly active, since it remains under the attacker's commands. We are facing the "domination" of this radical foreign by repeating its imperatives.

This repetition occurs in the form of self-attack, of self-punishment, engendering a defensive self-punishment violent circuit around of which the obsessional neurotic remains sidered. The ego, unable to answer such an attack, also unable to repress such messages or integrate them into its territory - passes, through the feeling of guilt, from the self-punishment circuit, to answer for it, returning upon himself the superegoic imperatives (Cardoso, 2002).

In this passage to guilt, there is already a symbolization work, egoic work, even elementary. Contrary to what we might be able to think, the feeling of guilt not directly indicates the superegoic attack, but, a triggering of an egoic confrontation to such attack and this happens in a unique way in the obsessional neurosis, in contrast with what happens, for example, in the context of melancholy. We believe that this discrimination is of fundamental importance as it comes unveil one of the most essential elements for understanding the obsessional neurosis, given its complexity.

Thus, we introduced, hereinafter, a topic dedicated to this counterpoint between obsessional neurosis and melancholy. It is an analysis that will allow us to show that the ferocity of the guilt (central aspect of the text) is not uniqueness of obsessional neurosis context. We will discuss this aspect of the matter in the light, among other things, the issue of the organizing stages of the libido and the notion of regression, in order to highlight the uniqueness of the obsessional neurosis in view of the specific ferocity bases that the guilt feeling includes in that framework. Comparing two clinical frames, which are close, in relation to a particular aspect, is, in our view, a legitimate methodological resource for the precisely apprehension of what is intended to support as a particular trace of one of them.

Self-accusation in the obsessional neurosis and in the melancholy: a brief counterpoint

The interior scene in the obsessional neurosis is marked by a violent clash between superego and ego. It establishes an asymmetrical relationship, of sadomasochistic character, between the two bodies, governed by the dialectic between activity and passivity. This same aspect takes place in the melancholy frame, also characterized by the presence of violent self-accusations. In both diseases, there is a regression to the pre-genital organization of the libido, more specifically the anal-sadistic organization. However, despite its common relation to the latter, the melancholy and the obsessional neurosis have fundamental differences. We will seek to hold on just one of the elements at issue here.

When comparing the course of the libido in the obsessional neurosis and in the melancholy, soon we can see that the obsessional neurotic, despite the insecurity of its relationship with the object, never strays far from the normal target of its development in a regressive direction as it does in the case of the melancholic one (Abraham, 1927/1970, p. 94).

The melancholy and the obsessional neurosis would be under the influence of heterogeneous elements of the anal-sadistic phase. According to Abraham (1927/1970), the anal eroticism contains two trends of opposing pleasure: to retain and to expel. These two team up with the sadistic tendencies: to destroy the object on the one hand and on the other, to control it, to master it. The sadistic-anal phase of the libidinal development would present, therefore, two levels. In the latter level, the conservative tendencies would predominate to retain and to control the object while in the older level, the hostile tendencies to the object, relative to its destruction, would be in the foreground. In the passage from one level to the other would occur decisive change in the subject's attitude toward the outside world. The tendency to preserve the object would begin to predominate from the second level.

In the melancholy, there is the action of the tendency to expulsion and to the destruction of the object through only the merger - on the basis of the "identification with the lost object," according to the propositions of Freud (1917 [1915] / 2006) - abandoning, thus, the investment in the external objects. Perdomo (2010, p.325) stresses that "it is as if the lost object had condensed on it the entire libido, breaking this way the self representations mass." In the obsessional neurosis there is also the tendency to retain the object, but then, to control it. The obsessional neurotic comes to abandon the tendency to incorporate the object, passing in addition to the desire to master it and to possess it. He regresses, but for a later level of these two plans, maintaining, thereby, the contact with the object.

In the melancholy, the regression occurs in a more primitive level of the anal-sadistic phase, paving the way for regression to the cannibalistic oral phase, whose instinctive purpose is to incorporate the object in itself. Thus, it would be an important zone of investments transformation. Once exceeded in a regressive direction, i.e., as having abandoned its object relations, the libido seems to glide quickly to the previous levels. According to the propositions of Abraham (1927/1970), in the melancholy act elements connected to both the anal-sadistic organization and to the oral organization.

If the conservative tendencies - to retain and to control its object - are the most powerful, this conflict around the loved object raise phenomena of psychological compulsion. But if the opposite anal-sadistic tendencies - that is, those that seek to destroy and to expel the object - are victorious, then the patient will fall in a state of melancholic depression (Abraham, 1927/1970, p 93.)

Even though, Abraham propositions are too focused on the issue of organizing stages of the libido, these propositions are interesting for us because they indicate that both in the obsessional neurosis as in the melancholy we found the action of a destructive dimension, but in a different way. In the obsessional neurosis, the destructiveness, though based on an archaic mode of operation, is a chance to ensure Eros to take action, in the sense of connection with the object, even if limited to a search of domain and control over it. But we have to take into account that the connection with the object does not break as in the melancholy, where we find the action of destructiveness in the predominance of the divestment.

From the intrapsychic point of view, in both conditions the superego attacks the ego relentlessly, putting it in a passive position. In the obsessional neurosis, the ego, trying to overcome this passivity, responds to the superegoic attack for convening the moral and also by the object domain.

Violent self-punishment circuit engendered by the categorical sense of guilt allows, by the introduction of the dimension of guilt, the lining of the instinctual attack by a relative dimension to the Oedipal record. In the obsessional neurosis the dimension of forbidden appears as expectation of severe punishment in the face of the desire exercise, which is, in fact, another destination to the instinctual attack, which is a secondary target type, as implying in a symbolization process even to save a character also violent, i.e., operates in this case a coating of the instinctual attack plan by the oedipal level, thus transcribed as a threat of punishment. Let's see, in detail, the elements involved in this aspect of the matter.

Foolish Guilt in the obsessional neurosis: opening to the Oedipal record

In the obsessional neurosis, the superego attacks the ego relentlessly, putting it in a passive position. In an attempt to overcome this passivity, the ego responds to the superegoic attack for convening the moral; then, that guilt is presented, in this case, under his categorical imperative and violent form: "Anyway, you are guilty." The violence of this feeling is directly proportional to the violence of the instinctual, superegoic attack: " "In any case, you are guilty", it is the action of a sharp initial object that is terrifying the individual" (Cardoso, 2002, p 160.).

According to the author, the superego is secondarily coated by a moral content, result of the ego work. The violent statement "Anyway, you are guilty" involves a process of egoic construction, seeking to contain the instinctual attack. The moralizing dimension, categorical morality, will provide a "sense" to what could not be originally incorporated in topic. The violent self-punishment circuit engendered by

the categorical sense of guilt allows the coating of the instinctual attack by an Oedipal dimension - since in the obsessional neurosis the law remains through the punishment - which gives another destination to this attack, but also a character similarly violent.

The obsessional neurotic remains trapped to the conflict between law and transgression. The self-punishment circuit shows the clash between the desire and the ban, clash in which the psyche of the obsessional neurotic remains crystallized. Thus, the categorical imperative moral "Anyway, you are guilty" becomes the obsessive in a criminal. This feature allows "to limit", "to dominate" the violence of the instinctual attack, because the guilt feeling goes from there, to be referred to a crime committed, i.e. the instinctive attack gains a meaning whose logic focuses on the Oedipal forbidden. The annihilation of anguish becomes covered by the castration anguish.

This unique dynamic established between attack and defense, engendered by the violent relationship between superego and ego can be illustrated, in all its exuberance, in the case of the "Rat Man". The violent self-punishment circuit that places there expressed the dominance of an extremely torturous and immobilizing logic, marked by the dialectic between activity and passivity, and guided by a sadomasochistic script.

In the obsessional neurosis the anal-sadistic desires are controlled by the Oedipal logic, incestuous logic. In addition to the self-punishing dimension that this symptomatic organization shows, there is also a dimension of intense satisfaction linked to the displaced achievement of the incestuous desires. Therefore, punishment and satisfaction, law and transgression appear articulated in the self-punishment circuit that the "Rat Man" is imposed. Thus, the torture of rats, this terrible apprehension that plagued him, expressed, in an exemplary manner, both the violence of the instinctual attack involved, as its coating by an Oedipal dimension.

It is the Oedipus complex, in its full configuration, that allows the internalization of the law; in the obsessional neurosis the regression before the Oedipus complex to the anal-sadistic organization entered in an importantly way its establishment. The ban sets is fragile and constantly under the threat of failure. The strength of the defensive measures and the energy that the obsessive needs to spend in order to avoid the ban failure highlights this threat.

The Oedipal record follows here infiltrate by the anal-sadistic logic. In the obsessional neurosis, the regression to the anal-sadistic organization indicates coalescence between the genital and the anal-sadistic problematics: the incestuous desires act disguised through the anal-sadistic desires.

When referring to the superego in the obsessional neurosis, Laplanche (1980) points out:

The superego is presented as a mocking, cruel rat, the very image of the instinct. So that, the moral, excruciating, unrelenting conflict apparently assimilated to a high level of conflict, does not do more than cover up a 'cruel and lustful' struggle in which the supreme punishment is always added to the supreme joy (Laplanche, 1980/1987, p. 286).

The coating of the instinctual attack by a moral dimension, i.e. the insertion of the instinctual attack on an Oedipal logic enables that the neurotic defense mechanisms can be built, although they bring the brand of the instinct violence. In the obsessional neurosis, the categorical feeling of guilt allows us to glimpse the situation of helplessness that the ego is exposed, though in the ego is operated elementary symbolization from the threat of annihilation, in response to it.

Final Thoughts

On concluding our reflection, we would like to emphasize that the idea of "sidelined" of the sense of guilt has allowed us to highlight the difference between a dimension of the instinct attack, linked to the superego, and a defensive dimension of symbolization, which covers it, referred to the ego. We sought to show that these two dimensions, although inseparable, cannot be reduced to one another. Such differentiation allowed us to indicate the key role that the instinctual force - underlying to the sense of guilt - plays in the obsessional neurosis. This is a defensive resource through which the ego comes to give him a "figure", limiting, thus, its violence, that is, trying to cope with the instinctual attack.

As shown Cardoso (2002), in the transition to the guilt, it already operates a symbolization work, an egoic work, even elementary. Contrary to what we might be able to think, the sense of guilt in the obsessional neurosis not directly indicates the superegoic attack, but the triggering of an egoic confrontation to such an attack.

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