

## **Dramatization and imagination in the “Squared Civitas” The psychosis is not an island**

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### **Abstract**

The two papers we are going to present are focused on the theme of the image – particularly pictorial representation- in order to describe more efficiently experienced reality. The aim is to present the importance to conjugate our passion for psychodrama’s technique with the rigour of theoretical research that is necessary for our work’s development. The first article of S. Tedaldi, offers an iconic description based on visual, universal and immediate symbols that words don’t always have. The second paper of A. Iannotta refers to what Lacan discerns in the incisiveness of visual experience as a solution to language’s ambiguity. In Hobelin’s painting *The ambassadors* the discovering of an extravagant figure is crucial to discover the painting’s sense. Though, the image’s communication capability is not absolute.

**Keywords:** psychodrama, scene, psychosis.

The two papers we are going to present are focused on the theme of the image – particularly pictorial representation- in order to describe more efficiently experienced reality. Both of them make use of Lacan’s “patronage” quoting some of his statements - one concerning pictorial and the other the verbal language- which gave us the opportunity to expand on the subject. We are also bringing a theoretical consideration on two experiences of analytical psychodrama with psychotic subjects that live in a protected space such as Therapeutic Communities.

We would like to conjugate our passion for psychodrama’s technique with the rigour of theoretical research that is necessary for our work’s development.

We shall start from language. Verbal language is essentially based on abstract associations (phoneme/sense) and on the convention of who uses it (different languages = different conventions). The iconic one has a different characteristic: it is based on analogic associations (images that carry in themselves an own proper meaning) and it is less linked to conventions that are connected to cultural codes.

In the first paper the schemes beside some of the cases try to facilitate the phenomenon’s and it’s context perception. We are not proposing a different analysis of the situations described but we are trying to offer an iconic description based on visual, universal and immediate symbols that words don’t always have. We consider the square like a symbol of control and order and, on the contrary, the figure with uncertain borders, the visualization of oppressive boundaries or

overwhelmed by the content, are simple visual metaphors that help our attention concentrating on each of the events illustrated.

In the second paper we refer to what Lacan discerns in the incisiveness of visual experience as a solution to language's ambiguity.

In Hobelin's painting *The ambassadors* the discovering of an extravagant figure is crucial to discover the painting's sense. Though, the image's communication capability is not absolute, what counts is the observer's point of view: the disintegrated image can be recomposed (such as in the anamorphosis) or not.

The image always remains a metaphor of what has sense, the problem is how to extrapolate it if it's deformed or dissimulated in between other incongruent signals. In both cases the passage from verbal language- that we use in logic procedures - to the iconic one – that uses analogic procedures- constitutes an interesting example of cooperation of two different linguistic systems without creating confusion. The discourse's and analysis's structure is given by verbal language, that is also the cultural dimension in which each theory has been elaborated, and by the difficulties of comprehension that occur when theoretical complexity or verbal language's lexical ambiguity, reaches its structural limits. At that point the image's immediateness and intuitiveness helps. The image doesn't tend to substitute itself to the logical process and it couldn't be able to do it because it acts with evidence and in an aesthetic way, (that is persuading through emotions and experience together) but it can help to give a synthesis of the logical process and also a trace that has to be verified with more rational mediums.

### **Dramatization and imagination in the “Squared Civitas” The psychosis is not an island.**

*Stefania Tedaldi*

Psychotics have always been considered absolutely marginalized, but their isolation has not always been elaborated through the encounter with “the other”.

Psychodrama is thought, in psychotherapy communities, as a main entrance that leads towards re-discovering reality. In fact we think that for some of them there is a possibility of going back towards internal and external integration with the possibility of meeting the unconscious, the unknown inside of what is known or, even better, their forgotten life.

The psychodrama-entrance is the main support of the psychotic's therapeutic process. The support that allows movement even though still, still just as like the psychodramatic process is in itself and that continuously enacts the patient's story. The support where his come and go is similar to what happens in the play when the metaphor of representation defers to the patients' forgotten reality.

The sessions often take place with many difficulties but most of the times, even if for a little time, the participants intuit something different and far from the alienation in which they live. They enter in a cooperative dimension with the

others and they perceive themselves as something else from their illness. This is already something.

Imagination: fascinating word that implies a metaphor, freedom of discovering and discover themselves and at last also intuition of what is at the margin of their identity and that doesn't communicate with the core (where consciousness is).

In the dramatic play imagination is welcome. We hope that the patient can go with agility towards his desire, it's the game that the actors do when they improvise, at last it's a fundamental ingredient that allows the analyst to call gestures signs, accidental episodes signals and to see the butterfly beyond the maggot.

Is the therapy itself also imagination?

At first sight no; the aim of this paper is to say "maybe".

"No" is comprehensible: there is no science nor cure that is not anchored to rigor. Fantasy and imagination can be the source of important intuitions but they have to be verified and applied with a method. We have not yet seen a "methodic fantasy".

Within the freedom of these thoughts in regard of the psycho-dramatic therapy I would like to introduce the perturbation element of imagination as part of the methodology that guides the session's unfolding. I shall do it cautiously with an introduction because the therapist's responsibility is to offer an opportunity to who seems leading towards a migration without hope that can only increase and not decrease in relation to what's at stake.

This last concept is referred to patients with psychotic tendencies, which are a particular dramatic challenge for the analyst.

Imagination: fantasy rather than image. These are two different perspectives: the first one (Fantasy) is the capability to consider new things like allied rather than enemies. The second one is at the same time unexpected and immediately available: the image, the image that comes out all of a sudden like a symbol or a dream and at the same time is resolutive, self-significant and immediate.

Throughout my considerations I will talk about both of these perspectives trying to propose their use, in order widen to make the therapeutic space during the session and also make the rules that protect and found the curative aspect of psychodrama, flexible .

### **Lets start from Fantasy**

Fantasy as antidote towards what? delusion. Delusion -or anyway the loss of reference between signification and signifier- makes the psychotic patient become the unique citizen and emperor of an alien kingdom. Laws, habits and relationships that govern the "kingdom" of reasonableness don't have any value in that kingdom. Some kind of ambassador - that learns their language- is able to suggests how to engage relationships that aren't mystifying and reveals what is perceived as threatening -is needed. Continuing with this metaphor the next step

should be the one of creating between the two men –the “reasonable” and the “psychotic” a small common region, a place that from “no man’s land” becomes a “shared land” ; all this through psychodrama.

This means that we have to hand over something to the patient’s imagination for having it back in terms of trust. What we hand over is a part of the control-containment that the therapist practices during the session in favor of some adaptations that are necessary for who needs to have a made to measure dress rather than one you can find in the shop.

Besides containing dramatization, we should try to elaborate “the offences” introduced from the actor-patient so to recover the proliferation of his imaginary dimension in a more significant context.

Lets see some examples of the particular uneasiness that characterizes a participant with psychotic tendencies in regard of the usual practice of psychodrama.

First of all: the misunderstanding the patient that fails in perceiving the mechanism of the game would lead the session towards a therapeutic impasse (1).

Another issue that can imprison as a constriction by who suffers psychically is the language itself. I am not only referring to terminology or conventions that progressively structure the group – a particular context of meaning in of which one of the group’s members could have lost the key from the beginning. I am also referring to a general aspect: the whole psychodrama session could be also understood (or misunderstood) by the subject as a language instead of a game. The difference is evident: in playing the context is the result of a free choice, in the language it’s imposed by an authority. In playing the actor feels free, in the language he has to demonstrate to have a code and to know how to use it for not being excluded or derided. We can’t undervalue that maybe some patients feel their participating to the group as painful and inadequate because what happens in the group is felt like a ritual to which they have to mimetically adequate. The language’s definition as a potentially compelling structure starts from Lacan’s teaching when he talks about “language’s wall” as an insurmountable obstacle that opposes itself to the desire’s fulfilment (2).

It is possible that psychotic patients interpret the psychodrama’s environment as a compelled space and therefore they could feel strange and inadequate to face the groupal dimension. In this case we have to accept another point of view: if the psychotic patient doesn’t “play” and he experiences the group’s dynamic like a ritual of obedience to the Law, then we have to break in the scene and in psychoanalysis this equals the creative act: the imaginary.

I would like to be more precise in regard to the implications that this introduction would have according to a practical point of view, during the sessions’ unfolding. Usually the therapist elaborates signifiers with more attention than the specific episode that is dramatized. With psychotic patients even spontaneous behavior is difficult to analyze like a possible metaphor of the uneasiness that distresses him.

It is in fact very difficult to recover signs of “the desire’s exhibition” without a narrative coherence and each accidental participation of these subjects with metaphoric incapacities(3) can actually contain the real message to interpret for entering in the enigma of their psychosis. Theorization should be so flexible in order to be adapted to single events without losing any clue.

This therapeutic perspective is not easy to realize and it depends on the leader’s possibility of “entering and getting out” in the patient’s uneasiness engaging even the group’s relationship. The members’ availability is also necessary for listening to the other’s discourse.

Now I shall talk about the second valence of the term “imagination”: the image.

Image – the root of the term we are considering- is related to a perception that is immediate, synthetic and sensible of a structure that is gained by logic in different phases. Till now we used logic for analyzing a situation (psychodrama and psychosis) and trying to foresee their development. Now we are using an instrument that needs a bigger metaphoric exercise –because we have to transform concepts in shapes- but that offers fulfilment of a better perceptive return.

Practically we have to transform some situations that represent quite well the patients’ participation to the psychodrama sessions in simple, geometrical images. As we shall see images’ aid helps us to configure even the propositional aspect (the new methodological aspect) that I intend like “imaginative contribution” to therapy.

First of all I would like to configure the (small) existential universe in which dramatization occurs with a square. (fig.1). The four sides represent, two at a time, the four boundaries in which representation is contained. On one side (vertically) there is the dimension occupied by the analyst, that we shall geographically define the North-South (N-S). The analyst “contains” representation in two boundaries the superior and inferior one. Both of them have to do with the relationship that each participant has with the external world trough the analyst itself (that we shall define the Other): the explanation (that is feeling like a stranger) and identification. The analyst looks after these two boundaries stopping the patient from losing himself (mostly in personal relationships). The other coordinate of this figure is the horizontal one (East-West E-W) that is dominated by the group. Even the mass of the participants has a role of containment (beside the one of favoring communication). In this case each patient has to do with an “Other” well characterized and identifiable (the other) that obstacles an excess of abstraction or identification. These are the four sides of a figure that represents the rules of dramatization.

We can see how these limits are set practically with some examples: the analyst doesn’t intervene with a direct involvement in representation (he inhibits the excess of identification) but as well he doesn’t renounce to his authority (versus

an excessive member's autonomy ); in the group none of its members substitutes themselves to the analyst nor he can refuse himself to participate personally.

These are the boundaries of the Squared (quadrata)(4) Civitas that contain psychodrama in its custom.

Let's now try to introduce in this context the psychotic patient (with an uneasiness that is now not well identified) and let's try to imagine what could be the perception that the patient feels could be. Because of the great alteration with reality and with the codes that assign it in the cognitive process, we have to adapt ourselves to imagine this representation as unstructured (fig.2) and the coordinates (cardinal points) placed in an arbitrary way (for the psychotic subject's point of view). The relationship that can result, in the best case, is the one that I would define "probabilistic", in the sense that the subject creates for himself an own memory of painful or rewarding experiences that approximately show him the "probability" that reality has a certain configuration, that is unknown for him and also for the eventual analyst.

Till here the general context.

The next step, in his proceeding for analogic images is the one of introducing some psychic malaise trying to symbolize them geometrically and then to suggest (always graphically) what could be the psychodramatic role's experience could be.

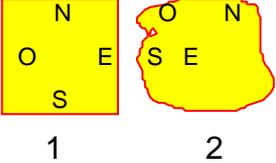
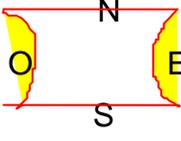
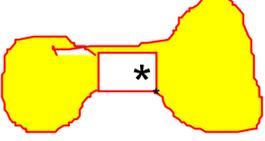
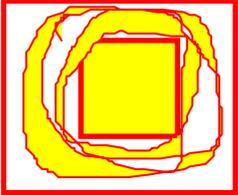
- a) The personality that is characterized by the continuous imminence of falling in an absolute incommunicability, an implosion inside one's own subjective dimension is like what happens when black holes are generated in the galaxies that don't have any light, not even for a message. In this case a psychotic actor would risk, in dramatization, to transform the analyst and the participants in simple audience, like an impotent witness of a whirlpool in which the patient sinks. The dynamic solution suggested is instead a viscosity between patient and group (or patient and analyst). This viscosity would function as an inertial force for this irresistible patient's attraction towards his empty center. We should create the conditions for forming this "consortium" in which (through a relatively strong identification) the implosion process is obstructed quite instinctively by the "mass" (either if it's the group or the analyst). I specified "analyst or group" to signify that one of them should remain repository of an effective authority, in order to avoid that the whole structure collapses with this very strong traction. It can either be the analyst that maintains the distance and gives rules, when the group is partially involved in the staggering adventure that afflicts the patient(5), or instead the group itself can guarantee a certain level of objectivity (reacting to the psychotic strangeness) when the analyst is busy protecting the patient.
- b) We can now explore the case of the psychodrama group's member that continuously varies between two extremes (for ex. a maniacal and depressive polarity). In the picture this process is simplified with a figure that is

transforming itself in a “bipolar” image (fig. 4). We can see the crisis in the thinning of the intermediate (and balanced) space between two extreme behaviors. In this case, we can suppose that the dramatization’s context adaptation, “miniaturized” till the point of making it match with that portion of reality that is still recognized and experienced by the patient(6). In this case the group should be particularly tolerant in regard to a restriction of its prerogative that is so noticeable and the analyst should continuously look over the small boundary in which dramatization can occur. Looking at the picture we can see how this space has been reduced for entering in that breaking point of personality, in that middle point that tends to be more limited and desolated. Psychodramatization would protect this menaced space avoiding -with the strength of it’s rules and internal dynamics- that an incurable fractures occurs between the polarities.

- c) The last case I shall propose is the one of psychotic patients that tend to repeat a determined ritual. I am not going to consider that kind of ritual that takes place in a “loop” of actions (this kind of rituals are to physical and isn’t linked to influences that come from relationships). The kind of maniacality I’m referring to is the one that forces the patient to follow a pathway that, even in different objective situations, continuously repeats the same self-destructive model. For example the person who, establishing conflictual relationships, feels like a victim of reactions that he provoked himself.

For indulging a such important mutilation in the relationship with reality we should play dramatization again modeling it on this particular need. The psychodramatic game’s structure would not be deformed in its rules but there would be the request of a procedure that is linked with the theatrical literature. It’s the “theater in the theatre” in which the issue that involves the actors the director and the writer(7) is enacted. In this scene we would play a drama of “first level” and afterwards a dramatization that is set in a maniacal space built by the patient (fig.5). The patient would tend to follow a circular pathway inside the dramatization of “first degree” (shared by the others) building chains of actions that isolate him in regard to reality around him. A small portion of this reality is still practicable for him. The therapist should individuate this territory almost physically and re-propose the game with these coordinates inside the group. Such space can be transformed in a shared place that, at the end, loses its alien characteristics even for who built it.

Examples of adaptation in the psychodrama's structure for the psychotic patient

 <p>1                      2</p>	<p>1) the squared Civitas of dramatization 2) the environment's "probabilistic" structure for the psychotic personality.</p>
 <p>3</p>	<p>3) The tendency towards implosion, partially involved in the dramatization, with the viscosity of the opposition of the other participants (E-W) partially opposed by a rule (N-S). The deformed lines represent the partial subjection to the psychotic attempt to condition the external environment. The straight structure symbolizes the rule's persistence.</p>
 <p>4</p>	<p>4) The bi-polarity: psychotic characters that continuously vary between two extremes. In regard to the group's member that shows symptoms of personality splitting, the group itself (including the analyst) can only react trying to reconstruct, in miniature, an undestroyable space of dramatization that protects the most complete part of the patient's personality.</p>
 <p>5</p>	<p>5)The mania. The tendency of repeating a determinate ritual substitutes in the patient the free run of his behaviour. In this case psychodrama should "split" and become "drama in the drama". Also the maniacal development that takes place in a first level dramatization should be enacted. In this way the compulsive behaviour would be relegated between two disciplined contexts or rather, it would start from a structured introduction and it would generate another one.</p>

## **Clinical Cases**

Each case will be briefly summarized and then I shall compare its particular configuration with the one of the previous scheme (that instead describes a more generic situation).

**Stefano** came in the therapeutic community for adolescents when he was 13 years old, he stayed till he was 16. He has been sent by the Social Services because he didn't obey to his mother and he didn't want to go to school. The woman, because separated, lived with a new boyfriend that Stefano couldn't bear and could not stand any kind of communication with him. In the community he wasn't able to have relationships with the other members. He excluded them and was excluded.

After some weeks he started psychodrama once a week. He participated but he was principally interested in criticizing his mates. During one of the sessions he has been chosen to represent the part of one of his mate's uncle that had abandoned his wife and his sons. At the end of the game, once he was back in his place, he talks about his absent father and realizes that he had filled this absence taking his father's place, without having the right to do it and not realizing that he had been playing a role that kept him prisoner of himself.

During the following months he seemed to slowly mature and in his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday date he decided to go back home. From one of his recent visits we know that he found a good job. He is followed by his family and he tries to live a dignified life despite some persecutory anxieties that he has.

### **Graphic of Stefano's experience:** (fig.6)

His therapeutic experience seems to be successful. The model is the one that describes the psychodrama's space in fig.1: a squared yard in which there is the analyst (N-S) and the group (E-W) in a context that is "guaranteed" by dramatization. In Stefano's case the strong subversive force that was present because of the identification with his father (polarity N of identification) goes together with the opposite tendency of refusing the contact with his possible substitute (polarity S, of alienation). The conflictual dynamics with his mates that refuse him (they move the limit E of the group's identification, farther in regard of his coming near) spark a reaction of isolation (W). Stefano's personality, subjected to all these forces, (that tend towards all of the four extremes) offers us the image of a shape that is potentially "explosive" that impresses the subject with a dynamic of dissipation in opposite directions (fig.6 the curved lines that push towards the outside). Psychodrama, though, contains all of these forces in its "strong" structures. The sturdy "walls" of this space that is "guaranteed" by the therapist are also used as boundaries in order that the patient can perceive the echo of his tendencies (of his desire). This is shown in the figure at the center that is generated by the echo of the subversive forces that hit against the wall (the

boundary put by the dramatization) and go back towards Stefano permitting him to reconfigure in an autonomous way his internal structure.

**Teresa.** She started psychodrama in a community for psychotic patients at the age of 35. In the subway she had a panic attack to which followed a delirious episode: she felt that someone entered in her brain and aspirated it outside. In that period of time she frequented many groups (like new age ones) that suggested to gain good health and enlightenment through strange collective practices. She participated gladly to psychodrama excepting some moments in which she didn't feel very well. In the group she was often chosen for interpreting roles that were very different from what she thought was her character. Often she said smiling: "but I'm not like this, they didn't understand anything".

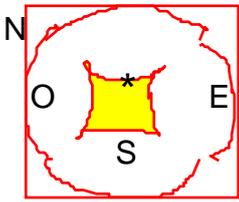
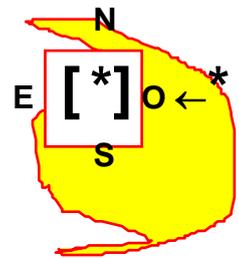
This particular space in which Teresa became another Teresa, made her face the external world in a different way from the one perceived till that moment in which she was a prisoner in between a pseudo-mystic exaltation and delusion, terrified by an indescribable pain. The encounter with psychodrama made her ask for an individual therapy that, very slowly, permitted her to feel more in contact with what is outside.

### **Graphic of Teresa's experience**

Our starting point could be image 4, the one that describes a personality with bipolar characteristics. Naturally Teresa doesn't have this problem but her identity appears to be sucked down far away from its natural location. It seems that Teresa had progressively created the conditions for "migrating" in her intimate nucleus towards an anxious exile. Her frequentation of groups where probably her attention threshold in regard of the loss of identity, brought Teresa to loose herself. This happened in a moment just like when, opening a window, the wind brings out of the house the air that is contained in it. In regard to fig.4, with the bipolarity characteristic, Teresa's figure overflows towards one only direction, the one of alienation in the "group" or in the "others". In fig.7 Teresa's personality is identified with \*. As we can see it "migrated" beyond the boundary of alienation. (that is beyond the limit W). She got conscious of this loss in one single moment with a delusion crisis.

The analogy between fig. 4 and 7 is in the similar role of psychodrama's game: the square is, in both cases, a defence of the weakest part of her personality. In Teresa's case what regards consciousness (limit towards E). As we can see even inside the square (the therapy's space) there is the sign of personality: \*. It shows the subject's experience of configuring oneself in the real space thanks to the psychodramatic game. Actually it is a temporary displacement of the patient's identity that has a resolving effect in regard of anxious condition of strangeness. Thanks to the reversal in a protected boundary, Teresa has been in the condition of not being a host of her own pain, being helped in finding her way out. With

time she had the opportunity of “returning towards the center” thanks to which she actually went towards a real improvement.

 <p>6</p>	<p><b>Stefano.</b> With him the therapeutic experience had success. The strong subversive force of the identification with the father (N) connected to the opposite tendency of refusing the contact with its possible substitute (S), the conflictual dynamics with his mates that refuse him (E) while he also isolates himself (W) offer an image of a potentially “explosive” attitude, so that Stefano’s personality seems to have a dynamic of dissipation in opposite directions. Psychodrama contains all these forces in its “strong” structures and gives back to the patient the echo of his drives in order to allow him to configure his interior structure by himself with those echoes.(*)</p>
 <p>7</p>	<p><b>Teresa.</b> Unconsciously her personality(*) emigrated beyond the boundary of alienation (beyond the limit W). She had knowledge of this loss in one single moment with a delirious crisis. Like if an inrush of air that makes a window open suddenly showed her the attraction that what is “other” from her and emptied her. The scheme shows the extreme position of this “migration”. The psychodrama’s game (the square) is a defence of the most weak part of her personality, the one related to self consciousness (limit towards E). In this case the psychodramatic game “turns” the perception that the patient has of herself in the well protected boundary of therapy. (*). It’s a definite change in regard to the anxiety produced by identity’s “dislocation” that is out of the person’s control. Thanks to this inversion Teresa can really gain access to this zone of salvation .</p>

### **Around the border: rapresentatio and acting in the psychosis**

*Anna Iannotta*

I am choosing this case because it presents a web of psychic components, somatic components and actions; and an almost pictorial capacity by the subject to represent his loss in his childhood.

Alberto’s diagnosis is borderline; he is diabetic and he makes use of drugs, but not in a continuative way.

There was a loss in his childhood : his older sister who used to look after him died when he was five years old.

He reports that his parents were mourning their daughter in despair. Alberto remembers, of this time of his life, first a time where everything is vague, then the loss of his sister, then again everything is confused.

One day he reports the memory of himself, just after the loss of his sister, asking to his father where she was. The father answered “in the coffin”, and pushed him towards the balcony to call her by name. Of course, Alberto remarked half way ironical and half way embittered, nobody answered.

The identity dispersion syndrome (so Kernberg calls the borderline syndrome) is characterized by the lack of integration between the concept of self and the concept of significant other people ( that is the lack of a significant person),

The issue of the mourning and the ways to represent it seems central in Alberto.

The first play in the group brought by Alberto is the one where his father keeps calling him without receiving an answer from him.

Then looks for him in the house and finds him hidden in the cupboard behind his sister’s clothes ...

The scene seems trivial, as it often happens in psychodrama, were it not for the fact that he is sheltered by his sister’s clothes, that is he is “sticking to her gowns”.

About one year later, or may be more, again he faces a real separation, from his girlfriend. In coincidence with this event he has frequent hypoglycemic crisis and he is aggressive with operators and guests.

Throughout the frequent hypoglycemic crisis there is an event that takes place in the group where I have the impression to attend to a play , the representation of something that is missing , the loss of awareness, the loss of control on the body. I think that this inversion in the representation (he is not the one who is called, he calls) happens maybe because of the work of narration and integration in the group.

In this second separation (from his girlfriend) which recalls the first one, (the death of his sister) Alberto tells us of his need to explode the pillars of his life. Explosions of anger which cause him to explode with the operators as well.

In clinic of drug addiction the object is compulsively taken in to control it, because it is not possible to process the mourning of the original object.

The borderline personality (character) can be seen as fluctuating between the ability of representing only borrowing somebody else’s representations and a representative vacuum.

What is not symbolized on the screen of your mind is not symbolized in reality.

I am struck, while listening about the loss of the sister, by the fog around the time before and after the event of the loss, of the whole body all what remains is his voice calling the dead sister.

Follows to this a time of great silence; then one day he comes to the session with a card which he stares obstinately all the session. As I ask what is he looking at he shows it to me.

It is the painting “ The cry “ by Munch. An empty cry which seems not to be able to come out from the mouth and two hands around the face to support it.

When this happens I think that the painting well represents what is happening to Alberto, it is something in him that constantly wishes to explode , something that finds no voice, and at the same time the trainer (leader) feels “framed in the representation”. World history of arts : the cry by Munch.

“Observing the painting from the foreground, the eye is strongly attracted by the straight lines towards the corner from which they are originated; on the contrary at the right side the area develops in bunches of curves within which the space gets lost.

The different way in which the two sides are treated gives a strong feeling of uneasiness. The violent and crude chromatic impastos develops in equivalent contrasts.

The basic realism of the painting is denied by the obsessive and unrealistic use of the colors. There is no concert between dark and bright but violent contrast.”

“It is a manifest and surely exceptional way to show us how we as subjects are literally called in the painting, and represented in it as taken.” It is Lacan that speaks in “The four fundamental concepts in Psychoanalysis” and he describes for us the painting by Holbein “The Ambassadors”.

Something in the relationship between the man and his desire is so represented in the painting: it is the floating object, a skull, left in the background of the painting and perceived by the observer only from a precise point of view, obliquely and turning the head as ready to leave, It represents the enigmatic relationship between the man and his desire.

This association, the first done who also determined the choice of the case, also speaks about the way of framing as part of it because the point of view of the observer is essential to perceive the meaning of the ensemble.

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Framing is part of a process of subjectivization because it implies the existence of the eye of the painter who created the work.

It seems to me that the contrast of colors is well expressing the conflict as well as the alternation of the different moods : violent red light, explosions and the dark grey of the states of depression, there is no continuity in the two halves of the painting, there is no dialogue.

I think that the painting well describes the call for the other, as well as the distress through the empty orbits. Which other image could be as much effective in describing the child calling the name of the dead sister, calling death itself ?

Does (Can) this painting represent the violent contrast of the feelings and describe the distress that this causes?

Looking at this picture I also feel called to participate to the distress and to the impotence strongly expressed by the painting.

I feel like a silent observer framing the case history brought by Alberto; also it is a scene that we can bring in the group, a play we can play, a play out of plays.

Let us get back for a moment to the painting by Holbein "The Ambassadors" and let me show you an analogy with what happens in the group.

Converging their eyes on the one single focus all the participants are called to get the significant hidden object to come out.

The coming on the scene of the painting makes me think of the small object a, voice and view.

Alberto is also the voice of a band that started in the therapeutic community.

In the described scene surely part of the phantasm of the therapist gets into the play and is part of producing a determined representation.

The therapist, a new Ulysses listening to the sirens, cannot avoid the attraction lure (the call) to play with his own narcissism.

From the Odyssey: "Come glorious Odysseus . Nobody ever passed by without listening to the sweet sounding voice from our mouths : but than leaves with great joy knowing more things. We know al what Argives and Trojans are suffering in the wide valley of Troy because of the will of the Gods."

"Knowledge, pain, destiny", aren't these the words "incanting" the therapist to follow his wish to be a therapist?

But can a small object a exist, in the clinic of psychosis, with the same function of link, of filling that it has in neurosis? That is an object is built with the function of discard, and can be given away without threatening the psychic integrity of the subject?

The small object a recalls to castration itself.

Alberto carries in the group the happiness for a newly found work, he reports a scene where someone asks him to bring some water. Water doesn't have a form, but takes the form of its container, we can believe that this passage may indicate the creation of contents.

In reality moods and attempts to leave the group ( even just verbal attempts) keep alternating.

The trainer (leader) is the one who recalls the junctions, the metaphors of the discourse and follows the weawe weaving the cloth which is language. As much as it may be sufficient for who is taken by the web of reality.

One more note about the possibility to represent a scene in the play of psychodrama, from a paper by G. Moniello about the borderline adolescent : " for the mental function to develop, for the phantasmal play to begin again, it is necessary to recreate the conditions of psychic space supplying the conditions for representing the disorders of the patient; one scene stands out among the many others daily activated by the patient because of its explicative power and the ability to clear the emotional background."

The scene is the one in which he calls his sister, where the voice is the predominant element.

In “Which Psychoanalysis for Psychosis?”, Correale says that in serious pathologies we not only want to pursue integration but to gradually build the inner interlocutor. The effect of this operation results in an attenuation of the negative feelings to give space to other feelings, still negative but more human and tolerable.

In other terms pain and death become a melancholic and sad, but not catastrophic, sense of the impossibility to satisfy what already happened. The really structuring aspect of this operation is that what was considered tragically lonely and incommunicable becomes sharable and can be considered part of a common field. So we can say that in this case representation can have the function of border to contain explosions – Racamier calls them “ejections”- , projections on the other of one’s uncontainable experience.

About the concept of healing.

Healing seems to me an absolute concept. What is healing? Not to feel any more pain? I think that healing may be the possibility to bare the pain, to contain it within oneself without an explosion ( like the two hands containing the face). For Alberto healing can be the harmonization and fusion between the two opposite sets of colors in the painting , and the call in the cry a word for the other. The weave of the discourse can weave a narration of the untellable that the human soul has to go through. Through the voice that leads to singing and through the eye looking a painting the partial object becomes a “shared experience” with the other.

## Notes

(1) If a participant isn’t able to identify in the mechanism of the scenic metaphor he could find himself like who feels the therapeutic contest with the same uneasiness with which he reacts to the existential reality. When there is a big gap between the analyst-animator’s symbolic and the one of the actor there is an obvious failure in the encounter. The therapist didn’t exit from his usual therapeutic schema in order to fill the gap. It is different when there is a limited spread because it’s the therapist himself that elaborates a different perception of the encounter between the animator and the group’s patient.

(2) Language’s use involves an irreversible adhesion to those prohibitions that everybody’s intimacy would like to dodge. In this context words are “ empty words” because they go back after having found the way towards signification closed: it’s empty because it’s reduced only to the signifying that clandestinely diffuses the unconscious desire. Language can force because it has the law’s strength. Law is summarized in the pleasure’s prohibition and so language is the structure that enforces this rule.

(3)With this I mean: the “plot” of their narration, the relevance with which they unfold the various roles, the eventual irruption not scheduled during the representation, when they directly call the leader, the extra-scenic relationships with the other members.

(4)This term contains an analogy with the first definition of Rome at its origin: its squared boundaries where the sacred poerium in which it was forbidden to do fatal events ( like burying the dead) or bring armies

(5)In this example the axis N-S that represents the analyst isn't deformed instead the one E-W bends suffering the sucking down created by the implosive tendency of the psychotic component.

(6)We define “miniature” this edition of the enactment because it would have a reduced dimension the situations that constitute the “grey zone” in which the patient doesn't react anymore.

(7)I would like to cite at this regard Pirandello's “Sei personaggi in cerca di autore” (Six characters looking for an author) where is remarked the dramatic inadequacy in which art is used despite of its potential. The psychodrama played in a previous dramatization session would show how the content of the previous enactment was unsolved.

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