

Beyond Verbal Language

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As the psychoanalytic foundations were based on what was not possible to be 'said', widely enacted by 'hysterics' in the beginnings of psychoanalysis, we understand that what the body showed was what had been away from knowledge, repressed by the psyche, prohibited to the verbal. Thus, the way that was imposed was to search in the patient's speech for what had been muted by the repression. It is the realm of the verbal, the language by excellence of the unconscious proclaimed by Lacan who saw in it its regal expression.

But psychoanalysis has never ceased to know other types of languages other than verbal, whether that of affections, that of expressions of mimic gesture and posture, having the individual's body as a projection screen. Child psychoanalysts have always had to make use of them to enter the children's universe. Early in the psychoanalytical development, Ferenczi knew how to listen, in his difficult patients, to the child sheltered in the adult manifesting in a session denouncing the presence of the trauma that, when expressed in the language of tenderness, mixed with the verbalizations of the secondary process. His patient used to say in a regressive moment, wrapping her arm around her neck, 'Do you know I'm expecting a baby?' to which Ferenczi replies, 'Why do you think about that?' starting a game with the child that arises from within this adult during the analytic session (1931).

And if the patient is not assaulted by this type of communication from the child, we can ask ourselves how to recognize her in order to capture her? Many years have passed since Ferenczi and his children inside the adult as such experiences were called. And again, it is in the clinic that, sovereign way, incites new knowledge.

This time it is Roussillon who, through his narcissistic identity patients, a category he coined for those whose narcissism is deficient and whose identity is compromised, realizes that there was some trauma in primitive times of the little man, a time when verbal language was non-existent. Freud is called to follow him with his writings at the end of his life in London (1938) where he says: 'the first experiences, contrary to what may happen later, are totally preserved' due to 'the fragility of synthesis' and in 'Constructions in Analysis' (1937) evokes the hypothesis that the hallucinations observed in adult psychosis must represent 'experiences seen or heard' in a time before the emergence of verbal language and that they referred to traumatic experiences. We are faced with fruitful data that tells us that there are records and feedback of experiences that were not registered in the verbal language apparatus. Roussillon offers us his theoretical construct to help us understand how the trauma of this language-less period will manifest itself.

In his 'bricolage' [1] he attributes to the drive a messenger function between subject and object, and to its representatives (word representatives, affection representatives, thing representatives) the possibility of expressing an organization in the form of verbal or non-verbal languages. As non-verbal languages are the reason of our interest, we found that they make the body the privileged vector of their messages, whether it is the body of emotion and affection, the body expression, the motricity and the passage to the act, or even the sensory-motor, that is, from the soma. Verbal language does not replace the pre-verbal modalities contained in the aforementioned bodily forms, it merely completes them and reorganizes them at the moment of their installation without ever making them to disappear.

Early experiences that have not yet reached the symbolization of verbal language present, however, a symbolization of another order, different from the commonly known secondary symbolization proper to verbal language. This process was designated by Roussillon and what was detected is that if this primary symbolization does not exist, we will know that there was an incidence of trauma, and with it all the consequences that characterize the narcissistic-identity patient. The work of primary symbolization was already known, not under that name, but both in playing and in dreaming we know that they are not crossed by the verbal language apparatus but by other forms of presence, such as the symbolic action of thing representations [2].

When verbal language is installed, we progressively witness the transition from non-verbal symbolization forms to the language apparatus: in words to name feelings and emotions, in the connection of experiences with words, but also between words, in the pragmatic structure of utterances, in the language's prosody, in the style and rhetoric of its use. For this reason, verbal language cannot be reduced to just the words' representation; in fact, it is the language apparatus as a whole that will be mobilized while the word representations will be restricted to just one part. Gestures, posture, action, contained in the register of thing-representations, will be transferred to the language apparatus, thus making words 'continents' of these attributes of the thing-representation. However, this process of passage does not happen all at once, nor completely and in the best of all worlds it happens if throughout development everything goes well.

The body tells, the gesture is narrative, telling the story of subjective experience, what the voice sometimes cannot say, what the subject cannot formulate. It shows what the subject does not live by himself, what he can neither see nor feel about himself, what is cleaved from the reflexive consciousness, as it was never reflected to him by his 'mother environment' in the early times.

The first expressiveness' record is the affect, forms of affect, especially rudimentary forms of the affect. The somatic sensation is much more infiltrated of hallucinating turbidity than what is usually perceived: they are hallucinations that bring traces of primitive experiences preserved in a state of perception and updated in 'perception's identity'. Hallucination and perception are not opposed; they can be conjugated and a hallucination can use the vector of a perception to update itself: it is the condition that Winnicott (1975) used to create his notion of 'found/created'.

Body expressiveness, face expressiveness, body gestures, postures and body tones are part of the privileged expressions record of babies and early childhood. But these elements will not be absent from adult expressions, although they accompany them, just as simple index.

Postures are also 'very talkative'. They tell a subjective position, a position of being; they tell the story of the position taken by the self towards the object, the story of its fears and arrogance, its challenges or submissions, but also the object's responses to its messages; they tell 'the conversations' between subject and object.

What interests us in this mime postural gesture topic is knowing how to discriminate when a follow up mime postural gesture gives a color to the word or when it comes to be an intrusion of early experiences of the non-verbal period, a traumatic experience, which returns in its original garment, in its language of 'return'.

The motor field does not have a good reputation in the psychoanalytic world, says Roussillon (2008): acts are generally considered to disturb the analytic process, as they are seen as discharge forms. They are called 'passages to the act', those that steal from elaboration. However, if we consider the

act in its relation to the other to which it addresses, we will have different types of act. Therefore, it is important to distinguish the 'passage to the act' from the 'passage through the act' - an experience that supports the development of certain subjective experiences.

Affection language, body language, soma, act, mime postural gesture and motor sensory – a profusion of non-verbal expressions that are presented in session to be captured, to gain meaning, to be part of an unhappened history of a Being that never became Being. In reality, such expressions lost in time are ambivalent, with potential in the dependence from whoever might give them meaning.

In this way, the languages' polymorphism will spread at the time of consultation, demanding a polyphonic listening to their different messages carried out by an analyst sufficiently attuned to the noises of being in the world.

In this compass, languages interweave free association into an associative symphonic presentation of different verbal and non-verbal forms. In the session, we are urged to read this range of languages, especially the corporeal ones, which seem to be forgotten by us. But, many times, they are introducing themselves in a curious way. I tell to a patient that to start an analysis she would have come twice a week as she would need to see some important points from her past and that, at our next meeting, she could tell me what she had thought about it. When I open the door on the appointed date, what do I see? A young woman all dressed in pink tiny shorts, with her legs showing also in a pink color; the mime postural gesture language was revealing. It was the baby who had arrived. To fill me with more evidence of this, upon entering my room, in a single gesture, she closed the umbrella and appeared behind it evoking the exit to the world, her birth.

Before she might say anything to me about starting her analysis, I had already known that she had committed to doing the analysis as I had asked, from the beginnings, as the baby had already arrived.

Another case of a narcissistic-identity patient who, when she starts to make her bond with me, presents a repetitive behavior: when I'm going to say something, she settles down on the couch and moves her lips making a baby's noise who is sucking her baby bottle. Through this body language she was informing me that she had received very well my words and that she would keep in touch with me.

There are countless examples of how much non-verbal languages accompany us and, the more we pay attention, the more we will have faithful squires for our daily work.

[1] Bricolage: the word means small jobs, usually repairs, done by an amateur with little knowledge and no professional tools. In anthropology, the term is used to describe a union of various cultural elements to form a single culture.

[2] Thing-presentation – '... it is the mnemonic trace left by an experience of satisfaction, in which the object that brought satisfaction received its inscription [in the psyche] ... it can function as a crossroads, a bridge, the link through which symbolization works... in its possibility of articulating itself at the same time with the drive and with the language'. (Green, 2013, p. 158)

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