

PSYCHIC TRANSMISSION OF THE PATHOLOGICAL PHANTOM AS A TRANSGENERATIONAL OBJECT: AN ANALYSIS OF THE MOVIE “VOLVER”

Anna Thereza Carneiro Pinto Abdala, Caio César Souza Camargo Próchno
and Luiz Carlos Avelino da Silva

Anna Thereza Carneiro
Pinto Abdala

Caio César Souza
Camargo Próchno

Luiz Carlos Avelino
da Silva

Universidade
Federal de
Uberlândia
(UFU), Instituto
de Psicologia,
Uberlândia/MG,
Brasi

ABSTRACT: Psychic transmission of the pathological phantom as a transgenerational object: an analysis of the movie “Volver”. The many processes of psychic transmission are inside the bonds among the subjects of the same group or family in an unconscious way. Considering that, this article, which originated from a master’s degree thesis, implies to talk about the constitution of the pathological phantom as a transgenerational object in cases of incest. This object is transmitted through the processes of psychic transmission from generation to generation, which consists on the heritage. The investigation of this study came from the analysis of the events and traumas of the subjects that compound the family in the movie “Volver”.

Keywords: psychic transmission; transgenerationality; phantom object; incestuous sexual violence.

RESUMO: Os processos de transmissão psíquica, de modo inconsciente, permeiam os vínculos entre os sujeitos de um mesmo grupo ou família. Diante disso, este artigo teve como objetivo explicar sobre a constituição do fantasma patológico enquanto objeto transgeracional em casos de incesto. Este objeto é transmitido pelos processos de transmissão psíquica de geração a geração, constituindo a herança. A investigação deste estudo ocorreu a partir da análise dos eventos e traumas dos sujeitos que compunham a família da trama do filme *Volver*.

Palavras-chave: transmissão psíquica; transgeracionalidade; objeto fantasma; violência sexual incestuosa.

From the movie *Volter* (2006), this article discusses the influence of psychic transmission processes in the repetition of incestuous sexual violence between generations. The interest in studying this issue arose from the experiences in the internship of the undergraduate course. There were cases with three generations of the same family involved in scenes of sexual violence, incestuous or not. These cases aroused questions in me.

What factors led to the repetition of sexual violence through these generations? Were there psychic elements present in the dynamics of these families that differentiated them from others? If so, what are they? From these questions, we had the idea to investigate the psychic transmission processes, considering that the psychic inheritance, the result of these processes, permeates the unconscious and the relationship of the subjects. Thus, the psychic inheritance is also important to understand the subject who suffers.

The culture, the language and the constituent laws of civilization are examples of the intergenerational content of psychic inheritance; while the unspoken elements, non-elaborated experiences and unrepresented aspects are transgenerational content. Therefore, the object of research was whether there was an influence of transgenerational contents of psychic inheritance on the experiences of repetition.

We chose *Volter* for analysis because the movie allows us to observe the various relationships of the subjects of the same family. In addition, there is the possibility to investigate the past and present in the history of the generations of the family, considering the movement of psychic inheritance.

Thus, this article is meant to be a cross-sectional objective explanation about the constitution of the pathological phantom as a transgenerational object in cases of incestuous sexual violence. Psychic transmission processes through generations transmit this object, which is part of the psychic inheritance. The proposed investigation was based on the events and traumas of the subjects of the family, from which *Volter's* entire plot unfolds.

PSYCHIC TRANSMISSION PROCESSES

Psychic transmission processes are present in intersubjective spaces, permeating relationships between at least two subjects. The children born are inserted into the prehistory of their families (KAËS, 1998; EIGUER, 1998) that support and maintain the network of investment and care for them. In the environment where psychic transmissions are possible between and through generations, subjects constitute their psyches.

The “configurations of the psychic objects” (KAËS, 1998, p. 9) of different origins are transmitted to the other subject through identification mechanisms.

These configurations define how the psychic object will be transmitted. Many of the objects are marked negative, therefore

what is transmitted would then be, preferably, what is not contained, what is not retained; what is not remembered: the absence, illness, shame, repression, objects lost and still mourned. Thus the configurations of the object and its intersubjective bonds are transported, projected, deposited and diffracted in others, in more than one other: they form the material and process of transmission (KAËS, 1998, p. 9).

Thus, the psychic transmission does not only have negative content, but also contents that support narcissistic continuities, intersubjective bonds and the continuation of the complexity and life. Considering the unconscious, it is interesting to note that the positive and negative contents intertwine. Both are inherited simultaneously.

Although they are connected to each other, there are two types of psychic transmission: intersubjective, which relates to the positive contents, and transpsychic, which has a negative character (KAËS, 1998). The first occurs among the subjects of the family, distinguishing them from each other in a complementary relationship. Thus, there is the possibility of the transformation of the content transmitted, while transpsychic transmission does not allow such transformations. Furthermore, in transpsychic transmission there are no limits to the subjective spaces established, making it difficult to separate self-other. It happens through the subjects, placing something not elaborated from one subject into the other.

These contents compose the object to be transmitted psychically between generations (EIGUER, 1998). This is a libidinal investment element originating in the psyche of the subject that transmits the object. This process predates those libidinal investments from the mother to the baby. These are essential for the formation of psychic life. However, if something causes libidinal disinvestment, an unrepresentable void may be constructed in the psyche of the child.

The subject may receive two types of interconnected content: intergenerational and transgenerational, both resulting from the psychic inheritance. This is understood as the result of psychic transmission processes (SILVA, 2003), as well as being an enriching factor to investigate facets of psychological distress. Psychic inheritance can be comprehended in the psychoanalytic clinical practice as well as in the analysis of cinematographic and literary works.

Due to psychic transmissions, subjects can appropriate culture, language, symbols and constituent laws of civilization — elements present in the groups to which they belong. They can also receive into their psyche aspects arising from guilty feelings, fantasies, desires, repressions, non-elaborated mourning

and narcissistic conditions, which permeate the relationship even though foreign and unknown, making it unrepresentable (KAËS, 1998; SILVA, 2003). Why do some elements become appropriate while others remain alienated in the psyche?

TRANSGENERATIONAL PSYCHIC TRANSMISSION

In groups, two interconnected types of psychic transmission are present. Intergenerational psychic transmissions are structural and constituent connections and transformations, because there is space for metabolizing the psychic material to be transmitted to the next generation (CORREA, 2000). Thus, intergenerational psychic transmission works in favor of bonds, although the events may have been traumatic, they were prepared and symbolized constituting psychic representations (TRACHTENBERG, 2005). This type of transmission allows the descendants to constitute subjectivities themselves, modifying the history and appropriation of their inheritance, differentiating themselves from their ancestors.

Conversely, transgenerational psychic transmissions are alienating, preventing the heirs from constituting themselves subjectivities (CORREA, 2000). There are no benefits from the psychic material inherited, since it is suspended, remaining in the raw state in the psyche of the descendants. These, in turn, will have their psychic contents marked by the functioning of the psychic life of their ancestors, as unconsciously there are records of traumas. Thus, the psyche of the descendant is not autonomous, since it is influenced by other psyches that were also not individual in their constitutions (CORREA, 2000). Traumas can stop the intergenerational psychic transmission.

Therefore, there is another, this time defective, transgenerational, which occurs through the subjects, traversing the psyche, invading it violently, in a direct passage of psychic formations from one subject to another, from one generation to another, without preservation of the subjective or intersubjective spaces. (TRACHTENBERG, 2005, p. 123).

Transgenerational psychic transmissions contain traumatic, pathological and symptomatic aspects that are not amenable to change because there is no space of transforming transcription (KAËS, 2001). The material transmitted is related to past traumatic events that had no representation and could not be thought about because of the horror, shame and other feelings aroused by these experiences.

Such content, traversing the psyche of others, can be transmitted through several generations, since transgenerational psychic transmission seeks a repeat of the collapsed past histories of family members, creating the transgenerational traumatic chain. (TRACHTENBERG, 2005). The unconscious psychic materials

transmitted through several generations are the transgenerational contents that can be manifested, for example, through symptoms of the family subjects (SILVA, 2003).

Such contents promote "gaps and voids" in the transmission, preventing psychic integration. Therefore, transgenerational inheritance consists of raw elements, transmitted as such, marked by traumatic, unspoken experiences and unelaborated struggles" (SILVA, 2003, p. 30), secrets, histories of violence, voids, silences, failures in and negative symbolizations (TRACHTENBERG, 2005).

The following scene from *Volver* can be used to reflect about context in which these transgenerational content may arise. Remember that at this point in the movie each character is hiding his/her own secrets.

Raimunda talks with Paula, her daughter, saying that Soledad, her sister, is strange and that, if Soledad asks about Paco, Paula should answer that she does not know anything, "which is true. The less you know the better" — Raimunda said. Mother and daughter go to Soledad's apartment. Raimunda says she will use the bathroom and her sister acted strangely. Meanwhile Soledad watches her niece and asked her what is going on. Paula says: "I am in a very bad age". (ALMÓDOVAR, 2006)

This strangeness of one character in relation to the other combined with the evasive answers denotes the existence of secrets that were mentioned by the characters themselves in previous scenes. These secrets involving murder and sexual violence maintain a mixture of feelings, such as shame, guilt and hate, which participate in the composition of the transgenerational psychic materials.

These materials constitute the transgenerational object, comprehended as that which is placed as the object of another direct or collateral ancestor from previous generations, which causes fantasies and identifications, interfering with the constitution of psychic instances of the family members (SILVA, 2003). The object of transgenerational transmission is permanently intrusive, making it impossible to represent or elaborate. It remains alienated with regard to what the psyche inherited, where the traumatic experience is encrypted.

There are three types of transgenerational object: indulgent, idealized and phantom (EIGUER, 1991), the third being the transgenerational object to which this study relates. The transgenerational phantom object refers to the unrepresentative void present in the psyche of the descendants, involving something committed by ancestors that had become a secret. This category of object remains as a foreign body in the psyche of the other subjects. The subject who suffers intrusion and violence of this type of transmission is named and located in a place according to the wishes of the transgenerational legacy of family (KAËS, 1998).

Comprehending the types of psychic transmission and the inherited contents, the following questions arises: why is a secret kept for generations causing the repetition of traumatic events? What makes family members integrate this dynamic even though there are no benefits provided by the transgenerational inheritance?

There are unconscious alliances in the intersubjective bonds of the family. In these bonds, the unconscious “is inscribed and manifested, often in multiple registers, and in several languages, for each individual and the bond itself” (KAËS, 1998, p. 13), therefore the psychic apparatus of each subject acquires positive and negative aspects unconsciously transmitted from one to another.

TRAUMAS AND THEIR INTERSECTIONS WITH THE TRANSGENERATIONAL PHANTOM OBJECT AND THE PSYCHIC CRYPT

Freud constructed the theory of trauma and then reformulated it, considering the psychic reality, fantasy and sexuality. Ferenczi summarized the first trauma theory of Freud in *The confusion of tongues between adults and children*. He said traumas, which are life’s experiences and impressions in childhood, also originate from an actual event and denial by an adult. This adult is generally the model with which the child will identify (FERENCZI, 1933/2011). Situations of sexual violence as real events can be discussed from these formulations.

Although sexuality and pleasure seeking is something inherent to the human being, also present in children, the language of infant sexuality is organized by tenderness while the adult language is organized by passion (FERENCZI, 1933/2011). Children take pleasure in their play, including the make-believe where they can represent their family romances (FREUD, 1909/1974); adults, in turn, have established and formed libidinal organization also acting in pursuit of pleasure, but involving genitality. Therefore, to be a situation of sexual violence as a real event, in which children and adults are involved, it is necessary to consider that there is the violator¹ making his wishes prevail over the child. In this sense, what distinguishes the subjects from the others are the internalized laws unconsciously relating to prohibitions imposed by the culture (FREUD, 1913/2012).

However, it is not only the violence that characterizes trauma as pathogenic, but also the denial — a situation in which the child is not believed by an adult when making the complaint of sexual violence, receiving silence or denial of the fact for example (FERENCZI, 1933/2011). The denial does not allow the

¹ This study does not intend to cover the violators, which is a complex issue that requires specific studies for a through discussion. It is important to consider that, in a situation of sexual violence, incestuous or not, the violator has full responsibility for his act.

child to give meaning to the violent event. The child needs an adult who accepts her suffering, assisting her in constructing a designation because her psychic resources are still in development.

Real sexual violence is a strongly registered trauma, in which the unpleasantness is extremely excessive, becoming unrepresented. Often the pain becomes unattainable by consciousness and cannot be repressed or subscribed to the unconscious. It is a state of near death originating from traumatic shock (FERENCZI, 1933/2011). With the denial mechanism, the words enclose and lose the construction of new meanings and may become representations without fantasies. A blockage of introjective work, considered the engine of the psychic life, also occurs from the trauma. From this, the fantasy of incorporation begins to exercise a significant and detrimental role for the psyche of the subject (ABRAHAM & TOROK, 1972/1995).

In Psychoanalysis, the limit of the body is a model of separation between the interior and exterior. Incorporation would be a bodily envelopment while introjection refers to the interior of the psychic apparatus (LAPLANCHE & PONTALIS, 1992). Introjection is related to the expansion of autoerotic interests; it provides an extension of the ego through elimination of repressions and helps the inclusion of the object into the ego, transforming the investments of the libido into the objects.

Introjection performs a developmental function when introducing an "unconscious, anonymous or repressed libido" into the ego (TOROK, 1968/1995, p. 222) to promote an expansion and enrichment of the ego. The ego does not internalize the object. This is, simultaneously, the context in which there is set of drives and their destinations and a mediator for the unconscious. Thus, there are possibilities for constructing representations, expanding the psychic life of the subject.

The beginning of the formation of the mechanism of introjection occurs in the first moments after birth. The baby cries, screams to express a need for the maternal figure, communicating to fill "the emptiness of the mouth" (ABRAHAM & TOROK, 1972/1995). Later, the child makes some sounds until the actual language emerges, however, for this, the presence of a maternal figure who has a language that supports the baby is necessary. The words of the mother portray something to the baby so that it starts inserting language and filling "the emptiness of the mouth". Therefore, designations, meanings gradually replace the presence of the mother, allowing the emergence of new introjections.

When the internalization process encounters obstacles, the fantasies of incorporation prevail, precluding elaborations of situations experienced by the subject. It is impossible to articulate and attribute meanings to experiences, allowing the mind to create fantasies for this unnamed something. "The emptiness of mouth",

that is not to be filled with words, introduces “fantastically, the whole or part of the person, as the single depository of that which has no name” (ABRAHAM & TOROK, 1972/1995, p. 247). These fantasies of incorporation take the place of words, referring to impassive traumas of representation and designation. They act, for example, in the formation of symptoms, since the unspoken can refer to an embarrassing secret.

The fantasy of incorporation appears from unspeakable grief preceded by a state of cloistered ego due to a shameful experience. This process leads to the construction of a psychic crypt, defined as a zone cleaved from the ego (ABRAHAM & TOROK, 1971/1995). The psychic crypt occupies a definite place, which is not the unconscious, nor the ego; it is a territory between these two like an artificial unconscious installed in the ego. The psychic crypt aims to intercept the contents transferred between the unconscious and the ego so that they will not reach the outside world, keeping the secret inaccessible.

In the psychic crypt, there is a conservative repression because the desire has already been realized without deviations. The desire “is buried, it is unable to be reborn or to become dust. There is nothing that could have prevented its realization or could cause the memory to be blotted out” (ABRAHAM & TOROK, 1971/1995, p. 240). The past remains trapped in the subject as a foreign body in the psyche that does not die and does not become known so there can be reinterpretation.

This encrypted content cannot be expressed in words. They are buried alive in the crypt. In the individual bearer of the psychic crypt, the absence of words indicates that the wish was carried out before burial without yielding to interdiction. The psychic crypt allows the subject to keep the secret, hiding and canceling the effect of the shame, taking the meaning of the words for the realized and hidden desire.

There is a specific mechanism called endocryptic identification “which is to change your own identity by a fantasmatic identification with ‘life’ beyond the grave of the lost object by effect of a meta-psychological trauma” (ABRAHAM & TOROK, 1975/1995, p. 280). It maintains the same conservative function of the fantasy of incorporation, causing the correspondent of the lost object to remain encrypted and reconstructed given the memories of words, images and emotions.

Thus, an entire unconscious fantasy world was created, carrying a separate and hidden life. It turns out, however, that, during the libidinal achievements, at “midnight”, the phantom of the crypt comes to haunt the guardian of the cemetery, giving him strange and incomprehensible signs, forcing him to perform unusual acts, inflicting unexpected sensations on him (ABRAHAM & TOROK, 1972/1995, p. 249).

From this quote, we can think that the phantom object of the psychic crypt has its action performed on the other subject while endocryptic identification is related to the subject itself. If this other subject is the one who will try, if possible, to elaborate this pathological phantom object, we can make an association with the transgenerational psychic transmission, in which a descendant carries a strange object in the psyche, deposited by an ancestor.

There are two types of phantom object: the structural phantom object and the pathological phantom object. The baby's relationship to the parental figures and their desires influence the formation of both (ABRAHAM, 1975/1995). Newborns introject the libidinal investments of the parents. If the child can appropriate the parental unconsciousness and the formation of her psyche continues to progress with representations and elaborations, it is because there was an introjection of the structuring phantom object.

However, if this desire of the parental figures is broken by any omission of speech, the mechanism of introjection remains unchanged, as there is a tormenting secret around which this organization of desire occurred. The child begins to deal with an obstacle that hinders the establishment of her place in her family, facilitating the appearance of strange behavior towards herself, with influences of the pathological phantom object.

This phantom object is unconscious and results from the psychic transmission of the unconscious, for instance, from one of the parental figures to the child. "The phantom's periodic and compulsive return lies beyond the scope of symptom formation in the sense of a return of the repressed; it works like a ventriloquist, like a stranger within the subject's own mental topography" (ABRAHAM, 1975/1995, p. 394). The pathological phantom object is opposed to the introjection, with a gap in the speakable. It originates from a time when the gap breaks the path of introjection, disabling the meaning of the words.

The work of the pathological phantom object serves the death drive (FREUD, 1920/2010). It does not have its own energy. It is continuing its shutdown work in silence. The pathological phantom object supports itself by the omission of words that cause outbreaks in the consistency of threads. It is still an undefined source of "endless repetitions and, more often than not, eludes rationalization" (ABRAHAM, 1975/1995, p. 395). Possibly, due to the non-integration of the hidden words of the pathological phantom object in the psychic apparatus, it generates repetitions found in many different frames or events.

At this point, we can think that the transgenerational psychic transmission transmits the pathological phantom object. The pathological phantom object refers to an ancestor who committed an act denied by all or muted as secret (EIGUER, 1991). The libidinal investment of this ancestor absorbs the functio-

ning of the descendant's psychic apparatus, making it impossible to think. There is no space to reflect on the secrets, so they can return as symptoms or events.

Unconscious processes of psychic transmission occur in every family. There are situations in which there are no outbreaks of transgenerational transmission of pathological phantom objects through the symbolization and elaboration of these. Considering this, can we think that the encrypted secrets of subjects that suffered unspeakable grief form various symptoms and events representatives of the return of the pathological phantom object in the next generations?

METHOD

This study used the psychoanalytic research method, which employs the psychoanalytic interpretation as a tool. By analyzing a subject, we can assign different meanings to the experiences of this because the interpretation is intrinsically related to the symbolization. Thus, there is no single truth. The sense of truth adopted in this study is not as consistency or something corresponding to evidence, but as *Alethea* — a word attributed to the truth in Greek, translated as unveiling or not oblivion (REZENDE, 1993).

The choice of the junction between Psychoanalysis and Cinema was taken as the latter is a means of communication that has language that is closer to the representations of images of psychic life (ZUSMAN, 1994). The image becomes objective, acquiring tones of reality even though the work can be fictitious. Interestingly, the movie can achieve the transmission of everyday aspects, as movies often portray various topics and enable subjects to belong to different realities and know other cultures.

In this study, we analyzed *Volter* (2006), directed by Pedro Almodóvar, because this movie enabled us to capture movements of the family dynamics of the characters. Movies lead to an enlargement of the perspective of those who are searching when they show different sides of the story and the context in which the characters live. This allowed the investigation of the psychic transmission processes.

DISCUSSION

Volter means going back to a place. This movie is full of retrogressions to the past of women of three generations. They are characters in a story in which family secrets relapse throughout the plot. This study aimed to analyze the transgenerational issue presented in the movie along with the violent contents.

Volter is set in the region of La Mancha in the Spanish countryside. A couple had two daughters: Raimunda and Soledad, both with opposite characteristics.

While the first had the attributes of vibrancy, sensuality, persistence, courage and the ability to try to overcome challenges, the other showed the opposite, being accommodating of the circumstances. Soledad had a little liveliness only after the return of her mother.

Below is an excerpt from one of the final scenes of *Volver*, in which the secrets and the movement of family dynamic are revealed.

Her mother: "I dreamed it so many times".

Raimunda: "Me too".

Her mother: "I do not know where to start".

Raimunda: "You are a ghost, aren't you? Aren't you dead?"

Mother: "No, my daughter, I'm not. However, if I had died, I would have come to ask you for forgiveness for I did not understand what happened. I was blind. I buried myself on the same day as the fire".

Raimunda: "Is it true that you had left my father?"

Mother: "Yes, I could not face the betrayals. On the afternoon of the fire, you spoke with your aunt. As always, you did not ask for me. I hated you and told your aunt that you were ungrateful. Moreover, as I continued excommunicating you, your Aunt defended you and told me everything: your father abused you and you got pregnant and that Paula was your daughter and sister. I could not believe it. How can this monstrosity happen before my eyes without my noticing? Then I understood everything. I understood your silence and your distance. I understood why your father went to Venezuela to work. He was unable to take the shame of what he did. I understood that after you married Paco, you came to Madrid and you did not know anything about us".

Raimunda: "I hated you because you did not notice anything, mother".

Mother: "And you were quite right, my daughter. When I learned of the situation, you do not know how I was. I went to the house wanting to pull your father's eyes out and I found him sleeping with Augustina's mother. They did not see me. I set fire to the house. It was a windy day and, before long, the flames devoured everything. Not even giving them time to wake up".

Raimunda: "Are the ashes buried in your place those of Augustina's mother?"

M: "Yes. Then I walked lost in the fields for several days hiding like an animal. I thought to surrender myself, but before I passed by where Paula lived to see her. I found it very bad. When she saw me, she was not surprised. I came from the past, where she lived and she received me as if I had just walked out the door. The tragedy made her lose the little reason she had. I could not leave her alone. Therefore, I was taking care of her until she died.

Raimunda: "Mother, in the village everyone believes that you are a ghost".

Mother: “This is best in such a superstitious village. For me, it was easier to follow the flow that I created than to tell the truth. I thought they would arrest me. I kept thinking someone would investigate me or punish me. During all this time, I swear I have lived a real purgatory”.

Mother and daughter hugged strongly.

Raimunda: “It has never been said better”.

(...)

On the street, the wind blows garbage far away. The mother, still unnamed, is who watched this movement happening. In the next scene after this, she is called by her name for the first time in the movie: Irene. (ALMÓDOVAR, 2006).

Only in this scene, does the sexual violence committed against Raimunda by her father, also the father of Paula, became known. Raimunda’s aunt, with the same name as the daughter, was a figure of support and cared for her. When Paula was still a baby, her mother married Paco who took the girl as his daughter. When Paula was fourteen, she was also sexually assaulted by Paco and she murdered her stepfather.

Irene, named only at the end of the plot, did not realize what happened to her daughter. It is possible that the maternal denial (FERENCZI, 1933/2011) in this case of sexual violence was established in relation to Irene and Raimunda. What would the unconscious aspects be that permeated the relationship of both before the incident that may have influenced the maternal denial? It is plausible that the mother envied her daughter due to her sensuality that stood out. How was the oedipal triangle (FREUD, 1923/2011, 1924/2011) between Irene, her husband and Raimunda?

Raimunda told Aunt Paula about the sexual violence when she lived with her. We can affirm that the aunt listened to her niece, however, it is also necessary to consider that Aunt Paula may have denied, unconsciously, the birth of Raimunda’s daughter because she could not bear to have contact with a child born from incest. For a while, Aunt Paula was the only person who knew about the situation that the niece had experienced. Aunt Paula asked Raimunda if she had the baby when Paula was already fourteen. Such denials and aspects without representation are elements that contribute to the formation of the negative face of the denied pact (KAËS, 2005).

Raimunda did not appear to be able to elaborate the traumatic situations experienced. She married Paco; they moved to another city and she turned her back on her family, trying to break the bonds to erase the wounds of the past, silenced (CORREA, 2003) with the secrets. Trauma blocks introjection. The ego is attached to the unelaborated loss which becomes shameful and this process can lead to the formation of the psychic crypt (ABRAHAM & TOROK, 1972/1995),

burying the secret. It remains hidden, creating obstacles for designations, meanings and elaborations. We can therefore establish the hypothesis that Raimunda constructed a psychic crypt to cover up the trauma of sexual violence.

The secret, buried in the crypt, participates in the formation of a pathological transgenerational phantom object (EIGUER, 1991; ABRAHAM & TOROK, 1975/1995), which arises when the gap transmitted in the subject itself interrupts the path of introjection. This pathological phantom object works for the death drive (FREUD, 1920/2010) and it is the source of the repetition of various events.

Therefore, we can imagine that Paula, who was unaware of aspects of her own history, may have been the depository of this transgenerational phantom object made from the secrets kept in the psychic crypt of her mother. The active pathological phantom object may have influenced Paula, both in relation to the repeat of the incestuous sexual violence experienced by her mother, as well as committing murder like her grandmother.

However, for the incestuous sexual violence to happen, the participation is necessary of a violator, who has full responsibility for the act committed. Thus, under any circumstances, the intersubjective links and psychic transmission processes do not determine whether incestuous sexual violence or other violence takes place.

It is important to point out that the two fundamental laws for the maintenance of civilization: to not commit murder or incest (FREUD, 1913/2012) were violated by generations of this family more than once. These laws are also content that make up the intergenerational psychic transmission that can be interrupted by trauma (TRACHTENBERG, 2005), as experienced by the family of Raimunda. Therefore, prior to the trauma, the transmission is predominantly transgenerational, which does not preserve the intersubjective spaces. What are the impacts that will result in future generations due to the infringement of the constituent laws of civilization by these subjects?

Another aspect that we considered: in the face of the traumatic situation of incest not elaborated for Raimunda, would she have unconsciously wanted to kill her father who raped her? Given this possible desire of Raimunda and the fact that Irene had killed Paula's father/grandfather — both seen as muted secrets, the pathological transgenerational phantom object inherited by the girl may also have had the unrepresented aspects that refer to murder in its constitution.

Another interesting aspect is that the music *Volver*, — performed by Raimunda — seems to portray the role of transgenerational psychic inheritance in the psyche of a subject. It is as if the past and present mingle, preventing the evolution of chronological and psychological time given this strange, unnamed body that acts in the psychic life, sometimes repeating itself, possibly seeking an elaboration.

“(…)Feeling that is a breath of life, that twenty years is nothing, that the feverish look, wandering in the shadows looking for you and calls you. living with the soul clutched to a sweet memory that I cry again” (ALMÓDOVAR, 2006).

Raimunda sang emotionally as she did as a child while her mother, hidden in Soledad’s car, was crying. Were the past and present mingled? Could a process of elaboration have started at that time? Is this song, which Irene taught her daughter to sing in the talent show, already representing a legacy of a family that has hidden many secrets that were possibly transgenerationally transmitted, as a psychic inheritance?

It seems that Irene’s return as an unnamed ghost, coming out of the grave, and a family friend breaking the silence were necessary for the secrets to start to be told and named, the pathway for a possible elaboration. If we return to the scene where the wind blows the garbage, we can think of it as representative of the stories unspoken and unelaborated in this family. As the garbage is being blown away, the secrets were disappearing with the possibility of designations and explanations of the facts experienced. It is as if the many unspeakable gaps were allowed to be filled with words, allowing changes in the relationships of this family and reinterpretation of the traumatic events previously experienced. This was breaking the transgenerational traumatic chain.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article investigated the constitution of the pathological phantom as a transgenerational object in cases of incestuous sexual violence. We tried to comprehend the possible meanings attributed to the consequences of the traumatic events experienced by *Volver*’s family and the impact of the psychic inheritance in the descendants of this family.

We can say that there was some relationship between the incestuous sexual violence and the psychic inheritance, however, it was not a determining factor for the violence to occur, although it could have had an influence, as on other occasions. In cases of incest, trauma can be installed, for example, when faced with a denial that disallows the suffering of the violated subject. In this analysis of the movie, the traumatic experiences interrupted aspects in the psyches of the individuals, preventing elaborations and meanings.

This was a point of view constructed among many that could be structured. Furthermore, there is no way to cover all aspects of the movie, therefore the focus of incestuous sexual violence was chosen and some aspects of the killings, since there is a relationship between these acts as violations of the fundamental laws of civilization, contents also intergenerationally transmitted.

Finally, the psychic inheritance is an important factor to be considered given the experiences of the subject. If professionals also consider this perspective, their view expands, trying to think beyond the subject that presents something that cannot be enough to comprehend the distress. Considering these aspects, it can make possibilities for designations and changes during the process of Psychoanalysis, as in the plot of the family of *Volver*.

Received: April 17, 2014. Accepted: September 23, 2014.

REFERENCES

- ABRAHAM, N. (1975/1995). "Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology", in ABRAHAM, N. & TOROK, M. *The shell and the kernel*. São Paulo: Escuta.
- . & TOROK, M. (1971/1995). "The topography of reality: Sketching a metapsychology of secrets", in ————. *The shell and the kernel*. São Paulo: Escuta.
- . (1972/1995). "Morning or Melancholia: Introjection versus Incorporation", in ————. *The shell and the kernel*. São Paulo: Escuta.
- . (1975/1995). "'The Lost Object-Me': Notes on Endocryptic Identification", in ————. *The shell and the kernel*. São Paulo: Escuta.
- ALMODÓVAR, P. (Director). (2006). *Volver*. [DVD]. Spain: Chanel + Spain. 120 min.
- CORREA, O. B. R. (2000). *The avatars of generational psychic transmission*. São Paulo: Escuta.
- . (2003). Psychic transmission between generations. *Psychology USP*, year XIV, number. 6, p. 35-45.
- EIGUER, A. (1991). Identification with the transgenerational object. *Journal of Psychoanalysis*, year X, p. 93-109.
- . (1998). "The accursed share of the inheritance", in EIGUER, A. *The Psychic Transmission Between Generations: focus on psychoanalytic family therapy*. São Paulo: Unimarco.
- FERENCZI, S. (1933/2011). "Confusion of the Tongues Between the Adults and the Child", in *Works of Ferenczi - Psychoanalysis*, v. IV. São Paulo: WMF Martins Fontes.
- FREUD, S. (1974). *Standard Brazilian Edition of Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*. Rio de Janeiro: Imago.
- (1909) "Family Novels", v. IX, p. 243-247.
- . (2010). *Complete Works*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.
- (1920) "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", v. XIV, p. 161-239.
- . (2011). *Complete Works*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.
- (1923) "The Ego and The Id", v. XVI, p. 13-74.
- (1924) "Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex", v. XVI, p. 203-213.

- _____. (2012). *Complete Works*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.
- (1913) "Totem and Taboo", v. XI, p. 13-244.
- KAËS, R. (2001). "Introduction to the concept of psychic transmission in the thinking of Freud", in KAËS, R. et al. (Org.) *Transmission of psychic life between generations*. São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.
- _____. (1998). "Psychoanalytic devices and the impact of generation", in EIGUER, A. (Org.) *The Psychic Transmission Between Generations: focus on psychoanalytic family therapy*. São Paulo: Unimarco.
- _____. (2005). *Shared psychic spaces: transmission and negativity*. São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.
- LAPLANCHE, J. & PONTALIS, J. B. (1992). *Vocabulary of Psychoanalysis*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.
- REZENDE, A. M. (1993). "Research in Psychoanalysis: exegesis, hermeneutics and interpretation" in SILVA, M. E. L. (Org.) *Investigation and Psychoanalysis*. Campinas: Papyrus.
- SILVA, M. C. P. (2003). *The Psychic Inheritance in Psychoanalytic Clinic*. São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.
- TOROK, M. (1968/1995). "The Illness of Mourning and the Fantasy of the Exquisite Corpse", in ABRAHAM, N. & TOROK, M. *The shell and the kernel*. São Paulo: Escuta.
- TRACHTENBERG, A. R. C. (2005). "Trauma, transgenerationality: a transformation possible", in TRACHTENBERG, A. R. C.; KOPITKE, C. C.; PEREIRA, D. Z. T.; CHEM, V. D. M. & MELLO, V. M. H. P. (Org.) *Transgenerationality from slave to heir: a destination between generations*. São Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.
- ZUSMAN, W. (1994). *The movies I have seen with Freud*. Rio de Janeiro: Imago.

Anna Thereza Carneiro Pinto Abdala
annabdala@gmail.com

Caio César Souza Camargo Próchno
caioprochno@terra.com.br

Luiz Carlos Avelino da Silva
luizavelino@yahoo.com.br

Review of English version
Martin Webster
Kingston University, Faculty of Science, Engineering and Computing,
Londres/Inglaterra
martinwebster2@gmail.com