

# MOVING WALLS: SPACE AS AN EFFECT OF LANGUAGE

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper addresses the theme of the constitution of the notion of space in psychoanalysis, discussing the relations between perception and representation from the viewpoint of boundary instability phenomena related to the instinctual field (such as hallucinations, depersonalization, the *Unheimlich*, mimetic processes, or even psychotic roaming). It proposes to consider spatiotemporal relations at the human level as an effect of the subject's position in language, problematizing the function of repression as a producer of boundaries that define and stabilize the subject's relations in his perceptual experience.

**Keywords:** space; psychosis; mimicry; perception; representation.

**RESUMO:** Paredes movediças: o espaço como efeito de linguagem. O presente artigo aborda o tema da constituição da noção de espaço para a psicanálise, discutindo as relações entre percepção e representação a partir de fenômenos de instabilidade de bordas no campo pulsional (como a alucinação, a despersonalização, o *Unheimlich*, os processos miméticos ou mesmo a errância psicótica). Propõe que as relações espaço-temporais no âmbito humano sejam tomadas como efeito da posição do sujeito na linguagem, problematizando a função do recalque como produtor de fronteiras que definem e estabilizam as relações do sujeito em sua experiência perceptiva.

**Palavras-chave:** espaço; psicose; mimetismo; percepção; representação.

DOI - <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1809-44142017002007>

Warbling is more beautiful than singing  
 for it includes seduction.  
 It is when she is in love that the female bird warbles.  
 She embellishes herself and adds new enticements to her voice,  
 like a girl applying perfume for her boyfriend.  
 That is why the trees go wild when they are warbled.  
 That is why the trees rave.  
 Under the effect of the seduction of the hen the trees rave.  
 And are proud to have been chosen for the concert.  
 The flowers of these trees will then bloom more fragrant.  
 (Gorjeios, Manoel de Barros)

This article proposes, based on elements present in clinical work with psychosis and which indicate an unique form of occupation and movement in space, to investigate the constitution of the experience of spatial demarcation in humans. Clinical psychoanalysis is based on speech — which presumes that therapeutic processes take place in the field of language and are capable of affecting subjects by provoking changes in their relations with the environment. In this sense, we will address proposals on the constitution of the psychic subject in psychoanalysis with a focus on the establishment of basic spatial notions, taking into account the proposal of Lacan that points to the *name* as the means to stabilize perceptions and relations — spatial and temporal — between subject and object. Thus, we will start out from clinical psychosis to question the experience of space as a production to be constructed at the intersection of psychic structuring — we will start out from psychosis, but not restrict to it our argument, since our aim is to discuss the idiosyncrasies of the constitution of a spatial experience.

In psychopathology, we encounter several indications of major changes in the relations of patients with their surroundings — from productive symptoms, which are present in more severe psychopathological conditions (such as hallucinations), to subtle and sometimes momentary changes in the ability to discern the boundaries between subject and object (such as Freudian *Unheimlich*). In psychosis, we repeatedly encounter the roaming of subjects as a unique form of movement and occupation of geographic space. We can also point to the experience of annihilation and depersonalization witnessed in clinical practice as a sign of instability in the constitution of psychic boundaries. We identify in these situations a genuine noise in the relations between subject/space/representation. How do these phenomena enable us to question the experience of the constitution of space-time boundaries in humans? To advance in this initial inquiry we propose to follow the path the *infans* must take to psychically cons-

titude delimiting boundaries of basic interior/exterior oppositions. Our initial proposal is that the structuring of notions of time and space is determined by an instinctual field that responds to previously established signifier chains (representations, identifying traits and narratives). Spatiotemporal structuring is the effect of the incidence of language on the body and relates to the subject's position in the symbolic fabric. Thus, subjective space cannot be considered as Euclidean geometric space, restricted to height, width and depth coordinates. The experience of space in man is governed by the unconscious logic that topologically integrates the different psychic records: Real, Symbolic and Imaginary.

### **CAILLOIS IN THE TEACHING OF LACAN**

In the article "The Mirror Stage" written in 1949, Lacan, addressing the theme of identification, in the sense of the changes produced in subjects when they assume an image, introduces in the debate the studies of French anthropologist and sociologist Caillois (1986). The proposals of this author on various phenomena observed in nature are used by Lacan in his teaching as guidelines for discussions on the structuring of the subject based on a field of images. Discussing the formative effects that images may have on organisms, he presents examples from the animal world such as the maturation of the pigeon's gonad, or the grasshopper's passage from the solitary to the gregarious form. These are cases in which the mere sight of a similar image produces significant changes in organisms — what Lacan will call "homeomorphic identification" (1949/1998, p. 99). The above-mentioned article goes on to refer also to cases of "heteromorphic identification" (p. 99), those related to the so-called mimicry phenomena that, for Lacan, would directly challenge the signification of space for the organism.

Lacan (1949/1998) will refer many times to the propositions of Caillois (1986), for this author, on investigating elementary distinctions delimiting boundaries between organisms and their surroundings, present at the heart of the constitutive experience, assumes the view of an external organizer, radically denaturing the logic presumed in these relations, pointing to a fundamental split between organ and function. At the end of the article "The Mirror Stage," the author proposes a shift in the concept of the I, no longer focused on the system named by Freud as "perception-consciousness," no longer organized by the "reality principle," but founded, in its origin, on a radical unawareness of what determines it.

In the seminar "The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis" (1964/1988), Lacan refers to the work of this thinker to articulate the position of the subject and his insertion in a particular field. Once again addressing the theme of mimicry, he indicates what is at stake in these phenomena: the

movement of inscribing the subject in a given framework. This would not be an adaptive process or one of a defensive nature, as would be more obviously assumed, but essentially a form of insertion. The basis of seeing would be found in a primitive institution of the form, that is, in what Lacan named the “thrust of the one who sees,” something actually prior to the eye. Lacan (1964/1988) points to the mandatory stand taken by the subject in relation to this first insertion, which we can think of as the entrance to the world of signs.

The most radical problem of mimicry is to know whether we must attribute to it some formative power of the very organism showing its manifestations. For this to be legitimate, we would have to be able to conceive by what circuits this force might find itself in a position to control, not only the very form of the imitated body, but its relation to the environment, from which it has to be distinguished or, on the contrary, in which it has to merge (ibid, 1964/1988, p. 72).

From an extensive discussion of several cases of mimicry found in the environment, Caillois (1986), in the article “Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia,” makes us consider these phenomena no longer from a natural perspective of preservation of life — as defense processes of an organism against another. On the contrary, by merging with the environment, the organism, many times, is capable of actually putting itself at risk. Caillois (1986) presents this theme through a literature overview, which leads him to conclude that the cases studied cannot be explained by biologists within the logic of nature. He proposes, in turn, a singular explanation: these are phenomena that present a clear “disturbance in the perception of space.” Based on this proposition, he goes on to outline relations with psychopathology, developing the idea of the “existence in man of psychological potentialities *strangely* corresponding to these facts” (ibid, 1986, p. 62, emphasis added). In this sense, he proposes analogies between mimetic processes and the experience of psychasthenia<sup>1</sup>. To support this position, he invites us to ponder its relations with what he called the “realm of mimetic magic.”

By linking magic and mimicry, Caillois (1986) seeks to find general laws which determine the most elementary relations between beings and their surroundings. The author posits as a dominant trend in the organism the movement of indistinctness towards the environment: “The search for the similar would seem to be a means, if not an intermediate state. Indeed, the end would appear to be *assimilation to the surroundings*” (ibid, 1986, p. 62). As a setting, he proposes the

<sup>1</sup> Psychasthenia is a psychopathological category used in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in French psychiatry. The term was proposed by Pierre Janet to designate a broad set of phenomena comprising affections and extremely diverse states, among them depersonalization and impairment of the function of reality.

antagonism of two forces: alongside the instinct of preservation, which would lead the being towards life, is revealed a “tendency to abandonment.” He states: “This assimilation to space is necessarily accompanied by a decline in the feeling of personality and life” (ibid, 1986, p. 64).

Caillois’s (1986) main proposal is to disassociate the idea of mimicry from biological functionality, pointing to a true tendency of bodies towards a kind of imaginary assimilation to space, as a way to insert their image in the universe of images. Maybe that is why Caillois (1986) associated mimicry to pathology, a disorder in the distinctions between the organism and the environment; precisely for not being able to find, in the studied cases, some “natural” logic. Lacan emphasizes in this proposal the idea of “organic insufficiency” (1949/1996, p. 99), which he claims is present in these formations of nature, to analyze the position of the *infans* in his dependence of his similar. In the seminar “The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis” (1964/1988), he refers to the works of Caillois to propose a split in the subject between the eye and the gaze. Because the function of the eye is to detach itself from the gaze, the human subject constitutes an instinctual field that is not governed by natural laws, but by the intersection of language in relation to his similars.

“It even seems like an actual temptation of space is exerted” (ibid, 1986, p. 62). This emblematic sentence prompts us to inquire about this curious attraction to be part of the environment, to get lost in the surrounding space. He follows up on this idea by proposing an original conception of what space would be for the organism. He formulates an equation with two terms that are related in complex ways: perception and representation, which leads him to state, in a final proposition: “[...] space is indissolubly perceived and represented” (ibid, 1986, p. 62).

To reflect on the relations between representation of space and perception, the image he offers us is a double dihedral, changing at every moment in size and situation:

*Dihedral of action* whose horizontal plane is formed by the ground and the vertical plane by the very man who walks and, therefore, forms the dihedral with himself; *dihedral of representation* determined by the same horizontal plane as the previous one (but represented rather than perceived), intersected vertically at the distance where the object appears. It is with represented space that the drama becomes specific, since the living being, the organism, is no longer the origin of coordinates, but one point among others (ibid, 1986, p. 62).

This is a difficult scheme to interpret. We will highlight a few points that seem important to our construction. The first concerns the emphasis Caillois

(1986) makes on movement: there is instability inherent to the system that would tend to reconfigure itself all the time. In the dihedral of action, man would be a reference point, but in important perceptual and motor instability. As we shall see, it is Lacan (1955/1986) who will later formulate the register of the symbolic as capable of bringing some stability to the system. Caillois (1986) points out a necessary repositioning, i.e., between the planes of perception and representation occurs a decentering movement, with representation necessarily implying a decentering of man's position. Caillois (1986) does not fully develop this, but seems to suggest that the object only appears, as representation, from an intersection between man and the environment. This gives rise to the relations he establishes between depersonalization and assimilation to space.

Clearly for the author, it is on the path to representation that the being becomes decentralized, with the point of reference no longer situated on him (as occurs in the perceptual function), but outside, in the world of representations. In Freud, we find an important discussion on this issue when he formulates the three narcissistic shocks suffered by humanity, namely: the decentering of the Earth in relation to the universe; the decentering caused by science in relation to religion when it announces the origin of species; and the decentering of consciousness caused by psychoanalysis. These are narcissistic shocks — ways of awakening imaginary logic — which broaden the condition of representation in culture.

Starting out from Caillois (1986), can we make an analogy between mimetic phenomena, in the field of biology, and the movement necessary for the *infans* to project himself in the domain of the Other as entry in terms of image/representation in the world of language? The author presents an interpretation of mimicry as a “thrust” to merge with the environment, as a return to the inorganic. We consider, from this perspective, the recidivist position in the psychosis of “thrust” to adhere to the demand of the Other, precisely for not finding the signifiers that demarcate a constellation capable of circumscribing a unique position among the objects in the world. Clinic practice with these patients requires the constant replacement of elements of culture, essential to processes of subjectivity, since there would be a kind of “temptation” to allow oneself to be devoured by the Other.

The feeling of personality, considered as the organism's feeling of distinction from its surroundings, of the connection between consciousness and a particular point in space, does not fail under these conditions to be seriously undermined; one then enters into the psychology of psychasthenia, and more specifically of legendary psychasthenia, if we agree to thus name the disturbance in the abovementioned relations between personality and space (ibid, 1986, p. 63, emphasis added).

Caillouis (1986) draws his statements from “personal” experience with schizophrenics, adding that they are in full agreement with the contemporary medical literature (he cites the works of Pierre Janet):

To these dispossessed souls, space seems to be a devouring force. Space pursues them, encircles them, digests them in a gigantic phagocytosis. It ends by replacing them. Then the body separates itself from thought, the individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses. He tries to look at himself from any point whatever in space, *dark space where things cannot be placed*. He is similar, not similar to something, but just similar (ibidem, 1986, p. 63).

There is a *depersonalization by assimilation to space*; thus is called what mimicry performs morphologically or chromatically in some species of animals: the environment ready to devour mimetically its victim taken over by the “temptation” to let itself be devoured. In Caillouis’s words: “Mimicry would thus be like an *incantation fixed at its culminating point* and having caught the sorcerer in his own spell” (1986, p. 63).

Incidentally, Caillouis (1986) begins his article telling us about the principles governing magic — specifically on what is communicated in a supernatural way. He recalls that all incantational practice is more or less based on the principles of contiguity and similarity. Thus, desire — or even a brief thought — can, by this logic, turn into fact. Within this logic it is also possible to include the theme of contagion, of what moves from one body to another in contiguity. Once again we are on the fragile boundaries between the body and its surroundings, based on the idea that the exterior can seamlessly communicate with the interior.

#### **FROM SURFACE TO VOLUME — THE PATHWAYS IN THE CONSTITUTION OF SPACE**

The Argentinian psychoanalyst Ricardo Rodulfo (1990) develops, from his clinical experience with children, a number of formulations that seek to account for a form of play which is prior to the paradigmatic reel and string game, narrated by Freud (1920/1981) in the text “Beyond the Pleasure Principle”. His proposals point towards an inextricable interaction between archaic play and the gradual constitution of an experience of the body as volume and of space as three-dimensional. By retrieving his pathways, we risk establishing an evolutionary reasoning in which the *infans* faces the challenge of crossing different times to reach an ideal experience of separation in relation to the Other; in spite of this risk, we decided to resume his studies, especially for what he locates in the so-called space of reciprocal inclusions. The reason is that his formulation seems

to be extremely valuable to reflect on an experience of boundary instability to which we are all, more or less, subject. Does his question of how an *infans* constitutes elementary spatial notions such as inside/outside, exterior/ interior help us reason on the plurality of ways of inhabiting and moving in life? We believe that the bonding of the instinctual field with language is what allows stability to be configured, albeit precariously, in the experience of body contours.

### THE PRODUCTION OF A SURFACE

The first structuring game identified by Rodolfo (1990) from the clinical observation of very young children is composed of a combination of two moments, a pair of movements: making holes-making surface. This addresses, therefore, the early time of play. This game would be at the heart of the most basic constitution of space constructed by the child, i.e., while passing through a continuous surface in which he recognizes the objects of the world (including his mother) as continuous to his body, the *infans* constitutes, through the experience, a movement between the discontinuities that are already announced (this point will be discussed below while addressing Freud's text "Negation"). Therefore, Rodolfo will say that "the first thing that is constructed is in no way an interior, that is, a volume, but a film on continuous tape" (1990, p. 96). The construction of the interior/exterior relation, which implies the presence of a third dimension, will only come at a later time.

The idea of surface being related to the concept of the Ego is originally found in Freud: "The Ego resulted from the process of differentiation that occurred on the surface of the Id (1923/2007, p. 38). Also in the text "The Ego and the Id," when speaking of perception as arising from the body surface, and being precisely one of the systems responsible for providing the elements that will compose the Ego, Freud affirms: "The Ego is above all a bodily Ego, but it is not merely a surface entity: it is also, itself, the projection of a surface" (1923/2007, p. 38). This is the point in which he makes his well-known analogy between the Ego and the "cortical homunculus" of anatomists. It concerns the surface of the body and the part of it that becomes image, projection — already introducing here the presence of duplication (body and image). Perception would be responsible for the composition of the Ego inasmuch as it enables the possibility of being taken (perceived) as both an external and internal object: "On touching it (the body), we will notice that it produces two kinds of tactile feelings, one of which can be equated with an internal perception" (FREUD, 1923/2007, p. 38). The inner and the outer meet in continuity, but already detaching themselves occasionally into different perceptions. Rodolfo (1990) proposes to compare this moment to the inscription of a continuous tape that can be endlessly covered.



## FROM THE SURFACE TO THE INSINUATION OF A VOLUME —

### THE SPACE OF RECIPROCAL INCLUSIONS

To move on to the second moment of the structuring of space, we will resort to Sami-Ali (1993), an author who is also discussed by Rodulfo. Sami-Ali forges, from a detailed discussion of Freud's text "The Uncanny" (1919/1981), the concept of "space of reciprocal inclusions." He states: "The feeling of the unsettling uncanny implies the return to that particular organization of space where everything is reduced to the inside and the outside, and where the inside is also the outside" (ibid, 1993, p. 34). For the author, this concerns a certain perception of space that presumes a logical operation of reversibility: at the same time as it defines antagonistic poles, it is likely to cause their inversion.

The space of reciprocal inclusions makes up the specular space "where the subject apprehends itself as another and where the other is the image of the subject: a world of the metamorphosis of the same" (ibid, 1993, p. 36). The moment of psychic constitution in which there is no contradiction: the inside can be the outside and vice versa. As a topological figure, we can evoke the Moebius strip, where one side passes to the other with no solution of continuity, with no hiatus.

To Freud (1919/1981), in the disturbing uncanny there is a partial deletion of repression and the emergence of what should remain hidden, producing an area of uncertainty and anguish, of shadows and ghosts — a kind of mirage of our primeval condition of object of the desire of the Other. It is essentially a disorienting experience, in which the function of repression breaks down and can cause subjects to experience the deconstruction of boundaries.

Sami-Ali will tell us that sometimes it may happen that "in dreams or in the waking state, the definite relationship established between the uncanny and the familiar is reversed, and that, due to a subtle change in the perceptual function, the familiar seems uncanny and the uncanny, familiar" (1993, p. 30).

The author follows up this discussion further on:

Two conditions must be united for the familiar to turn into its opposite and for the change not to be accompanied by the affection that characterizes it: the experience must develop on the plane of perception and be translated by the lack of distinction between the real and the imaginary (ibid, 1993, p. 39).

He therefore locates the origin of this phenomenon, which Freud (1919/1981) named *Unheimlich*, in an "alteration of the perceptual function." This viewpoint position raises a question: how is it possible to speak of alteration of the perceptual function when what seems to be at stake is precisely a kind of immersion into a time prior to the one allowing the construction of external reality, a time

in which current reality is relative to a moment of the structuring of the subject in which the internal has not detached itself from the external?

Lacan (1954-1955/1985) will propose, in the seminar “The Ego in Freud’s Theory and in the and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis,” that phenomena of this order form at the level of language and not at an alleged sensory level.

The power to name the objects structures perception itself. The *percipi* of man can only hold itself within a zone of naming. By naming, man gives a specific consistency to the objects. If these only stood in a narcissistic relation to the subject, they would only be perceived in an instantaneous way. The word, the word which names, is the identical. It is not to the spatial distinction of the object, always ready to dissolve itself in identifying the subject, that the word answers, but to its temporal dimension. The object, initially constituted as an appearance of the human subject, a double of himself, nevertheless has a certain permanence of aspect over time, which is not indefinitely sustainable, since all objects are perishable. This appearance, which lasts a certain time, can only be strictly recognizable through the name. The name is the time of the object. Naming is a covenant by which two subjects, at the same time, agree to recognize the same object. [...] If the subjects do not agree on this recognition, no world at all, not even a perceptible one, can hold together for more than a moment (ibid, 1954-1955/1985, p. 215).

The spatial distinction of the object, for Lacan (1954-1955/1985), is insufficient to guarantee its stability. Perception, which is instantaneous (for Freud it is also a system which leaves no memory traces), requires the signifier for its permanence in time.

Following up on the discussion of the space of reciprocal inclusions, Sami-Ali (1993) states that this is a moment of psychic structuring in which we find multiple projections of the bodily reality of the subject, “imaginary reduplications that determine a space of absolute contiguity, where everything takes part in everything” (ibid, 1993, p. 38).

In the second moment of the archaic play proposed by Rodulfo (1990), the notion of spatiality presupposes the inclusion of the body — a body to all appearances imaginary: “Space is the body, body and space coincide without consequences” (ibid, 1990, p. 104). The author situates in that moment Sami-Ali’s space of reciprocal inclusions, where no pair of polarities that will govern the following moment is definitely present (interior/exterior, Ego/non-Ego, subject/object). We can classify this space as two-dimensional, for to constitute volumes, thicknesses, it is necessary to add a further element to the equation. We now quote Rodulfo, who dubbed this moment “space of abolished distances”: “Two-dimensional space being crushed, the two points of any polarity coinci-

de” (1990, p. 105). At that moment, these polarities somehow find themselves announced, but the chasm that will definitely differentiate them has not yet been inscribed.

In the space of reciprocal inclusions we can also situate the presence of the archaic fantasies of devouring: the incorporation of the maternal body by the subject simultaneously to the possibility of it being devoured by the mother — in a reversible logic. The notion of volume difference is not yet established here, the *infans* evaluates the experience resorting to only two dimensions. Reversibility is present in the container/content relations. The relations between exterior and interior are governed by ambiguity, and not opposition. The reversibility between content and container allows fantasy to find its place — the child’s imagination preserves part of this archaic logic alive. “These laws of earlier and more radically unconscious psychic functioning are prior to the differential separation from the body of the primordial Other” (*ibid*, 1990, p. 107).

In his formulations on mimicry, Caillois is forced to question what he calls “incantational logic of magic;” in it we recognize the same form of reversible construction, as in his notes on psychasthenia. To the extent that this author’s studies focus on phenomena that present logical continuities between exterior/interior, body/environment, his work suggests the attempt to circumscribe an experience of space which in Sami-Ali (1993) was named “space of reciprocal inclusions,” and which in Rodulfo (1990) was titled “space of abolished distances.” These are phenomena that allow us to hear about the instability of the contours that define the boundaries between the subject and the other. Differentiation — which is linked to the image — does not stabilize, it tends to movement, coexisting with indifferenciation.

Psychic acquisitions, which inscribe themselves from one time to another, leave residues to be articulated. Although the passage from two-dimensional to three-dimensional results from a split, something from that experience of continuity between interior/exterior remains under the repression. It is precisely the experience of loss that produces the passage from simultaneous to successive, also enabling a narrative of facts to move forward in a succession. Thus, we can consider the primary loss to be a generator of historicizing. We recall here an important work by Lacan (1938/1990), “Family Complexes,” in which he claims that it is precisely the notion of alternation that enables the production of series. In the seminar “The Psychoses,” Lacan (1955-1956/1988) will once more point to a basic condition in the production of a successive construction: the existence of opposing pairs. Without significant polarities, there is no succession.

### VOLUME AS EFFECT OF THE SPLIT

In a conference held at the EFP Congress in 1974, later known as “The Third,” Lacan (1974/1986) proposes to reflect on spatial relations from the viewpoint of mathematical coordinates. In developing the relations between Real/Symbolic/Imaginary via the Borromean Knot, he refers to the Imaginary as “the place where one surely spins in circles” (ibid, 1974/1986, p. 35); to the Real and the Symbolic as “what does not close, what does not form the whole,” although they have the dimension of a straight line, intersecting one another, pointed to infinity. It is the intersection of the three records, the so-called Borromean Knot, that the dimension of space, as the space that is common to us all, emerges.” [...] the Borromean Knot unites these three famous dimensions that we impute to space” (ibid, 1974/1986, p. 36).

For space to arise, a split in the surface is required (effect of the intersection of the records), which we can refer to, in the Imaginary, as the narcissistic surface of the Mirror Stage. Crossing the Mirror Stage requires the presence of a third dimension; for Freud, the ideal of the Ego that is announced in place of the first identification with the father; for Lacan, the Name of the Father that borders the Real, the non-representable. Therefore, a discontinuity is necessary so that the mirrored surfaces can give rise to a third dimension.

The three-dimensionality in a plane, for example, could arise from a “point of escape,” organizer of the spatial relationships in relation to a specific point of the space — a blind spot, a privileged place from where the Ego could emerge. In this sense, we can situate the Ego as a reorganizer of the structure.

This moment of construction of the space itself is marked, in children’s play, by games of hide-and-seek, peekaboo or even the classic *fort-da*. The throwing of objects can only be thought of as a reissue of an earlier constituent outside. The transition from two-dimensionality to three-dimensionality, present in the discussion of Freud about the game of *fort-da*, is only possible by relying on a previous hiatus operation.

### A BANISHMENT IN THE ORIGIN

In the article “Negation” (1925/2007), we find the Freudian proposition about the genesis of thought and the construction of the notion of reality. The author assumes the existence of an initial moment of indifferenciation and continuity between the subject and the outside world. The production of a negation (*Verneinung*) would constitute a first differentiation in relation to the exterior, organizing as non-Ego all that arouses displeasure in the subject. Under the aegis of the Pleasure Principle, what causes displeasure is banished, spat out (*Ausstossung*), constituting a first “non-Ego,” a cell of the later “Ego”/“non-Ego” differentiation.

In the next moment, what is experienced as pleasurable now becomes a first “pleasure Ego,” resulting from the affirmation (*Bejahung*). The constitution of the “pleasure-Ego” as opposed to the unpleasant object, which emerges as residue, as uncanny (LACAN, 1964/1988, p. 180).

Freud (1925/2007) situates this “banishment” movement as originating in the constitution of a first delimitation of an *outside* — a symbolic operation of the establishment of the outside world (the moment of the originating repression). It is the constitution of a primordial “no”. The later distinction between the uncanny and the self presupposes this previous operation of banishment.

According to Freud: “These acts of confirming or negating the content of our thoughts correspond to the psychic function of passing judgment” (1925/2007, p. 148). A function that basically refers to two points: the ability to decide whether or not something possesses a certain characteristic (the quality of being good or bad, useful or harmful), called by the author judgment of attribution; and a subsequent operation, the ability to confirm or refute whether the psychic representation of that thing has a real existence, called judgment of existence. We are, therefore, at the moment of the constitution of the basis of what will be configured as a boundary between the subject and the exterior, between *inside* and *outside* and, consequently, between representation and thing, hallucination and fantasy. Freud (1925/2007) therefore proposes that the construction of external reality presupposes this psychic function of passing judgment. Thus, the author formulates his theory of the birth of the world of objects. This involves, in the interpretation of Lacan, “testing the exterior by the interior, the constitution of the subject’s reality in the rediscovery of the object” (1964/1988, p. 174).

Thus, in Freudian theory, the subject would not move to encounter his object, but to reencounter it. Reencounter the hallucinated and eternally lost primitive object. As the pleasure principle is not able to distinguish between the real object and the hallucinated object, a principle of “correction” is necessary to confer the psychic apparatus with a minimum of efficiency, which will be given by the reality principle. Movement that establishes a fundamental hiatus between subject and object, for the hallucinated primitive object never corresponds to the one found in reality, requiring from the subject a new, partial operation, a possible opening to the subject of the desire. To Freud (1925/2007), this is what the reality principle consists of, inaugurating a fundamental and foundational disparity of demarcating boundaries of the Ego as distinguished from the non-Ego — component of the outside world and the world of objects: “The non-real, that is, what is only imagined, the subjective, is present only in the inside; while the real will also be present in the outside” (*ibid*, 1925/2007, p. 149).

By proposing that at the beginning there would be no difference between what is bad, what is uncanny and everything that is outside, Freud presents his

mythology about the constitution of the Ego and the world, founded on the establishment of an irreversible hiatus. For Lacan (1964/1988), who proposes the psychic constitution based on the subject's position in language, this first division of the subject between good/bad can only be conceived in the field of symbolic articulation, in the fundamental alternation between presence and absence. In psychoses, this alternation is not effective due to a failure in the symbolic constitution.

At issue is the fundamental rejection of a primordial signifier into the outer shadows, a signifier that will henceforth be missing at this level. Here you have the fundamental mechanism that I assume to exist at the basis of paranoia. It is a matter of a primordial process of exclusion of a primitive within, which is not a bodily within, but that of an initial body of signifiers (Ibid, 1964/1988, p.174).

As we have seen, Freud (1925/2007) locates, as a starting point for the psychic, a banishment at the origin. It is necessary to inscribe a non-Ego as part of the subject's structure. Without this fundamental "outside", the operation of the *Bejahung* cannot happen.

In "Formulations Regarding the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," Freud (1911/2004) introduces the terms "pleasure principle" and "reality testing," basic components of the psychic apparatus. He describes the "pleasure principle" as the driver of the construction of reality, anticipating the propositions of 1920, in which he introduces the notion of death drive in the article "Beyond the Pleasure Principle." The first point developed by Freud (1911/2004) in this article is precisely the "loss of the function of reality." When discussing different forms of departure from reality in psychic structures, he refers to repression in neurosis as a partial departure from the unpleasant reality: "The neurotic departs from reality for finding it unbearable — the whole or part of it" (ibid, 1911/2004, p. 65). Freud is, at this moment, concerned about investigating the "psychological significance of the real external world" (1911/2004, p. 65). This text situates the dimension of reality as a product of the representation created by the subject to deal with a certain condition of following in the pleasure principle. "The replacement of the Pleasure Principle by the Reality Principle does not imply the removal of the first, but the guarantee of its continuity" (ibid, 1911/2004, p. 66). Fantasy and desire arise here as necessary ingredients for the composition of reality.

From the disagreement between the hallucinated and the found, to follow in the instinctual satisfaction, the psychic apparatus becomes capable of delaying that satisfaction, representing "the actual circumstances present in the external world and longing for its real modification" (ibid, 1911/2004, p. 66). In this

initial constitution of the psychic apparatus that is at stake is the construction of thought as representation, imagination, an act of mentally conceiving (*Vorstellen*). Imagine, think and represent have, in German, the same semantic root. This also pertains to the establishment of the reality principle, namely, the constitution of the possibility of representation. It follows that reality, for Freud, is represented, and can no longer be reduced to mere perceptual reality. Reality is a symbolic construction.

Freud reaffirms, which may seem a paradox, the importance of the loss of the real object in constituting the notion of reality. The object ceases to be real in order to be represented. It is as if representation and reality emerged in a same movement. Therefore, external reality is the result of a process of representation, of the insertion of the object in a symbolic reality (1911/2004). He thus suggests the presence of two realities: the internal and the external, one forming in relation to the other. These concepts will be developed later by Lacan (1954-1955/1988), proposing the distinction between Real and Reality, with the introduction of the three records.

#### **SPACE AS EFFECT OF LANGUAGE**

Hyppolite (1998, p. 899), in “A Spoken Commentary on Freud’s *Verneinung*,” says: “What is at the origin of the judgment of existence is the relationship between representation and perception.” For, in the beginning, the subject would reproduce his representation of things from the primitive perception he had of them. There would be a second moment in which the subject would need to prove whether this representation corresponded or not to reality. And for that to happen, according to Freudian thought, it is necessary to have suffered the loss of the object. The time of primary repression marks the establishment of the stabilizing base of the boundaries between interior/exterior which will enable the subject to organize his perceptual experience.

Lacan, dialoguing with the Freudian text, suggests that the psychic structure must be considered from the position intended for the subject in language. His interpretation of the content of “Negation,” alongside Hyppolite (1998), emphasizes that the subject’s first differentiation between what is good and what is bad can only be conceived in the symbolic field, in the inscription of the *infans* by the desire of the Other in language.

Thus, the relations woven by Caillois between psychasthenia (in psychopathology), mimetic processes (in biology), and even the precepts that constitute magic circumscribe a field governed by logical similarities, in which it is possible, based on what we have developed in this article, to make associations with the

space of reciprocal inclusions, proposed by Sami-Ali (1993). At the human level, it is a time of instinctual reversibilities supported by imaginary identifications.

In neurosis, we have signs of this instinctual time with the emergence of phenomena such as the Freudian *Unheimlich*, evidencing that, occasionally, the symbolic structure/fabric can temporarily break down, triggering experiences of spatiotemporal disorientation. There is a temporary suspension of repression. At such times the polarities that guide the subject's instinctual life falter, provoking inversions between subject/object, exterior/interior. We encounter, in clinical practice, reports of experiences of spatial derealization in acute cases of phobias — which can trigger extreme spatial disorientation. Severe depression frequently involves the presence of visual and auditory hallucinations: fleeting shadows and momentary voices that often evoke the name of the subject. In psychoses, particularly paranoia, where instinctual polarities are announced, but not stabilized by symbolic naming, there is a distinct spatial organization that evidences the instability of the subject's position in the signifier network.

We return to the question posed earlier: to what extent would it be possible to speak of perceptual function if what is at stake is the structure from which the discourse detached itself? With Lacan, reality becomes permanently a discursive reality. Perception as the effect of language indicates that the structuring of space is also an effect of the subject's position in the symbolic order. "The rejection of a primordial signifier into the outer shadows," as announced by Lacan, establishes for psychosis, for example, an unique mode of movement in what we might call the "outside world" (1955-1956/1988, p. 174). Therefore, not only is the habitual roaming of the psychotic an effect of his position in a seamless language network, but also the experience of a space of reciprocal inclusions — in which there are no symbolic walls guiding a territory belonging to the subject himself — determines the constant exposure to the permeability or invasion of the boundaries between interior/exterior, between subject/object.

Received: June 3, 2014. Accepted: December 2, 2014.



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Traduzido do português por Anthony Sean Cleaver / translated from portuguese by Anthony Sean Cleaver. Tikinet Edição Ltda, São Paulo/SP, Brasil.  
www.tikinet.com.br

