

## HELPLESSNESS AND SPECIFIC CARE ACTIONS FOR AN ADOLESCENT IN THE PUBLIC SYSTEM<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper presents preliminary data from a postdoctoral research that investigates, from psychoanalysis, the notion of helplessness in vulnerable young people, in the search for specific care actions in clinical and institutional practice in public policy devices. We start from the interface between Psychoanalysis and law, based on a case under supervision for restorative justice action. The study analyzed a case of an adolescent under protective and socio-educational measures, from which two observations are taken to guide the discussion: the dimension of transmission and affiliation, and the helplessness and specific action in the face of adolescence. As a result, we have gathered from institutional supervising four guiding plans for its lecture: the subject and the symbolic dimension, the subject and the drive circuit, the implication and rectification in the Other's field, and the inflections on the team. We conclude that helplessness is a psychoanalytic key for the notion of vulnerability and that institutional supervision favors the construction better oriented towards specific care actions.

**Keywords:** Helplessness; specific action; adolescence.

## DESAMPARO E AÇÕES ESPECÍFICAS DE CUIDADOS COM UM ADOLESCENTE NA REDE PÚBLICA

**RESUMO.** Este trabalho apresenta dados preliminares de pesquisa pós-doutoral que investiga, a partir da psicanálise, a noção de 'desamparo' em jovens em situação de vulnerabilidade, na busca por 'ações específicas' de cuidado na prática institucional em dispositivos de políticas públicas. Partimos da interface entre psicanálise e direito, bem como da supervisão de caso sob ação da Justiça Restaurativa. Analisamos, pela metodologia do caso único, um caso de adolescente sob medida protetiva e socioeducativa, do qual são extraídas duas observações orientadoras: a dimensão da transmissão e filiação e do 'desamparo' e da 'ação específica' na adolescência. Como resultado, sistematizamos quatro lógicas de orientação para composição da 'ação específica': o sujeito e a dimensão simbólica, o sujeito e o circuito pulsional, a implicação e a retificação no campo do Outro, e as inflexões sobre a equipe. Concluimos que o desamparo é uma chave de leitura psicanalítica para a noção de vulnerabilidade e que a supervisão institucional favorece a construção melhor orientada para a ação específica de cuidados.

**Palavras-chave:** Desamparo; ação específica; adolescência.

<sup>1</sup> Support and funding: Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) e Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de Minas Gerais (FAPEMIG).

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## LA IMPOTENCIA Y LAS ACCIONES ESPECÍFICAS DEL CUIDADO CON UN ADOLESCENTE EN LA RED PÚBLICA

**RESUMEN.** El documento presenta datos preliminares de la investigación postdoctoral que investiga, desde el psicoanálisis, la noción de impotencia en los jóvenes vulnerables, en busca de coordinadas que establezcan acciones específicas de atención en la práctica clínica e institucional en dispositivos de políticas públicas. Partimos de la interfaz entre el Psicoanálisis y la ley, basada en la supervisión de casos bajo la acción de justicia restaurativa. El estudio de caso analizó un caso de adolescente bajo medidas protectoras y socioeducativas, de las cuales se toman tres observaciones para guiar la discusión: la dimensión de transmisión y afiliación; impotencia y acción específica ante la adolescencia. Como resultado de la supervisión institucional, hemos reunido cuatro planes de lectura guía para su composición: el sujeto y la dimensión simbólica, el sujeto y el circuito de conducción, la implicación y rectificación en el campo del Otro, y las inflexiones en el equipo. Concluimos que la impotencia es una lectura psicoanalítica clave para la noción de vulnerabilidad y que la supervisión institucional favorece una mejor construcción de la atención orientada a la acción.

**Palabras clave:** Impotencia; acción específica; adolescencia.

### Introduction

This text presents theoretical and practical considerations from a postdoctoral study, linked to the research 'Transmission and Affiliation', registered in the Research Ethics Committee with the CAAE 96236718.3.0000.5149<sup>5</sup>, and based on a recent doctoral research. The Freudian and Lacanian notions of 'helplessness' and the concept of 'specific action', developed by Freud (1996a) were used to discuss the situation of an adolescent in a situation of vulnerability, in order to think about intervention from the perspective of psychoanalysis. The mentioned concepts will be discussed, applying them to the analysis of a case, chosen from a set of five others that make up the complete study of young people under social-protection and socio-educational measures<sup>6</sup>.

The case was built from institutional supervision carried out with the team from the Ciranda Project of the UFMG Faculty of Law, a team that since 2016 has been part of one of the Centers for Restorative Youth Justice in the Belo Horizonte District. The work demonstrates the contributions of Psychoanalysis to the restorative process which, as such,

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<sup>5</sup> Research financed by the Research Support Foundation of Minas Gerais, FAPEMIG, 2017 universal call for proposals.

<sup>6</sup> Adolescents and children at personal or social risk are subjected to a list of protective measures provided for in Article 101, of Law 8.069/90, the Statute of the Child and Adolescent. They are: a) referral to parents or guardian, through a term of responsibility; b) temporary guidance, support and monitoring; c) mandatory enrollment and attendance at an official elementary school; d) inclusion in a community or official program to assist the family, child and adolescent; e) request for medical, psychological or psychiatric treatment, in hospital or outpatient regime; f) inclusion in an official or community program of assistance, guidance and treatment for alcoholics and drug addicts. As for adolescents who commit an infraction, they are subjected, as provided for in Article 112 of the same Statute, in addition to the protective measures listed above for children, to the following socio-educational measures: a) warning; b) obligation to repair the damage; c) provision of services to the community; d) assisted freedom; e) insertion in a semi-free regime; f) admission to an educational establishment.

aims to meet individual and collective needs, hold the parties to the criminal or infraction conflict, victim, offender and members of the community affected, as well as promoting the reintegration of the victim and the offender in the community (Arlé, 2018; Guerra et al., 2019).

## Method

From a theoretical point of view, the study was based on a review of some conceptual aspects of 'helplessness' that, in Freud (1996a), articulates the experience of satisfaction of the small living being and that, in Lacan (1995), establishes the demand and desire circuit in the relationship with the Other. In the same way, the study was also supported by the concept of 'specific action' (Freud, 1996a), which is distinguished by focusing on the subject's helplessness, appeasing him from the establishment of an instance of otherness.

The single case method in psychoanalysis (Miller, 2006) was chosen as the operator for this study, since its exceptional characteristic considers the subject always constituted as one who escapes the rule of classifications and generalizations. In this method, the case, even analyzed among others, does not produce serialization, but extraction of singular elements that teach others, thus making it paradigmatic.

In the case presented in this study, arising from the supervision offered to the Ciranda Project, we observed that the infraction, which led to the referral to Justice (Integrated Center for Assistance to Adolescent Offenders, CIA-BH<sup>7</sup>), occurred as a result of acts of violence and threat directed at members of the adolescent's own family, especially the mother and siblings. Thus, the following questions were raised: does this act show something of the helplessness articulated to the processes of transmission and affiliation? How does the involvement of the other and the subject take place? Can Freud's concept of specific action inspire the logic from which the public institution intervenes?

In order to demonstrate the contributions of psychoanalysis in building answers to these questions, the present study focused on case analysis and reflection on the role of clinical and institutional supervision that, by promoting means that lead to 'specific actions' (Freud, 1996a) in response to the way in which public devices can operate care actions, founds a condition to face the radical helplessness of adolescent subjects with the teams that accompany them. Insofar as institutional supervision aims to expand the possibilities of maneuver in progress with the case (Campos & Alvarenga, 2015), we assume that it can favor the production of reading keys capable of guiding the production of the 'specific action' of collective care, providing subsidies to assess its effects, considering the institutional Other.

In the process of supervising the case - whose reports and supervision were recorded and heard in audio -, we sought to extract the signifiers of helplessness for the adolescent subject as a guiding axis, identifying how the helplessness articulated itself in a driving way. Hence, four operative categories were produced, that is, coordinates that allowed the tracing of specific care actions that emerged in supervision as a guide for the restorative process that, as such, consists of an ordered set of acts in which the victim and the offender, or "[...] any other individuals or members of the community affected by a crime or offense, actively participate in resolving issues arising from the crime or the offense, with the help of a

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<sup>7</sup> The Integrated Center for Assistance to Adolescent Offenders (CIA-BH) aims to streamline and give greater effectiveness to the accountability of the adolescent offender, concentrating, in the same physical space, an interinstitutional team composed of representatives of the Secretariat of Assistance to Socio-Educational Measures (SUASE), Civil and Military Police, Court of Justice, Public Ministry, Public Defender and City Hall.

facilitator” (Arlé, 2018, p. 6). In the case in question, whose referral was carried out in execution of a socio-educational measure “[...] the execution process is not suspended and the restorative process conducted by the partner [partner entity] takes place in parallel, and its results may be considered by the judge in the reassessment of measures” (Arlé, 2018, p. 23).

In this aspect, research in psychoanalysis keeps the researcher open to the surprise arising from the real conveyed by the word, by the signifiers present in the subject’s discourse. It calls for a listening that goes beyond generalization, the words enunciated, but recognizes the aspects of the enunciation and transforms them into elements transmissible to reading and work guidance in other cases (Januzzi & Ferrari, 2018; Januzzi, 2019).

### **Case report João: “In your house, everything is out of place”**

João<sup>8</sup> was referred to the CIA-BH due to an episode of aggression and threat directed at his sister. It all started when she drank part of the juice he had set aside to drink at night. Annoyed, João took what was left of this juice and threw it on her plate. The sister, also irritated, throws herself towards João, attacking him. He holds her by the arms in an attempt to contain her, throwing her on the bed. On top of her, he tries to immobilize her and the aggressions continue. “Hey, come on, you’re not going to hit me, you’re not going to hit me”, said João. The sister manages to let go and call the police, which arrived at the same moment that the mother came from work. João told the police that he did not attack his sister, just restrained her. Even so, he was taken and his acts equated to two articles of the Penal Code: art. 129, “[...] offending the bodily integrity or health of others [...]” and art.147, “[...] threatening someone, by word, writing or gesture, or any other symbolic means, to cause him/her unjust and serious harm” (Decreto-lei nº 2.848, 1940, p. 51 e 59), with the socio-educational measure of deprivation of liberty applied according to the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA).

João and his family were invited to participate in the study conducted by the Ciranda Project team, whose work methodology is the proposal of Restorative Circles. The work takes place through frequent meetings, in the interval of a few months, in which collective interventions called ‘pre-circle’, ‘circle’ and ‘post-circle’ are carried out. The voluntary acceptance of the adolescent and his family in the restorative process is justified whenever a restorative potential is identified in the case, even if a socio-educational measure is applied in a closed environment. “Even so, a restorative process, parallel and complementary to the fulfillment of the socio-educational measure, can be instituted” (Arlé, 2018, p. 11)

During the restorative process, several techniques and ways of addressing the issue that demarcate the act are performed. In one of them, the adolescent is invited to elect someone they recognize in the family as a support. Family and its members are also invited to build an action plan in which each one commits to something, signing a term of commitment that has legal value. In this context, the case reaches the Center for Psychoanalysis and Social Bonds in the Contemporary (PSILACS).

The scene of João’s act dated back to a family context in which affective relationships were crossed by the oral object, food. At João’s house, food was regulated in various ways. The material difficulties that the family faced dictated one of them. There was what needed to be reserved for eating or drinking at lunch and what was for dinner. But there was also another way to regulate this resource and, on the day of the event, João highlights this other

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<sup>8</sup> Fictitious name chosen to preserve the subject’s identity.

dimension. As he sometimes did, that day, he stopped taking part of the lunch juice to reserve it for the night. When the sister took what was his, something from Another scene emerged, leading him to a situation of helplessness in front of the place he occupied for the maternal Other in an unconsciously directed way.

The mother sustained the livelihood of the house and claimed to fulfill her function: “[...] bring the rice and beans to home and that’s it” (mother of the adolescent). These foods, in the order of necessity, were freely accessible to everyone, that is, João, his sister and his mother. However, foods like cookies and yogurt were locked in her sister’s room, so that only she and her mother could have access. In João’s house, there were only doors in the mother and sister’s room; not in his. The sister was “[...] the example daughter, who gives me no trouble” (mother of the adolescent), while João was the one who ate everything and did not help with the housework. “He’s useless!”, said the mother. He then learned on the internet about locking techniques. He learned to open locks and started to enter the room and steal. When the mother came home tired and João had done nothing, she took her daughter to eat pizza and did not take her son. He said there was rice and beans at home.

Verbalization of conflicts remained at the level of punishment and reward, covering a drive circuit of orality that regulated maternal love in an unequal way. João received a divided, ruled love, sometimes even inaccessible, that opposed the partnership that was established between mother and daughter. In the same way, João’s affection for his mother was also mediated by the food object, but, in contrast to the regular love he received from her, the young man addressed everything he had to her. With the money he earned when he opened a car wash with some colleagues, he spent it all on food he brought to his sister, mother and maternal grandmother. He did this as if he were offering himself as an oral object to be incorporated by the Other, that is, as an object that the Other lacks.

João’s father was arrested when the boy was about to be born. The reason that led him to prison is a matter not commented on by his mother and family. It is known that he was a ‘rough’. The mother separated from him at the same time and, sometime later, met another companion, with whom she lived for a while. In both relationships, the mother experienced serious situations of violence.

When João was between eight and nine years old, his mother found a girlfriend who is her current partner. João’s sister is also a homosexual. Two years later, everyone moved in with his mother’s girlfriend, which caused him to lose his old friends. The new schoolmates constantly provoked him because of the particularities of his family, contributing to his first dropout. “In your house, everything is out of place!”, they said.

Initially, the relationship between João and his mother’s girlfriend was good. She worried about him and said that the boy was ‘uncared for’ and that he lacked a male reference. She puts herself in this place, buying him new clothes and boxer briefs, which, in her opinion, were ‘men’s’ briefs. However, the good relationship between them became conflictive, making it so that when João was fourteen years old, his mother decided to return to her old home. She maintains a relationship with her girlfriend, but in separate houses. This is the moment pointed out by the family as the moment when João started to be considered a ‘trouble boy’.

At the same time, João’s father left the prison. At this point, however, the young man had no ties to him. Even so, the mother calls the father as a reference of masculinity for the son, understanding that the two should live together, and she, with the daughter. There is a lack of knowledge of the affections and unconscious identifications that cross the case, taking the idea of ‘male reference’ literally, and not considering the symbolic effectiveness. So, João goes to live with his father, who spent all day out and charged his son to carry out

all the housework. If he did not do it, the father beat and threatened João, who even asked for his mother's help saying that his father made him a slave. The mother went to get him, but, in the face of his father's threat to attack her, João intervened saying that everything was fine and asking her to leave. Two days later, he returned alone to his mother's house: "No, my father is a lazy man, hey. He kept telling me to do everything at home. Then took any woman home. I had to sleep on the couch when he took a woman home".

According to the women in his family, his maternal grandmother, mother and sister, João was the most loving person in the family, and that was disconcerting. The grandmother said that "[...] when he gets home, he makes too much of a mess, he knocks on the gate, he comes screaming, hugs me, squeezes me". The sister says: "Oh, no, I understand, but he is too boring, nobody can take João". He hugs his mother, but she, not taking much, pushes him. According to the maternal grandmother, affection is something "[...] that we don't talk about. My poor daughter doesn't even know it very well".

The grandmother was taken away from her childhood when she was abandoned by her parents. She married early, and with her husband, João's grandfather, suffered several types of violence. He beat her and all the women in the family, including daughters and granddaughters. When the Project team intervened asking in one of the circles about a moment when another member of the family did something that made the person feel 'family', João's sister took the floor. She remembered that when she was very young, a maternal uncle, when he caught her grandfather assaulting her, intervened, hugged her, took the girl out of there and said: "[...] you will never beat her again".

This uncle was also very important to João. He was the one the boy chose when the team asked him to elect someone as a support for him. At this uncle's house, João volunteered to help with housework. As can be seen, aggressiveness is a very present element in what links João's historical kinship relations, demarcating, mainly, the relations between men and women in the family. However, no matter how much the symbolic dimension of male inheritance in the parental line weighs, in fact, John seems to subvert it by adopting a differentiated male position in this context. He refuses the imposing masculinity of the mother's girlfriend, the violence that the father addressed to his mother, as well as the aggressiveness of the grandfather towards the grandmother and the women of the family. João is a boy who touches the body of the women of his family to hug, kiss, squeeze, contain [...]

Not surprisingly, the scene that led the Judicial Power to send João to the Ciranda Project is precisely the reissue of the Other tensioned and unresolved unconscious scene of a man's violence against a woman - even though, in fact, it was a defense of João against his sister's aggression. The masculine element that João symbolically embodies implies him unconsciously as a violent man in the repressed scene of family trauma.

## **Theoretical discussion**

### **1. Transmission and affiliation**

The idea of family 'disruption' is at the heart of moral and reductionist explanations that justify what is not going well in society. When it comes to adolescent offenders, the different forms of kinship to which they may be linked and the predominant factors in the production of vulnerability emerge as elements that underlie such discourse (Guerra et al., 2018). But the perspective that psychoanalysis allows us to glimpse indicates that the too idealized, moralized and disciplined image of the family conceals the inexistence of a single

model of family organization for speaking beings, as well as hides the fact that transmission occurs through different routes with drive effects.

In the horizon of perversion, writes Laurent (2007), Lacan places the phallic woman/mother and in the horizon of neurosis, the family drama, just as João testifies. The conjugal family, according to the author, does not have the role of sustaining the place of success of a nuclear parent organization, but of existing as a waste. An example of this is the mother of care that brings “[...] the mark of a particular interest, even if it is through her own shortcomings” (Lacan, 2003a, p. 13). The father has in his name the vector of the incarnation of the Law of desire, insofar as, in desiring such a woman, he combines the Law, the prohibition and the desire. The child, in Lacan, is the object captured not in the ideal of Freudian parents, but in their jouissance and in their own, and this is how the human family is structured. The search for completion with a family is the drama of the neurotic subject.

The ways in which the drive circuit is applied arise from the three structural family complexes (Lacan, 2003b): weaning, intrusion and Oedipus. The notion of structure refers, therefore, to the idea of a set of elements subjected to numerous combinations operated, provided that one of these elements is the void (lack-to-be), making these variations not result in a harmonic totality, full and complete.

João's case and the particularities of his family allow us to show that what is transmitted and affiliated to humans is of the order of the symbolic, overcoming the biological or social bias. Thus, we start from the assumption that the processes of transmission and affiliation present in the case and the way in which the dimension of helplessness is presented, resulting from the structural and structuring concept of family, allow the identification of possible 'specific actions' of care for the subject.

## **2. Helplessness, specific action and adolescence**

By choosing the Freudian concepts of 'helplessness' and 'specific action' as theoretical frameworks that underlie this research, some distinctions are necessary. Helplessness to which we refer is that which comes from the subject's instinctual dangers, being, therefore, different from the social vulnerability, located here from issues related to violations of social and human rights. In the materiality of the subjects' lives, both situations are combined in the symbolic dimension, giving it expression under the contours of abandonment, abuse and neglect.

At the origin of such a dialectic, the drive circuit of orality seems to stand out in João's affective kinship relations. This same circuit is also the privileged path that Freud (1996a) highlighted the first time he approached the term 'helplessness' in his work. It is through the experience of satisfaction, in feeding by the mother's breast, the first to which the small living being is submitted, that Freud recognizes the initial moment of the psychic constitution, the same that also engenders a 'childlike state' that he called 'helplessness'. Food, the first human satisfaction experience, becomes a privileged object in which libidinal relationships are created, promoting ways in which needs circulate, but also love. It is in this way that the maternal love that belongs to him in the structure of his family is directed to João; a ruled, divided love, impoverished from affection, denied, and which responds to what is in the order of necessity: “[...] rice and beans, and that's it!”. Social vulnerabilities that called the mother to work all day to support the home and the symbolic heritage that situates her in the series of women victims of male violence in her family, operate in order to outline the particularities resulting from her difficulties with affections.

The term *Hilflosigkeit* ('helplessness') permeates almost all Freudian work, and its equivalence to a 'childlike state' remains in almost all passages, with great theoretical regularity. Linked to the Other scene of the unconscious, helplessness can be recognized at different times and in different ways in the subject's life, through situations of pulsating repetition in which threatening psychic experiences are updated.

In the case of João, the dangers that this 'childlike state' imposes on the subject can be felt when the part of maternal love that he needs to keep so that he does not lack (the juice of lunch) is taken by his sister. We cannot fail to mention that, even though, in his mother's speech, João is 'useless', he is also the loving one of the family, which comes up against the traumatic dimension that the male figure keeps in his psychic reality and on the transgenerational border of that family. The mother does not know how to answer this, and, on João's side, a radical helplessness emerges in relation to the demand directed to her, because there he finds only what is necessary. The mother, for her part, also gives news of her helplessness and the generalized effects that, in this case, are felt on the relationships of violence, on the feminine, conjugality, motherhood and her affections (Januzzi, 2018). The abolition of this state requires a 'specific action', the second distinction we should make. It is not just any action, but one that comes from the outside world through the attention of an "[...] experienced other" (Freud, 1996a, p. 370). By functioning as an instance of otherness, it allows the important function of communication to be established, an operation that fuses, in language, the particularities of the social bond of speaking beings.

The other experienced comes to appease the initial state of psychic threat in the small human being, since "[...] the human organism is, at first, unable to promote this specific action. It is effected by the 'help of others', when the attention of an experienced person is turned to a childlike state by discharge through the internal alteration path" (Freud, 1996a, p. 370, emphasis added). Embodied in the presence of this Other, the 'specific action' responds to demands that originate from internal, endogenous stimuli, thus appeasing the initial state of psychic threat. From these internal stimuli, which originate in the body, the organism cannot escape or avoid them. The condition for them to cease is only supported by the presence in the external world of this other experienced. This requires an effort by the organism to get out of its original tendency to inertia, to tolerate an accumulation of sufficient energy that can undertake and trigger, in the direction of the other, a 'specific action' of care, like the baby's cry. It is, in fact, a primordial economic mechanism, whose function is to maintain the functions imposed by what Freud (1996a) called life's demands.

It is in the field of the Other that the subject seeks the object of the satisfaction of his/her desire, encountering the frustration of never finding it. It is also there that the subject's dependence relationship is located, because his/her desire is conformed to the Other's demand. The Other articulates the dimension of desire, but can only give the subject surrogate objects for its fulfillment. We know that the symbolic Other is incarnated by the concrete small others of the world, by people and institutions. And, on the other hand, we know that the Other has always been constituted as fiction, a semblance for the subject who, in the symbolic, is supported by the insignia necessary for its support in the social order.

João demonstrates difficulties in dealing with his desire. It is as if what he identifies as maternal desire was symptomatically helpless, inadequate, unreasonable. In fact, at present, the Other shows its inconsistency, no longer veiled by the apparatuses and discourses of culture, lacking badges that give sense and orientation, the vector of desire in the pubertal crossing. The consequences of these aspects are verified in the case, and the supervision is, therefore, relevant for its solution. This symbolic destitution of the Other does not mean the tragic announcement of the dissolution of the social bond, but a particular



fragility that is established in the subject's relations with the Other, producing significant effects, above all, in puberty. In order to break with the authority of the parents and flirt with the need of an Other in the experience of satisfaction, which is no longer autoerotic, the adolescent needs to go through the symbolic Other. Two fundamental consequences arise from this work: on the subject's side, he is summoned to place himself in the sharing of the sexes, which places him in the real that puberty establishes. And, on the side of the Other, the coordinates are established in the symbolic, which define and reedit what is transmitted to the new generations.

Therefore, each adolescent subject needs to find ways to undertake the separation from the parental Other that will result in giving up a childlike position, supported by the ideal of the parents. The issue becomes very complicated when this order is reversed and it is the parental Other who separates from the subject before his/her pubertal work. In these cases, the subject is in difficulty with his/her desire, and that is how the Other is symptomatically helpless. Whether in its parental, social or institutional aspects, the effects that arise from this relationship with the Other can be even more devastating. Helplessness ceases to be exercised in its structural, that is, constitutive functionality, and is established for the subject as a radical abandonment that responds not to a 'specific action', of care, which would articulate demand and desire, but to an action that takes the subject to do without the Other.

Despite the changes in the current social order, the adolescent subject's psychoanalytic clinic observes that this is a moment in the life of the subject when the actions tend to find privileged ways of establishing themselves. João's path marks his conflicting place in family relationships through the orality circuit. It is with his own food that he attacks his sister, which is exactly the object that regulates the affection, regularly received. In another moment, João offers his mother, sister, grandmother, in short, the women of the family, that same object. The signifier of helplessness for João is of the order of orality, of food.

In 'The ego and the id', Freud (1996b, p. 48) talks about the relationship of helplessness with the emergence of the superego, in the face of the fall of childhood narcissism. The superego perpetuates the existence of the factors to which it owes its origin as "[...] representative of our relations, with our relations with our parents. When we were little children, we knew these higher natures, admired and feared them and, later, we placed them in ourselves". However, warns Freud, it is not just a matter of reproducing the old object choices of the id, but of a reactive formation that should oppose these choices. It is not necessarily about being like the father, but the prohibition of being like him. The conflicts between the ego and the superego reflect the contrast between what is real and what is psychic, between the external and the internal world and denote, above all, the resource that is produced in the subject in the face of helplessness arising from the abdication of object love from parents. It so happens that, in the case of João, the result of the loss of childhood narcissism reveals the horror that marked his mother's place in object relations with the men of his life. This same violence is now recognized and incarnated in João. From this place, the young man is called upon to answer for an inheritance that he seems to refuse, as it subverts the series of violent men within the family, as his maternal uncle had done.

Helplessness is inserted into the subject in object relations and, therefore, can produce anguish, as Freud (1996c, p. 136) writes, as "[...] a product of mental helplessness [...]" when he announces the loss of an object. In this case, mother is the primary object, one that articulates the castration anxiety in the phallic phase. This state of helplessness is

thus recognized as a “[...] traumatic situation” (Freud, 1996c, p. 161), so that, in the face of danger, it is anguish that warns about the possibility of reliving the trauma of the object loss. It is in this situation that the anguish signal is emitted. At this moment when Freud defines the traumatic situation, he no longer distinguishes between internal and external dangers. The external danger of being internalized corresponds to a situation of significant helplessness for the ego. At the limit of the subject’s symbolic resources, it is the act that emerges as a solution. In the impossibility of constructing a symptom that can not only be addressed, but, above all, welcomed by the Other, the helplessness that João denotes with his act results from what is articulated in the relations with the lack of object in the drive economy. A permanent and devastating drive deregulation:

Whether the ego is suffering from a pain that does not stop or experiencing an accumulation of drive needs that cannot be satisfied, the economic situation is the same, and the motor helplessness of the ego finds expression in psychic helplessness (Freud, 1996c, p. 163).

Being ‘useless’, which appears so intensely in the mother’s speech, seems to respond to something symptomatic, since it seems directed at her. Let us remember that, in the house of the uncle and his wife, this is not repeated. There, João helps with the tasks even without being asked to do so. A ‘specific action’ demanded of the mother seems to be inscribed in João’s symptomatic spectrum, although it is not done as a question stated for her. And, in another perspective, the performance that leads the family to the restorative process also reveals the mother’s own difficulties with desire and with her objects.

### **Main results:**

Supervision stands out as a clinical-institutional organization device, a key to read in order to rectify and recompose the spectrum of possible responses within the singularity of each case. Here, we highlight four of its axes.

#### **A. The subject and the symbolic dimension:**

Every speaking being finds him/herself in the original situation of helplessness precisely for speaking and, in doing so, he/she encounters an impossible, traumatic, meaning, which requires a specific action. Well, this action starts exactly from a symbolic and interpretative framework of the situation, which favors its apprehension from the unconscious dynamics, articulated by the concrete material conditions. When discussing one of the interventions carried out in the circle of the restorative process, the facilitator comments that ‘it was very strong’ because, surprisingly, they were all very emotional. Faced with the request that each subject take an object that represented themselves and their family, the following was observed:

João, he took the [...] a cell phone that they had arranged for him. Because he said that the cell phone represented for him [...] that he still wanted a new one, but that cell phone represented a new phase for him. [...] The grandmother and mother took the Bible; G. [cousin] took a family photo; and the most beautiful, was the sister. She took a toy set of tea. A set of tea pots, toys, tiny. Then she went and got it. First, she took this set [...] then she started like this: ‘This tea set here, João gave it to me when he was younger - he shouldn’t even remember it - but he should remember that he broke it. Then I said: ‘darn it’ (Laughs) (Facilitator).

The sister continued with the speech, taking a little cup from the little set that was broken and said: “This thing, I want him to know that this part here is him and that this other

part is me. And that we separate are useless, but together, we can do something". The sister's intervention about the cup set becomes a symbolic operator that locates the meaningful and affective circuit, as well as the value attributed to each subject/object in this circuit, which makes this indication a guiding element for the specific action of care. This implies considering the symbolic dimension, which has not been said until then, but determines the movements of violation in the family context. In addition, the grandmother's repressed experience returns to the adolescent's body, crossing the transgenerational relationship between the adolescent and his own mother and the violent men of the family.

You are working on the repression of the grandmother [with the violent grandfather], who today is updated in her relationship with him [adolescent]. And, at the same time, the mother's pain. It is as if he carried a genetic load, but it is symbolic [...], which is the grandmother's pain - because imagine his embrace, showing a loving affection and asking what? What does he ask for? Adoption (Commentary by the supervising psychoanalyst).

How to adopt a man in the context of this family so violated by the incarnation of the aggressive male figure? How to make the affections circulate in this so retentive and defensive family? The symbolic delimitation of the real at stake allows a logical framework for the calculation of the specific action to which Freud (1996a) referred, impossible to do without the singular experience of each member. In this regard, we can think that it is universal to consider the uniqueness of each case. And, when the case is constituted, alongside others as a series, it is essential to locate the name of the series for the composition of actions articulated to population groups with similar problems.

## **B. The subject and the drive circuit**

Every speaking being has a body, and its regency, although crossed by the signifiers, will always be driving, marked by the search for satisfaction. Thus, the whole-body lodges in the absence of the Other as an object that satisfies it: oral, anal, phallic [...] this arrangement takes shape in the professions we choose, in the loving partnerships we make, but also in the repetition of the modes of suffering we find in reality. The drive circuit drives each body in different directions shaped by the objective, economic and social conditions of its insertion. This composition addresses a body for diverse modes of affections and bonds, being a determinant of its objective conduct.

Locating how the subject becomes an object to meet what is supposed to be the Other's demand, which, inverted, locates his/her desire, is essential in any clinical construction to guide the specific action of care. Because it is precisely there that the subject repeats his/her movement, in the search for its decoding or for its rewriting. In this case, even though signifiers stand out, which define the adolescent as violent or lazy, what guides his/her jouissance is the retained food circuit.

What does the Other demand from the child? [...] the unconscious will appear in material things. That is why this food circuit is relevant in this case. [...] It is through food that affections are made explicit. Then, when the mother locks the food and shares it with his sister, she says: 'we are a family; not you'. When he makes the cake and gives it to everyone, to G. [cousin], to his grandmother [...] he says: 'but I want to belong [...] it's mine too' [...] It's like he's saying: 'my family are all of you', 'I want to satisfy you with my being' (Speech by the psychoanalyst).

Therefore, there is an orientation from the location of the subject as an object in the drive circuit, highlighted by supervision, which guides the construction of the case and the specific action.

### C. Implication and rectification in the field of the Other

Locating, in the signifier and in the object, the vertices of a case, as we have previously developed, is central and basilar. However, other elements become essential to the work thus oriented. For instance: The care action implies the Other, which activates the subject in a scenario where both are expected to change. In the current discourse, which sometimes crosses public policies, a discursive tendency is born, which directly influences the practice of criminalizing situations of poverty and individualizing the structural economic problem, as if the adolescent were responsible alone for producing the conditions of violence and violations in which he finds himself.

In supervision, there is an orientation to work in which not only the subject's involvement is sought, but also his/her subjective rectification. But rectification also implies a treatment of the Other, especially in those cases where there is a weakened or hostile relationship. And this rectification is not always possible. In psychoanalysis, the particularity of this work of localization and rectification lies in the fact that it starts from the unconscious dimension. Rectification implies the work of the unconscious from concrete materiality. And it is not enough to read and interpret reality from a logical-symbolic context. Interpretation is the key to reading the experience that aims at *jouissance*. Thus, it is essential to write the context, including the way the object returns to the situation that is expected to change, since the scene that updates the trauma will be repeated exactly in the daily life of the violence and violations that repeatedly make up the relationships. In this case, we see that João's sister becomes an articulating element of rectification, while the grandmother and mother, in a transgenerational way, repeat the situations of retention of affection and experiencing violence. In this sense, supervision opens a condition of reading and installs modes of intervention for specific actions that aim at the implicated transformation of each element of the repetition scene, updated in the experiences that aim at social protection.

In this case, the action plan proposed to the family by the team of Restorative Justice gives materiality to a work on the symbolic and affective level. The grandmother demands more family lunches; the sister says that she does not embrace João, but cooks for him; João asks for privacy and equity, asking for a door to his room, since all women already have his own; and mother, son and daughter establish a routine of activities together on Mondays. This materiality embodied in 30 points to be judicially obeyed becomes nonsense, meaningless, if it does not happen in parallel with rectification work. After all, how do family members need a judicial mediator to agree to have lunch together? As the facilitator perceives in supervision by the 'specific action, through the restorative cycles, "[...] it is necessary to speak without explaining everything, for them [subjects of the restorative process] to think and position themselves".

#### Inflections about the team

We can say that supervision also operates as a measure of qualitative assessment of the work performed (Figueiredo, 2017). It implies an analysis of the effects and the detachment of the quantum of *jouissance* recomposed from the primary scene, matrix of the drive repetition. At first, we start from a notion of recidivism, which resumes that of chronicity as "[...] adherence to an imposed life program, decided out of any subjective decision" (Viganò, 1999, p. 50), its risk being that of moving from exclusion to segregation, generated by alienation to communities of *jouissance* that do not share experiences of body, nor spaces or common discourses.

Thus, the team manifested itself in a way to question the way the work was conducted, with statements such as: “There was no time for work, for preparation”; “The methodology is short”; and, still, the analysis that, while the sister was involved, there was no rectification or implication with the mother, and even the grandmother managed to engage only partially in the process of change. João and his mother, in particular, maintained a specular and alienating structure: “The mother said that she didn’t do her part, because she didn’t see João doing his part” (‘Facilitator’). There was also tension between João and his mother’s girlfriend.

At the post-circle meeting, only the mother and son were present, as the grandmother was ashamed that they were not fulfilling the established plan, and the uncle, João’s reference, could no longer stand his irresponsibility. Even so, it was possible to return to the point of rectification and accountability was worked on - “You do your part (mother), and he (João), his” (‘Facilitator’), as each pointed out the lack of responsibility of the other to justify the non-fulfillment of what was his/her own responsibility. The team was thus able to reconstitute itself around the case, assess the work carried out a posteriori and systematize its reading and action plan for new interventions. Formalizations obtained and collectivized through supervision imply the team before the limits imposed by the system, shifting the position of impotence to that of invention. It is a moment of construction of the case, in which its writing formalizes, as anchoring points, the impasses, thus enunciated, allowing the construction of possible strategies, even if contingent in the quality of specific actions capable of facing the radical helplessness.

## Final considerations

Supervision reveals that the ‘specific actions’ related to the case can be nurtured exactly from its limits, arising from different situations of helplessness, originating in the structure, radical in adolescence and generalized in our time. To have this limit implies taking the impossible to say everything as a starting point and not as a point to overcome. The impossible, in this case, is rooted in the desire of women - especially the mother - in relation to men, resulting in the cancelation of the writing of affection on the adolescent’s body. He is structurally excluded from the desiring female circuit and, therefore, symbolic, of this family of violent men. Taking this impossible as a starting point implies considering a specific action in the face of radical helplessness of this young man and the generalized helplessness of his family and time.

Subjective responsibility, in this case, would imply the rectification of each one in the circuit that articulates them from the violent male Other. This was perhaps much more operative than the illusion of recomposing a picture of happiness, bringing the possibility of use of the male body by João and the treatment of pain suffered by women. We conclude, therefore, that helplessness can be a key to psychoanalytic reading for the notion of vulnerability and that within the limits of what the interface between Psychoanalysis and Law can restore here, restorative justice and psychoanalysis ethics is found. Repairing damage, restoring possible bonds, and reintegrating victim and offender into the community, imply the realization of an established reality about the fact that not everything is symbolic, reparable. However, it is necessary to be aware of this residue that is imposed on the work of the facilitators and also, on what is possible for the subject to respond.

By enabling a construction better oriented towards specific care action in public devices for the care and protection of adolescents, clinical and institutional supervision, aimed at different facilitators, psychologists, lawyers, social workers, that is, operators in the

field of Law, favors, thus, the construction of a practice that, although crossed by the public field, can be guided by the dimension of the singular that sustains the narrative of each act and each story.

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Received: Nov. 26, 2019

Approved: Jun. 24, 2020