

For psychoanalysis, words are, even today, the treatment

“Doc, I do not know what I do here. I just speak, and things change!”

This is a saying from a patient who is unfamiliar with psychoanalysis. He comes due to a discomfort that he cannot explain well and that presents itself – without him being able to say it – as anguish. As he is from the world of exact sciences, he is not very much skillful with words. They come out stiff, not very well articulated. However, when invited to speak and make associations, something shifts, stirring memories of a childhood as dry as his difficulty in speaking out. His anguish improves as he talks and builds other paths than just those drawn by the ghost. This movement, Freud had already named, in the voice of his hysteric, as “Talking cure of chimney sweeping¹ – the analysis moving that soot caused by the unsaid traumatic things that builds up and impact the *falasser* in their body and bonds.

It is not just any words, though; it is necessary to extract something from “One saying” that moves the insides,² so that something changes in the speaker’s structure. It all started with the sharp listening of the Viennese psychoanalyst and was taken up by the Frenchman, initially based on structural linguistics that teaches us how the unconscious mind uses the structure of language to present itself in what it divides, slips and speaks (or fails). While Freud dethrones the conscious mind from the command of human actions, Lacan insists that the practice of psychoanalysis takes place through the patient’s speech, in which the analyst seeks to hear a Saying that is said behind what is said³.

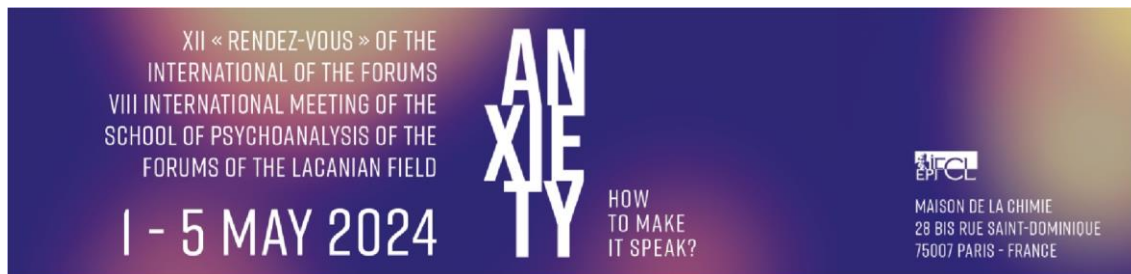
But how to make anguish speak out? This is the daily question in our sessions, the main task of a psychoanalyst. Freud asks,⁴ “How does something become preconscious?” And he answers, “Linking itself to the verbal representations that correspond to it.” Words are

¹ FREUD, S. Estudo sobre histeria, 1892-95.

² FREUD, S. O eu e o Isso, 1923.

³ LACAN, J. Aturdito in: Outros Escritos, Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Ed., 2003

⁴ FREUD, S. op.cit.



the means through which the work of analysis operates, they are the first bet. It is in the cutting of signifiers that some of the anguish dissolves. But which anguish?

We tend to talk about anguish as if it were a single entity. However, it is not enough to say that you are distressed for it to be anguish, especially because this word is on everyone's lips. In RSI,⁵ Lacan takes up the issue again and says, "Anguish is this, it is what is evident, what ex-sists from within the body, what ex-sists when there is something that awakens you, torments you." Here we have a first indication: Anguish is this thing that ex-sists from within the body, which we can read as what escapes the body, goes beyond, that clothing that does not fit and is tight and uncomfortable.

We have embarrassment—that mild form of anguish that hurts, but does not move us. Common to the inhibition that preserves stagnation as "a symptom placed in the museum."⁶ In the clinic, the complaint of having a type of dizziness, an associated unspecific discomfort, of "treading water," "choosing comfort" echo this form of anguish that is not enough for the individual to move.

Anguish can also be associated with the symptom, and it sometimes produce the transition to the act and sometimes produce the acting-out—the former at this maximum movement of the symptom along the line of anguish and the latter located between the symptom and the anguish as a request for interpretation. Lacan uses the cases of the Young Homosexual Woman and Dora to exemplify these two clinical figures, with the first throwing herself in front of her father's gaze and the second in the "embarrassment in which she is placed by the trap phrase, 'my wife is nothing to me'."⁷ It is at this moment that both escape the scene. Anguish is like a fire which the analyst needs to be aware of. On the one hand, it is the engine of analysis and on the other it can also move toward those actions that throw the individual out of the scene.

⁵ LACAN, J. Seminário 22 – RSI. Non-commercial edition designed for 2022 EPFCL (Fórum do Campo Lacaniano em SP) members. p. 61.

⁶ LACAN, J. Seminário, livro 10: a Angústia; Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, p. 19.

⁷ Idem p. 130.



In Nice, Lacan adds to the evident existence of the torment of the body the dimension and effect of the word that affects it. He says:

“Affection, what is it? ... The alleged affections only testify, in reality, the affectation of those who speak of it. What does emotion do? Do you think it is the guts that move? Why do they move? They move through words. There is nothing that affects more the one I describe as being a speaker.”⁸

Here we can return to what Soler⁹ recalls: “Anguish is an affection; this means that it is not an emotion or commotion, nor an inhibition or an impediment. But that between emotion and embarrassment, it is an affection (...) the unrepressed affection is adrift; that is, it moves and what is repressed are effectively the signifiers.” Anguish what is adrift, without words. Making it talk means treating the symptom for what it is – a tangle of signifiers. And the analyst’s job is to get the individual to speak so that they can hear what escapes and let us glimpse what is hidden and causing this discomfort.

With the Borromean knot, Lacan manages to link RSI so that the records remain equivalent. Anguish will be presented¹⁰ as a Real name and also as something that advances from the Real onto the Imaginary field, which is the body. He defines it as “part of the Real, it is quite sensitive to see that it is this anguish that will give meaning to the nature of the jouissance that is produced here [JØ].” We have this specificity of anguish as what gives direction to the nature of this jouissance that is outside of meaning. Treatment through words does not aim to give the meaning that is missing, but rather to reach the point where the last word, the whole truth is not said, but the unspeakable is bordered.

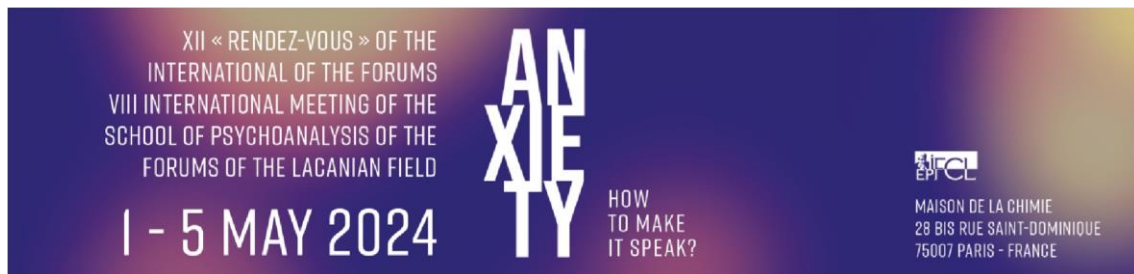
An analysis is a forcing of that which, despite ex-sisting for the Symbolic, can be bordered by it. In the end, it is touching the real with the real¹¹ through the insistence of

⁸ LACAN, J. Conferência de Nice, in: Textos complementares ao Seminário 22 – Non-commercial edition designed for EPFCL (Fórum do Campo Lacaniano em SP) members, p. 87.

⁹ SOLER, C. Seminário de leitura de texto, ano 2006-2007 – São Paulo: editora Escuta, 1004, p. 24. 10 Seminário XXII

¹¹ Lacan J ...ou pire, Relatório do seminário de 1971-72, in: Outros Escritos, Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Ed., 2003, p.545

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speech. A bet that the pulsation of the tongue will vibrate a new sound, different from that played by the ghost's strings. Edge of "word like skin over deep water."¹²

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12 CAMPOS, Haroldo. Como quem escreve um livro. Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjGbutgUNVo>