

SELF-ESTEEM, SHAME AND PSYCHO-MENTAL BLOCK

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Shame is always an intersubjective, self-referred and secondary to a “cognitive” process of reference and comparison, it can be understood as a relational function with social background. Just on those terms, one can not deliver from specific functions of reference that other than having a major and a minor, are linked by ethical-moral principles that with regard to cultural features, underline right and wrong, true and false, due and not due according to one’s rights, being able to and not being able to, etc.

In this diversity of situations is also the variety of forms of the establishing of Shame itself.

However before analysing its different phenomenological forms or expressions, we have to repeat that that it should not be considered as a simple reflected reaction since it, as all the emotive-affective reactions, just because it is a reaction, is the result of a complex mechanism of psychophysical response.

Shortly above we referred to a cognitive space essential and responsible for the whole reaction. If shame gets compared to an “autonomous response” like the flushing face for example (Darwin, 1872), it must be remembered that this biophysical and physiological response is only a visible, external and observable expression, of a whole deep process, intimate, hidden and partly subconscious that the subject involuntarily structured beginning from stimuli partly conscious and partly subconscious.

Under certain aspects one can say also that shame, just for what was said above, should be considered as a behaviour, meaning that it establishes a big part of compulsoriness in the response, determined by a sort of prearranged by reactive adjustments that were structured in responses following of a repetitive experience that, in the end, is responsible also of some behaviours of character.

Coming back however to the problem of the cognitive component of shame, in the phenomenological field of the subject, this should be seen as linked to an awareness of oneself exposed to observation and judgement.

Here two point of observation arise: the first linked to the eye and to the look of the other; the second is determined by a disconformity or by a disappointment in respect to a personal expectation.

The summit inborn in the look of the other presumes an awareness of two presences: the self-object of judgement and the other, judging subject and capable to give judgement. All this, of course, experienced in the subjectivity of the actor for which one can affirm that in the experience of shame establishes an overlapping between oneself, made object of analysis and the eye of the other introjected as “outside source active and hostile”.

The phenomenological structure of shame, constitutively intersubjective, implies therefore a division of oneself since the subject finds itself at two places at once: in the one of the observer and in the virtual one of the other as observer.

The fascination and the blending desire of being or of becoming the other show the symbolic structure of shame in the sphere of which the own identity gets projected in the other for a sublimation of inferiority and of impotence in favour of a conquered higher identity, narcissistic and megalomaniac. Just for this the shame invests the libidinal field, justifying the statement is the result of a tension between the ego and the ideal ego.

Even the phrases typical of the "...I feel sinking", "...I would like to die"; I am nothing but the underlining of an end that foresees a rebirth, the death of the phoenix that will be reborn in a higher dimension.

Division of oneself, narcissist and megalomania are the elements that differentiate and individualise the experience of shame that in its latest expression, has a demythicising meaning of discovering the secret, of placing into the light the arcane; the external virtual spectator becomes the "ideal spectator". Expressions such as "... I do not manage to see myself as I would like that the others would see me" show the mythical representation of an ideal-ego, paraphrased precisely by the ideal observer, as sublimation of oneself that fuses with the Super-ego in the attempt of absorbing the dominant characteristics and also the vindictive and reductive-disparaging ones.

This explains the reason for these sensations of shame felt by the subject put in front of exhibitionisms of the others for which one feels repressed sentiments of admiration and envy.

The phenomenological foundations of the experience of shame talks therefore of a presence that virtually external, is experienced as internal, with the possibility to be again projected to the outside as value of the other that humiliates and that is imagined linked to the virtual presence, amplifying of others. This way can be seen how intersubjective nature takes a dimension of social relationship and also specifically group.

The top of disconformity and disillusion is the structure that justifies and makes the bursting of the reaction of shame depends of sentiments of unworthiness and inferiority possible.

Physical or psychic impotence and inadequateness are joined in this chapter with sentiments of unworthiness and inferiority.

In this chapter physical and psychic impotence and inadequateness join with sentiments of undeserved use of qualities and merits, the use of lies and tricks to obtain results or a status that is not deserved.

In relation to the intimate sensation of inferiority the subject feels shame and tends to withdraw in his own world, isolated and deprived of relationships, where he can freely pour out his rancour towards someone else, experienced as aggressive and mocking since he receives just these sentiments as a result of the projection of the subject itself.

Again we can see how this is an attitude of primary narcissism, driving reason and mechanism that gives energy to the retreat and isolation, justifying the sentiments of impotence, exclusion and solitude, inadequateness and incapacity to face the reality and the world.

The "visual" characteristic aspect of shame (the look of the other) justifies again its cognitive participation. If the eyes are the mirror of the soul (symbolic expression of the subject that looks and in turn looks at itself), just of that spirit

capable to understand and to want, are also the picture of looking inside oneself to discover innermost mechanisms of the mind or the symbolic elaboration of the meanings; therefore, to be ashamed is the symbolic expression to make the truth known, to discover the innermost secret of ones own truths, of the recognised narcissism and of the imaginary own self.

Telling is also taking the mask to disparagement, to that Super-ego envious and vindictive that would like to deny the real capacities and the sacred rights of the subject.

According to M. Lewis (1990), on the level of consciousness we must recognise a “reflected self-awareness” that calls “self-consciousness”, the same that Bronceck (1982) calls “objective self-awareness”, defined then as “sense of being aware of oneself as object of observation for the others”.

Lewis, in his experimental work, puts in relation self-recognition in the mirror and the behavioural indicators of embarrassment: the children that show signs of embarrassment pass also the test of self-recognition.

Zazzo (1983), commenting the work of Lewis, pointed out how one should talk of “self-identification”, rather than of self-recognition. In fact it would seem more a prerequisite to be able to reach a real self-recognition and that, anyhow, it is needed to fulfil oneself, getting over other stages: distinguishing and coordinate the real space and the virtual space, other than overcoming the perception to structure a representation.

The ideological convergence between shame and feeling of guilt presumes an attempt to reduce these phenomena in one sole need of Super-ego control linked, psycho dynamically, to the anxiety of castration. It would seem to be able to assert that the embarrassment of Lewis (that Zazzo refers as “reaction to avoiding”) has to precede also the self-identification other than the self-recognition.

In the space of conscience of oneself, there is undoubtedly also a precise conscience of oneself so that the perceptive space, the representative one and the identifiable one, are, in the light of these observations, prerequisites to reach a self-knowledge and a self-conscience of oneself.

Through analysis what is referred as awareness to be an object of observation for the others, one highlights how this function belongs to a higher level, more complex and more coordinated: presumes a precise structuring of one’s own self measured over time and, naturally in space; overcoming real and virtual dimensionalities that link also other references of the in and the out; the dimensioning of the different other and holder of an own space; the dynamic valuation of the subjective and objective relations.

From all this Izard (1977) underlines the importance of the emotive development that accompanies the cognitive development, declaring after that “an emotion triggered by the exposure leads to a real self-conscience”.

It is on the basis of a well-structured relational self-conscience that the basis of a development of “self-esteem”.

This function, although founding on self-knowledge and self-conscience of oneself, on the emotive-affective side gets invested by one part through the structural function of the ideal-ego and by the other by the driving energy of the ideal ego.

Freud, some time ago, did not clearly differentiate the ideal of ego from the super-ego and on the contrary had nearly incorporated the first in the second.

Lewis (1971), Piers (1953) and Chassynet-Smirgel (1973) quote as shame the fruit between the ego and the super-ego, recognising the autonomous value of the ideal of ego that, having been recognised by Freud (although in an initial phase of his theoretical itinerary) as “heir of primary narcissism”, covers a fundamental meaning in driving economy.

The ideological convergence between shame and feeling of guilt presumes an attempt to reduce these phenomenons in one sole application of Super-ego linked psycho dynamically to the anxiety of castration. In this conceptual sphere shame would result therefore a simple picture of transformation or variation of the sense of guilt.

The differentiation of the concepts of ideal of ego and super-ego, has contributed to the shame as autonomous motivational phenomenon and responding to own mechanisms of forming and resolution. On the other side, relating strictly shame with the ideal of ego results remarkably limiting and reductive. Recognising the phenomenon of shame correlated with the concept of narcissism and, consequently, with the concept of oneself meaning the relation of self with oneself, results evident that to give a theme to shame one has to pass from a “driving conception” to a “relational conception” of human development, passing that is from metapsychology to the theory of objectual. In other words it's a question of not to make the affective relationships and their transformation depend purely on satisfaction and/or frustration of the drives (self-conservation, love, aggressiveness), but analyse and understand the driving events beginning from affective relations.

The relational conception inevitably leads to the themes of oneself and of the narcissism (from here the importance taken up by shame) just because any relationship is always a relation of oneself to an object and moreover, the self is not but one particular kind of (objectual) relationship.

To understand shame one must fit into a structure of emotions, of affects and of cognitive learning; in final analysis, it has to be put in the sphere of psycho mental development.

Clinical case: Federica – anni 10

She comes to our centre accompanied by the mother that heard saying that hippotherapy can help solving trouble with “timidity”.

The family has a complicated story since it has settled recently in the area where it moved from South Africa: it had followed the father (for two years) who went there for work.

Mother and daughter (there also is a sister) had considerable difficulties in this “Anglo-Saxon” country, relational and of adaption to the language, but thought that the beginning of school would have resolved at least the problems of the daughter. To the contrary this demonstrated such difficulties to be defined “mentally insufficient” and, therefore got addressed to a differential school.

In front of such a diagnosis and a choice that dramatic, the mother decides to face her daughters difficulties in Italy, considered to be a “known place and therefore more welcoming and favourable”.

Insertion in an Italian school was not positive especially because the little showed serious difficulties in relating to children her age other than to the teachers.

The observation shows:

- *Picnic physical appearance, with regular distribution of adipose deposits;*
- *Infantile clothing, not suited for her age and her growth (the clothes are rather tight);*
- *Very little controlled anxiety in the interpersonal relationship;*
- *Feeling of shame and shyness;*
- *Difficulty to carry out orders (that have to be repeated a few times);*
- *Infantile stubbornness and inflexibility in her own determination;*
- *Inhibition of the psychomotor activity and of the expressiveness, so that the mimic results rigid and inexpressive;*
- *Articulation of words is so blocked that she does not even succeed to say her own name;*
- *Clear difficulties in complex motility;*
- *Inhibition of initiative;*
- *Incapacity to maintain the relationship if not on basis of dependence.*
- *Affective indifference and little interest also for the objects.*

According to the father there is a sort of familiarity because he was just like the daughter, he never spoke. At school he never said a word, but once at home “..he set off ..got up to all kinds of mischief ... that is why he was always being punished...”

The wife underlines that while they were engaged they were spending hours without talking ... because he never spoke.

The father adds, to his comment, that however he never had intellectual trouble, showing this way as sort of rancour and rage to not succeed to speak with the daughter.

Federica starts E.I.T. and shows good abilities to learn the different practices. In the space of a few months she highlights how she:

- *Recovers the ability to perform exercises of high coordination difficulty;*
- *Structures a commonsense of herself and a fairly good self-esteem;*
- *Improves relational abilities with the children of her age and the operators;*
- *Participates enthusiastically to the therapeutic work and arrives to the setting cheerfully;*
- *Shows an improvement in affective bursts until to declare to “be fond of” an operator;*
- *Greets all the participants of the therapeutic activities with a kiss both when she arrives and at the time of leaving.*

The mother reports that the daughter has improved in performance at school even if she still has difficulties in interpersonal relations, takes care of her clothing and starts to have and see girlfriends.

The improvement is underlined in hippotherapy too (that she started almost at the same time as E.I.T.); showing security in herself and in carrying out the movements in front of others, riding the horse with precision and skill.

All this does not go with recovery of personal initiative and most of all, in the ability of verbal communication.

She started an E.I.T group therapy where she shows totally blocked when she must “speak”, does not even succeed to say small simple sentences and also to repeat what the therapists prepare for her.

The language stays the main and little resolved problem that has all the characteristics of behaviour, comparable to the reaction of “shame”.

Resuming the theoretical considerations, we remember Jung’s concept of oneself relates closely with reference to “numinous nature” (*numinosum* = “... essence or dynamic energy not originated from any arbitrary act of will”) with overwhelming and inevitable characteristics.

This “force” catches and dominates the subject that, therefore, is its victim rather than creator.

The function of this “force” provokes, yes, surprise, joy and satisfaction, but also restlessness, disorientation, fear and sometimes terror, sentiments that are linked to:

1. **Fear of being left** – who observes this force would not be capable to resist, of staying with the subject and would therefore flee. Often one hears a reference to a mask to wear because: “... if they would see me how I really am, they would leave me at once”.
2. **Fear of being swept away** by this “unknown energy” that however is perceived as scary, unstoppable and uncontrollable.
3. **Fear to provoke envy** (Leopardi says in “Le ricordanze” “... che m’odia e fugge, per invidia non già, che non mi tiene maggior di sé, ma perché tale estima ch’io mi tenga in cor mio, sebben di fuori a persona giammai non ne fo segno”
The object of envy is also of evil eye (who praises too and gives you the “evil eye” and, therefore, the risk to loose everything that one has of value becomes something concrete, possible and real.
4. **Sense of imminent death that** acquires diagnostic value since it highlights in the psychosis and in autism. It refers to the “terror” of being abandoned or literally “removed from the breast” as indicative answer to ones own voracity. To have “sucked” (in virtual form) too much “good” milk an anxious patient repeated “... I do not want to do two hours of therapy because what I receive is sufficient”.

This energy considered archetypal has always a transformational effect in the conscience and in the attitude of the subject towards oneself that, for its subconscious quality also assumes the meaning of unlimited, indeterminate over time and space, therefore numinous, but also able to inspire fear, anxiety and terror: it is “a nuclear atom of which we do not know the farthest meaning we know nothing” (Nathan Schwartz-Salant).

For these characteristics the ego tends to refuse the confrontation with these “forces” that it experiences as foreign, but also powerful (for ex.: a train), invincible and inexorable.

The “fight” with these forces leaves the subject exhausted (latent psychosis), incapable of assuming those “adaptive” dynamics that, through narcissistic charges could outline a valid sense of oneself and, finally an ideal-ego (psychic cohesiveness in front of invasion of the archetypes).

The primitive defences are all turned towards the nucleus, to all that threatens to uncover or alter or involve in the communication. This secret self is defended valiantly so that it won't be violated through communication that slips through the defences.

These “fears” go to build the “natural reluctance of oneself, characterised by silences, by the block of communication, that got to build a split, gloomy, negative, unpopular and refused condition.

When ego experiments oneself as one's own content and recognises that its existence is something greater, that transcends it, that gets close to its own ideal, but that the consciousness asks the “ability to recognise symbolic reality” (Nathan-Salant) understands itself how:

- ?? “the self depends on the taking of conscience of ego”;
- ?? “the self is perceived at the inside although it is felt greater than the ego itself (psychoanalytical version);
- ?? “the self is separate to the name of the father” (Lacan's version) and becomes “child of man”;
- ?? “the self needs taking consciousness of ego to be able to exist”.

For Jung the “self identified in the father” becomes also the “self identified in the son” and completes, therefore, emotions and sentiments, thoughts, desires, impulses, attitudes, actions and behaviours that like this will be recognised as own.

This “real” is suitable as mirror to the ego and leads the primary process to think through the symbolical, after having experimented the real and affective thought.

The identification too, as the thought and as the process of thought, lives subsequent and interconnected possibilities:

- ?? **real** – linked to experience: I am, I exist;
- ?? **affective** – linked to the relation: I count;
- ?? **symbolical** – linked to the deep experience of value of being through the Name of the Father: *I am I, over time and in the space.*

Following this psychoanalytic thought the self, assimilated inside the ego, must be “found” and this happens always through interpersonal relations.

The self reflects the ego and, for Jung's notion, the ego too must reflect the self, but it should be taken into account that this meaning is not taken into consideration by psychoanalysis that sees in it an introversion, characteristic to psychosis.

Ego is a psychic function that gets modified continually both by the introduction of the relation-perceptive input, internal and/or external, that for the experiences experimented in relation with the life of relationship.

The reported clinical case serves to explain and to shed light on the theory and overall to confirm that when the barriers of protection (defences) get swept away, the “terror” appears as dominant sentiment (sensation of not having anymore a way out), the melting of the representative plot and a process of misidentification of the ego starts. A division of the components of the structure and the disinvesting of the objects with alteration of the psychic economy occurs.

The moment of “transformation” of the functional structure of the ego; that from being supported and compacted by the defences so called archaic (almightiness, adhesiveness, primary narcissism) passes to become “centre of growth” in social and relational context; it is maybe the most difficult and dramatic lap of the whole process of psycho mental maturity.

Not for nothing many researchers sustained that this transformation means the settlement of the function of ego replaced by the more complex of self. We are inclined to recognise that “... the ego experiments the self as its own content ...” (even if greater); that “... the self depends from the becoming conscious of the ego”; that “... the self is a mirror to the ego” e, therefore, we believe that the period that goes from the 18th to the 24th month is crucial for psycho mental development and brings a delicate transformation full of fears, of anxiety, of hesitations, of moments of growth and others of retrocession of changers that will stay to give shape and quality to the by now mature psychism.

Moreover the clinical observations supplied by the psychotherapy of autism confirm to us the theoretical reflections.

Also the anatomical-functional studies of Antonio Damasio that this is the critical period that sees the maturity of the frontal and prefrontal lobe that involves the “humanisation” of the cerebral structure with what was called “frontalisation”.

The transformation we talk of concerns:

?? the birth of the function of the socialisation that means to confront one’s own self with the outside world in a dynamic that provides the structuring of:

- conscience of oneself and the objects in reality;
- self-valorisation
- self-satisfaction;
- growth of the process of thought that passes from the tangible to the affective to the symbolical;
- structuring of that modality of psychic functioning that is called “the name of the father”;
- formatting and introjection of the “internal objects”;
- avoiding the process of introversion to open to the relationship supported by a valid sense of oneself and of power (that is ability to function both in the physical and in the psychic and in the cognitive);
- organisation of the affective dynamics that at last constitute the substratum for the cognitive development;

?? reaching the complex model that was recognised essential for the structuring of the psyche and that was called Oedipus;

?? the organisation of the psychic functions that is the ideal ego, the foundation for the identification and the overcoming of the symbiotic and functional dynamics and those of dependence.

Just in this moment of transformation, our Federica “looses her way”, she finds herself notable to assemble the complicated puzzle that would allow her to reach security in herself, self-valorisation and self-satisfaction.

The birth of shame “that in the case is a structural shame and not a simple reaction to a negative confrontation with the others” is, in Federica, synonymous of “division” and, how we see of that “sinking feeling” and/or “wanting to die” that gets referred to often. Above those experiences however is the reality of a real break of “psychic compactness” that is synonymous of identification, of feeling One, feeling “real” and not a virtual space open to contrasts and to irrepressible fights between conscious, unconscious and subconscious.

This loss of “psychic skin” (container) brings to the shattering (and not to division) of the ego under the driving pushes, breaking that balance that allows the birth of oneself that is ability to manage the relation with oneself with external reality.

The shattering means to throw parts of oneself in the other, discovering in the other those potentials typical of judgement, of satisfaction, valorisation that, therefore turn against the self as persecutory, disenchanting, assimilating, frustrating and paralysing.

Federica’s psychic paralysis is not a strange phenomenon, unique, infrequent, and meaningless; it is, to the contrary, an observation that can be found in many children and is masked with:

- telling one’s experiences to the dog and not to parents or children;
- collecting monsters, dragons, dinosaurs and/or ... pokemon;
- choosing always to play smaller children;
- devalue and refuse contract with “handicapped”;
- being always afraid to start something new;
- seeing the same tape over and over;
- wanting to wear always the same clothes;
- playing alone and not accepting closeness of other children;
- becoming dependent of the “blanket”;
- not being able to detach obsessively from the mother;
- unjustifiably leaving school;
- somatising deep anxieties.

This moment reflects a crossroads of changes, of “mourning”, creative possibilities, just for this, hides many situations of danger that, often, develop in the following year with the appearance of psychotic problems, alimentation trouble, drug addiction, conflicting situations tendency to lifelessness.

The relation with parents, children and the others and also with one’s own body that changes impose a narcissistic restructuring that clashes with feelings of refusal and/or persecutory, other than driving “urgencies”.

The social relation induces a construction of abstract categories that presume the birth of an ethic and also an adaption to the rules, to customs and cultural myths. Julia Kristeva and Beatriz Janin talk of “structure open to repression and regression that can “break” (split) if it is not solidly established”.

It is the “representational” organisation that gives consistency to the psycho mental structure through identification. The difficulties to identify pour on the world of representations that does not remain able to sustain the self in front of the fundamental themes founded on self-awareness: the body (being, the phallic dynamic (the power), the narcissism (the value), the quality (self-satisfaction).

A little evident identification produces continuous “fits” started by the difficulty in relation with reality if the weak psychic structure results incapable to support chaos, confusion and conflicts generated by the weave of drives, passions, ideals and ethical-moral rules.

The personal difficulties induce desires of refusal and flight that is abandonment of “fight” and closure on one.

I do not want, do not feel, do not feel, do not become, do not think, become choices of life and synonymous of “affective desert” sustained by the sensation of continuous changes, always disagreeing and terrorising.

For Freud, the ego is a psychic need an organisation that presumes a narcissistic charge, capable to maintain a functional union in which self-conscience is structured. In this “work”, the ego:

- generates a sense of existence;
- builds one’s own reality that gives sense of security;
- organises a capacity to interact with the external reality and with the internal driving.

In this order of ideas, we can talk of “representational system” that found on:

- ?? the self
- ?? the family - constituted by its different components
- ?? the world

Those elements, in the process of formation of conscience, structures as internal objects and have a precise concrete connotation in the images of:

- ?? The body
- ?? The “house”
- ?? The environment.

It is evident that the “representational system” has always a relational and social value and, therefore it is dynamic and modifiable by the experience and by the experiences that are moved by the emotions, the affects and the cognitive functions of analysis and deduction.

Armida Aberastury recognises that the subject faces his “mourning” that interest bisexuality, the role of parent and family, the identity and the self; seeing oneself in the mirror seems to her to look into a kaleidoscope that offers him changing and distorting images. That can be processed with difficulty.

This is why one often observes that to weak ego corresponds:

- a fearful self, defenceless, incapable to maintain firm in front of the requests of relational reality;
- a family incapable to give security because the different components must face continuous difficulties of roles and of self-definition;
- a persecutory world, anxiety inducing, that does not facilitate individual security;

- the body is usually used and, therefore, brings with it difficulties of coordination and problems to face complex motor schemes;
- the house is always a shelter, a place where to retreat to flee from relational difficulties;
- the environment is too indecipherable and, therefore, fundamentally to avoid.

From these considerations one can easily deduce that a weak ego does not find security in its self-conscience and discovers ancestral models of self-defence.

First of all *egocentrism*: the subject refers all that happens to the own self that, although weak, gets invested with sentiments of almightiness that, as “fake self”, hide sentiments of indifference and of inadequateness.

One observes this way a division since:

- from one side the subject closes in itself, living sentiments of almightiness that usually gets referred to a higher intelligence because it is able to avoid the conflicts and can, therefore, build a life without anxiety and tension (that are in most cases oral). A particular aspect is the ability of the subject to reduce continuously the own requests in order not to suffer for the sacrifice, given that the objects are devalued and therefore, can be thrown away with no prejudice and without suffering;
- on the other side, it does not participate to social life and looks for “home “ continuously, the safe refuge where the family is kept at a distance, devalued, made inoffensive by the supposed ability of the subject.

It is in this picture that the *shame* is born that promotes the functions of identification-overcoming and self-conscience acts in the formation of identity (ego-poetic action).

Therapy brought Federica to completely recover the functional motor and psychomotor capacities, but also to turn the subconscious material in which the following was highlighted:

- *Anger towards the mother that does not understand the necessities and the weaknesses of her daughter;*
- *Putting down the Other that on one side (the children of the group with more difficulties) gets assimilated and moreover “scotomized” and denied (the good mates and/or operators);*
- *Egocentricity and megalomania expressed as falling in love towards “the most beautiful of the group” (an operator) and negation of the own limits, above all, her own impossibilities;*
- *Incapability to enter into analytical-deductive cognitive processes which is why the judgement is altered, rigid and irremovable even if the most logic arguments are being used;*
- *The “shame” does not grasp her motor behaviour any more, but the psychic processes, for which a block of thought and language are showing;*
- *Impossibility to precisely value the mental abilities since, even though there are hesitations, not to speak is a mask, a refusal to “being seen”.*

In underlining the great improvements of the girl, the mother tells us how today (“... fruit of the therapy”) she usually speaks in an easy-going manner with the younger sister, while she does not do this with girls of her age; “... I don’t know what to say!” is her justification.

How it was seen above the subject, through experience of shame, one finds simultaneously in two places, the own one of the observed and the virtual one of the observer. The desire to be and to become the Other (melting desire) derives from the projection in the other of an own superior identity, narcissist and almighty. This is the famous “secret” that subtends shame and that becomes “what no one should know “because it contains its own rancour and hate towards what is experienced as persecutory, given that it is overwhelmed by the projections of the subject of itself (*Federica has projected on the therapist her own anger saying “... I must be careful to express my sentiments because He gets angry ...”*).

- Sense of incapacity and inadequateness;
- almighty sentiments;
- rancour and hate;
- projections on others of one’s own experiences;
- narcissistic closure;
- shame;
- lifelessness;

form the corollary that explains and justifies those psycho-mental blocks that hide from the difficulties in the reorganisation of the ego to reach the Self and to the ideal-ego.

In this way, starting from the analysis of a clinical case. We reach to understand how shame is the result, but also the cover, of tension that gets created between ego and ideal-ego. In other words, it reflects the missing formation of that psychic function that is called “the name of the Father” that represents the difficulties in approaching and solving the problems of Oedipus.

The Oedipus triangle is sufficiently complicated for Federica, in fact the father is never there (“... he always travels for work!”); the girl tries out ways of “falling in love” that are in contrast with the other aspects of refusal and putting down the Others in the relationships; she reports about dubious attitudes of the mother that wants the therapy, but opposes it (“... I don’t know if I will be able to know, whether I can continue to pay for it ...”) particularly inculcating fears (“...be careful not to say certain things because the therapist could get angry ...”); a certain desire of replacing the daughter in the therapy is highlighted, to ask for more attention regarding her personal appearance and her “difficult” role.

In Federica there is an always-present ambiguity:

- *Wants to go, but remains without problems even if her therapy “time” is finished;*
- *Does not speak, not answer even if the questions foresee only a yes or a no or a very short phrase, then she does not show particular difficulties to*

- give orders (even raising her voice) to the mates of the group who show to be less able or that she guides in the exercises;*
- *Entering or exiting the setting she kisses all those present, without a problem or hesitation, but jeers at herself and refuses in those moments that she decided, "...not to stay any more!"*

These observations lead us to think of the expressions of J. - D. Nasio: "... the speaking being refuses in every way to access absolute enjoyment, it can nor does it want to enjoy. ... having phantoms that realise the desire, reveals being the best way not to enjoy".

It seems from this, that, how Eleonora Fé d'Ostiani says, these subjects "have dread to come into contact with the fearful internal parental world" that conditions and controls every experience in the interpersonal relations:

- they present under the garments of an impoverished and impotent self that, in circumstances "personally" favourable, frees its potentialities;
- they open to the relationship only when they think not to run risks for which the affective dynamics flow in just one direction and, therefore, the other is always in the balance, on the point of losing every value and/or meaning;
- communicate through the non-verbal paths that however they characterise for a wide semantic value that can even arrive to mean the contrary of what they would like to say;
- the elements that disturb the relation are always as much intense as of little importance;
- the attention put on the single words or on micro-messages that prevent to perceive and to understand the together of the communication and, therefore, the subject appears distracted or, worse, that it does not matter how much he is being asked and/or explaining;
- the speech is always fragmentary because, after short exchanges of words it seems that the attention disperses following the if, the but that result therefore insuperable rocks;
- the emotive latent content of the communication produces associations and reactions that are unforeseeable: "... the words, captured by the primary process, produce a dream or a nightmare that then the patient evacuates through the acting or by means of a symptom or a crisis" (Eleonora Fé d'Ostiani);
- being able to "speak" with the children or with people considered "inferior" and instead blocking in the discussion with the "superiors" says how strong the projective process: puts itself into the others a negative judgement that dominates the sentiments and the affects, prejudging any sense of "pardon" and of "compassion";
- the ambiguity that dominates the relations generates tension and deep anxiety that preclude not only a word, but also the homogeneous and constant flow of the thought, the ideas and the analytical-deductive elaboration;
- the distance of the parents (in the case of Federica of the mother that results the more frustrating and castrating element) frees, in some way, the initiative, but a sign is enough to get back to the conflicting characters to produce an emotive, affective and cognitive implosion.

These expressions remind us how the subject dominated by shame and overall, by the block of verbal expression shown how the tendency of avoiding refers to:

- something experienced or heard as dangerous and that refers to primitive restriction with the parental characters;
- the situations that lead again to those sentiments of neglect linked to the desire to other bonds that get refused any time they get experienced as danger of loss and of vindictive retaliation;
- to the soothed, but constant, fear not to be able to feel free and independent (narcissistic and phallic pushes);
- to the affective sentiments that push to growth and self-valorisation and that subtend persecutory anxieties of violent repercussion.

These continuous intra-psychic micro-conflicts justify the tension between the ego and the ideal-ego that brings a form of weakness of the ego that characterises with the fragmentation or the destructuring of what we call "*representational system*".

This psycho-mental function is linked to the self and to the processes of self-identification and structuring of conscience. The representations, founding elements of psychism, refer to the *sense of*:

- ?? being as unique and indivisible Self;
- ?? being worth and counting as subject and as person;
- ?? power (phallic dimension);
- ?? knowing how to function both physically and mentally;
- ?? maintaining one's own subjectivity over time and space.

The denomination of *sense* refers to processes usually unconscious and pre-cognitive, to agree with Piaget, that have a global value and that, just because representations, are strictly linked to perceptions and to the "way of being of the subject".

From here we can say with Lacan that these subjects are blocked in the *representation of what*, finding precluded the way to the *representation of word* that is the symbolic dimension and, therefore, definitely cognitive.

The *theory of the representational system* goes to maintain and give shape to the *theory of the constitution of subjectivity* (subjective structure) in which the "structure" takes shape and, consequently, the value of the symptoms.

A difficulty in the pattern of communication must, therefore, be considered as an alternation of the "position of the subject" and, consequently, it is clear that the language can not be simply put in relation with the biological functioning, but becomes the expression and the "brand" of the "presence of the subject" and not a presence or absence (dumbness) of a function.

From this results therefore evident that shame and/or dumbness present as symptoms are instead the expression of trouble in the construction of subjectivity intended as development and overall, as harmonic relation between the self and the ideal-self in which it finally can reflect and recognise.