

Round Table « Sexuality and perversion in adolescence »

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The psychoanalytical approach and the sexual behavior

This paper is associated with a panel discussion whose purpose is to offer the opportunity to the readers of *Controversias* to exchange views about the subjects under debate, which are in this case related to sexuality during adolescence. Rather than establishing clear and defined hypothesis about the clinic and the theory of perversion in adolescence, this is an invitation to the reading of those behaviors in that evolutionary moment.

One of the questions posed by *Controversias* makes reference to *how to give account of sexuality posed on the edge of legality and therefore basculates between the legal and the illegal*. For such reason, the particular situation of this problematic may give way to certain contaminations between the juridical and the psychoanalytical approach.

The analyst is part of a society which has its own legality and its own conception of the legality of sexuality. As part of that society, his vision of the patient may participate of that regard deprived of a suitable filter that would eventually allow him to visualize the psychoanalytical phenomenons that take place in the patient. He sees himself overwhelmed by the social regard, he is immersed in an ethical scandal and he psychopathologizes the patient's behavior without enough discrimination and thereby validates -from a scientific perspective- social condemnation.

An extreme example of such condemnation has been homosexuality. Until the end of the past century homosexuality was juridically considered as a punishable offence and, in a certain way, this contaminated the psychoanalytical vision of the homosexual patient. Just because of being homosexual he was labeled as sick, namely "pervert". The reception of the patient was somehow related to the idea that he was bounded to an illegal world in the sense that he did not respond to what it could be called 'the legality of sexuality'. Legality, Oedipus and mental health would adhere to one another. Both the juridical and the psychoanalytical

approaches were the same. Being a delict, the homosexual was bound to clandestinely and somehow participated of an order that society and even he considered perverse. Psychoanalysis itself sustains, and this must be revised, that anything that is not unresolved Oedipus is synonym of sickness. It's very well known that the Oedipus is not altogether solved; therefore certain condition typical of sexuality is in line with the pathology of sexuality.

Certain sexual behaviors such as pedophilia or abuse clearly fall apart from the law and the analyst feels obliged to make a huge effort in order to grasp the psychoanalytical or unconscious plot, which leads this choice of object beyond the social vision of a degenerated behavior, vision of which the same patient participates. Child abuse is a perverse behavior which may often be observed in adolescence. Gutton explains it as the movement of placing in the little child his own self that has been seduced by the very pubertal process in the same way that it was seduced by the adult sexuality during childhood. This psychoanalytical approach is an example of how a psychoanalyst may relate perversion and adolescence without falling abruptly into an ethical approach. The other perverse behavior, very often in adolescence, is the search of a pedophilic adult, behavior which Guillaumin named traumatophilia. Such is the behavior that characterized the personage of Lolita de Nabokov, in which the goal is to find the libidinal flow that came from the parents in childhood and that vanishes when entering adolescence.

Resuming this pressure that the social exerts on the psychoanalytical regard we observe that what happened in the past with homosexuality is what happens nowadays with the addictive behavior. Consumption is strongly related to perversion as perversion to delictive behavior. Such is the reason why it is fiercely argued whether consumption should or should not be penalized.

If it is penalized, it becomes a delict, so this may as well contaminate the psychoanalytical approach in the sense that it possible to glimpse that the patient tends to place himself with his symptoms in a delinquent zone, that is to say, antisocial, and thus psychopathic. There, the force exerted by the social organization, for which the drug is a value that attempts against the right social behavior, is not taken into account.

This drifting apart of legality concerning certain behaviors favors the constitution of a delictive world around it. For instance, in the case of homosexuality one had to enter a subworld, circulating through the city's bathrooms, through public and yet, very secret places. Things have changed. In the world of nowadays is it argued if marriage among homosexuals should be legal or not. Something known as civil union is allowed, but what is not known is if the marital institution would be perverted by the homosexual marriage. There is now the danger that the analyst accepts as healthy whatsoever sexual behavior of the

patient just because it is the politically right thought rather than placing his function in the mental organization of that particular patient under the psychoanalytical approach.

In the case of addiction this becomes even clearer. There is consumption and yet there is the consumer who gradually gets involved in the buying process of the product and later on, in the selling process out of which he makes his ultimate inclusion in a delictive world, even if the order of behavior that is taking place is alien to the antisocial behavior in itself, which would eventually belong to another category.

Paradoxically, the juridical point of view regarding perversion or other phenomena can be very perverse. The ultimate example of this type of construction is that Nazi "creation" that was called degenerated art, which assimilated the category of the perverse to the category of the "Jewish" and of the abstract. Psychoanalysis was just as well considered by Nazism a perversion and even Freud was accused of promoting a perverse licentiousness. Nazism showed modern art as a degeneration of art. The social order always attempts to prevent adolescents from falling into perversion. In the times of state terrorism during the military dictatorship, a guy who was homosexual or had a left ideology or had long hair, was promptly identified and qualified in relation to some sort of degeneration, to a moral and sexual perversion. By preference, the curse was: "faggot".

Nowadays it is often seen a series of behaviors among adolescents where cruelty definitively plays a key role; there, perversion is not so much bound to the construction of a problematic concerning sexuality, but rather to the appearance of sadistic traits and of humiliation and torture which characterize a form of perverse bond with the other. The sado-masochistic pleasure and the utilitarian value of theft join themselves together. To appropriate something is as important as to make suffer and to enjoy out of it. Such is a perverse acting in a structure that could not be so. When such cases are analyzed, what it's found is a deep bond between the arousal of the perverse behavior and an intolerable psychical pain. In his work about terror and terrorism, Meltzer points out that these behaviors tend to evacuate suffering and terror on the other. The spontaneous position of the ethical approach of repudiation to the sadistic behavior of the pervert, of the lack of consideration of the other's desire, may act as a barrier that saves us, through the psychoanalytical approach, the pain that is taking place in that scene. Often, sadism itself is unloaded on the very body of the adolescent as a receptacle of psychical pain.

Whatever is the issue currently in focus concerning perversion, sado-masochism, cruelty or torture; it is important to consider that whoever is either a victim of a terror experience, or is subdued to a pervert or is object of abuse, experiences the suffering and the terror that -maybe- the very producer of such situation endures but is not aware of it because it is already projected onto the other. In the perverse couple each party has its share in the scene. In the cases of forcing, the partner is obliged to become a part of a scene that is alien

to him and of which he does not enjoy. In fact, he is literally forced to become object of the other's jouissance, in the same way as the subject is placed as object of jouissance in such scene.

Concerning the issue of perversion related to the legal and juridical order and the problems that such close relationships entail, they refer to what has been classically considered as essential to the perverse structure, which is regarded as a certain position before the law, a position that implies a certain challenge, a certain questioning of the order and of the law. It is in this sense that I want to examine the crucial battle of the adolescent who on the one hand must transgress the law and on the other, accept it. He must put the oedipal drive to work and displace it from his primary objects, all of which constitutes an anti oedipal movement.

Aiming to give account of the psychical problems that take place in what I call the 'territory of immaturity' -which is adolescence- I bind the oedipal and the antioedipal. In general terms I mean to say that the adolescent must solve two fundamental issues in his path through adolescence: the position of his sexuality within the frame of sexuality in the social complex -the position he will assume- and his position in the production chain, that is to say, his position in the laboral world; the position he will assume in the sexual order and the position he will assume in the laboral order. So, in order to make his insertion in the laboral world he must accept the terms of the law, but at the same time, he must question them so as to create a new frame which will enable him to deploy his singularity. From the sexuality's perspective, this same conflict arises, which develops more clearly between the oedipal and the antioedipal; so what follows is my attempt to explain what I mean by these concepts.

The adolescent experiences to which we will make reference are experiences that have not yet reached a degree of subjectivation, that is, that they are felt but not thought and which can be operationally divided into oedipal and antioedipal. These experiences undergo a process of constant elaboration and re-elaboration until the adolescent is able to escape from that evolutionary turbulence. Such evolutionary turbulence is what Gutton denominated "The pubertal"¹ to conceptualize the core of psychism that is installed at puberty and that is a new composite which includes the most primitive impulses of sexual development, in addition to the genital impulses typical of puberty.

Puberty and the installation of the pubertal is a process that, whatever the culture taken into account, will be inevitably produced. There is then a universal of the pubertal, a cultural singularity and even a more singular level typical of each subject.

¹ N.of T.:Phillipe Gutton, *Le pubertaire*

Puberty is a phenomenon that we consider bound to the body. The oedipal, instead, is a process that strongly binds the body to culture and that tends to come to its end on the side of culture. Properly speaking, the oedipal is considered as the hinge which serves as the passage from the order of nature to the order of culture. Culture organizes and installs the Oedipus as the Oedipus organizes and installs culture.

Now, the antioedipal is a reaction to the consequences of the oedipal. In the literature that we could call philosophic-psychoanalytical, two authors - Deleuze and Guattari- have launched a crusade against the negative consequences that endured the enthronization of the Oedipus in the psychoanalytical theory. This has much to do with the issue of perversion- and in such direction they have written a book titled *Anti Oedipus* in they aim to suppress the central place that the Oedipus occupies, not only in the theory but also in the structuring of desire. This central place has witnessed the perverse departure from sexuality as a deviation of the right path.

I am working on this concept, anti oedipal, to confer it a productive ambiguity. The oedipal and the antioedipal forces play a role in adolescence; the adolescent development gives account of it when it goes -on the one hand- towards the Oedipus and -on the other- towards the oedipal fixations giving way then to exogamy.

Since the adolescent is unaware of what is happening to him, the more he falls under the force of attraction of the oedipal representation, the more he feels threatened by the dangerous proximity of the perverse, being the incestuous relationship the center of his horror towards the perverse. However, the anti Oedipus may as well be considered in a direction other than the impulse of avoiding the incestuous relationship.

Hence, adapting and transforming the idea of Deleuze and Guattari with the coherence of this anti, we may think the anti Oedipus not only as in opposition to the dominant theoretical concept which subdues to the oedipal any development in the psychoanalytical theory, but rather, it appears to me as the most appropriate name to mention it as the force that impedes the establishment of oedipal bonds or that leads to grow apart from them; thereby the use of the term antioedipal is very important and gives account of a certain problematic and psychopathology of adolescence, which is the force whereby the establishment of the oedipal bond tends to be avoided. It is as well this antioedipal force the one which leads to put an end to the submission to the father and which opposes the force that leads to follow his law.

When addressed towards the source of drive, this anti Oedipus may abort -and this is what Gutton has made clear- the whole development of the pubertal process which can be so strong that it may not take place at all. Green has described a pathology known as neutral sex, which deals with this issue. It is this same Anti-Oedipus that, when addressed towards

the object of drive, enables the adolescent's detachment towards his development as a subject.

Hence, there is a moment in which, if the anti Oedipus addresses towards drive it's deadly, and such moment is the beginning of puberty; then the anti Oedipus is necessary to enable the access to maturity, development and the opening towards the exogamic, non oedipal world. I will attempt to conceptualize perversion as a sort of compromise between these two forces, but before doing so -in order to make the term clear- allow me to extend myself a little.

I need to make a brief overview, which is the following: as a signifier, the oedipal displays a semantic ambiguity which we aim to sustain since it gives light -thereby- to paradox elements of the central phenomenons of adolescence. On the one hand, oedipal means and makes reference to the sexual drives that the child initially addresses to the adult figures, with whose bodies he gets involved in a relation of absolute intimacy; and such drives operate from the beginning of life. When someone says: "I have an Oedipus", in that sense, with that ambiguity, he means to say: "I have a drive fixation related to the maternal or the paternal object".

We take this paradigm because in the baby there are already phenomenons that could be called anti Oedipus in one of the senses of the word; in this sense we strongly reject of drive towards the object, we emphasize that there is something that impedes the erotic bond with the mother. It is with no doubt that we are forcing the term oedipal because there would not be a triangulation right from the start, yet it is on this object -the mother- upon which the foundations of the oedipal building will be laid later on.

And this is a risked if not interesting hypothesis: autism would be the anti Oedipus' utmost expression since the whole relationship is established as an anti relationship. The anti Oedipus becomes also evident as strong inhibitions in the oral drives, which would cause early anorexia of the baby. The anti Oedipus may as well have its origin in the mother, not only from the impulse of the baby towards her but from the oedipal impulses, from the sexual love -quoted by Freud- which should have to address itself from the mother towards the child; an abrupt end of such process would eventually lead to breastfeeding difficulties because the mother would be attacking at the same time, her own sexual drives.

Further on, in the stage that Freud describes as early genital, the male child clearly states his will to marry the mother, to have children with her and thus show his rivalry and the desire to exclude the father from this relationship. Such is the moment in which the oedipal triangulation achieves its complete form.

The anti Oedipus, in one of its meanings, would impede the thorough appearance of this formation. Now, this is not always the case, in children analysis this first oedipal moment may not appear. The child represses himself excessively; he and his environment have taken

those drives with utmost severity, not as a play, likely in consonance with parental repression and paranoia. It is the moment of the infant sexual play among peers, whereby all those sexual fantasies are put at stake inasmuch the anti Oedipus is not interposed. Infant sexual play is a playing with the Oedipus and this is as important as the first way out of the Oedipus, since that each and every drive is deployed within a frame of generational peers.

Under a new approach, the perverse organization could be placed in a compromise between remaining and leaving; remaining in the Oedipus and getting out of it. It lies there, in a hinge between both things.

Let's make reference to puberty. What is distinctive of the pubertal is that tendency to reproduce the oedipal, in the sense that the first figures provided of erotic force are structured similarly to the already existing representations, which are the most available ones in mind and space. This is a classic bound to the Freudian observation which states that in order to get organized during adolescence one must, somehow, go through the Oedipus either with the mother or the sister. These drives, addressed to those incestuous objects, are known as the pubertal.

We have now a first sense of the oedipal insofar it represents the oedipal drives. The oedipal in puberty would be the pubertal, and the antioedipal, the anti pubertal addressed against the drives impeding the emergence of sexuality's development. In Gutton's book many examples give account of this type of antioedipal phenomena, which produce what he calls and defines as pubertal psychosis, which must be distinguished from pubertal madness which would be precisely the consented, perverse realization of the Oedipus complex, either with the maternal or the paternal figure. Gutton employs the term **psychosis** to illustrate this play of the antioedipal and **madness** to the realization of the Oedipus complex. As we can see according to Gutton's statement, is that the realization does not coincide with psychosis, but with perversion. Adolescence would entail the capacity to conform a perverse dyad to the parents' complicity.

When we talk about pubertal madness we get close to the perverse scenario, such is not meant as psychosis, it is not psychosis, it has nothing to do with psychosis, but with the illusionary belief in the eventual realization of the Oedipus complex.

My exposition envisages now the second moment of the Oedipus in its totality. We no longer regard the oedipal signifier from the point of view of drive but the whole oedipal system which involves subjects like the Law of the Father, the instauration of the oedipal interdiction and the sacrifice which implies the acceptance of the Oedipus. A part of the Oedipus complex goes to loss, that is, it implies a sacrifice. It is precisely under that aspect of the Oedipus -which deals with interdiction and sacrifice- where the pervert engages in a sort of negotiation that somehow allows him to sustain a jouissance that continues to develop beyond the interdiction and thereby, sacrifice is not installed.

This becomes quite clear when it is talked about -for example- bisexuality, which is so in fashion among adolescents nowadays, given that the discourse of sexuality is linked to the current saying which puts the premise that one can have it all. For example, one may have the youth and the experience. The adult believes he can, through the miracle of surgery, remain forever young and yet have the experience of maturity. The adult's culture encourages the adolescent to believe that, since there is nothing to sacrifice, he can have it all, to be a man and to be a woman, has everything. There is no statement that implies the loss of something. Not to be a pervert means to lose jouissance, that is the norm, not the exception. And the adolescent must acknowledge this aphorism.

Now, the oedipal in this facet of the signifier, means the acceptance of the loss, the instauration of the Superego as the heir of the father and therefore the impulse towards the search for exogamy. But also the anti Oedipus is in this facet, the battle against the paternal commandment. It is the very rupture of his law that propels him away from homosexual submission and that leads him to the creation of an identity based on premises other than those which led him to the father. Thereby, to be too oedipal is **over adapted** and does not entail the path through an open adolescence, an adolescence where rupture takes part in the writing of singular history, that of the subject and a social history enriched by the instauration of a generational mark that defines it. In perversion, opposition to the father does not lead to a creative process, but consumes itself in a scene in which the imaginary dimension of the primary scene repeats itself eternally.

I think I have briefly outlined the nature of the crucial battle that takes place in adolescence and from which its identity and its relation with the other sex will be established.

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Summary

This article examines the relations between the psychoanalytical point, legal and ethical conduct in relation to the problem of perversion in adolescence, which extends beyond sexual behavior. It also examines the evil eye that the power projected onto parts of the social group when that power is seized by a fascist ideology of left or right. Perversion is there in line with the prevailing law, becoming in a perverted law. The analyst must pay attention to these productions, which can twist its psychoanalytical access under the force the prevailing theory of normality both within and outside the theory. The second part focuses on adolescent sexuality as a clash between two forces: the edipical and the Anti-edipical. Both the first and second can be run on or against the impulse or on or against the object. If this forces are targeting the impulse at the beginning of puberty may hinder the development, must therefore dominate the edipical impulse, which should gradually move away from its object. This distance is in relation with an Anti-edipical force that also argues against paternal mandate in order to get rid of the homosexual submission. The perverse departure leaves a foot into the edipical and the other outside. This is a transitional formation in adolescence, while this fight takes place.

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