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Composition and Identifying Metaphors

Composition et métaphores identifiantes

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Abstract:

In certain cases, the psychoanalyst's creativity can express itself through a work of composition, which consists in providing the patient with figures capable of stimulating the individual process of identification. One form of such compositional work – metaphorization – shows us the existence of a paradox at the heart of this process: metaphors can reveal certain alienating identifications or terrifying experiences by deforming them. The identificatory function of a metaphor rests on its position in the field of language, where it represents the equivalent of a kind of enfolding gaze, one that does not efface the individual.

Résumé :

La créativité de l'analyste s'exprime avec certains patients par un travail de composition consistant à présenter des figures par lesquelles s'engage un processus identificatoire singulier. L'une des formes prise par ce travail de composition – les métaphores – fait apparaître l'existence d'un paradoxe au cœur du processus : c'est en déformant, en voilant qu'elles révèlent certaines identifications mortifères ou certaines expériences d'effroi. En constituant, dans le champ du langage, l'équivalent d'un regard enveloppant, au lieu d'un regard qui efface, elles témoignent de leur fonction identifiante.

Keywords: composition work, identifying metaphors, paradox, identifying process

Mots-clefs : travail de composition, métaphores identifiantes, paradoxe, processus identificatoire

Plan:

- 1 – Compositions and Becoming
 - 2 – Terror and Identifying Metaphors
 - 3 – Paradoxes and Metaphors
 - 4 – Fleshing Out the Words
- Conclusion

As Freud's work shows us, for a long period of time, the objective of psychoanalysis was to reconstitute a historical truth, i.e. "a picture of the patient's forgotten years that shall be alike trustworthy and in all essential respects complete."¹ Gaining precedence over remembering, which, as Freud was forced to recognize, was sometimes impossible, in 1937 reconstruction was still fundamentally connected to the reality of the events. However, we can argue that by putting such great emphasis on what is "true," Freud was primarily trying to establish the scientific status of psychoanalysis. He seems to have in fact escaped the imperative of truth when at the end of his article he says, apropos the force of conviction which these constructions acquire, while remaining completely outside conscious memory:

What the circumstances are in which this occurs and of how it is possible that what appears to be an incomplete substitute should nevertheless produce a complete result—all of this is material for a later enquiry.²

Yet is this not a fundamental question? It in fact seems to confront us with an observation made by Freud himself: even if the analyst is searching for historical truth, what he is presented with is inevitably something else. Many analysts have subsequently continued to search for the possible answer to this question: S. Viderman in particular has paved the way by arguing that the history engendered by the analyst's constructions cannot be seen as lying outside the time and space of the speech that brings it into existence. "What the unconscious offers to our knowledge is not only mediated by language but created by language."³ Under these conditions, he sees construction as an "invention,"⁴ a testimony to the creative imagination of the one who articulates it,⁵ which nonetheless must coincide with the reality experienced by the patient. This has gradually led to the hypothesis that the role of the analyst was not so much to find a history that has been lost, buried in the depths of the unconscious, but to bring about certain

figures, as peculiar as they are unprecedented, which may function as a support to identification. The analytic space has thus become a site of *creation*. However, in order to question the analyst's creativity, should we not first have freed ourselves, at least partially, from a certain idea of the treatment, which holds that "two quite different portions, [are] carried on in two separate localities, [involving] two people, to each of whom a distinct task is assigned"?⁶ For the development of psychoanalysis has shown us that clinical work with borderline patients and psychotics, both children and adults, has put this idea of the treatment in question, calling upon the analyst's creativity. In these clinical fields, analysts have indeed had to invent new theoretical and technical tools to allow the speech of their analysands to emerge, and to encourage psychical elaboration. This approach therefore responds to two requirements: the need to take into account the patient's singularity, which requires a different approach, while at the same time not losing sight of the specificities of the analytical approach as such, i.e. for example of the asymmetry between the analyst's and the analysand's positions.

How then is this creativity expressed? What movements does it comprise? We argue that with certain patients, it is essential that the analyst carry out a *work of composing*, which can specifically cause certain mortifying identifications to unravel, so that time and space can be elaborated, as evidence of the deployment of an internal space-time dimension. We will also examine the process at work by using the notion of *identifying metaphors*, which will put us on the path to a kind of paradoxical mirroring.

This article will thus try, firstly, to explain some of the psychical movements produced in the course of the treatment, which involve the two psyches present, and secondly, to emphasize the fundamental role of the figures forged by the analyst, in the absence of which the analytic process often could not be deployed.

As we know, the Latin *figura* is based on the root *fingere*, "to model with clay" and has a

number of different meanings: a form, an aspect, a sculpted representation, a mode of expression, a sign or a symbol. “To figure” (derived from *figura*) is first of all to fashion, to give form, to represent something visually.⁷ In rhetoric, the figure is defined as a distance from a “normal value,” from what is perceived as the proper meaning of a sign. The metaphor is therefore considered as a privileged example of a figure. As particular forms of representation, figures are essentially imagined as metaphors, that is to say, as something that represents by substitution.⁸ The presentation (*Darstellung*) of figures by the analyst could therefore also be seen as a particular way of connecting language to the image, resulting in a *work of composition*.

1 – Compositions and Becoming

In certain psychoanalytic treatments or psychotherapies, we find that the subjects have been prematurely caught up in unbearable unconscious identifications, which they are unsuccessfully trying to escape. Finding it impossible to recognize themselves in them, they are nonetheless constantly referred to these representations which cannot produce a subjectivating construction. Whether the question is of the fantasy of the “giving child,”⁹ leading the subject to give a part of his body or his psyche to the other as a gift, or the fantasy of the child as the parents’ future murderer,¹⁰ which stamps the emerging relationship with the seal of a deadly struggle, we realize in what kind of impasse these subjects find themselves. For while they must submit to these identifications in order to exist in the gaze of the other, this reflection constitutes a breach and leads to the dissolution or partial disintegration of their specular image. The terror that accompanies the encounter with such identification induces therefore a state of shock, barring the subject from access to mobile and productive thought. Very often, the subject tries to escape these unconscious identifications by various paradoxical modes of functioning: effacing oneself in order to exist, surviving by

imitating death. These modes of functioning show the untenable position in which these individuals are trapped, leading to an altered representation of the body, which is deprived of volume and entangled in singular fantasy formations, such as in the case of “bodily chimeras.”¹¹ These representations lead subjects to suppress certain affects¹² in an attempt at disidentification and in order to preserve the psychical and corporeal envelope that is threatened by each appearance of the face of the murderous or mutilated child in the mirror. The collapse of the mirror image is therefore expressed by either hemorrhagic or eruptive pain, while at times a resort to sensoriality may be necessary to restore its unity. Crushed under such identifications, time and space representations also seem to become suspended – on hold and in abeyance – while other moments are marked by movements of disappearance and the suppression of time and space, thus hindering the possibilities of the psyche’s record of events. First and foremost, the speech of these patients seems strained, since it is impossible to express distress and not be immediately assailed by it. Hence, words fail to effect even a slight distancing, since by “sticking” to the subject, they cannot but deepen the original terror associated with the distress produced by these alienating identificatory positions.

The transference relation is therefore also marked by certain paradoxical reactions, when for example the subject seems to take flight in order to extricate himself from a relationship that has suddenly become upsetting, while in fact his entire being relies on this other, the analyst, and the analyst’s capacity to turn his distress into something other than raw reality. The position taken by the analyst is therefore crucial to the subject’s involvement in and continuation of the treatment. While the analyst’s creativity, as a capacity to present the subject with singular, unusual and sometimes even enigmatic figures, takes on great importance with certain patients, it is also in fact only through this creativity that the

movement of desire that animates the analyst is expressed. For it is indeed this movement of desire that nourishes his capacity to let the foreign psychological material resonate within himself. As a movement *towards* the other and a recognition of his singularity, the analyst's desire brings about certain figures, which can create a shared psychological space, a kind of thread between the patient and himself that the former can hold on to for a certain time. In fact, the presentation of such figures, traces of this resonance and of the analyst's desire, appears to be the condition for certain analysands to be able to face the terror provoked by the emergence of these mortifying identifications. This results in a *work of composition*, which is at times carried out as part of the treatment and offers us a new understanding of the analytic process and its stakes. In creating these "shifting psychological compositions, where the psychological movements of the analyst and the analysand proceed side by side,"¹³ *transferences* in fact play a key role.

The question is now of how to use this compositional work to enable the double movement of unbinding and binding, through which the alienating identifications can come undone and be transformed into new figures. The issue is then of what we call *becoming-subjects*,¹⁴ multiple and always in flux, evidence that the subject can only exist *in becoming*. It is indeed best to let go of the idea that the analytical process allows for the emergence of a subject. For if we take into account the internal division shown by psychoanalysis, claiming to uncover a subject can only be an illusion. Since it is itself a process, the work of composition therefore testifies to this never-ending movement, both by shaping different and sometimes heterogeneous identifications that inhabit the analysand and by enabling a process of re-composition, which is sufficiently labile to no longer be the expression of the fixed superegoic designation of "Thou art that."

In the analytic treatment, how are these *becoming-subjects* produced? Far from trying to establish, reconstruct once for all, the

analysand's history, the analyst presents him with figures that can help bring out new and previously unthought of connections. By letting the analysand's speech resonate with the figures that emerge in himself, the analyst's speech is able to deploy compositions that "think-figure the body and touch the body by way of the signifier."¹⁵ Such compositions, which involve "the body, its openings and closings, its breaches, its formations and deformations,"¹⁶ allow the analysand to identify himself anew and create a new relationship with his own body. The result is a "body gain,"¹⁷ i.e. a binding together of sensations, drives, images and linguistic elements, which enable the / to project itself at the level of the body as volume and simultaneously to situate itself as an / in the field of language. The chimeras as fantasmatic compositions can thus be dissolved and a new "judgment of existence" can be instituted.¹⁸

The work of composition carried out by the analyst and the analysand can also be understood based on the model of the dream, which by treating words as things is the privileged site of the creation of "image-events."¹⁹ The function of the dream images brought up by the patient during the psychoanalytic treatment must therefore often be understood as essentially a process of creating links, of bringing out the unconscious identifications to which the subject is captive. The revelation of these novel connections brings into light an essential dimension of the process leading to the *becoming-subject* - namely that it is realized by *becoming-other* [*devenir-autre*], thus affecting both the analyst and the analysand. We therefore cannot ignore the effects of surprise that are produced at certain moments of the treatment. On the contrary, these turn out to be essential, as evidence of *becoming-other*. The subjectivating experience of this *becoming-other* is in fact related to the analyst's capacity to "give what he does not have."²⁰ And we can say that "the analyst often intervenes in ways of which he was unwitting: it is a potential he does not know he has but which he discovers in his own speech."²¹ Still,

there is nothing obvious about this process and it never fails to provoke various counter-transferential reactions, particularly resistances against letting oneself be deformed and interpreted by the patient. It is true that while the capacity to be surprised leads to creativity and to an openness towards the unexpected, the necessary absence of preparation gives the fact of being surprised a potentially traumatic aspect. And yet, the unexpected must sometimes emerge in the analyst, in order for it then to transpire in the analysand. This creates a “specular transferential framework,”²² i.e. a “reflexive surface (in the twofold meaning of the term), inhabited by the dimensions of the voice and the gaze, which reflects to the analysand the plurality of his messages, allowing them to resonate and to appear in new compositions,”²³ thereby making the analyst into, among other things, an acoustic mirror. Hence something can occur, a story can appear, a witness to this common creation, which is what these figures ultimately are.

2 – Terror and Identifying Metaphors

The active process in this work of composition can also be explained using the notion of the *identifying metaphor*, metaphor being one of the forms this process can take. We can see that for certain subjects, the analyst’s presentation of a metaphor makes it possible to elaborate a terrifying experience, thanks to the metaphor’s ability to introduce a distance. However, this quality shows the existence of a paradox at the very heart of the work of figuration: by creating a distance, by in a sense deforming the experience of infinite distress, the metaphor also reveals it and creates new possibilities of identification.

Is this not what Jorge Semprun was trying to understand when he wrote, regarding accounts of experiences such as those of concentration camps survivors: “I start to doubt the possibility of telling the story. Not that what we lived through is indescribable. It was unbearable, which is something else entirely.”²⁴ Semprun’s

view is that art alone allows the listener to come close to the reality of this terrifying experience. “Telling the story well, that means: so as to be understood. You can’t manage it without a bit of artifice. Enough artifice to make it art! [...] How to tell such an unlikely truth, how do you foster the imagination of the unimaginable, if not by elaborating, by reworking reality, by putting it in perspective? Hence, with a bit of art!”²⁵ Semprun argues that it is primarily the subject who must carry out this operation: this raises the question as to whether everyone is indeed capable of undertaking this kind of creative process. Is it not true that certain subjects need to rely on the words of an other, who temporarily plays the role of a “spokesperson”²⁶ and whose function it is to bring this artifice into the narrative process, as the only way of making it function as a work of passage? Is this not precisely what the metaphors offered by the analyst can achieve?

This metaphorical passage enables the terrifying experience of these patients, which previously remained outside speech, to take shape. More precisely, to take a *different* shape, one that allows the reflection to be imagined and contemplated without being seized by terror. Figuration and disfiguration seem to be working in harmony, showing us that metaphors cannot be equated with a photograph of a history gone by. By virtue of the gap that constitutes them, metaphors cannot be situated in the register of the identical. On the contrary: the analyst’s participation in giving shape to such metaphoric figurations only deepens this gap and the play that accompanies it. In fact, his own conscious, preconscious and unconscious psychical material is mixed into the experience brought along by the analysand, creating compound figurations, which are therefore frequently surprising and enigmatic. This is indeed where the role of the other is crucial, like a paradoxical mirror which functions as a gap between the subject and his suffering.

The paradoxical orientation of these metaphors also provides an access to otherness, both in oneself and in the other. As a consequence, by

giving rise to the figure of oneself as a stranger - which resonates with one's lived experience yet does not belong to the register of the "true" and which alludes to and outlines a reflection without aspiring to precision – the metaphors offered by the analyst allow these patients to begin the psychical elaboration of their painful infantile experience. Certain unbearable identifications can thus be unraveled and the mirror produces a reflection in which one can now recognize oneself without being immediately effaced from it.

3 – Paradoxes and Metaphors

Although we see this paradoxical function of metaphors as fundamental, it has so far rarely been discussed. Greater attention has in fact been paid to their mechanisms, primarily to displacement and condensation. Thus, when we examine the etymological meaning²⁷ of the term "metaphor," we find that the word, which comes from the Latin *metaphora*, itself borrowed from the Greek *metaphora* for "transfer," refers to the idea of a transfer or a displacement. In the literary field, the term means "a process through which one substitutes one term for another in order to produce an image,"²⁸ the passage from one register to another enriching the original meaning. The paradoxical function of metaphors is therefore kept in the background, yet it is easy to recognize once we start paying attention to it. Moreover, we could argue that this same paradoxical dimension appears implicitly in Lacan's thought, when he speaks of the fact that "language is at its most effective when it manages to say something by saying something else."²⁹ However, Lacan centers his discussion on identification, which he understands as what gives metaphor its structure, bringing out three of its determining characteristics. On the one hand, he explains, a metaphor relies on a "transfer/ence of the signified,"³⁰ i.e. on the fact that the essential role is played by the latent, symbolic meanings, which give metaphor its dynamic potential. On the other hand, he emphasizes that the identificatory dimension of metaphor depends on the positional similarity

within the sentence. Finally, metaphors testify to the possible disconnection between the signifier and its meaning,³¹ by virtue of the syntax, which allows for a differentiation, not a reduction of the subject to its properties. "Metaphor presupposes that a meaning is the dominant datum and that it deflects, commands, the use of the signifier in such a way that all kinds of pre-established, we might say lexical, connections, come undone."³² Based on these passages and references, we can argue that in the work of composition, the primary constitutive processes of a metaphor are used to paradoxical ends. In the clinical field, the concealment of certain infantile experience, certain unconscious identifications, is a necessary concealment, meant to reveal, to make visible rather than to mask. Is it therefore not this double, paradoxical register, borne by the primary processes, that allows the analysand to gradually become involved in a work of binding and to abandon a mode of functioning structured by a certain form of destructiveness, in order to create space for intra-psychical conflict and repression which are less invalidating? The use of these paradoxical metaphors, which finally becomes possible, therefore appears as the first step towards the "psychical treatment"³³ of one's de-subjectivating experience, so that the analysand is no longer sucked into the terrifying representation that he was previously condemned to identify himself with completely.

4 – Fleshing Out the Words

However, the work of binding enabled by the metaphor does not only involve the sphere of representations but also concerns the affects. A close connection in fact exists between metaphors and affects, the former having the power to engender the latter. On this subject, let us look at what literary criticism tells us:

The metaphor reveals the hidden face of the word, by emphasizing the profound analogies between beings and things. Greatly expressive, it permits of giving flesh

to ideas and of translating sensations or feelings visually. As an inexhaustible process of linguistic enrichment, it is accompanied by poetic and dramatic effects which arouse deep emotion in the reader.³⁴

However, it is often the case that these analysands experience any affective movement as a danger to their psychical and bodily integrity. By giving rise to affects that do not completely shatter their fragile limits, metaphors offer the possibility of a new experience, able to forge new links between affects and representations. Whether these are feelings of surprise, curiosity, pleasure or grief, at each time we see the beginning of a process of re-appropriating the affects, a moment which represents a decisive reconquest in the histories of these patients. This leads to the possibility of word play and to a new capacity to enjoy thinking, which become part of a shared pleasure, making it possible for the patient to attempt new libidinal investments in the relationship both to the other and to oneself. This is because each metaphor is filled with affects, borne by the analyst's desire and by his ability to let the material brought to him by the analysand resonate within himself. The subject can thus gradually register the existence of the depth of words, of an internal psychical space. By giving flesh to words, metaphors also reveal the primacy of the body as the source of the drives, allowing the psyche to represent what it experiences and feels by means of the models provided by the body. It therefore appears that by inscribing the body at the heart of words, by creating links between affects, images and words, *metaphors* endow the mirror they form with other specific qualities, in addition to the acoustic dimension we previously discussed. By giving flesh to words, metaphors simultaneously restore a *tactile* dimension to the gaze, thus giving it the capacity to function as an envelope. How is this tactile quality of the gaze originally constituted? This question brings us to the function of the mother's gaze. Winnicott emphasizes the fact that before the infant encounters his image in the mirror, as a source

of intense jubilation, there is an indispensable preliminary stage: that of seeing himself reflected in the mother's gaze. Winnicott shows the necessity of the gaze reflecting, back to the infant, an image of the child himself, as well as the grave consequences of a gaze closed in upon itself, one that only communicates the mother's psychical state, for the child's development.³⁵

More recently, Geneviève Haag³⁶ has also stressed the role of the maternal gaze, together with her posture, in the constitution of *movements of interpenetration*, which equally provide the child with a sense of an envelope. However, here too, in order for the movements of interpenetration of the gaze (which add to the interpenetration of the mouth/nipple) to set in, the gaze the child is facing must be welcoming and available. Is it not also true that the gaze preserves this original link to posture, acquiring a "tactile" dimension, which becomes part of its capacity to function as an envelope? In the opposite case, when these movements of interpenetration are missing, the gaze appears to lose its enveloping function and becomes a site of intrusion. It is then experienced as piercing and penetrating.³⁷

Finally we should also stress the ability of the gaze to reveal affects – a capacity which makes it a site of exchange or a place of terror. When an adult becomes overwhelmed with affects that constantly disfigure him, his gaze cannot maintain – or deploy – its integrating properties. Conflated with the affects it expresses, the gaze then becomes a symptom of intrusion and collapse. We thus find that for certain analysands it is fundamental to encounter the tactile feeling provided by the gaze of others, before they can take the risk of a direct gaze. Can we therefore think that metaphors, and more broadly any figures offered by the analyst, constitute a unifying gaze that joins together speech, the image, the feeling of being held and the possibility of accepting the different affects within oneself? By giving flesh and affect to words, metaphors thus represent the equivalent of the gaze – in its multiple dimensions (reflexive, emotional and tactile) - in the field of language.

By incorporating the feeling of holding associated with the enveloping function of the gaze, these figures brought by the analyst jointly constitute a limit, thus acquiring their identifying function. It seems that these figures, like interpretations which fuel verbal exchange, constitute a source of new compositions that the subject is now able to elaborate himself, and, at the same time, as an envelope that protects against the ever-present threat of a rupture.

Yet it is also by virtue of being part of language, language coming from the other, that metaphors offer the subject the possibility of a new experience, equivalent to the child's encounter with the mirror. What emerges from the imaginary and what emerges from the symbolic can thus be woven together and reconnected.

Conclusion

In the cases of certain patients, the demand for the analyst's creativity appears in the form of a *work of composition*. Far from historical reconstitution, this work consists in offering the patient

figures that can lead to new identifications, new relationships to the body, while the alienating unconscious identifications are unraveled.

This initiates the process that introduces the constantly recreated *becoming-subject*. Metaphor, as one of the forms this work of composition may take, shows us the existence of a paradox at the heart of this process: it is precisely by deforming and concealing that metaphors reveal certain mortifying identifications or a terrifying experience that was previously kept silent in the background. As the fruits of the analyst's capacity to allow the material brought by the analysand to resonate within himself, these metaphors appear as the – often quite strange – results of the joint work of both. They initiate a movement of thought and of reappropriation of the unelaborated affects, while fleshing out the words. This results in the emergence of the identifying dimension of metaphors: by linking together representations, the feeling of being held and the possibility of accepting certain affects in oneself, they constitute an enveloping gaze within the linguistic field, one which does not simply efface the subject.

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¹Freud, S. (1937). Constructions in Analysis. *SE, Volume XXIII*, p. 257.

²*Ibid.* p. 384.

³Viderman, S. (1970). *La construction de l'espace analytique*. Paris: Gallimard, p. 63.

⁴In the sense in which one invents a treasure.

⁵*Ibid.* p. 65.

⁶Freud, S. (1937). Constructions in Analysis. *Op. cit.*, p. 257.

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¹¹Le Poulichet, S. *Les chimères du corps. De la somatisation à la création, op. cit.*

¹²Guittonneau, M. (2011). *Les fonctions du contre-transfert dans la figuration de la détresse*. Unpublished doctoral thesis defended July 1st, 2011, Paris Diderot University at Sorbonne Paris Cité.

¹³Le Poulichet, S., *Les chimères du corps, de la somatisation à la création* (p. 96). *op. cit.*

¹⁴*Ibid.*, chap. 3.

¹⁵*Ibid.* p. 25.

¹⁶*Ibid.* p. 24-25

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸Freud, S. (1925). Negation. *SE, Volume XIX*, p. 235.

¹⁹Expression used by Maurice Dayan in (2010). *Le rêve nous pense-t-il?* Paris: Ed.d'Ithaque.

²⁰Expression used by Maurice Merleau-Ponty. See Ménasé, S. (2003). *Passivité et création. Merleau-Ponty et l'art moderne* (p. 132). Paris: P.U.F.

²¹Le Poulichet, S., *Les chimères du corps, de la somatisation à la création* (p. 73), *op. cit.*

²²Le Poulichet, S. (2003), *Psychanalyse de l'informe*. Paris: Flammarion, p.43.

²³Le Poulichet, S., *Les chimères du corps, de la somatisation à la création, Op. cit.*, p. 62.

²⁴Semprun, J. (1997). *Literature or Life*. New York: Penguin, p.13.

²⁵*Ibid.* p. 124.

²⁶Aulagnier, P. (2001). *The Violence of Interpretation: From Pictogram to Statement* (1975). London: Brunner-Routledge.

²⁷*Dictionnaire étymologique et historique de la langue française* (1996). Paris: Le livre de poche.

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³⁰Lacan, J., "Metaphor and metonymy (II)." *Op. cit.*, p. 258.

³¹P. Férida will later speak of the de-signification which marks every metaphor.

³²Lacan, J. (1993). "Metaphor and metonymy (I): His sheaf was neither miserly nor spiteful", *Op. cit.* p. 248.

³³Freud, S. (1890). Psychical (or Mental) Treatment (1890). *SE, Volume VII*, p. 281-302

³⁴*Vocabulaire du commentaire de texte, op. cit.*

³⁵Winnicott, D.W. (1967) "Mirror-Role of Mother and Family in Child Development." In D.W. Winnicott (1971). *Playing and Reality*. London: Tavistock.

³⁶Haag, G. (1988). Réflexions sur quelques jonctions psycho-toniques et psycho-motrices dans la première année de la vie. *Neuropsychiatrie de l'enfance*, 36(1), 1-8.

³⁷Furthermore, the child's own gaze cannot progress from the stage when it clings to the gaze of the other to the stage where the child returns the gaze, as evidence of an exchange taking place. In "Further Considerations on the Function of the Skin in Early Object Relations (1986)," E. Bick writes about the tendency of certain children to "cling with eyes and ears as well as skin-to-skin," in a purely two-dimensional mode of functioning; a grasping that seeks an external object (light, voice) in order to feel held and "together." In the eyes of the observer, the gaze sometimes turns itself into a blind stare. See Bick, E. & Briggs, A. (2002). *Surviving Space. Papers on the Infant Observation: Essays on the Centenary of Esther Bick*. London: Karnac Books, p. 70.

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