

Urgency in the Work with Autistic Children

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The urgency of life is the requirement of the drive². The drive implies urgency and it refers to *Das Ding*, to the object *a*, the object cause of desire – that is, of that which lacks³.

It's R.'s first session. He is 3 years old. As I open the door, he enters, passes by the waiting room and goes directly to my office. R grabs my little clock and remains looking it for a few minutes. He then leaves it somewhere and starts doing the same with different objects, one at a time – toy cars, keys, and a box lid. In between the objects' explorations, R. is verbose: he produces sounds that renounce to address his speech to the Other. Some words are heard in a battery of disarticulated signifiers, an *essaim*, accompanied by a jouissance whose circuit is closed in itself.

In this first session, the drive is there, in a fragmented body that does not count on a unified image. The drive is in his gaze, his speech (both renounced to be directed to the analyst), and in the way he uses and manipulates the space and the objects – as disorganized as his non-specular imaginary. Freud tells us the drive is always aiming to discharge its excess, which is only possible through an object that allows for satisfaction. If there is drive, there is the urgency for life; there is the urgency for satisfaction. Lacan states that to enter language means to lose jouissance: it's a structural loss that organizes the subject. When there is an impasse in alienation, as we witness in autism, what is the status of jouissance? How does the urgency of the drive finds its discharge?

Throughout the treatment, there are a few moments that suggest a higher level of urgency; of something that pushes him and makes him address his gaze and his voice to the Other. For instance, in one session, R. wants to leave the office and to do so he grabs his father's hand and starts pushing him towards the front door. While I'm talking to his father and the door is still closed, he gives in and says: "open it".

At its root, autism is constituted by the refusal to give up drive objects to the Other⁴. The retention of both the gaze and the voice reveals the obstacles for the inscription of the subject's being in the field of the Other. Thus, is the drive not looking for jouissance in the Other? The autistic did not give up his drive objects to the Other, the drive does not circulate around a lack, which does not prevent the drive to be there, in its urgency.

1. Member of a Flash Cartel on « Urgencies in the Clinic and in Art »- New-York

2. Stevens, A.: *The two faces of urgency*. NLS Congress 2019 Blog.

3. Lacan, J.: *Preface to the English Edition of Seminar XI*. TLR 6.

4. Maleval, J-C.: *Why the hypothesis of an autistic structure?*