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Transference and “Bare Life”: Defencelessness

Summary:

The hypothesis of this work is that the psychic life is marked from the beginning by the exposure to a Real that is by definition extraneous, uncanny, undomesticated and not subjective. In some circumstances the quota of Real exceeds that which is sustainable for the subject, in such a way that contact with this Real assumes traumatic connotations. This gives rise to a primary experience of “defencelessness”, “Bare Life” according to some of today’s philosophy. From this basic experience, that can be assimilated only in part to the Freudian *Hilflosigkeit*, the drive to merge with the other originates in the attempt to recuperate the state of indifferent well-being/bliss, similar to that described by Winnicott, brutally interrupted by trauma. The attempt to “make whole” with the other assumes various forms, from that described and called by the Italian psychoanalyst Elvio Fachinelli as “co-identity”, to one that tends toward an actual fall from boundaries, inducing con-fusion of identities between patient and analyst. In the present work, these psychic movements are traced in the dynamic of transference and counter-transference and are illustrated with the evidence of a clinical case.