


“THE PROFESSOR’S MANIAS”: TRANSFERENTIAL TIES BETWEEN TEACHER AND STUDENT IN TIMES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

“AS MANIAS DE PRÔ”: LAÇOS TRANSFERENCIAIS ENTRE PROFESSOR E ALUNO EM TEMPOS DE PANDEMIA COVID 19

“LAS MANÍAS DEL PROFESOR”: LAZOS TRANSFERENCIALES ENTRE DOCENTE Y ALUMNO EN TIEMPOS DE PANDEMIA DE COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to reflect on the transference ties between teachers and students in the pedagogical relationship in the time of quarantine caused by the pandemic COVID-19. This is a theoretical-bibliographic research in the field of psychoanalysis and education in which authors such as Freud, Lajonquière, Kupfer, Tardif, Nóvoa, Santos, among others, were consulted. We use some Freudian constructs such as, unconscious, transference and the desire to know. We defend the idea that the educational process is based on the bond that involves teacher and student. At the end of this work, we were able to signify that these links occur fundamentally in the field of language and are the basis that supports the educational act even if it does not happen in the classroom. In this sense, we believe that the theme proposed here carries with it great importance for studies in education.

Keywords: Education and Psychoanalysis. COVID-19 Pandemic. Transfer Ties. Teacher and Student Relationship.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é tecer uma reflexão acerca dos laços transferenciais entre professores e alunos na relação pedagógica em momento de quarentena causada pela pandemia COVID-19. Trata-se de uma pesquisa teórico-bibliográfica no campo da psicanálise e educação em que foram consultados autores como Freud, Lajonquière, Kupfer, Tardif, Nóvoa, Santos entre outros. Utilizamos de alguns construtos freudianos como, inconsciente, transferência e desejo de saber. Defendemos a ideia de que o processo educativo está fundado no laço que envolve professor e aluno. Ao final deste trabalho, pudemos significar que esses enlaces ocorrem fundamentalmente no campo da linguagem e são a base que sustenta o ato educativo mesmo este não acontecendo em sala de aula. Nesse sentido, julgamos que o tema aqui proposto carrega em si grande importância para os estudos em educação.

Palavras-chave: Educação e Psicanálise. Pandemia COVID-19. Laços Transferencias. Relação Professor-aluno.

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RESUMEN

El propósito de este artículo es reflexionar sobre los lazos transferenciales entre maestros y alumnos en la relación pedagógica en el momento de la cuarentena causada por la pandemia COVID-19. Esta es una investigación teórico-bibliográfica en el campo del psicoanálisis y la educación en la que se consultó a autores como Freud, Lajonquière, Kupfer, Tardif, Nóvoa, Santos, entre otros. Usamos algunas construcciones freudianas como inconsciente, transferencia y el deseo de saber. Defendemos la idea de que el proceso educativo se basa en el vínculo que involucra al maestro y al alumno. Al final de este trabajo, pudimos decir que estos vínculos se producen fundamentalmente en el campo del lenguaje y son la base que sustenta el acto educativo, incluso si no ocurre en el aula. En este sentido, creemos que el tema propuesto aquí conlleva una gran importancia para los estudios en educación.

Palabras clave: Educación y Psicoanálisis. Pandemia de COVID-19. Transferencia de Lazos. Relación Profesor-alumno.

1 INTRODUCTION

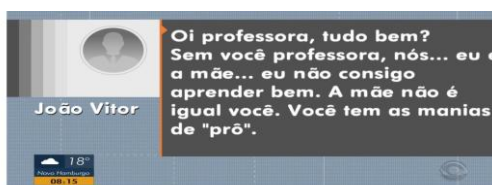
This text focuses on the reflection on the transferential ties between teachers and students in the pedagogical relationship at a time of physical and social isolation imposed by the health emergency caused by the pandemic of the New Coronavirus COVID-19³. It is the result of a theoretical research that is located at the interface between the fields of study in education and psychoanalysis. The article takes as a scenario the context in which Brazilian schools are closed and that the pedagogical relationship occurs through remote teaching.

Schools began to adopt different strategies to continue schoolwork with students. Some using digital technologies as a form of mediation between teacher and student, others adopting directed study, in which the student does printed activities aimed at the teaching-learning process that are made available in person in schools. In the case of younger children, face-to-face mediation by an adult in the family is necessary. We agree, therefore, with Santos (2020) when he points out that "the pandemic and quarantine are revealing that alternatives are possible, that societies adapt to new ways of living when it is necessary and felt as corresponding to the common good." (SANTOS, p. 29, 2020).

To discuss the focus theme of this work, we present the case of an Elementary School I student in the municipality of Lagoa Vermelha in Rio Grande do Sul⁴ who has had face-to-face classes suspended since March of this year. João Vitor, six years old, who is a student in the state network and is in the process of literacy, has access to school activities through *WhatsApp* and through printed activities made available in person at the schools in the network. The message sent by João to his teacher, through WhatsApp, at this time of physical and social isolation, went viral on the internet:

Figure 1

Print of the video available on the G1 website (Part 1)



Source: <https://g1.globo.com>

³ "COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the New Coronavirus, first identified in December 2019, in Wuhan, China."

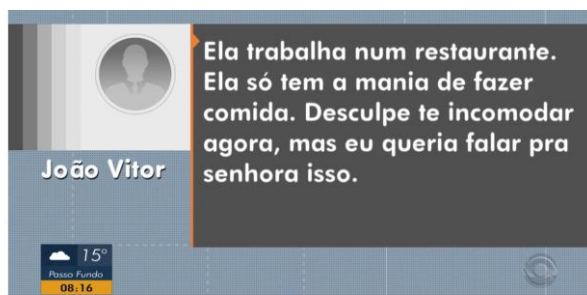
https://www.paho.org/bra/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6101:covid19&Itemid=875

Accessed on: 15 Jun 20

⁴ Available at <https://g1.globo.com/rs/rio-grande-do-sul/noticia/2020/05/20/com-aulas-suspensas-menino-de-lagoa-vermelha-manda-audio-a-professora-sem-voce-eu-nao-consigo-aprender.ghtml> Accessed on 10 Jun 25.

Figure 2

Print of the video available on the G1 website (Part 2)



Source: <https://g1.globo.com>

We understand that the educational process is based on the transference bond that involves teacher and student. This bond is formed from a student's demand for knowledge that is anchored in the teacher's word addressed to him. In this way, we can say that it is the affections that circulate in the relationship that sustain the pedagogical act. The case of the young João Vitor presents us with the elements that make up the transference between teacher and student.

2 METHOD

This article presents a research in psychoanalysis (MEZAN, 2006) and its interface with the field of studies in education. The term "in psychoanalysis", used right after the noun "research", carries in itself the adjunct function of indicating the field of investigation in which the work is concentrated, not the quality of the work. That is why we do not say that it is a psychoanalytic research."

Still with regard to the types of academic research developed in the area of psychoanalysis, Garcia-Roza (1994) created a classification that we consider interesting to contextualize our study. According to this author, such research is categorized as: psychoanalytic research of material based on and restricted to the clinic; of the theoretical type; the historical and critical perspective; the aesthetic and semiotic perspective; the theory of the fields in psychoanalysis and, finally, the epistemological perspective.

By definition, research in psychoanalysis of a theoretical nature is that constituted by the exploration of the texts of authors in the psychoanalytic field without any activity of an empirical nature.

Thus, we developed a research in psychoanalysis of a theoretical nature that is basically guided by Freudian and Lacanian letters, in addition to other authors who took the

ideas of these two thinkers to the field of studies in education such as Lajonquière, Soares, Kupfer, Ornellas, specifically with regard to the role of the transfer ties between teacher and student in the educational act.

In these authors, we could find a range of references about the transferential ties between teacher and student in the educational act. We have also seen that such transferential ties are unconscious discursive effects. According to psychoanalytic theory, language is the terrain where such links take place. Thus, in order to understand the vicissitudes of the transferential relationship that occurs in the relationship between teacher and student, it is necessary, first of all, to understand that it always passes through the field of the word. From the analysis of the authors' lyrics, which give theoretical support to this work, we reflected on the transfer between teacher and student in times of pandemic. For this, we used João Vitor's speech in the audio that went viral on social networks on the internet in Brazil and is also reported in the local newspaper of his state.

3 ON THE TEACHING ROLE IN THE PEDAGOGICAL ACT

"You have the prô manias" (João Vitor, 2020).

When we address, in this article, the issues related to the transfer between teacher and student, we refer to the subjective dimension of the pedagogical act. When we speak of subjective, we mean nothing more than the formations of contents that, as Freud (2010) states, are produced unconsciously. These affective contents circulate in the relationship between teacher and student in the pedagogical scene.

The term "act" in the expression "pedagogical act" is intended to "[...] to point out the dramatic character of this type of praxis that, in school, concretizes its plot, [...]" (SOARES, 2015, p. 97). On the educational stage, teacher and student act, each one playing their role in the field of discourse.

By saying to the teacher "You have the prô manias", the boy João Vitor recognizes the competences, skills and knowledge that this professional has to exercise teaching and makes us reflect that it is not something innate, that is, it is not a vocation, much less a mission or priesthood. The elaboration of the teaching role takes place in the toil and daily conflicts crossed by the political action of the teacher, constituting "a space for the construction of ways of being and being in the profession" (NÓVOA, 2000, p. 16). The permanent process

of teacher training promotes the ideation and configuration of the teaching role and this process should favor personal and professional development, with the subject and society being responsible for this training (NÓVOA, 2000). Nóvoa (2013, p. 230) states that "we are not born teachers. We become teachers through a process of training and learning in the profession".

Tardif (2002) addresses the teaching role from the perspective of knowledge and professionalization as a search for knowledge and practice. What makes the professions unique are the specialized knowledge gained in continuing education. "Learning to teach is a process that extends throughout the teaching career (...). Nowadays, we need teachers who know that their duty is continuous improvement" (TARDIF, 2017, p. 63). Thus, the *episteme* of the teaching profession is reformulated and resignified by the process of professionalization that also permeates the self-recognition of teaching.

The teaching activity brings together several types of knowledge: knowledge of professional training - transmitted by teacher training institutions; disciplinary knowledge - different areas of knowledge; curricular knowledge - the institutional curriculum as a trigger of social knowledge chosen for the erudite training of future teachers; experiential knowledge - arises from the daily life of the professional and becomes *the habitus* teacher. In this way, the plurality of knowledge is valued by Tardif (2002) as a human mark.

Tardif and Lessard (2005) published the book *The Teaching Work: Elements for a Theory of Teaching as a Profession of Human Interactions*, in which teaching is conceived as a singular form of work that aims at the human being. There is a confluence of this book with the work *Teacher knowledge and professional training* (TARDIF, 2002) with regard to the knowledge and practices of teaching work. The first, however, will focus on the human connections made possible by the teaching activity and its developments. The researchers emphasize that "(...) the conditions, tensions and dilemmas that are part of this work done on and with others, as well as the experience of the people who carry it out on a daily basis" (TARDIF and LESSARD, 2005, p. 8) are conditions inherent to the teaching work, which has as its principle the interaction between social actors in education. The authors conceive the teaching activity not only from a technical and/or theoretical perspective, which are important for the performance of the function, but equally important to observe the affective and interactive bias that bind people (TARDIF and LESSARD, 2005), since the "(...) Theoretical knowledge is always general and abstract knowledge. But the teaching action is concrete and situated" (TARDIF, 2017).

In the case of the student from Lagoa Vermelha, it is clear that, for him, the teacher is the bearer of the necessary knowledge for his professional performance and in this belief the young João Vitor anchors his desire to know. In other words, he bets his chips that his teacher carries the key to his learning. We will see in the next section that this assumption causes the necessary bond to the pedagogical act.

4 TRANSFERENTIAL BOND BETWEEN TEACHER AND STUDENT

"Without you, teacher, I can't learn well. [...] Sorry to bother you now, but I wanted to tell you this." (João Vitor, 6 years old)

Language, whether in oral, written or digital modalities, is a founding condition of the civilizing course and education works as a kind of contract, in which children learn from adults to integrate themselves into this process. It is a structuralist view of the educational process. Within this perspective, education is understood as a way of being within a structure that behaves like a language.

Language is commonly understood as a secondary artificial system of signs that we use to transfer pre-existing information, etc. What, however, this definition ignores is the underlying level of the subjective engagement of the enunciation position. Both the teacher and the student are, in themselves, places of enunciation and fulfill functions in the syntax called education. In another saying, they are roles played in the structure of the process of educating.

The functioning of the dynamics of the educational act occurs when each of the two parties acts from the place it occupies. This action occurs mainly in the field of language. In this sense, we have no doubt that the teacher's word assumes a fundamental importance in the educational act, since it captures the student's desire to know.

The transferential bond between teacher and student refers not only to the teacher and the student, but always constitutes an actualization of the affections that each one carries with him. The teacher finds in the figure of his apprentice the *ethos* of his teaching practice, that is, it is in the relationship with the student that the teacher is linked to tradition in a line of succession from his own masters.

On the part of the student, the student supposes in the teacher's word a knowledge about his own desire. It is the love of this knowledge that finds such a word and, with it, forms an affective bond. Once this happens, the transferential bond between teacher and student

is formed. Through language, the teacher teaches by professing the knowledge shared by science and culture and thus contributes significantly to the student's humanization process.

Lajonquière (2013, p.459) speaks of a symbolic debt of the teacher:

[...] when parents teach their child who he is, to a certain extent, to others (starting with themselves), giving him a name that vectorizes certain *ideals*, as well as when a teacher teaches Pedrinho the numbers, a debt sets in. Both owe something for their existence. As we know, it is one thing to owe x amount of money to a friend and another, very different, is the price of friendship. With names and numbers something similar happens: all respect will be little to pay off the debt for existence or, in other words, the meaning that life may have just gained. In its incalculable value is embedded an endless question: *what does the Other want from me?* The proper name and the numbers learned take away a lot of the stupidity of empirical life, but it is the act of naming and teaching itself that installs or sets fire to this question in our lives (emphasis added).

We have no doubt that it is a symbolic debt, since what has been handed over by tradition to the teacher will be professed to his students. The teacher recognizes the debt and tries to pay it off little by little, in each class, with each of his disciples. For Lajonquière, however, this debt can never be completely settled.

The author also draws attention to what he considers the core of the educational act: "the implication of the word" (idem, p.457). In his text, Lajonquière makes use of some examples that illustrate his arguments. One of the examples he uses refers to Camus' letter to his primary school teacher on the occasion of receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature. With this letter, the creator of the philosophy of the absurd reveals not only his gratitude to his master, but also aspects of the teacher's personality that left marks on the boy. What draws Lajonquière's attention in reading the letter was that the French-Algerian philosopher is the fact that he emphasized the affections that surrounded that relationship. He dealt with the teacher's commitment and generosity in addressing him the word, which was not at all common at that time. As we can see in this fragment of the letter:

Mais quand j'ai appris la nouvelle, ma première pensée, après ma mère, a été pour vous. Sans vous, sans cette main affectueuse que vous avez tendue au petit enfant pauvre que j'étais, sans votre enseignement, et votre exemple, rien de tout cela ne serait arrivé. Je ne me fais pas un monde de cette sorte d'honneur mais celui-là est du moins une occasion pour vous dire ce que vous avez été, et êtes toujours pour moi, et pour vous assurer que vos efforts, votre travail et le cœur généreux que vous y

mettiez sont toujours vivants chez un de vos petits écoliers qui, Malgré l'âge, n'a pas cessé d'être votre reconnaissant élève. Je vous embrasse, de toutes mes forces.⁵

The other example used by Lajonquière refers to the text written by Freud in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the school where he studied during elementary school. In this 1914 text, the father of psychoanalysis, like Camus, evidences the personality of his masters and cannot say what else became more important to him: the contents that were presented to him by his teachers or their personalities.

My emotion at meeting the old teacher of the school induces me to make a first confession. I don't know what absorbed us the most and became more important to us: the sciences that were presented to us or the personalities of our teachers (FREUD, 2012, p. 419-420).

And he states how much this relationship was of fundamental importance for the students to be educated: "[...] For many of us, the path of knowledge inevitably passed through the persons of the teachers" (Ibidem, p. 420). Here the idea that the pedagogical act is directly linked to the affections that are exchanged between teacher and students in the transferential bond is clear. From his speech⁶, the teacher assumes the position of supposed knowledge. This discursive dynamic is fundamental for the constitution of transferential ties with the student. When this place, for some reason, is not occupied, it becomes difficult to perform any pedagogical act.

For Lajonquière, to opt for teaching is to recognize the debt contracted when in the process of acquiring speech or mastery, in the continuous and endless attempt to settle it. This duty, while it is paid little each time the teacher addresses his enunciative mastery to a student, remains perennial to the extent that other students are willing to listen to him. The desire to maintain the place of mastery is renewed in the relationship with the student, when the teacher leaves marks of his personality when delivering his speech, causing, for example, tension, embarrassment, respect on the part of the student.

⁵ My first thought, after my mother's, was for you. Without you, without that loving hand you extended to the poor child that I was, without your teaching and your example, none of this would have happened. I don't do a world of that kind of honor. But this is at least an opportunity to say what you have been, and still are for me, and to ensure that your efforts, your work, and the generous heart you put there are still alive in one of your little schoolchildren who, despite his age, has not ceased to be your grateful student. I embrace you with all my strength. Available at: https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2015/02/25/savoir-lire-ecire-compter-et-aimer_4583021_3232.html Accessed on: 10 Aug. 2018.

⁶ This discursive place is sustained by the teacher's speech. It should be noted, however, that the word that the teacher addresses to the student was offered to him by his teachers, who, in turn, received it from their teachers... thus forming a chain of signifiers.

If the teacher enters the educational bond imbued with the feeling of symbolic debt, the student enters the same bond through love. As already mentioned, the student loves the knowledge that he supposes the teacher has possession of (LAJONQUIÈRE, 2013). Love is displaced from parental figures to the figure of teacher. As Lajonquière (2010, p. 97) also states:

There is only love within the field of speech and language. Every animal is moved by an instinct as silent as it is close to clear and distinct ideas. It is known that animals of the same species communicate with each other. There are those who say that there would also be communication between different species. However, animals do not speak, because they do not inhabit any language that allows the emergence of the word. And since they don't talk, they don't get involved in more or less familiar love novels! However, man is not an animal, he is rather a creature whispered by love always in half-light.

Just as the Roman combatants threw themselves into battles for the love of the symbol that represented their people, the student throws himself into the educational process for love of knowing that he supposes the teacher to carry.

To illustrate this love for the professor's supposed knowledge, I refer to Alcibiades' love for Socrates reported in a passage from Plato's Banquet (2011). While the philosophers were making a *symposion*, Alcibiades breaks into the place and gives a public eulogy to Socrates and speaks of his love for his oratory. In this example, we clearly see the young disciple's love for the master's words, which for the young man is loaded with wisdom and authority. A point that we will not explore here, but that deserves attention in its own article is the issue of the teacher's word and the issue of teaching authority. Unfortunately, the space allocated to an article does not allow us to explore this issue in more depth.

Still approaching the transferential issue from the teacher's side, we cannot fail to remember that the word "teach" originates from the Latin term "insignare". This term carries, in turn, the same root as "signum", which we can translate as "sign", "symbol", "sign". That said, we understand that "teach", "in-signare" can be read etymologically as "to print a sign, a mark". I would also like to draw attention here to the warlike meaning of the term "signum", used by the ancient Romans. In this semantic field, "signum" referred to the symbol contained in the banner that went in front of the troop and showed the direction. For the combatants to be on the battlefield, the standard had to be followed. With this meaning, we have Portuguese, for example, the term "insignia". Thus, we can say that "teaching" is to produce a brand, a symbol, to be followed. This symbol is none other than the word that the teacher

addresses to his student. In short, when teaching, the teacher produces signs that are followed and create marks in his disciples. The teacher is, above all, a "signum" for his students.

This is the case, for example, of João Vitor. Your teacher is a sign to be pursued, even in times of isolation. So he does it by sending him an audio by Whatsapp. When João Vitor declares: "without you, teacher, I can't learn well" and, especially: "[...] I wanted to tell you that", we can see the transferential bond that exists in this relationship. From the audio intended for his "pro", the student sought to ensure that she knew the role she plays in his education.

But what does John say when he talks about "the manias of being pro"? Certainly he refers to something that he supposes his teacher has possession of. It is the *agalma* that the student sees in the teacher. As Ornellas (2019, p. 66) explains, *agalma* "[...] It comes from the Greek *agallein*, which means prop, that which serves to embellish. It is a precious object of beneficial or evil power, translated by ornament, brightness [...]"

Ornallas (ibidem.) also observes that "the teacher's *agalma* is seen by his student with a flash in the classroom, in an evanescent moment, marking in the object the enigma of the real inscribed in his knowledge even if not known" (ORNELLAS, 2019, p. 66).

We consider that the young João Vitor supposes that his teacher is the bearer of this *agalma* and that she, in a generous way, disposes of it in the educational act. In another way, we can say that it is the imaginary phallus, that is, something that is supposed to be missing. It is this phallus that João imagines he needs for his learning to be completed.

5 CONCLUSIONS

In view of what we have exposed in these pages, we can say that, even in the condition of physical isolation such as the one imposed by the pandemic and in the remote teaching format, we realize, with the example of student João Vitor, that it is still possible to maintain transferential ties between teacher and student even outside the classroom.

The word that circulates in the teacher-student relationship, as seen between João Vitor and his "prô" makes a bond and gives support to the act of education. Ultimately, educating is a way of operating in language that has an effect on both the student and the teacher. This word offered by the teacher towards the student speaks of the symbolic debt and the love of knowledge that form the transferential bond. From constructs from the field of education and psychoanalysis, we understand that teacher and student are discursive

positions that are related in educational syntax. This act is, above all, an operation of the teacher's word and the student's desire.

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