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Bad Company: Encounter with Demonic Inner Objects in the Therapy of Adolescent Psychoses

This paper addresses the phenomenon of delusional/hallucinatory demonic entities in the therapy of psychotic adolescents, from the general perspective of object relations theory. As understood by this theoretical orientation, these demonic entities are diabolical, "bad" objects existing as discrete sub-personalities with the young patient's mind. Freed from repression by the bio-psycho-social changes of pubescence, the demonic objects announce themselves in the forms of delusions and/or hallucinations, inserting themselves in malevolent and destructive ways into both the adolescent's subjectivity, and into the relational matrix of the therapy itself, so as to undermine the teenager's passage into a psychologically independent existence. Using a case study, the paper describes how analysis may enable the beleaguered adolescent to "find" his or her voice and enter into dialogue with the demonic inner object(s), thus reclaiming a sense of ownership over the mind and resuming the journey into young adulthood.

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