What Shall We Do Without Us? Ada Fetters fettersa@seattleu.edu

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Abstract

A therapist should not welcome her patient into a rigid, delusional world. However, the world of mental health is fraught with paradigms that can diminish the healing interaction, or "Us." This paper explores the dimension of height described by Emmanuel Levinas, and why the act of placing the Other above the self is crucial for psychotherapy with a schizophrenic individual. This dimension of height, when applied to psychotherapy, contests the commonly-held ideas that both therapist and client are rigidly "equal," or that the therapist is "above" the client. Instead, I propose that while the therapist may hold a social role of authority, the responsibility of the therapist is to provide an ethics of inequality by placing the schizophrenic Other above herself. Indeed, the uniqueness of each participant provides a dynamic arena for "Us" to collaborate and create new meanings.