

A vertical photograph of a person's face and hands on a wooden beam against a sunset sky. The person's face is in the center, looking down, with their hands resting on the beam. The background is a bright sunset sky with a golden glow and some clouds. The image is oriented vertically, with the top of the page at the bottom of the image.

Tradition / Invention

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# Calibán

Latin American Journal  
of Psychoanalysis









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Latin American Journal  
of Psychoanalysis



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# Editorials



## Odur cannibal, *Calibán!*

*They do not argue. And they do not want to persuade nor be persuaded; they do not think of winning or losing.  
They agree on only one thing: they know that discussion is the not impossible path to reach a truth.  
Free from myth and metaphor, they think or try to think.*

JORGE LUIS BORGES, *El principio* (1984)

I welcome the birth of this new Latin American journal with the feeling of an accomplished task. I edited the magazine while I was the publishing director under the management of Marcelo Viñar in 2002. While doing that task, the idea of the need for editors to stay longer started to grow in my mind. The change every two years did not allow for the creation and maintenance of a coherent editorial policy. It was then that I began to submit the proposal to create an expressive and creative editorial and scientific policy of our identity

Then, as a Latin American representative within the Board of IPA, while participating in the meetings of Fepal, I formally submitted that proposal which resulted in the change of the statutes in 2010. Appointed by Fepal's Assembly of Presidents, three editors –one for each region of the federation– will take care of the journal for a period of six years. One of the editors will be substituted every two years to guarantee renewal and editorial continuity. There will be three annual publications to meet the requirements for indexing the journal.

The organisation of the International Psychoanalytic Association divides its administration and science policy into three regions: North America, Europe and Latin America. The distribution of power is equally shared by the regions. Recently, we have incorporated a new region that is still in its infancy: Asia, and which does not form part of this rotating system yet. Interesting issues arise with countries such as Israel, South Africa, Australia, etc. What region do they belong to? They always insist and end up as part of Europe. It is symptomatic and understandable; they are factors relating to history and cultural familiarity, complex relationships between peripheries and metropolises...Is it not the direction towards which we spontaneously tend to look? This takes me to the considerations that follow.

The American Federation, APsA, has a long history. Founded almost simultaneously with IPA, it has organisational independence, unlike EPF, the



European Psychoanalytical Federation, and the Latin American Federation, Fepal. It has its own analytical training criteria and administers them independently. It organises two annual congresses and is widely influential. EPF, despite not administering training criteria, also has a long tradition and organises an annual scientific congress. Though not claiming for political action, its role in creating and spreading clinical theories and practices is unquestionable.

Our federation, Fepal, is the newest and holds the most recent institutional role within the international organisation. Only after the 1990s, it had its statutes comparable to those of other regions. However, that only applies to the formal aspect as our organisation is more fragile, we face integration issues between the Portuguese-speaking and Spanish-speaking analysts, we have a long colonial history and we are not seen as theory creators or clinical reference although we may not see ourselves in the same manner. In the current Board of Directors, we believe that our role is to strengthen the Latin American regional organisation to become a key vehicle for the spread of our ideas and practices.

Not long ago, psychoanalytic theories were competing for the only truth. In that debate, as Latin American, we were often times seen as lenient, spreading unwittingly the ideas from the metropolises of knowledge, which here suffered from a series of distortions. Our damaged self-esteem, to a certain extent, endorsed those judgements. The role of creators of the most traditional centres is undeniable but we certainly have our own history and also an original practice ready to participate in the institutional debate at an international level. I would argue that our vision is more inclined to syncretism; we read French literature, the British school and it is common for us to be able to read English, French and Spanish. We have done this since high school, and, thus, what would be seen as a weakness as we do not adhere strictly to one school, can be revealed as an advantage which promotes more freedom of thought.

Today, the idea of a revealed truth is no longer acceptable, even when that event is mediated by religions or the Enlightenment. These are times that require critical and creative thinking. The world of traditions is undergoing a crisis; times are questioning us, and like all human disciplines, we do not have ready answers. Inheriting a tradition is a symptom related to an adjustment. The psychoanalytic tradition, for us to take it over, requires hard work. This is the only way by which we can be assured of where the questions that will give birth to the necessary thought for the challenges of the present may arise. We have our own foundations to continue asking questions without being nostalgic about the times when the world was a different one and the challenge was hysteria.

We think that this journal has a key role in the challenges ahead. Its birth name, *Calibán*, referred to the universal element in Shakespeare, the character in *The Tempest* who used to babble, and to the particular element in the Latin American tradition. I will exemplify by recalling the cannibalistic vision of Brazilian modernism, in which Oswald de Andrade used to state that the metropolis, once tasted deeply, becomes our flesh. After all, psychoanalysis, as

a form of knowledge that does not frequently deal with the consciousness, only becomes our possession when it turns one with our flesh. Is that not what we aim at in our training as psychoanalysts? Is that not what we expect our institutions to promote?

We also believe that our journal plays a key role within Fepal in order to promote unity and dialogue among us. We hope that it will help our psychoanalytic thinking grow and be spread so that we will be able to position ourselves ahead of our peers with our reality. On the one hand, our tradition is recent and we also work in centres under huge social crises; on the other, we are not subject to public health policies or private health insurance systems. We are neither in privileged nor underprivileged conditions; we are simply specific and our originality deserves to be looked after. The complex relations between the particular and the universal are at the heart of psychoanalytic thinking: how do we articulate the specific aspect of the clinical gesture with the generalisation that precedes the emergence of a theory? In what cultural context is this task carried out?

Thus, our journal aims to be in the search of our *zeitgeist*, the spirit of time. It aims to engage in dialogue with our peers of human disciplines who face the same challenges posed by current times, accompany the rebellion that the arts must undergo in order to keep its ethics and keep in suspense the scientific, aesthetic or ethic character with which our clinical practice questions us. It will be a journal where essays will be welcomed, and, despite not claiming a positivist character, all tendencies of thought, provided they are willing to be included, will have a place for an open debate to actually take place.

I would like to conclude by referring to a comment by Brazilian literary critic Roberto Schwarz, who, in his essay *Leituras em competição* about the interest of scholars of the intellectual metropolises in relation to the literary work of Machado de Assis, stated: “Without hopes, trying to promote the Brazilian writers in France, Mário de Andrade noted that our art would be more appreciated worldwide if the national currency was strong and had bomber aircraft. As that was not our case, we were creating a high quality literature, even outstanding, that was being kept hidden from external use.” Then, his article narrates how that changed and the contradictory ways like the arrival of Brazilian art abroad have been done. Mário de Andrade’s comment, which Schwarz is making reference to, happened in 1939. Is it possible that, unequally and contradictorily, that time has arrived for us, psychoanalysts?

In these times of economic, social and thinking paradigm crises, in which psychoanalysis is also a part of the perplexities we face, I believe that we can only welcome *Calibán*, this newborn creature. *Calibán* will speak Portuguese and Spanish, in order to be present among us, and English, to introduce us to the world. I would like to finish by hoping that we can find the strength to fight off the witches, who usually appear in fairy tales when a new baby is born, and that *Calibán* can thrive, learn, love, be loved, enjoy a long life and be useful to its community. Congratulations!

## *Calibán: A new challenge*

It is with great pleasure that I am writing this editorial for the first issue of *Calibán*, the Latin American Journal of Psychoanalysis.

Undoubtedly, this journal is the result of a long “gestation” in which, lately, Leopoldo Nosek, the presidents of the Latin American Societies, Mariano Horenstein and I have participated as “parents”. In this period of almost two years, we have been many times taken by doubts, fears and uncertainties that vanished when, during a more intimate meeting here in São Paulo to start planning the journal, we were motivated by the enormous enthusiasm of Leopoldo Nosek and by the innovative ideas of Mariano Horenstein, who dazzled us with the countless possibilities he envisioned.

*Calibán* became then a baby who was aware of the fact that it had to be born during the Fepal Congress, in São Paulo, when the new Board of the federation would be appointed. Its project and execution were possible mainly thanks to Mariano Horenstein, to whom all the team members are thankful.

In Latin America, we represent more than just a region or subcontinent since, in addition to South America, the societies of Mexico and all Central America form part of our Federation. As such, we are the largest group of psychoanalysts of IPA, not only size-wise but also as the one with the greatest international growth. We are not only a growing psychoanalytic group but also a group that values culture and Latin American production as a whole. A highly heterogeneous, diverse, and plural group, which, far from being a disadvantage, represents an enormous advantage.

Our production, which has been highly criticised or undervalued internationally, sometimes even despised by ourselves, is mainly creative and innovative. We publish vastly but our Portuguese or Spanish publications many times remain restricted to our continent or even to the author’s country of origin.

We also know that not everyone within the international publishing world agrees with our theoretical perspectives and psychoanalytic clinical work. We have many times been underestimated or referred to as lacking accuracy in our work.

It may be true that not all Latin Americans share the English exactitude or the American scientific nature. It may also be true that our history, coloured by colonialism, in search for freedom and democratic ideals has contributed to



turn our approaches to psychoanalysis, our theoretical production and clinical work, in something very peculiar and unique.

Our psychoanalytic work as well as Latin American culture, in my opinion, reveal an intense and lively creation that is characterised by sensitivity, clinical ability, and the permanent struggle for something new.

I believe and hope that *Calibán* can be seen not just as another journal but also as the reflection of the cultural and psychoanalytic production of Latin America, as a space and place created for all our colleagues to feel they are being represented and introduced to the international community.

Thank you in advance for the support and collaboration.

## Calibán Manifest

It could be said that there are plenty of psychoanalytic journals, enough, even more than the capacity to sustain them. We could argue that a publication is never an “excess”: the audience that inaugurates it is always new, a new desire to be transmitted, a new incentive for writing and tuning the clinical profession among and before others. Nevertheless, the re-launch of this Latin American Journal of Psychoanalysis is justified by the addition of a novel name, format and periodicity.

There are about thirty journals of psychoanalysis in Latin America, only taking into account the ones edited by societies of Fepal. Some do not edit any; others, up to three. They generally struggle economically and are restricted to the local market for its promotion. None of them have reached a referential position until now, a genuine global platform for the discussion of Latin American psychoanalysis and contemporary psychoanalysis read with Latin American lenses. None of them have been able to become an escape from which our production can be shown to analysts from other regions.

Due to limitations relating to format and periodicity, the Latin American Journal has not reached this place either and has not had the promotion it deserved. Can it do now? That and many other questions surround us. Can an “official” journal be creative and healthily irreverent? Can it take risks that, due to lack of coordination or overcorrection, are usually absent in institutional editorial projects? Can it surprise readers, keep them alert until the next publication, make them willing to buy and read it? We will see. The changes in the statutes, the extension and rotation of the editors’ task and the relative independence of the political leadership of Fepal aspire to generate a real editorial policy and promote a publication which can learn with each issue, which does not start from scratch with each management.

Latin American analysts do not read each other often and we are usually more dazzled by the production from the metropolises. We hope that this journal will embody –in an open and plural but also critical and rigorous way– that until-now-insufficiently-developed platform of encounter and discussion, even distilling, of a psychoanalysis, thought from Latin America. And the fact that it will do so using as a starting point the healthy mixture represented in the journal name since this first publication of **Calibán-Latin American Journal of Psychoanalysis** implies both an *invention* gesture and another one that honours the *tradition* of the Latin American Journal.

Every publication addresses a particular group of readers, in this case, the Latin American psychoanalytic community. However, every publication also *constructs* its readers. This journal imagines active readers, impertinent towards the texts, working readers. On the other hand, as editors, we force ourselves to think of them even more than of the authors and their need (which may be closely linked to our discipline) to publish their ideas and give testimony of their clinical work. We endeavour to make an attractive journal both graphically and thematically, interesting, that can learn to discover and host the novelties produced in our region.

In its multiple forms, the tradition-invention pair has been present in many of our Latin American encounters and is the thematic focus of this year's Congress, and therefore, of this first issue of **Calibán**.

Borges used to say that in the Western world, somehow, we were all Jewish or Greek. That heritage, cooked in the fertile broth of the multi-ethnic and agonising Austro-Hungarian Empire, has been the forge of our discipline. It was from a certain miscegenation that Freudian Vienna was formed and, generally, it is from the cross and the miscegenation that ideas are coined and species evolve.

References are not reverences, and although we may feel debtors, it does not mean that we are enslaved by the weight of an unpayable debt with our European masters (who find in our patronymic theoretical filiations its most evident expression). Instead of feeling ashamed for belonging to a continent that has historically been held back, almost clandestine in the world of psychoanalytic ideas, we will try to rescue that *wish to be an Indian* about which Kafka, a European, wrote. Only in this way, maybe, we will be able to construct some valid knowledge coming from these forgotten corners of the world.

It is not a matter of exercising any sort of *chauvinism* here but of reading not only the texts or practices but also their enunciation, writing context and reading processes and to do so from a different place than that of an uneducated reader to be converted. **Calibán** is meant to be –we hope– not only the vehicle of expression of our original ideas but also the platform to export the knowledge that we take from the Other, “cannibalised” and processed in its pages.

Before the aseptic possibility –and therefore, without risks- of continuing to be called just Latin American Journal or the image of a folk Latin American magic realism that used to look for other proposals, we chose the name of a character in Shakespeare's tragedy *The Tempest*, to name the new journal of our federation.

But with a special flavour as Caliban, one of the characters in the tragedy –an anagram of cannibal and whose image they have tried to see as the representation held of the “indigenous” in Shakespearean Europe– is a monstrous creature incapable of speaking the language of culture properly, doomed to babble forever. Based on a tradition of Latin American thinkers and writers such as Fernández Retamar, Achugar or Cesaire, we propose an ironic inversion of the way we are seen, avoiding the innocence of not being aware of it and the freezing effect of that disabling look, believing in an editorial project that is beautiful in its

manufacturing, cosmopolitan in its ambitions and original in the theories it hosts.

*Tupí or not tupí, that is the question.* The Shakespearean parody, in English cannibalised in the same manner as the name of the journal, refers to the *Cannibalist Manifest*, which constitutes the other source of tradition that nurtures this proposal: both Lusitanian and Spanish speakers. Thus, in order to promote the spread of our languages, we will publish two printed versions both in Spanish and Portuguese, besides a digital version in English since we dream of making the Latin American psychoanalytic production known beyond our borders.

The fact that *Abaporu*, the work of Tarsila do Amaral and symbol of the modernist Brazilian movement, within which the Manifest of Oswald de Andrade, with a strong Freudian inspiration, is found, is exhibited in an Argentine museum is but an indication of this *cross* which we intend to represent in **Calibán**.

**Calibán** will not only be a collection of psychoanalytic texts. On the contrary, we have imagined a journal that will have a central theme and a section layout, permanent or contingent, in each issue, with which the reader will, progressively, familiarise.

This structure will host scientific works with a classic format together with the adaptability that essays offer to consider psychoanalysis; it will include articles, interviews, testimonies and research. The analytic community will be invited to produce their texts in accordance with the themes of each issue –which will be announced well in advance- and, simultaneously, invitations focused on the different sections will be sent to analysts or thinkers from other fields of knowledge.

We will try to bring into practice the plurality of our analytic community, create dialogues, stretch differences, contrast discourses and practices, which will happen in sections such as **Arguments** and **Vortex**. Other sections –like **Dossier, The Foreigner or Textual**– are meant to host in the heart of a psychoanalytic journal the voice of the Other; thus, moving away from a self-referentiality that is both exhausting and infertile.

We will try to sketch this structure in more detail to introduce it; let us place **Calibán** on the dissection table:

The dogmatic section of the journal, **Arguments**, will include the psychoanalytic works that deal with the theme of each issue. In its graphic layout, there is an invitation: as it will be noticed, there are wide margins intended for each issue of **Calibán** to be jotted down, underlined, commented, annotated, even crossed out, by readers. We recommend readers not to read the published material as an untouchable dogma, to question the texts in a Talmudic exercise that, beyond sacrilege, *will touch them*, that will host their unique signature and interpretation right there, between the lines.

In this first issue we have included the six pre-published works of the São Paulo Congress, and, in that space we mentioned –equally important despite its marginality-, there appears a sample of the debate that such texts have triggered in the various societies of our region. For obvious space reasons, we have only included a tiny portion of the many comments made by analysts from diverse theoretical filiations and diverse ways of conceiving our

discipline and its praxis. They draw a kind of *constellation* that seems to refer, unintentionally, to the main reason of 30<sup>th</sup> São Paulo Art Biennial, which is held simultaneously with our 29<sup>th</sup> Latin American Congress.

That is not the only way in which our journal tunes in and dialogues with the Biennial; that is, it tunes in and dialogues –true to the birth mark of our discipline inseparable from the soil of culture– with art. Taking advantage of the synchronicity between the Biennial and the Congress, we present a *dossier* on contemporary art for the readers of this issue.

In its construction, we have tried to abstain from – a rule of abstinence which we will include in our editorial "creed"– *interpreting* art. And in that sense, this section is organised around two invisible questions. The first one: *what can we as psychoanalysts learn from contemporary art?* drips through the risks of psychoanalysis applied to art avoiding as well any explicit reply. And it does so through some art versions more in line with our current times, to put it in another way, –and due to the curious fact that the artist anticipates the analyst witnessed by Freud, Winnicott or Lacan among others– *with the age that we will have to live in*. Since *dossier* deals with themes and issues that are ahead, both in time and in the horizon, of our current level of debate in psychoanalysis.

The other question posed by *dossier* is the following: *can Latin American contemporary art, in its relations with "just" contemporary art, serve as a mirror that can question the relations of Latin American psychoanalysis with psychoanalysis in general, or more precisely, with the one produced in the metropolises?*

Ana Maria Andrade de Azevedo tries to give an answer in these pages, an answer that is actually the re-launch of a big question that we will try to bring under analysis, collectively, in each issue of **Calibán**.

In accordance with sections like **Arguments** or **Vortex** –as it will be seen, they show, more than ever before in its counterpoint, the idea that contemporary psychoanalysis declines in plural– *dossier* proposes a heterogeneous wide range of approaches that sharply engage in dialogue. Art critics, essayists, curators, and artists teach us there, in a quarry which we will surely drink from for a long time

Complementing *dossier* and its particular extraterritoriality in the face of psychoanalysis, **The Foreigner** section will include, in every issue, an original text written especially for **Calibán** about the central theme, by a thinker from outside the analytical field. Faced with an international psychoanalysis which often, in some of its expressions, runs the risk of wrecking in a self-referentiality far from being Freudian, we imagined these two sections as a sort of necessary antidote.

In **Textual**, our interview section, we will publish the ideas of thinkers that will help us construct and question the potential space of psychoanalysis practiced and thought from Latin America. In order to distance ourselves from ideas already known, to escape from the game of scholastic fidelities, we will begin by interviewing renowned intellectuals, in this case Uruguayan Hugo Achugar.

Psychoanalysis is an urban practice and the city in which each analyst develops it is not only a landscape but also a determinant, seasoning and the

leading character of the analyses that they carry out. In this effort to get to know each other, to read us in this community of foreigners which we represent as a federation, we wanted to inaugurate a space where the narration, the chronicle of the singularities of each city would take place. That is how the **Invisible Cities** section was born and, in line with the congress, a biographical sketch about São Paulo and the psychoanalytic practice in a megalopolis.

Probably the **Classic & Modern** section reflects the tradition/invention pair like no other does: we will take our most prominent theorists there in order not to pay them a formal homage or lazily become followers of the tradition founded by them. On the contrary, we will try to reinvent them from the contemporary *a posteriori* status we have to live in, to rescue them, to force them even to help us understand an age they did not live in. We will begin with José Bleger, on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death.

The **By Heart** section will complement the previous one, not to work with the texts or stretch the threads of a work but to remember, to construct a collective memory concerned more with our future than our past. We would like the English expression *by heart* to resound in its title; a memory woven with love, the same that encourages the Spanish and Portuguese equivalent to “remember”, *recordar*, in its path through the heart. In this issue, we will deal with André Green, but in a particular way. Avoiding the wave of homages and biographical sketches produced upon his death, we try to highlight in his image that quality which allows us to think ourselves more as Latin American analysts.

We have chosen the name **Vortex** for another section of the magazine that deals with controversial themes affecting us as an analytical community. In this case, the transmission of psychoanalysis. We have done it in a choral manner, alternating essays, documents and testimonies to record and re-launch a debate, both necessary and endless. The content as well as the section name, which refers to the eye of a hurricane, reflect the passionate debate that we hope to host and promote.

The cartography of **Calibán**'s sections is completed - along with others that we will introduce in later issues - with a **Logbook**. You will find there recommended readings to move forward in the route that each issue proposes, together with a brief introduction of the authors, the formal guidelines that we propose to future authors and some striped sheets so that, in line with the margins of **Arguments**, each reader is encouraged to continue the writing of the issue, a publication that we hope can become a real reader's notebook.

The editors, together with the Board of Directors of Fepal, had considered writing a manifest summarising the ideas of this publication that is new and old, tradition and invention at the same time. However, as we were receiving the articles that the readers have now in their hands, it became obvious that such a thing was unnecessary, or at least, redundant: the whole issue has the role of that inexistent manifest. And in our view –we wish you shared that–, it has the (quite Latin American by the way) charm of the unfinished, the promise of a task to come.



Arguments



## Possible Pathways between Invention and Tradition

*Prose lives together with verse: eventually for imagination both are the same. Luckily, we do not belong to only one tradition: we can pursue all of them.*

JORGE LUIS BORGES

*The problem is not inventing, but being invented every hour and that our convincing edition is never finished.*

CARLOS DRUMMOND DE ANDRADE

The dichotomy tradition-invention can be considered an apt synthesis of psychoanalysis, whether one thinks about its theory, its practice, its application into other fields of knowledge or the psychoanalytic movement itself and its institutions.

When psychoanalysis was invented -and here we already have a possible debate-, was it a discovery or an invention? Freud could not ignore or avoid constructing it from various traditions: the scientific tradition of his time, the cultural atmosphere which he lived in, the *end-of-the-century* Vienna, the tradition of the cultures that he knew the most (the Greek and the Hebrew) and his own Jewish tradition, in which he grew up.

When Garma's experience was transposed to Latin America, psychoanalysis had already been modified by the mental and cultural journey that includes *the names and analyses of Reik with Freud and Garma with Reik*. As Garma and other Argentine pioneers analysed those who were then pioneers of other societies, and as others, also coming from Central Europe, arrived in Brazil and other countries, a psychoanalysis with its specificities, some of them subtle and others more noticeable, was developed.

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## Beginning with the analytic room

In recent years, travelling across several countries of the psychoanalytic world, I had the chance to visit many analytic rooms and I have not seen two identical ones: each had some peculiar aspect, or a specific layout of the furniture, or something that was unique and unrepeatable.

Let's take the analytic room and the analytic situation itself as a starting point to begin a brief journey that aims at including the other dimensions of psychoanalysis as well.

Which aspects of the analytic tradition can be found in almost all rooms?

The patient lies on a couch and the analyst sits in an armchair out of sight from the former (although the layouts of those two pieces of furniture vary a lot); the patient begins to talk and from that moment on, the analyst's mind begins to react emotionally before making an intervention which could be a question, a comment, an interpretation, an indication. Supposedly, the patient associates and the analyst listens in floating attention or trying to have an attitude without memory or desire, and thus, the analytic dialogue that takes place will unveil the patient's unconscious aspects as a theoretical objective; those aspects can become apparent through discourse or in relation to the object, during the transference. As Green (2002) proposes, the aim would be to get some psychic change or transformation or to unveil repressed childhood contents.

How many analysts would subscribe completely to the previous paragraph? I imagine that it is an attempt to include in that formulation different theoretical traditions, which at least for me make sense, or that is the way I understand what I try to do in my psychoanalytic practice.

I think that our current difficulty lies in the fact that different theoretical and clinical traditions coexist within the psychoanalytic movement and from that derives the fact, in the same way that we find a great deal of different rooms, that we find the same number of personal syntheses that *help each analyst carry out their duties*.

Let's take an example: Bion. What elements of tradition and invention does this author have, considering just a brief fragment of his valuable contributions? Undoubtedly, it was from Melanie Klein and her concept of projective identification that Bion got the notion container-contained and that, after this, the way to visualise the analytic relation changes radically. When Bion describes a clinical fragment in *Attacks on Linking* (1959) and from that he deduces what could have happened in the mother's relationship with the baby, he is, in my opinion, following Freud's tradition, for example, in his reconstruction of the scene from the little Wolf Man when entering his parents' bedroom, and he does it from the famous dream, but at the same time he invents something new and different from what existed before.

With this I just want to exemplify that in psychoanalysis the relationship between tradition and invention is inseparable even if,

many times, we wanted to name something as new and revolutionary, breaking with the established tradition.

The truth is that we are all in Vienna, Buenos Aires, San Pablo, Mexico, Montevideo at the same time and that the analyst's and the patient's cities inhabit the analysis' room with their past, present, future, virtual, desired, dreamed, imaginary, traditional and invented dimensions (Eizirik, 2008). What I want to say is that possibly year after year the situation of psychoanalysis becomes more complex, and naturally more fascinating, as new authors make their contributions and the clinical analyst, sitting in the room with their patient, faces a distressing dilemma: to seek shelter in tradition or to allow the inventions generated by our most creative authors, or perhaps by each analyst in their relationship with each patient, to invade that space and demand permanent mental work in our daily practice. An example, possibly shared by many analysts, is found in this experience about how analysts can change their view on what their clinical activity consists in:

“Besides, I understood that the core of my job consisted in ‘translating’ (or better, helping patients themselves to do it), at the right time, what was already ‘written’ in the unconscious, family or individual, from indirect evidences, mainly linguistic, which my patients gave me, subject of knowledge. For that purpose I had to interfere as little as possible deploying what was folded by defense, acting as much *per via di levare* as I could. Now, I consider that this only embraces a part of the complexity of psychic processes on which psychoanalytic clinic is based; a part that leaves out aspects which today I consider essential such as the crucial role of the radically new emergents and bonding productions, whose understanding eludes a deterministic view of psychism”. (Moreno, 2000, p.1)

This emphasises an issue that is part of our theme: to what extent are we, our patients and ourselves, doomed to compulsion, to repetition and to constant evaluation in each analysis, within a deterministic view that guided Freudian thought? Or is there any room for what is unexpected, radically new, surprising, and indefinite in each analytic field? Tradition or invention? Tradition and invention? (Moreno, 2000; Berenstein, 2001; Knijnik et al., 2011)

If we take both terms to their extremes, we can think that every day or in each analytic session we face an epistemological dilemma: we either remain within the tradition of what is already known or we dare to go into unknown territory that will take us to invent with each patient a new fact within the analytic field. Perhaps it is more realistic to say that we move within that territory through advances and setbacks and that we swing between moments of tradition and of invention since both are an inevitable part of an analytic process. If we just remain in tradition, petrification is in store for us; if we just remain in invention, an

adventure without historical grounds.

I will try to re-write that paragraph: The patient lies on a couch and the analyst sits in an armchair out of sight from the former; the patient begins to talk and from that moment on, the analyst's mind begins to react emotionally before making an intervention which could be a question, a comment, an interpretation, an indication. What follows is a relationship in which

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*(I am leaving the lines above open so that all possible readers of this text continue the phrase according to the way in which they see their analytic activity).*

### **Something about psychoanalytic thought**

It would be artificial to restrict the approach to this topic to only one geographical space because nowadays, thanks to something radically new and unthinkable until recently, that is the Internet, such spaces do not exist anymore. Still, only to illustrate this complexity, an analyst who wants to be slightly updated about what is produce in Latin America, since this is in traditional geography the space we inhabit, could not leave the necessary awareness of the main Latin American contributions to psychoanalysis made by Lewkowicz and Flechner (2005) outside their view of psychoanalysis. To what extent was psychoanalysis implanted in Latin America based on its European tradition and to what extent was it reinvented or invented in the new continent?

A thorough evaluation of the original ideas developed in Latin America (Etchegoyen and Zysman, 2005) allows us to find some seminal contributions that are already part of the psychoanalytic tradition of the continent. Among the classic authors from the continent, that is, those who invented new theoretical clinical or institutional paths starting from tradition and who are nowadays part of our shared tradition, we can name Ángel Garma, Arnaldo Rascovsky, Enrique Pichon Rivière, Arminda Aberastury, Celes Cárcamo, José Bleger, Marie Langer, Heinrich Racker, León Grinberg, David Liberman, Ignacio Matte

Blanco, Willy and Madeleine Baranger, Santiago Ramírez, Durval Marcondes, Virginia Leone Bicudo, Danilo and Marialzira Perestrello, Mario Martins. Space constraints do not allow pointing out each one's original ideas and initiatives, but during the years after the psychoanalytic revolution in Latin America (Cesio, 2000), new and stimulating contributions went on developing.

Among the many creations and inventions of Latin American psychoanalysis, at least for me, the most stimulating in the last years has been that of Willy and Madeleine Baranger about the *analytic field, the bastion* and all its theoretical and clinical consequences. Apart from being a contribution that has stimulated creative developments in Latin America (for instance, Kancyper, 2009) and in other regions (for instance, Ferro and Basile, 2009), I think that it is a way of dealing with analytic work that, in spite of being some decades old, allows us to live the analytic process in a way that is compatible with the thought that characterises the movement of science and contemporary humanities (Eizirik, 2010).

As regards the main pioneers, time, that great sculptor (Yourcenar, 1983), has done with its contributions what it does to sculptures, that is, it changes them, it mutilates them, it transforms them, it creates new shapes, but it still allows us to see or imagine what still exists or what used to be splendid some day.

It is more difficult to evaluate the dimension of what is still developing. A contemporary evaluation of what a development process is undergoing is hard because it includes narcissistic elements (so present in our remarkable new world), inevitable blindnesses, varied interests and other well-known elements.

Besides, how can we aim at any objectivity or ability to have a comprehensive view? Anyway, since I consider psychoanalysis as a *work in progress* (Eizirik, 2006), with great satisfaction I see that a significant number of our colleagues are now working in an ambitious project coordinated by Jean Marc Tauszik, whose aim is to map and describe Latin American psychoanalytic thought. There is a question that always appears again and perhaps needs more discussion: is there a Latin American psychoanalysis? I do not think it is possible to find a closed unity in this mosaic where theoretical, practical, and institutional developments and different cultures unfold in this region. But I do believe that several specific trends of Latin America can be observed. The first is a close exchange with the cultural environment, which influences psychoanalysis, and at the same time is influenced by it; the second is a growing theoretical pluralism that allows and stimulates the dialogue between different theories evidencing a definite contrast with previous times during which the theoretical frameworks were so uniform and closed and usually prevailed in each country or society in a specific way.

As a result, we can see a more open atmosphere from the theoretical, and clinical point of view and in the institutional discussion, where listening to divergent points of view might allow us to establish real controversies (Bernardi, 2003) and help to face complexity,

fragmentation and uncertainty. The trademarks of present-day culture lead to a concern for protecting the quality and rigour of analytic training despite the existence of different training models and the constant economic and social restrictions. In many Latin American societies (and we refer to our own listening in consecutive clinical presentations in IPA's three geographical regions), it is possible to identify the presence of a special way to present clinical material, which is more intimate and direct, which aims at understanding the emotion present in the analytic field establishing a smoother atmosphere between analyst and patient, and which keeps the asymmetry but allows more spontaneous and natural communication (Eizirik y Widlöcher, 2005).

### **About institutional life**

As analysts we do not practise our profession *in a vacuum*; we practise within different, specific contexts with their own traditions and also some modest and timid inventions. I think that we must still carry out broader studies and research about psychoanalytic institutions, but having been an active participant in many of them for many years, I have learnt through different experiences to value them with a critical and, as far as possible, realistic perspective on their possibilities and limitations. This is a field in which tradition plays an important role in terms of analytic training and a shared common history, at the level of fantasy as well as of historical events; in them we relive our own family experience and our transference histories in different ways (Bolognini, 2008). However, tradition can also be an instrument for control, conservatism and castration of new initiatives, apart from a greater opening of the space for new ideas together with a more active presence of young analysts. The stagnant division in member categories, rigid curricula, difficulties imposed for progress in the analytic career, the uncritical obedience to international patterns (which luckily found a new reality in the adoption of the three models of analytic training, perhaps a stimulating invention by IPA in recent years), were some of the worst aspects of a tradition that resembled the dictatorial regimes in our region and that contributed to destroy creativity in our training (Kernberg, 1996).

It seems to me that the room for invention in our institutions should be in a critical training that stimulates independent thinking and a more active participation of young analysts. By the way, to what extent is Latin American theoretical tradition present in our curricula? That invention should take into account a greater interaction with culture including university, health systems, and health sciences; stimulate psychoanalytic inquiry in its diverse dimensions (clinical, empirical, conceptual); consider the many avenues along which psychoanalysis can move (children and teenagers, elderly people, families, couples); search for a constant dialogue between the different ways to practise and think psychoanalysis. That search should not remain in each institution but it should include all the other regions of our psychoanalytic world (for example, within the spirit that encouraged the creation of CAPSA).

## **Invention, reinvention?**

All in all, I think that we move and swing between tradition and invention throughout our vital cycle as analysts and within the vital cycle of our institutions, theories and practices. As Borges pointed out, *after all these years I have observed that beauty, like happiness, is frequent. A day does not pass when we are not, for an instant, in paradise. There is no poet, however mediocre, who has not written the best line in literature, but also the most miserable ones. Beauty is not a privilege of a few illustrious names.* (1985, p. 13). In the same way, in each analyst's practice and inside their minds, or even further, in each analytic field they create with each patient, tradition and invention coexist, follow each other, oppose each other, live together and, in certain way, characterise a dialectic relationship that is present in almost all the areas of this moment of culture. In the space that is specific to us, that of the analytic office, every day we have the chance to revisit our theoretical and clinical traditions; to invent new possibilities in this endless work with the unconscious, ours and the patient's, expecting that our convincing edition is never finished, as Drummond suggested.

That is how I think we reinvent psychoanalysis during our vital journey, with its difficulties, doubts, limitations, abilities, failures and achievements. Besides, from time to time, we are capable of creating new sounds and writing verses, which allow us to be, at least for a second, in heaven.

**Key words:** *Creation, History of Psychoanalysis, Psychoanalytic Institution, Analytic Situation, Pluralism.*

**Prospect key words:** *Invention.*



# The Vase and the Sunflower Seeds. Notes for a Future Tradition



## I. The end of Experience

A privileged witness of the atrocities of the Great War, Walter Benjamin<sup>1</sup>, noticed that the soldiers who returned home from the battle front were engulfed in a prolonged mutism: they were poor regarding a communicable experience. Technological progress<sup>2</sup> –incipient and even naive at the beginning of the last century in light of the vertigo with which its evidences are shown still today– necessarily culminated in the war and was responsible for the pulverization of the experience. Benjamin only knew about the ravages of the First World War, of the Second he barely had the hunch, which he experienced in his own flesh during his useless escape from it, about to what extent of subjective disappearance, of radical questioning of human experience –a new barbarity, he said– it would take us.

Such experience transmitted from older to younger generations, Benjamin recalls, is downtrend, more than ever before. The experience becomes liquid –it dissolves, it liquefies– and the deceitful self-reference of social networks or the instant communication techniques expose, in fact, any subjective appearance. The young patients who visit our consulting rooms, stultified, incapable of accounting for what happens to them; patients unable to even articulate a complaint but with a howling body; those who just from an acting to another can report their subjective orphanage, mimic those soldiers of a war that does not finish: the poverty of their language to express their suffering is just the visible face of the void of experience that has cuddled them.

These clinical events, verifiable by any practitioner, do not arouse in

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1. Benjamin, Walter, *El narrador*, Metales Pesados, Sgo. de Chile, 2008.

2. Technical progress that has in its reverse the insidious fall of the father in occidental culture.

me any melancholic nostalgia of a past time that, unluckily, I did not experience. Rather, I consider that it is a land of opportunities for psychoanalysis since the destruction of the experience itself is what creates the conditions for the emergence of analytic practice.

### **An exercise of tellability**

Obviously not referring to our practice, Benjamin said that, with the decline of the “spirit of narration”, located at the core of the lost experience, the gift of listening is lost, and the community of those who have a vigilant ear<sup>3</sup> disappears. If we call experience what can be narrated<sup>4</sup>, the psychoanalytic experience –inscribed in that lost tradition, that of the craft oral narrative on which memory is based– takes a restorative place in both fields.

For at the same time, as if the antidote had been made together with the poison<sup>5</sup>, that space of resistance<sup>6</sup> was created, the last bastion of subjectivity, natural reserve of the experience which was lost at a dramatic pace, a space where one would give words to mutism: the clinical practice of psychoanalysis, as a unique experience, restores the dimension of human life experience<sup>7</sup>.

In its fractality, psychoanalysis allows the observation under the microscope of each cure of the same structure that rules the experience in epochal terms. What Benjamin describes in historical terms somehow happens, and sometimes it is possible to place it exactly, during the moment prior to a psychoanalytic consultation: a moment of exchange of coordinates, of fall into mutism faced with an experience that is shown torn apart. There, the rupture of experience as generality is evidenced in a multiplicity of unique incidents. Each practitioner can find in their clinic that decisive moment that has often rushed the consultation: the words that suddenly stop flowing when nothing forebode it, all of a sudden hearing in a different way the flow of banalities in which someone stood until then, the sudden realisation of an overweight that has faded together with the memory for which it was the reason... All unique incidents of a single structural event: the rip if not the rupture of the experiential plot that embodies and gives meaning to a life. The symptom that comes into existence at the beginning of an analysis just places it in view of a job about itself.

After that rupture, if there is an encounter with an analyst, some part of that experience will probably be woven in a better way, it will be re-written in a narrative way. There lies what we can do for that subject who

3. Benjamin, Walter, op. cit., p. 70.

4. Sarlo, Beatriz, *Tiempo Pasado, Siglo XXI*, Bs. As., 2005, p. 31.

5. Hölderlin said it: where danger grows, salvation grows as well.

6. Viñar, Marcelo, *Inquietudes en la clínica psicoanalítica actual*, Brasil, 2006.

7. It is Lacan more than anyone who has considered analytic practice in terms of experience, mainly as experience of otherness (Barredo, Carlos, *Psicoanálisis: la experiencia de la alteridad*, in *Docta-Revista de Psicoanálisis* n° 6, APC, Córdoba, 2010).

is speechless: help them tell themselves. There will be rules for the sake of the construction of an account that will be, a posteriori, foundational and effective<sup>8</sup>: the characters should find the consistency and order of a plot, why not a suspense, which will stretch, session after session, in an exercise of oral narrative, the<sup>9</sup> re-writing of a paradoxical story. That in which the analysand –as the Greek poet Pindar said– will become, after the analysis, what he or she is. The experience is restored, it is even constituted in that account where the living to tell the tale invoked by the narrators will give rise to, by being told, the telling the tale to live it of our analysands. That story's signifiers, hence the ethical position of our listening and the way in which it moves away from any literature, must be those of each patient's. We must help them to tell themselves, and not write them like Pygmalion<sup>10</sup>. Thus, the silence with which we receive them to foster that the exercise of tellability which an analysis entails, as it makes tellable something which was not, can also reach that limit, that untellable hole, which claims and resists any symbolisation as well<sup>11</sup>.

### **Tradition and genealogy**

In psychoanalysis, which tradition we are debtors of? Of schools, of traditions of research<sup>12</sup> within which we intervene analytically and generate knowledge? Of institutions with their rituals, their emblems, their flags, their festivities? Of the coding of a technique?

Tradition in psychoanalysis can be thought at various levels, from which now I will take one, the genealogical one. The ways in which knowledge is produced and transmitted in psychoanalysis, from the Freudian founding event onwards, and unlike science which tends to forget its founders<sup>13</sup>, make us a genealogical practice. Our institutions, our research, our conferences, the way in which we debate, the references in which we take shelter always present, beyond the autonomy of the concepts which we deal with, a genealogical filigree.

Tradition in psychoanalysis takes on the form of genealogical transmission, mainly through transference experience on the couch of an analyst that precedes us<sup>14</sup>.

8. Javier García, in Montevideo (Lacan en IPA, 2011) directed clinic towards the construction of effective accounts.

9. Benjamin, Walter, op. cit.

10. Something in the structure of the situation seems to favour the opposite, and one needs to be warned. The person who comes to tell themselves through the sieve of our listening gets exposed to our influence on the story that will be put together, as a more or less awkward editor. Hence, it is not strange to find Kleinian or Lacanian patients, who after having a look at them one can recognize on which couch they have been.

11. Benjamin, Walter, op. cit., p.37.

12. Larry Laudan is the person who has spoken of traditions of research.

13. Foucault, Michel, ¿Qué es un autor?, Ediciones literales/El cuenco de plata, Bs. As., 2010

14. Experience that, as it has often been remembered, is placed at the forefront in an analyst's training by all the analysts, regardless of their institutional membership or theoretical affiliations; unanimous and unknown agreement beyond that precise point.

This model, fruitful in many senses, bears a great difficulty which is the enthronement of tradition in the spring of purity: there is a myth about the origin and the further we get from it, the more impure, the more contaminated, the less noble we are. Purity, however –measurable by the proximity to the sources, be it in time, in space or in the mimesis of the codes and membership passwords– has led to the worst<sup>15</sup>. We should be able to separate what is worth preserving, the incandescence that we must keep burning from generation to generation, from an alleged as well as risky constitutive purity of our identity, which also usually ensures an unquestionable place of power for those transmitters who are genealogically closer to the sources –be these Europeans who have transmitted the psychoanalytic good news or their local mentors who, since they have “touched” them, they keep some of that sacred aura within.

When facing tradition we should think what the right distance is. Neither so close that our practice and its reflection result in a mimesis tributary of repetition; nor so far that it deludes itself as self-generated, without debts but also without roots on which to hold. The right distance allows understanding what tradition contains of fictional, that is of an invention –necessary or not–. It separates us, like a seedpod separates from the seed, from endorsing certain theoretical, technical or institutional untouchables that anchor our identity just like those of our patients identified with a unique signifier without which they would slip into the abyss of madness.

That distance would allow us to take the standards (it is not random the use of the term “standard” in the Spanish texts) , as an “invented tradition”<sup>16</sup> and as such dated (maybe also fetishised) around the twenties in the last century in Berlin. The standards, which sometimes we mistake for the *nec plus ultra* of our identity as psychoanalysts of IPA, guarantee of preservation of our institutions’ purity, are so inseparable from our practice as celibacy is for priests, which is also an acquisition that is historically datable and controversial as regards its validity. At the same time, the right distance allows us –if we get rid of the need for certainties or identity rituals– to calibrate them in its right utility, to distinguish what enables certain regulation in an analyst’s training or in the implementation of a practice, without making that an ideal in the best scenario, or a sort of *sinthome* in the worst.

Each analytic school emerges as a renovation faced with something that started to become entrenched: Freudianism against academic psychology and psychiatry of his time, Kleinism against certain Annafreudian stiffening, Lacanianism against a Freudianism at times prefreudian or a Kleinism that skidded in delusions of self-reference<sup>17</sup>: the new is always fragile, it fulfills its function and ankyloses almost at the same time and, thus, knowledge advances.

15. Sperling, Diana, Contra la pureza, in Docta-Revista de Psicoanálisis n° 4, APC, Córdoba, 2008.

16. “Invented traditions” in Eric Hobsbawm’s brilliant denomination, and as such artificial guarantors of our identity that will benefit from the retroactive illusion that gives prestige to tradition (Hobsbawm, Eric y Ranger, Terence, La invención de la tradición, Crítica, Barcelona, 2002).

17. Right now the renewal that questions Lacanism is probably being conceived; the new avant-garde.

In each period, in turn, it could be modern to return to something supposedly displaced: sometimes being deliberately anachronistic<sup>18</sup> can be revolutionary.

How should genealogy and tradition in psychoanalysis be thought? How should eclecticism be avoided without resigning to a personal position of enunciation, avoiding the psittacism of quotes<sup>19</sup> and constantly aligning in theoretical or scholastic shibboleths<sup>20</sup>?

There have been, in Latin American psychoanalysis, moments of so much theoretical submission to certain English matrix, for instance, that it would be suitable to speculate that many analysts, if they had been able to, would have placed the steering wheel of their vehicles and started to drive on the left side of the road. Obviously, it could be said, this would have made them cause difficulties in our cities' traffic and cause more than little damage, to themselves and to others. And I believe that is what happened, perhaps in a less evident way, in the mass, adherent, fanatical adoption of the British style.

Today, at least in my country, Lacanism –beyond its multiple versions– takes the place of the predominant ideal, which also leads to listen to the analysts' everyday speech full of Gallicisms and with a syntactic structure that, trying to identify with the unmistakable orality of Lacan<sup>21</sup>, ends up being just a misuse of Spanish.

If we talk about tradition in genealogical terms, we should identification and the way in which the end of the analyses is thought, according to the conception of operant transference. Perhaps these extreme examples of identification bordering parody light up a series of situations that, for being less evident, go unnoticed many times.

#### **IV. A fertile hybridity**

When we intend to anchor our affiliation to tradition in any orthodoxy, we get lost. Where can we find then the true core of our tradition, that which is convenient to honour, as analysts and above all as Latin American analysts? How can we connect with the psychoanalytic tradition from Latin America? It might be convenient, as Benjamin advised in relation to history, to brush psychoanalytic tradition against the grain.<sup>22</sup>

We should reconsider the place of theories in that tradition. Although each theory is a self-referential system, which organises the, that know how to host their flaw, their incompleteness, and from there, understandable phenomena in a field it creates at the same time, we

18. Horenstein, Mariano, Alegato por una cierta (in)actualidad, San Luis, 2009.

19. Braunstein, Néstor, Freudiano y lacaniano, Manantial, Bs. As., 1994.

20. Cabral, Alberto, Lacan y el debate sobre la contratransferencia, Letra Viva, Bs. As., 2009.

21. Lacan seems to have considered (El Seminario XI, Los cuatro conceptos fundamentales del psicoanálisis, Paidós, Bs. As., 1986, p. 182) only German, English and French as culture languages. What about Spanish? And Portuguese? Which role does Spanish or Portuguese, not Latin American, cultures play in the mind of the masters? What does in fact a psychoanalysis in Spanish/Portuguese mean?

22. Benjamin, Walter, *Sobre el concepto de historia*, en Conceptos de filosofía de la historia, Terramar, La Plata, 2007, p. 69.

should tend to theories that do not appear as closed systems they should be theories that give rise to the new, not invented yet. Only that way, with a genealogical chaining between theories and also between masters where a shortage is what is transmitted will we have an updated tradition, far from a museum or from history.

Perhaps we should think the genealogy of Latin American psychoanalysis moving away from any orthodoxy, rather as mere heterodoxy. We should think it in terms of hybridity, miscegenation and cross-fertilization, of large families and spirit released from ties as well as promises; a psychoanalysis unaware of any regulating experience since we practise it in a continent that, for better or for worse, seems impossible to regulate.

Perhaps our genealogical bond with psychoanalytic tradition has to be thought from the borders of the Western world since it is that and not another, the place where we practise our strange profession: in cities that are usually populated and contradictory, effervescent and smelly, selective and filled with possibilities, fatigued cities since they go uphill in their learning curve towards what they could be, and not in the comfortable way down of an exhausted tradition. These cities of incipient tradition are border cities: one of the borders of the Western world like some time ago were, towards the East, the cities of Vienna, Budapest or Berlin, ancient multicultural epicentres where psychoanalysis was born. For psychoanalysis was conceived in marginal territory: although Vienna was a great capital, it was landfill of the peoples of the Austro-Hungarian empire, which enabled the Freudian invention. And it was also marginal in relation to the institutionalised knowledge of its time. It was as a result of a fragmentary encounter of traditions (Jewish, Greco-Roman, German) or rather an overlapping of foreignness that psychoanalysis was coined.

And even though its theoretical replacements have come from the centres of irradiation of power and ideas –London, Paris, New York– it is difficult to think that a true reinvention of our practice could come from the developed world; one that is so faithful to the roots, to tradition, as to make it burst.

If psychoanalysis finds the most fertile environment for its development in the border territory, it should look for a way of relating to the sovereign states, to the prevailing genealogies, different from that of inheritance, the tradition where we always end up playing the role of readers, of audience, if not that of clique of a play represented most of the times in other languages in which the main roles are always played by others.

We should think from Latin America without localisms or chauvinisms, but also without remnants of colonialism. We owe Lévi Strauss as well as Lacan or Green to French thought, but also the techniques of the Secret Army Organisation, which shaped state terrorism in our countries. We owe Wittgenstein or Freud as well as Hitler to the Vienna of the beginning of the twentieth century.

Many central countries –unlike ours, apparently doomed to anomie– respect red traffic lights at any cost but the same acceptance of

rules without questioning take them to abide by unworthy laws such as Nüremberg's, which ended up in genocide. Besides, the Spain of the discovery and language was also that of conquest and plagues.

If tradition refers to, as I said, the purity of origins<sup>23</sup> as legitimating function, in Latin America, as a continent of immigration, we seem to be doomed to eternal impurity in relation to European metropolises, where psychoanalytic agalma would concentrate.

Thus, hybridity, miscegenation, could be conceived as a disadvantage that would doom us to an eternal dependence on whatever is produced abroad, where purity would nest. An analyst from our side<sup>24</sup>, with full knowledge of the facts, said that, for Europe, we are not the Western world, but a hybrid. Always defined from the Other side, we might as well reverse the critical load of European appraisal to turn it into a spring of our privilege.

In that sense, a patient referred to himself as coming from the crossbreed of two different lineages and in his profession's jargon – linked to animal breeding– was proud of the hybrid vigour that resulted from that cross. We must aim at that appropriating tradition while we make it burst. It is on the margins that our discipline was born –Latin America, no doubt, is the margins– and it is from that place where there are more chances for vigour to appear as a result of breed and not of purity.

Which are the ways of appropriating a tradition for those who do not belong to it? Mimicking it, continuing it, idealising it? Accepting the transmission via colonisation condemns us to always receive second-hand things, eternal indigenes and indigents; a market of consumers rather than of producers. It is tempting to think of kidnapping, trafficking, misappropriation<sup>25</sup>, cannibalism even as a way of inaugurating something outside tradition, as a way of exogamy. Perhaps we should pay attention to the clue that - with certain Freudian inspiration– points to the Brazilian modernist movement, the cannibalistic movement<sup>26</sup>: to devour the other critically, to rebel against any catechesis, even psychoanalytic catecheses of the best cradle, to rebel against cadaverised ideas... to reverse the capitalist equation devouring the other, the conqueror,... to export it then, processed, from here.

23. Even when the intended purity reveals in fact an impurity, an older fusion constituting most of the times a retractive illusion.

24. It is Jorge Bruce, who practises analysis in Lima and lived in Paris for many years, in a panel at Fepal Conference in Bogotá in 2010.

25. Prometheus steals fire from the gods to give to human beings.

26. I owe my approach to the cannibalist manifest to Leopold Nosek and his comment in the streets of Bogotá, which should be compulsory reading for any Latin American (analyst).



Being a Latin American psychoanalyst, like Caliban<sup>27</sup>, implies accepting oneself as cosmopolitan, unapologetic, a voracious reader of everything but not like a childish obeisance of the colonised but like a declasse omnivorousness, to –after all Caliban is an anthropophagous– cannibalise it better.

Getting around the swamp of eclecticism, then it would be convenient for the notion of hybridity or miscegenation<sup>28</sup> to be uptrend, which moves away from the scholastic or echolalic reference and longs for a tradition that is forged in the present, that preserves a place for a unique style, at the same time marked on the edge with a group password: psychoanalysis in/from Latin America, as a sign that identifies us and does not refer to an author, not even a Latin American one. We should build a collective mark like the one that identifies, for example Swedish design or Bauhaus, the French New Wave or Dogme 95, where not matter who the author is (and of course there are); a geographic and temporal reference referring to a community spirit that always injects individual style and is recognisable before anything else. Perhaps we should not investigate the mark of Latin American psychoanalysis in the language or the bibliography or the cadence but in certain place of enunciation, at the same time absolutely singular and viscerally universal.

In Latin America the catastrophe of experience has not been so strong. We are used to catastrophes, natural and political, but our experience stays alive, much longer than the one tangible in the first world capitals. Even the art of narration, whose decline Benjamin associated to the catastrophe of experience, survives longer among us. Here we can – we must– rescue the singularity of a gesture, mestizo and marginal, subversive and contradictory, closer to an experience diluted in what is called postmodernism. Rather than the sepoy echo, the soft news of cultural colonised, we can restore impurity in the heart of psychoanalysis, that impurity that gave way to the pearls; return that impure and iconoclastic spirit that is necessarily crushed in the process of institutionalisation.

Being a Latin American psychoanalyst does not mean being forced

27. Hugo Achugar (Pluralidad incontrolable de discursos y baluceo teórico, en Docta-Revista de Psicoanálisis, n. 0, APC, Córdoba, 2003) takes the characters from *The Tempest*, by William Shakespeare, to distinguish the language spoken by Prosper, bearer of the conquerors' language, and that babbled by native Caliban –anagram of cannibal– in whom the figure of a colonized wanted to be seen. “Prosper has tried to teach Caliban to speak –he says– but he has just learnt to speak incoherently, to speak nonsense, to babble. Caliban cannot speak the language of the conquerors correctly”. Following Fernández Retamar (Calibán. Apuntes sobre la cultura de nuestra América, www.literatura.us), he claims the right to theoretical discourse, abandoning the position of mere mimicry of those who belong to the margins of the capitalist world and he wonders: “Can Latin American barbarians theorise; can they speak or just babble?”

28. Efectos de las teorías y de la clínica de Lacan en el psicoanálisis no-lacaniano, Alberto Cabral, Mariano Horenstein, Rómulo Lander, XXVIII Congreso Latinoamericano de Psicoanálisis, Bogotá, 2010.

to quote authors from the region<sup>29</sup> or falling into a folk regionalism of *mate* or *mojito*. Let alone take on the responsibility for a degradation of pure standards. This is a question of considering which psychoanalysis Caliban would practise<sup>30</sup>, most probably different from Prosper's. Caliban, the analyst, produces in his own language<sup>31</sup>; he does not practise a degraded version but one different from Prosper's analysis. Even an analysis from which Prosper might have something to learn.

How can we resend the plague to Europe? That could be a good question to debate in our encounters. That plague, like others, introduced at the very moment of the conquest and that through invention unveils the true fictional quality of psychoanalysis<sup>32</sup>, perhaps it is the content of our mission as Latin American psychoanalysts: Are we capable of contaminating, in the best sense, a North American psychoanalysis that relies too much on psychologising premises and on an elusive bourgeois well-being for us, those who are south of the borders controlled by Texan sheriffs? Can we renew the analytic experience that shipwrecks maybe when European practice becomes stagnant in an excess of certainties and convictions or in the control that underlies state funding?

## V. Whispering in the ears

In a well-known photographic triptych, Chinese artist Ai Wei Wei appears alone, standing in front of a wall at the time of dropping a vase of the Han dynasty (from 206 B.C. to 220 A.D.). The black and white sequence of photographs respectively shows the artist barely holding the vase in one; in the other, while the artist has opened his hands, the vase appears in the air, centimetres from the ground; and in the third, the vase shattered on the ground while the artist, with the same indifferent gesture in the three photographs, is still standing with his hands open. This iconoclastic action of a contemporary emblematic artist was, as he commented himself, a way of "liberating from the weight of tradition".<sup>33</sup> What this photographic sequence highlights, and Ai Wei Wei's whole work, is to what extent it is possible to invent something new without getting rid of the crushing weight of tradition.

Perhaps –without the need to reach the extreme of Wei Wei, without dropping the baby into the bathtub's dirty water– it is necessary to take on tradition with a bit of treason, otherwise it becomes an empty boring speech, a caricatural vindication of origins that is usually at the service of some power, if not of Alzheimer's. Tradition –understood in a good

29. The fact that Fepal has to suggest that we quote among us, however, evidences contempt with which we (not even) look at our production.

30. A way of considering –and distinguishing– the place of tradition in a central country and in a peripheral one.

31. Not in English that, Prosper's language, has become the lingua franca of the world, also of the psychoanalytic one.

32. Since apparently that phrase ("they don't realise we are bringing them the plague"), supposedly said by Freud to Jung during the sailing trip to the U.S. to give the conferences at the Clark University, was never uttered.

33. The cost of Ai Wei Wei's iconoclasm has not been small: arrested by the Chinese authorities, he was virtually missing. Only his international renown seems to have saved him from suffering the fate that the artist yearned for tradition.

way— forces us to constantly re-read the past, betraying previous readings faithfulness, Celan says, belongs to the traitor<sup>34</sup>— so as not to turn it into a defensive bastion.

Each period does not demand a supplement to tradition, as new annuals are added to a collection of magazines, but a whole review and tune-up of the collection that reads again as if it was new all previous work; that pulls off tradition, like Benjamin wished, from conformity always on the brink of yielding it<sup>35</sup>.

The concept of tradition in psychoanalysis is inseparable from *nachträglichkeit*, and thus it becomes almost indistinguishable from invention. We imagine that tradition concerns the past and invention the future, but from the inclusion of Freudian retroactivity we break up with any idea of temporal linearity. If there is something that is called as tradition is from what is new<sup>36</sup>; if something can be invented is from a tradition. Hence, contrary to what one might think, tradition concerns the future. It does not account for the question about the origin, where we come from, but about the fate: what we want to give rise to. It does not have to do identity but with the project and desire.

Let me resort to a metaphor, related to the way in which tradition and invention interweave until they become indistinguishable: psychoanalysis is a retrofuturistic machine<sup>37</sup> that owes its effectiveness, its own being out-of-date<sup>38</sup>.

Analysis should accept a character —inscribed in its DNA— that makes it go against the tide. Not only during this period when the end of experience seems to be certain, but during all of them.

Psychoanalysts never know for sure how to place ourselves, in the romantic melancholy that longs for an always better past or in the mimetic identification with the emblems of a progress that leaves us out. How can we get out of this impasse? Will psychoanalysis, an anachronistic device for many, survive?

Some have decided to increase the relations with university knowledge or with neurosciences or lobby faced with state power<sup>39</sup>.

We rediscover instead the territory of experience inherent to our language praxis where others do their best to build an experiment, and we do not remove an inch of rigour from our practice when we notice that its formalisation avoids that of science; something that, on the other hand, scientists notice well. For we care more about the integrity

34. Tan sólo al desertar soy fiel. Yo soy tú cuando soy yo (Alabanza de la lejanía, Paul Celan).t

35. Benjamin, Walter, Sobre el concepto de historia, op. cit., p. 67-8.36

36. In the end, one invents a tradition as one invents a father; tradition that is not given beforehand but that is built, instantly, after a choice. At the same time, without the symbolic murder of that father, there is no chance of the emergence of a unique enunciation, that is: of an invention.

37. Science fiction from some years ago sketched retrofuturistic devices that, like Brazil or other films inspired by stories by Philip K. Dick, imagined a future with elements from the past.

38. Horenstein, M., Alegato... Enrique Torres has remarked something valuable in that sense (Jornadas Otro Lacan, Córdoba, 2007).

39. Perhaps all this must be done, though I believe that it is not psychoanalytic operation that works in those cases but something of a different nature.

of our procedures, the ethics that threads our position and guides our interventions and the minutia of our training than the acquisition of certain body language or scientific vocabulary that, most of the times, only leads to imposture.

The psychoanalyst's shelter might be the last kind of clinical knowledge that still in medicine tends to disappear in the seaquake of technology and the haste of encounters. Their consulting room could be the last hideout for the chance of listening, disappearing.

Thus, we are forced to unblock ears: society perceives well the difference between someone who listens without assumptions and someone who does it with outdated cliches. It is a matter of survival:

I doubt that the analyst as a technician enjoys social fervor again, if they ever had it. The psychoanalyst as a listener, as an officiant of patient and unknown listening, as a practitioner, why not a wiseman<sup>40</sup>, will enjoy a good future. Obviously that forces us to constantly re-think ourselves, train ourselves absorbing from many sources and evaluate every inch of our path to see if we are at the level of what our profession demands us.

You must remember Fahrenheit 451, Bradbury's novel, in which a totalitarian government undertakes the destruction of all the books considered responsible for making their readers different, unique. When any book, as an object, seems doomed to inevitable disappearance, some men and women fight back learning them by heart, books preserved from that moment on and that will recite to whom is willing to listen. We can imagine these brave ones passing the literate memory to others, whispering in each other's ears, one to another, avoiding its loss.

Like characters from Fahrenheit 451, psychoanalysts are the guardians of certain lost experience. I am not referring here only to analytic experience, but just to experience, which seems to be doomed to disappear. And we pass it on from one to another, from analyst to analysand, whispering<sup>41</sup>, like a mystery, like a fire that must not be extinguished, in the miracle of transference. And in that sense, if we are at the level of our function, there will be psychoanalysis while there are psychoanalysts.

At Tate Modern in London, in its huge turbine hall, Ai Wei Wei exhibited, after breaking his base of tradition, an installation called Sunflower seeds: a million little pieces of porcelain<sup>42</sup> with the figure of seeds were scattered on the floor. Each of them apparently indistinguishable from the others, molten in a layer, was however unique, hand-painted by a Chinese craftsman. The work of art sym

40. Even when his wisdom is that of educated ignorance.

41. The removal of the look intended by the analytic device has been highlighted by placing the analyst behind the couch, but in this way, the analyst does not whisper in the patient's ears, with all the effectiveness inherent to almost intimacy.

42. When Cali Barredo was reading a draft of this account, had a revealing lapse by understanding that the sunflower seeds were made of the same broken porcelain of the shattered vases. This wonderful lapse, almost as an interpretation, reveals in her sharp listening analytic operating showing an amount of truth even greater than what I had aimed to write: it is with the shattered fragments of tradition that we invent. A truth that, we speculate, Ai Wei Wei himself would endorse with enthusiasm as his own.

bolised, according to Wei Wei, “the individuality between what is apparently uniform”. The same that the experience of an analysis produces and that analysts, like Bradbury’s heroes, must know how to preserve.

**Key words:** *Experience, Listening, Ethics, Genealogy.* **Prospect**  
**key words:** *Invention, Latin American psychoanalysis, Tradition.*



# Reviewing the transition from Freud, the neurologist, to Freud, the psychoanalyst

*Truth is born as heresy and dies as dogma.*

HUMBERTO ECO

## Introduction

The development of psychoanalysis has always swung from academic tradition to creative innovation. Psychoanalysis was considered by its author as a discipline derived from medicine, as a natural science. When Freud finished his medical studies, he worked as a researcher in the pathological neurology laboratory of his professor, doctor Ernest Brucke, in the University of Vienna, where he did research on neurological histology. His training in histology made him conceive places; thus, he would represent the mental apparatus, first of all, in areas, “the first Freudian topic.” In 1883, he obtained a position as a clinical neurologist, a change that also brought about the modification of his objects of study, which moved from the intricate neural networks to neurological clinic, a field where he discovered a group of patients who were called neurotics, who could not find any solution to their suffering with the therapeutic resources of the time. Freud’s aim was to find an effective method of treatment for those patients; he proposed a psychic mechanism as the cause of the disorder; thus, opposing the premises of Janet and Charcot, who proposed a hereditary or degenerative determination. Freud proposed a traumatic cause. Therefore, for him, neurosis was acquired. He became Dr. Breuer’s assistant, who talked to him about one of his patients, Ana O., a night of July in 1883. Ana O. was a young woman who described to him the events that triggered her symptoms and discovered that after recalling these events, particularly difficult ones, there was an improvement in her condition. That led Freud to listen attentively to what his patients needed to tell. If the patient was able to recall the trauma or the series of interrelated traumas, including the event as well as the emotion, when they were able to describe it in a detailed way, this resulted in the disappearance of the symptom. He called this process “the cathartic method.” He discovered that his hysterical patients’ symptoms were always related to sexual abuse during childhood and he postulated that hysterical patients suffered from “reminiscences” (Freud, 1885) of those traumatic events; memories that the person separated from their habitual consciousness, segregating them into a kind of second consciousness in which they remained apparently forgotten, and thus unknown, to even the subjects who suffered them. In this way Freud discovered a new treatment for neuroses; the mechanics in which this method produced its effects

\* Psychoanalyst (Mexican Psychoanalytic Society)

consisted in cancelling the power of the idea, giving way, through verbal expression, to the associated emotion, undischarged, which had been stagnant. The idea of normal consciousness was introduced again, rectifying a false association through a link by displacement.

Freud innovated, modified the understanding of his time of neuroses and their classification. He postulated that neurosis could be classified in: a) **defense neuroses**, which were those in which a psychic mechanism could be identified; **defense** or repression against intolerable memories, and b) **simple or actual neuroses**, where this mechanism was absent; within these he described: neurasthenia and anxiety neurosis. For actual neurosis he proposed that its cause had to be found in an abnormal relief of sexuality in a patient's adult's life.

As regards defense neurosis, at the beginning he supposed that its cause was that a defense against the memory of a trauma, which in this way was repressed, was built thus avoiding recalling it and avoiding the unpleasant emotion that comes with it, which is usually anguish.

Freud proposed that, faced with a patient's traumatic event, such memory should be separated from its emotional load and, through a mechanism he would call **defense or repression**, it would remain separate from the main conscious group of ideas: "ego", sending it to a secondary group separate from "ego" which did not have access to consciousness. Once the idea was repressed and the emotion was separated from the idea, the emotion took another path; it canalised to the body, and had, as a result, a symptom that became a physical condition; establishing a conversion symptom.

Obviously, for the researcher's disciplined mind, how did the memories become pathogenic? This was a concern for young Freud, who tried, with fragmented clinical experiences, to create an explanatory model that allowed him to understand these clinical manifestations. He reflected such model in his work "Project Psychology for Neurologists" still attached to the tradition of his training as a patho-neurologist.

In this work he states that when a traumatic situation takes place, with the passing of time, memories reduce their emotional load and, after repeated recollections, they become just memories. This process, however, does not take place like that in neuroses, in which even the opposite happens. A childhood event that could be experienced at the time in a pleasant or indifferent way, after puberty, when recalling it, can raise a distressing emotion and thus it triggers the mechanism of repression since the normal mechanism, that of repeating the memory until the emotion is exhausted, becomes ineffective.

In his works, Freud tells us that he studied hundreds of cases and found similar experiences thus stating as a hypothesis that traumatic experiences were the cause of the disorder. Thus, he postulated his first model of psychopathology: the model of the traumatic etiology of neurosis. The distinctive characteristic of those experiences was that they were of sexual nature.

Thus, in his work "the Project", he aims at explaining the transformation that took place from these sexual childhood experiences until their persistent memories that became a source of displeasure and that triggered the mechanism of repression.

Freud poses, with little concrete evidence but a great creative and innovative ability, seminal ideas that he will develop throughout his works. His patients described to him scenes of sexual seduction by their fathers, when they were girls of 4 to 5 years. A crucial moment in his career is when, on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1897, he writes to his colleague and confidant, Wilhelm Fliess, that he no longer believed in his neurotics since he thought it was impossible that there was so much abuse in Viennese families. Making a decisive turn in his approach he discovers that such memories were actually fantasies. Thus, he places *fantasy* as the cause of the disorder and this is his second model of etiology of neurosis: they were caused by pathogenic fantasies.

For an ordinary man this blow could be devastating. However, after a period of discouragement, his strength as a researcher placed him back on track and in this way he wondered: how do fantasies become the cause of the disorder? For many authors, psychoanalysis is truly born at this moment.

Fantasy as an etiologic agent substitutes the hypothesis of real trauma. As regards fantasies, he states: fantasies are generated by an unconscious combination between experiences and things that were heard and were assessed later and thus combine: what was experienced and heard, the past (of the parents' and ancestors' history) with what was seen by oneself. Thus, a fragment of the observed scene is blended in fantasy with another fragment of the heard scene.

Hysterical symptoms are built over the fantasies; they are the most immediate previous stages of these symptoms. Doing research on children's sexual theories he makes surprising discoveries. The first is that the child fantasised that his mother also has a penis like the father and himself, describing the fantasised image of the phallic mother. I will not continue with the evolution of Freudian thought but I only want to take one part in the following section and it is his ability to visualise and abstract the processes he didn't research on.

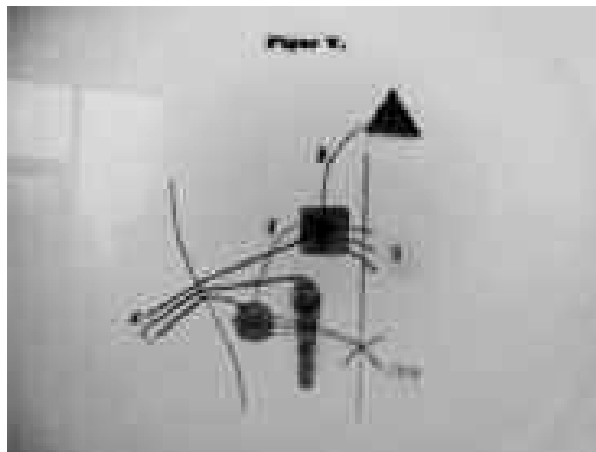
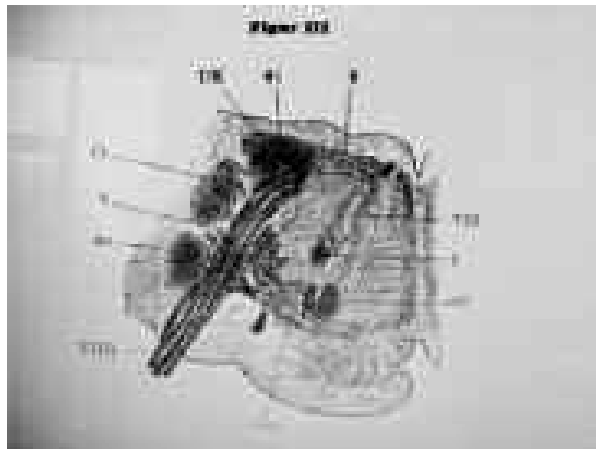
### **Schematic evolution of Freudian thought**

Since Freud's time one of the study methodologies of brain function has been an approach of neurofunctional anatomy. This implies relating brain structures by describing its anatomy and associating them through different techniques with the functional connections of other brain areas. Through the following schemes I will try to present the evolution of Freud's thought as a neurologist until his thought as a psychoanalyst. Examples of this are Freud's first drawings. Here we can see a schematic drawing of the anatomy of the acoustic nerve in a human foetus.

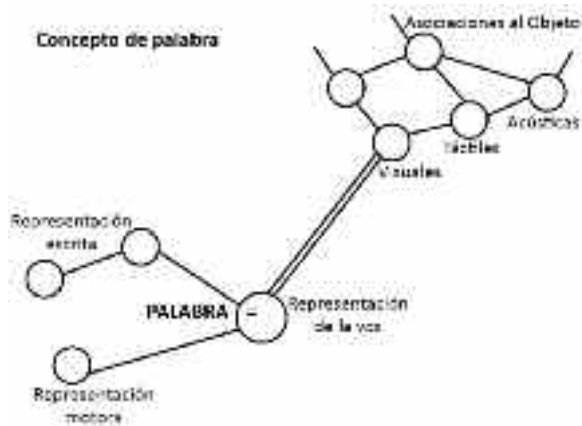
Here follows its schematic representation, showing its neuronal connections.

We must remember that Freud was one of the pioneers in the study of neural conduction and he postulated synapse, which is the transmission of stimulus between one neuron and another, before Sherrington named it like this, as well as the neural conduction of the reflex arc.





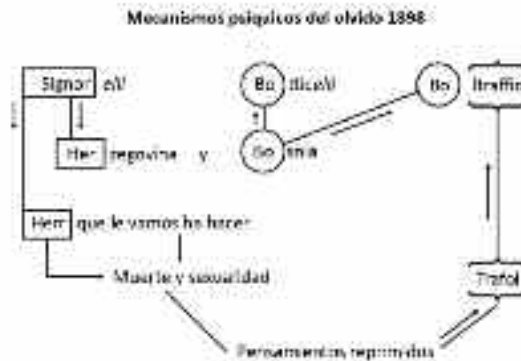
In 1891, in his article about aphasia, Freud offers us this scheme.



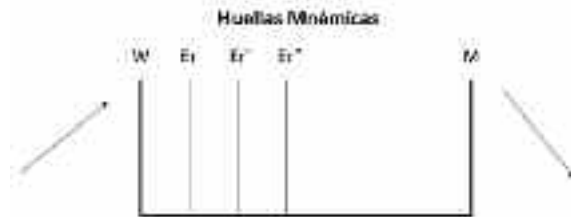
In this scheme, Freud establishes the representation of the world that the subject makes through words and represents their different elements,

what is seen, heard, felt; a conceptualisation that will be present throughout all his work. This scheme would help him understand the mechanisms for the construction of fantasies similar to the construction of dreams.

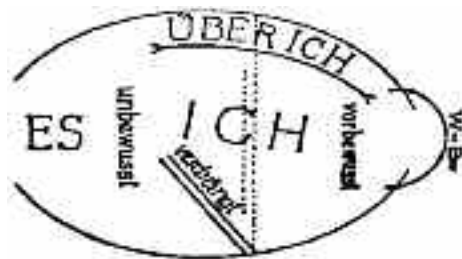
His first schemes refer to neural structures and as he got deeper into the functional problem, he was further away from the concrete anatomic references until he outlined the functioning of the mental system exclusively in abstract schemes. In this way he outlined, in 1898, how forgetfulness works in his work *The Psychological Mechanism of Forgetfulness*.



We get to Freud's schemes of 1900 in his work *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in which he outlines the functioning of the mental system and explains the fundamental role of memory in it. There he follows the logics of the reflex arc and the deviation of the neural discharge, as we can see in this scheme.



He explains memory in a scheme displayed from a perceptual pole to a reaction pole. This scheme does not have an anatomic reference any longer. In subsequent schemes Freud, already as a psychoanalyst, completely gets rid of anatomic references and explains the second topic and the functions ego, id and super-ego.



## Study of sexual abuse after Freud

Many years had passed, decades, when the study of sexual abuse was taken again as a real event; once the influence of psychoanalysis was established and Freud had discarded the premise of real trauma and substituted it for fantasy. Breaking this tradition really required an innovative courage and great freedom of thought, when clinical evidence was curiously always there.

Let me mention just some data according to the most recent statistics: medical consultations that have a psychiatric or emotional disorder as a cause are between 20 and 40 per cent. Of this percentage and the total amount of psychological and psychiatric consultations, between 30 and 50 per cent report having suffered sexual abuse as an antecedent. In Mexico, of the total population of women, almost 50% report having suffered, at least once in their lives, some experience of violence, particularly among the group of young women, from 15 to 19 years old, and almost 10% of the aggression was of sexual nature. Nearly 5% of the underage patients medically examined for abuse showed sexual abuse.

## Invention and tradition in the 21st century

Neurosciences have made great advances in the description of brain functions, as well as its structures, thanks to technology that did not exist at the beginning the last century, when psychoanalysis was born. The interrelation between psychoanalytic postulates and brain functions is a controversial research path not only for psychoanalysts who define the field of psychoanalysis only as the field of subjectivity and the inner world, but also for researchers in neuroscience who are strictly fond of research with methodologies to obtain hard data. I am convinced that the interrelation between both disciplines can provide us with new knowledge, confirm prior knowledge and correct inaccuracies. Following Sandler et al., I believe that making psychoanalytic contributions have methodologically valid evidence is a pending task for which we need to make a major effort. Therefore, I will allow myself to correlate the models of neurofunctionality arisen from recent research with some of the psychoanalytic observations, especially Freud's seminal observations in his early work.

## The limbic system

The limbic system is a set of brain structures responsible for the regulation and management of emotions. Among them there are two whose functions I want to highlight, and which today we know, due to brain imaging studies, show damage in people who suffered sexual abuse: the amygdala and the hippocampus.

The **amygdala** takes part in the function of attention, perception and memory of dangerous situations. It is connected to other parts of the brain stem associated with reactions related to fear and anguish; its

function as memory generates the sensation of experiencing an “emotion.”

The amygdala is responsible for the physical manifestations of anguish, such as increase in heart rate, increase in blood pressure, perspiration, dry mouth, choking sensation or shortness of breath and muscle tension. It is also responsible for psychic sensations, a sensation of very intense discomfort, extreme restlessness, the sensation of feeling indefense, helpless, incapable of facing a danger, which is felt as vague but, at the same time, imminent.

This structure works as memory in the form of **implicit memory** related to emotional states, especially provoked by threatening situations, and thus triggering anguish. When recalling memories, they are recalled as emotional memories and sensations, not linked to language. Another feature of this structure is that once an event is coded it is never forgotten; it will be remembered forever, but in the form of sensations and emotions, so when trying to express it through language, it will be described in a poor and inaccurate way, with lots of gaps and even contradictions.

The **hippocampus** is the structure where **explicit memory** (associated with language) is located. It is necessary to learn about the riskiness of an object or “the aversive experience”(traumatic); it also stores information about the context related to such experience, place, situation or associated objects. At an early age, the hippocampus is not developed yet, so the experiences cannot be fixed in the explicit memory but they can do so in the implicit memory by means of the amygdala, and remaining as unconscious memories.

When an object is perceived, different groups of neurons in different parts of the brain process the information classifying it by: shape, colour, smell, sound, etc. The brain establishes connections of these different groups of neurons and that way the perception of the object is represented. Later, when the object is recalled (evoked), such connections are re-constructed; a process that is carried out by the brain cortex, and if this process is altered, the memory of the object is distorted.

For example, the sentimental value associated with the memorized object, the subject’s mood at the time of the event when they come across the object and the intensity of the emotion, affect the memory of it. Thus, if an event is very disturbing, a particularly vivid memory of it will be kept.

When a person faces a traumatic situation, usually the response of the amygdala is intense and immediate, and it establishes an emotional memory. The more intense is the experience, the stronger the response in this structure will be.

On the other hand, the hippocampus is the memory associated with language and it adds details of the context of a given situation; besides, it is connected with the cortex creating a coherent, harmonic account sequenced in time. However, this memory tends to be forgotten. This structure will suffer inhibition as the intensity of the experience increases; that is why, when a traumatic event is evoked, it might be lacking some elements of the context, and all the elements linked to language and thought, details such as: where the event happened, when it happened and who were present. Thus, when a person tries to retrieve

the memory of a traumatic event some elements linked to language are missing.

Therefore, when trying to narrate elements from the memory of other events are taken, carrying out a real confabulation, the construction of a fantasy.

Once the pattern of anguish is established, it cannot be just forgotten. The reaction of anguish must be extinguished and that happens through new learning. Just as in the conditioning of the pattern of anguish the amygdala plays a fundamental role, the new learning apparently involves the prefrontal cortex to modify such reaction, hence the favourable response to the psychoanalytic process.

At the level of the amygdala and the hippocampus, functions of learning and memory are established and they are centres of affective processes; when such centres are overstimulated, by repression as well as overexcitement, structural anatomic damage takes place, and is shown by decrease of neural mass in such structures.

The psychoanalytic process can reverse the loss of neural tissue. Certainly, here we can recognise some descriptions of mental functioning made by Freud. Such descriptions are the recognition that traumatic experiences actually leave memories that are strictly affective and that, with great difficulty, the trigger of anguish can be deactivated since they either happened too early so the hippocampus had not been developed yet, or they were so intense that they inhibited its function and left gaps in the memory, contradictory accounts and even disorders in thought.

It also explains the mechanism of repression since the body will avoid the reactivation of these memories at all costs due to their disturbing emotional effect, as we usually confirm in people with a history of sexual abuse. In the psychoanalytic process, when the transference takes place, intense emotional states are activated, and are susceptible to disturb the secondary mental functioning, typical of the cortex as well as of the hippocampus, and that requires in part to recall and establish the lost or nonexistent context and, in some cases, building it in the sense of constructions in psychoanalysis; a context in terms of a lost verbal narrative with which those intense emotional memories stored in the structure of the amygdala can be associated

Freud proposed that the contents inside the mental apparatus suffered several translations and he described at least three. We could consider this one of them and a new translation of all the contents would take place by involving brain cortex with its dual function of the right and left hemispheres that certain features could integrate the distinctive of each of them would be expressed making a more complex process, which Freud could describe from a strictly clinical neuroscience. and functional perspective

To conclude, I believe that re-reading Freud's work, bearing in mind an anatomo-functional model of the brain system, can give us surely much a fresh, rejuvenating and creative reading of his masterful clinical descriptions, as well as of his different models of mental functioning which, as we can see, were illustrious and again it amazes us how Freud was ahead of his time. Nowadays, obviously from a deconstructionist, postmodern perspective, with the models of non-linear causality, since today we corroborate that brain structures

determine mental processes, as well as the bonding vicissitudes, we can add that the latter are, at the same time, capable of modifying brain structures, which can be documented by brain imaging studies; a particularly significant fact to us in a good analytic process.

**Key words:** *History of psychoanalysis, Evolution, Thought, Neurology.* **Prospect key words:** *Invention, Tradition.*

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## The invention of tradition

*On the other hand, the strength and adaptability of genuine traditions is not to be confused with the 'invention of tradition'.*

ERIC HOBSBAWM, *The Invention of Tradition* <sup>1</sup>

*[...] oblivion and memory are inventive.*

JORGE LUIS BORGES, *Dr. Brodie's report* <sup>2</sup>

*And I don't invent, I mean... I do invent, but I'm concerned with justifying my invention with the most solid foundation possible [...].*

GEORGES DUBY, *Dialogues*

In 1983, Eric Hobsbawm, considered by many as the most important living historian, edited and published under the title that I borrowed for this essay the joint publication that resulted from a symposium organized by *Past and Present* journal. In its introduction, in an attempt to position a similar paradoxical formula, Hobsbawm draws from a simple as well as revolutionary ascertainment: '*Traditions' which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented* (p. 7).<sup>4</sup>

Within the framework of this narrative, I will turn to the notion proposed by Hobsbawm very freely, just to outline and place within the context of next congress theme an issue which, in my opinion, is fundamental to past, present and, surely, future history of our discipline.

Rather than opposing or articulating a dialectical relationship *tradition and invention*, I will next try to propose *a distinction between two forms of tradition and two forms of invention of opposite sign*, with the subsequent possibility of different combining forms in two-way relationships. I believe it is essential to highlight, in this sense, that such formalisation would allow, on the one hand, to deliver justice to the complexity of our subject matter and that, on the other hand, would make it possible to go beyond the so frequent and unfortunate tendency,

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1. E. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger (eds.) (1983). *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge, The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
2. J. L. Borges (1970). El otro duelo [The End of the Duel]. In: *El informe de Brodie [Dr. Brodie's Report]*. Obras Completas [Complete Works]. Volume II. 1952-1972. São Paulo, Brazil, Emecé Editores, S.A., 1994 (p. 436).
3. G. Duby, G. Lardreau (1980). *Dialogues*. Paris, Flammarion
4. E. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger (eds.) (1983), op. cit.

among us psychoanalysts, to adopt Manichaeic models that distinguish between a “good” and a “bad” option, clearly and categorically defined, and thus solidly separated from one another. In other words, *I derive from the premise based on which none, neither tradition nor invention, is better or worse (or more or less desirable) than the other per se.* Therefore, I shall refrain from favouring *in principle* innovation over continuity. And vice versa. A similar thought could turn out to be relevant, first of all, in the understanding of the *analytical encounter*, whose novelty is engraved “within the frame of the transference mechanism” and where, as Barredo and Nosek also point out, “our way of receiving and housing the Freudian legacy is displayed [...] [and] that margin of freedom that, distinguishing invention from application, makes traditions renew themselves by remaining is compromised.”<sup>5</sup> Secondly, I could allow for a different perspective, an innovative vertex when, framed in our institutions and our Latin American psychoanalytical identity(ies), the aim is to apprehend and comprehend the way in which *transmission* and *appropriation* of said Freudian legacy is performed within the specificity of our history and our cultural realities. Contrary to the general belief, the term *tradition* does not evoke at first the idea of past, but the idea of *transmission*. The Latin word *traditio*, from which it derives, actually suggests the action of delivering, submitting, transmitting (a lesson, for instance) orally or in writing, through a narrative. Perhaps due to a somewhat arbitrary limitation, *tradition* became, in a way, “transmission of the past” and, to many, it was narrowed down to “prevailing of the past”. Actually, it rather designates the idea of *continuity between the past and the present*: the oldest affects (and in a way determines) the newest. And vice versa, we could add, from a perspective that allows for temporality as conceived by psychoanalysis with the notion of *nachträglichkeit* or *après-coup*.<sup>6</sup>

The word *invention* comes from Latin *inventio*, which designates the action of discovering, finding, and from *invenire*, which means to find. Its closest synonyms are *creation* and *imagination*; not so close, on the other hand, we find *innovation*, *renovation* and *discovery*. However, the notion of *change* and *rupture* underlies, at least as far as for psychoanalysis there would be no chance of legitimate *creation*, without a certain level of *destruction*.<sup>7</sup> If *tradition* suggests *continuity*, *invention* entails the possibility and the need to introduce certain *discontinuity*. *Binding*, then, for the first one and *un-binding* for the second, united in a push and pull inherent to the complementarity of life drives and death drives, when the first ones predominate and the last ones are subject to their predominance, determining the possibility of a new re-binding.<sup>8</sup> As

5. Barredo, L. Nosek (2010). 19th Fepal Congress, *Invention-Tradition*. First communication.

6. S. Freud (1918[1914]). *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis*. S.E. Vol. XVII (1917-1919). London, The Hogarth Press, 1995 (*From the History of an Infantile Neurosis [the “Wolfman case history”]*). A.E. Vol. XVII (1917-1919). Buenos Aires, Amorrortu Editores, 2003).

7. D. Anzieu (1996). *Créer-Détruire [Believe and Destroy]*. Paris, Dunod.

8. Cf. A. Green (1984). Pulsión de mort, narcissisme négatif, fonction désobjectalisante. In: *Le travail du négatif*. Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1993 (Death drive, negative narcissism, deobjectifying function. In: *La pulsión de muerte [The Death Drive]* (André Green et al.). Buenos Aires, Amorrortu, 1989, 65-78).



already mentioned, Hobsbawm derives from ascertainment that what is many times considered “traditional” y therefore “very old”, is usually in fact recently constituted. Thus, the paradoxical formula *invention of tradition* which corresponds to a mechanism, a formalisation and ritualisation process that *usually emerges in stages or periods in which, within a human group, it requires to guarantee and express identity and cohesion, especially in light of demand for fast transformations.*<sup>9</sup> It aims at validating institutions or authorities and at keeping loyalty and obedience based on materials coming from the past. He defines it as follows:

A group of practices, usually governed by openly or implicitly accepted rules, symbolic or ritual in nature, that aim to instil certain behavioural values or standards by means of repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. Actually, when possible, they generally try to connect to a historic past that fits them. [...]. In summary, there are answers to new situations that take the form of references to old situations or that impose their own past by means of an almost mandatory repetition. (p.8).

I would like to highlight the problem posed by *answers to new situations according to references to old situations that, by imposing their own past through repetition, stay alive*. Therefore, it is not only about, as I pointed out in a recent paper, “*finding a midpoint between a solid stability that is not to be mistaken with rigid immobility and a vital mobility that is not to fall in the pursuit of innovation, nor in an extreme easiness*”,<sup>10</sup> but also looking out for the outbreak of references to “invented traditions” of different types, whose claimed continuity with the past and whose legendary and remote origin (which psychoanalysis calls *orthodoxy*, for example), would “legitimise” introduction of invariability: “they use history to legitimise action and foundation of group cohesion”.<sup>11</sup> Its emergence can be apprehended as an important *symptom*, as an *indicator* of problems “that would otherwise not be acknowledged and of developments that would otherwise be hard to identify and date”.<sup>12</sup>

Having set this out, and based on Hobsbawm’s proposed distinction between “tradition” and “habit”, I think it is useful to differentiate now a (-) *tradition, the main characteristic of which is*

9. “There is probably no time and place with which historians are concerned which has not seen the ‘invention’ of tradition in this sense. However, we would expect it to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which ‘old’ traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable, or when such old traditions and their institutional carriers and promulgators no longer prove sufficiently adaptable or flexible, or are otherwise eliminated [...]” (p. 11)

10. A. Rojas-Urrego (2010). *Los últimos garantes de una cierta idea del ser humano [The last guarantors of a certain idea of human beings]*, <http://fepal.org> (Didactic Precongress), XXVIII Latin American Congress of Psychoanalysis, 23-25 September, Bogotá.

11. E. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger (eds.) (1983), op. cit. (p. 18).

12. *Ibíd.*

*invariability* and a (+) **tradition** that works both as motor and gear.

While the first one imposes fixed practices, like repetition from reference to a real or invented past and opposes, therefore, mobility, variation and change, the second one does not preclude “innovation and change up to a point, though evidently the requirement that it must appear compatible with the precedent [...] imposes substantial limitations on it”. It gives “any desired change (or resistance to innovation) the sanction of precedent”.<sup>13</sup> *It so happens that the second type (+) tradition, that which is motor and gear, is not invariable “because life is not so”.*<sup>14</sup>

Similar to what happens with tradition, invention can also be differentiated between a (+) invention *that introduces rupture and continuity* and a (-) **invention** *that essentially favours rupture*: “change for change”. While the first one, like Eros, un-binds and re-binds, the second one would approach pure destruction by means of radical un-binding.

*The tradition-invention dyad wins by being read in light of three terms: binding, un-binding and re-binding.*

I have limited myself in this text to introducing some elements that, in my opinion, shall be present in the exciting debate over relations between *tradition* and *invention* in contemporary psychoanalysis, as we can transmit it and recreate it every day in Latin America. I have referred mainly to historians and a notion coming from history as a discipline. That is so because, the way I see it, any research related to human phenomena shall be situated within a historical perspective.<sup>15</sup>

Faced with the huge challenges the world poses on us today, with the dizziness and haste of its demands, we must be extremely vigilant.<sup>16</sup> This way, we have an obligation to distinguish different forms (+ and -) within the same terms *tradition* and *invention* and to move forward with care. Some rules are unbreakable and only firmness, solidity and severity guarantee an evolution that is essential if we want to take the side of life. But we must also preserve an unbreakable will to sharpen and reinvent our tools at all times, by confronting them, in the consulting room, with the

13. E. Hobsbawm, T. Ranger (eds.) (1983), op. cit. (pp. 8-9).

14. *Ibid.* p. 9.

15. G. Duby, G. Lardreau (1980), op. cit. (p. 87).

16. Green, A., Corcos, M., Rojas-Urrego, A. (2006). *Associations (presque) libres d'un psychanalyste. Entretiens avec Maurice Corcos, avec la participation d'Alejandro Rojas-Urrego [(Nearly) free Associations of Psychoanalysis. Interviews with Maurice Corcos, with Alejandro Rojas-Urrego's participation]*. Paris, Albin Michel.

*psychic reality* of current psychoanalytic clinic and, as social beings and discipline, with today's *material reality*.

As for the first one, *our contemporary analytic practice demands theoretical, clinical and technical updating*<sup>17</sup> the three main pillars<sup>18</sup> of which could be *contemporary reading of Freud*, underlining the value of metapsychology and the Freudian method as the basis of psychoanalysis; *a creative appropriation of the main post-Freudian contributions*, including a constant dialogue between psychoanalytic cultures in different regions and, finally, *an extension of the clinical field of treatment of non-neurotic cases*, with pathologies bordering a new contemporary paradigm. In these three pillars, introducing tension inherent to the terms *tradition* and *invention* in its different variations can contribute with new elements to the debate. As for the second one, namely, the confrontation of our psychoanalytic tools with material reality of today's world, I will just point out in such vast and essential territory that, just like in any other discipline, our profession makes no sense if it backs upon itself and cuts off from the rest of the world. We must add, to the enriching exchange of research results among psychoanalysts, a sustained effort to go past our walls and change our tone so that our voice can be heard. The field of study that opens up to us entails, indeed, the interdisciplinary, the dialogue and the exchange with other knowledge, with a perfect harmony between *critical rigour* and *living pleasure*,<sup>19</sup> between *clarity* and *passion*,<sup>20</sup> that can be apprehended as *tradition* and *invention* expressions, in compliance with their outline in this essay.

Finally, and to conclude, in a society, in a discipline (and these are also expressions of tradition and invention, respectively), being more or less fit for change depends, ironically, on *the ability to reproduce the past*,<sup>21</sup> combined with the need, as with music, to *introduce more and more variations* where it is always possible to recognise the theme that gave rise to them. As in analysis. As in life.

**Keywords:** *Transmission, Temporality, Resignification, Binding, Un-binding.* **Prospect keywords:** *Invention, Tradition.*

17. N. Marucco (2006). Débats théoriques sur la pratique analytique actuelle. Réflexions métapsychologiques, cliniques et techniques. In: Les voies nouvelles de la thérapie psychanalytique. Le dedans et le dehors (sous la direction de André Green) [Theoretical debates on current analytical practice. Metapsychological reflections, clinical and technical].

18. F. Urribarri (2006). La théorie dans la psychanalyse actuelle. À la recherche d'un nouveau paradigme contemporain. In: Les voies nouvelles de la thérapie psychanalytique. Le dedans et le dehors (sous la direction de André Green), op. cit.

19. In the sense of "Enjoyment", as defined by Winnicott (cf. D. W. Winnicott (1971). *Therapeutic Consultations in Child Psychiatry*. [Introduction]. London, Hogarth Press).

20. G. Duby, G. Lardreau (1980), op. cit. (pp. 164-165).

21. J. Pouillon (1993). *Le cru et le su [The Raw and the Cooked]*. Paris. Le Seuil, La librairie du XXe siècle.

# Tradition, the mother of invention

*Clarice Lispector said:<sup>1</sup> "Even trying to eliminate our own flaws might be dangerous.*

*We never know which flaw bears our entire building". (Borelli, O., 1981)*

*Fabio Herrmann said (1991): "They who do not create, believe, but they who create, distrust".*

## Gregor Samsa and the Congress theme

When reading "As Gregor Samsa woke up one morning from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a monstrous vermin", Gabriel García Márquez thought: "then I can do the same with the characters! I can create impossible situations!" If Kafka could, then, so could he.<sup>2</sup>

In order to create, one needs inspiration, but one must also obtain permission. Gabriel, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1982, allowed himself to do so and magical or wonderful realism he founded became one of the main literary traditions in Latin America.

Backed by the European tradition of which Kafka was a respected representative, García Márquez invented a new one. The Nobel Prize granted to his creativity also acknowledged his prudence. Invention that is not supported and authorised in traditions risks being ignored or punished. Van Gogh was not less creative than García Márquez, but he did not sell his paintings and was not awarded any prize.

Samsa is a beautiful representation of the inventor who, trapped in their own inventions, becomes a monster to the society in which they

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1. Excerpt from a letter written in Berna on 01/02/1947 attributed to Clarice Lispector. Published by Caio F. Abreu in supplement "Caderno 2" from journal "O Estado de São Paulo" on 25/06/1994. This beautiful letter is available at <http://www.claraboia.com/101100.html>, retrieved on 10/07/2011

2. Obtained from an interview given in 1977 to a Colombian newspaper called "El Manifiesto". Available at The Virginia Quarterly Review <http://www.vqronline.org/webexclusive/2005/06/24/marquez-journey-back/> retrieved on 10/07/2011. Next, I reproduce the delightful text: *It was in 1947... I was nineteen ... I was doing my first year of law school ... I remember the opening sentences, it reads exactly thus: "As Gregor Samsa woke up one morning from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a monstrous vermin." ... Holy shit! When I read that I said to myself, "This isn't right! ... Nobody had told me this could be done! ... Because it really can be done! ... So then I can! ... Holy shit! ... That's how my grandmother told stories ... The wildest things, in the most natural way."*

live. It represents the danger that jeopardises all inventors. If their invention is not understood or accepted, their punishment is ostracism, which is monsters' destiny.

If inventing is dangerous because the result might be expulsion, it is yet more dangerous not being able to invent, as invention is the passport, the ticket that opens the doors of society. They who do not invent cannot be expelled, since they never get to belong to the human group, to humankind. They who do not invent are not human, as humanity lives in the world of invention. The human being is a hero who lives between inexistence and ostracism, they walk on a knife-edge. Any disregard will send them off into one of the two abysses.

Our discipline, psychoanalysis, emerges in Central Europe, which is full of rigid traditions bordering one another. It is not easy to walk that path without falling into the cliffs. Here, in the Americas, things are not easy either. On top of the European tradition we have inherited, we must notice and account for local traditions, just as complex, demanding and proud. Our eclecticism or cannibalism, as defined by the Brazilian modernist movement, is the most comprehensive solution we can get.

We believe that Fepal is a net, like the ones at the circus, beneath the steel wire or the trapeze, to prevent that a fall, which for artists is already a serious accident to their narcissism, kills them. Let it be for us, the Latin America community of colleagues, what Kafka was to García Márquez, and let us invent. The theme of this congress is provocative. The "tradition-invention" dichotomy can be seen as an opposition, but together, these concepts oppose discovery and application. Invention and tradition refer to desire, the arbitrary, the determined by human will and culture dispositions. They aim at art, religion, philosophy, science, but also lying, sin, transgression, the absurd and the unusual. Traditions are a haven to those who constitute them, but they are also hell to those who are different or strange to them. Wars, usually, derive from traditions and using inventions in them is essential to victory. Inventions are responsible for many of the wars and, in light of a new invention for peaceful purposes, we wonder when it will be used for destruction. Traditions and inventions are the main ingredients of the most sublime passions and rituals, as well as the most terrible and macabre ones.

Gods and demons inhabit traditions and are reinvented by dreams every night, by fiction every day and in every statement of human existence.

In this regard, we are at the eye of the storm. We shall not expect peace here. Nor rest. The calmness that exists at the eye of the storm is simply a sign that we are surrounded by deadly winds that will get to us any time.

We could refuse to accept provocation, as avoiding accidents is everyone's duty and, on the contrary, we would choose to stay on the other side of the dichotomy, on "discovery and application". Thus, things would be more peaceful. Discovery aims at truth of what was already there, and does not depend on creativity or inspiration. Truth reigns over desires and traditions. When in the field of discoveries, it is necessary to guarantee that traditions not be treason. Truth is eternal and does not require repairing or updating. Not depending on human will, it

exempts us from any responsibility. Applications, on the other side, are humble and obedient. They do not need inspiration or creativity either; they only depend on discipline and dedicated work. Truth is universal, and war has no shelter there. They who share it are at peace. Light, truth and life rule at the monotheistic heaven. Nothing is as comfortable and safe. *Truth has only one foot and does not fall down, lie has a thousand feet and falls down.* This old proverb sums up the safety of truth that cannot be invented, only discovered.

But Congress is also a game. Once the rules are set, we have to play. It is necessary to take risks, otherwise we become heavy, annoying. It is not right, therefore, to shelter in comfort of rationalist science with its sweet, comfortable, hopeful and optimistic positivism.

It is necessary to face up to winds and tides. In the menacing storm, Pompey shouted out to the terrified sailors: "Sailing is necessary, living is not necessary". Let's tie ourselves to the mast and sail the route between Scylla and Charybdis.

### **The Song of the Sirens**

Human beings have the capacity of predicting and building virtual realities by extrapolating data from their experiences.

When experiencing pleasure, they want to repeat it indefinitely. So, using their abilities, they start to create utopias in which, in their imagination, they could live in constant and eternal pleasure. They use their mind to purify experiences and create homogeneous images where only what interests them can be found and it is hard for them to stop living in the utopias they invent. In other words, they invent and hold on passionately to their inventions, ignoring how to live without them.

They start to follow them forever and as they are, by definition, unreachable, they never quench or cease.

Once Androgynous has been conceived, it turns out to be intolerable to confine to just one sex. Once an omniscient and omnipotent God has been imagined, it is impossible to not be like Him, or at least to not be His son. Human beings think they are absolutely necessary for them, objects completely expendable for any other natural being. They are dreadfully attracted by objects they created themselves. Given it is impossible to relinquish them, they invent they have them. They invent they are their own invention and the world abides by their wishes.

This invented world, still, must be articulated with the physical world and the world of their fellow human beings, the social world around them. If they remain in the fantasy world they invented, disregarding the physical world, they will die. Their representations of the physical world must be, at least, a bit adaptive for them to survive. Their desire to be omnipotent leads them to develop technology. They multiply their strength, longevity and material possibilities. It is the world of hard-science. No matter how much they can learn to control nature, they will still be far away from the objects of their aspirations. Religions, arts, philosophies are created to reduce frustration. In summary, the cultural, invented, virtual world is that in which they live.

They lean on the real, but do not know it, just as someone who lives in a house does not know their foundations and if they want to dig up to know them, the house will fall off. Lacan's theories on the signifier and the phallus as signifier (Lacan, J., 1971; Palmier, J.M., 1971) form the basis of these ideas, which also get their inspiration on Winnicott's "potential space" (1972) and, of course, on Freud's (1974a, 1974b).

### **Kitten climbed a tree**

Construction of human reality is, to a large extent, based on inventions and at the service of desire. Then, the tendency would be that each human being turned out to be very different from the rest, which would make it almost impossible to relate to each other. If that were the case, we would all be condemned to confine ourselves in our invented world, climbed onto our fantasies. It would be comparable to a kitten that, unable to climb down the tree it climbed up, is alone and helpless, meowing up there.

In fact, the more complex and special someone's inner world is, fewer things in common they will have with the others; more risks they will run to become incommunicado. It turns out that human beings do not invent based on nothing. For that end, they use traditions. Traditions are the matrix of the virtual world of every individual from a particular culture, which guarantees a considerable similarity between them. Internalisation of traditions is the condition of structuring and invention of people's inner world and, at the same time, the assurance of compatibility between individuals in the same group. (Grinberg, L. and Grinberg, R. 1971).

The theories about identification, so well developed by Freud and Klein (Baranger, W. 1971), which are one of the great contributions of psychoanalysis to humankind, clearly describe people's formation by introjection of relations they have with the people that look after them during childhood. These relations are filled with traditions, with language being the most important one and the basic means to the others. According to how these introjections take place, their content, their homogeneity and their contradictions, we will have different results in the subject's destiny. If we focus on the topic of relations between the individual and society, we might say that it is important that the subject can invent, but that these inventions must not be very different from traditions.

Winnicott (1972), with his theory of the good-enough mother, brought a new contribution into psychoanalytic tradition: the issue of the need for a life to be worth living. If invention is necessary to be among human beings and if inventions can isolate them from each other, it is necessary to have company when inventing, so as not to lose courage to produce them and adapt them to social harmony. I believe this is the meaning of Winnicott's proposal about how "the mother has to be compatible with the child invention".

If at the beginning of the creative function frustration were

excessive, Gregor Samsa's phenomenon would take place. As in the case of the kitten that climbed up a tree, the solution would be to get a ladder and save it from the consequences of its own abilities, it would be necessary to accompany the child in their fantastic productions. Of course, the other method would be to cut down the tree. When instead of a cat up the tree, we have a wounded tiger, knocking the tree down might be the only possible solution. Mothers look after their kittens, but quite often they prevent trees from growing in their gardens. We, psychoanalysts, work with big cats and tigers, as we find traditions already installed in patients, and conflicts and social choices already made.

It is possible that the feeling of "a life worth living" depends on the possibility of someone being capable of freely inventing in their inner world and, at the same time, being a member of a group, sharing and exchanging within the framework of traditions common to all. That passage, that possibility to climb up and down the tree of individuality, with the muscles and the ability to isolate up there whenever necessary and meet the gang on the floor, whenever convenient, can be a model for what we are trying to describe.

Following these ideas, traditions should be presented to human beings in formation, that is, to the child, in the most attractive way possible. Plato recommended: "Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each". Traditions have to be useful so that the child can build their subjective world in such a way that their desires are fulfilled, at least slightly. We must not forget that the human world, invented and virtual, is the expression of desire and its symbolic realisation. The more traditions are used effectively by the individual to build their subjective world, the more sociable they will be, less of a stranger among members of their group and the bigger the experience that life is worth living.

In other words, the mother, who represents culture, has to be compatible with constructions woven by children's imagination and has to promote pleasure throughout the process. In case of lack of compatibility, the child can, instead, inhibit their inventions and create a poor and unimaginative inner world, so that they can only follow traditions passively and apply what is already known, impersonally (Winnicott, D.W. 1972).

### **Invented sexuality**

Among human beings' inventions, sexuality is one of the most fascinating ones. Depending on the point of view, it may be the only one: all others may stem from it. Sexuality is our breach with the natural world, the big and irreversible caesura. Merleau-Ponty said that sexuality is the body's transcendence and psychoanalysts claim that because of it, the body will never again be a physical body, but an erogenous one. Nonetheless, our focus here is whether sexuality is invention or tradition as regards its objects.



This issue was studied by Lacan, who concluded that the object of love is invention. His answer is rather defiant, as he contradicts an important psychoanalytic tradition, according to which we rediscover primary objects as sexual objects.

To Freud (1974c), when we love, we only repeat, because to find the object is always to find it again, and every object of love is a substitute for one of the primary objects, prior to the boundaries of incest. To Lacan, according to Jacques Alain Miller (1991), love is the effort to give its own name to “a”, to find “a” in the eyes of a woman and be able, as Dante did, to give that a name and build a literary work around it. When Beatrice blinks, God shows up, the idea of a complete other emerges in Dante. The repetitive demand of love from the Other is replaced, with the help of an invention, by an “other”. That “other” as “a” and not belonging to the inventor, but to the Other, is fixed in the position of woman and is object of desire. The mother, then, primary object that represents totality, is not rediscovered, as is a castrated other and, hence, a woman. This reasoning is, in Lacanian vision, valid for both sexes, since it is not the physical body what matters, but the signifiers.

This vision is more optimistic than Freud’s, as it takes into consideration the possibility of healing. If we take into account that “a” represents the object of desire and that it is a consequence of knowledge and acceptance of the fact that there is no complete object, not castrated, that is to say, “a” is what is missing to complete the whole, we can only give a name to “a” if we accept castration, which allows for sublimation. In other words, rediscovering the primary object is associated to finding the significant other, the whole, the one, the androgynous, and, therefore, at the service of death drive. Finding “a” in the eyes of the beloved one is, on the contrary, finding the castrated being, the woman, the absence with no possible solution, so it is finding in the beloved one the inspirational muse, who will be the motivation for cultural work, effective integration in the symbolic world. Love, then, would not be repetition, but sublimation and, therefore, invention.

### **Truth and resolution of transference**

Among psychoanalytic traditions, transference is one of the favourite ones. In its dimension of scientific truth, they will remain until their foundations are shaken but, in tradition’s, they need to be loved to survive. Either as truth or as tradition, transference is the cornerstone of our profession. Without it, our construction falls apart.

When leaning on this concept, we immediately feel sheltered by our group. When we criticise it, we begin to take risks. For a vision of the world that separates reality from fantasy, truth from tale, transference is a kind of error. An error that emerges from confusion between past things and something happening in the present. Its resolution is, from this point of view, an approximation to the truth of the facts. The transference subject is stuck in past experiences and

figures that become prejudice, in obsolete filters that distort perception and lead them to find always the same. Unable to evaluate reality, the individual lives in a ghost world that disappears when transference is interpreted and brought to light. Then, the analyst will be perceived as they actually are and they can no longer be mixed with the patient's primary objects. Unleashed by insight, the analyst can relate to the world without illusions and delusions. Hence, it is crucial that the analyst is clear on who they are themselves. They will function as a reference point to measure the rights and wrongs of their patients. The analyst must know the truth of the facts so as to dismantle patients' inventions. The analyst has to live in the real world and get the patient to find it in this dimension. The patient, on the contrary, lives in the world of dreams, delusions, illusions and imagination. The analyst's world does not depend on their will, nor on the patient's. It is objective, real. It does not depend on anybody's desires and can be changed by nobody's desires<sup>3</sup>. It only has one leg and will not fall down. Light, truth and life rule in it. The patient's world, on the contrary, is fathered by their desires, invented by their unconscious, structured by compromise solutions. It is a world jeopardised by deviations caused by the difficulty of bearing frustrations and the desire to avoid limits. At work, from this point of view, the analyst does not need to invent anything. They need, instead, to be objective, clear-headed and clinical. They can lend their body as a projection screen, they can hold the patient back and be supportive with the patient's emotions, but only to provide better guidance towards a safe place where facts are found. Their function is, basically, to enlighten and demystify. They turn the light on at the cinema so that it is clear that what happened was a film. They use the setting for the scene to develop, for passions to be expressed, but after that, they will return to objective reality. An objective reality they know and have witnessed. Their psychoanalytic tradition will help them keep their convictions about what is real and what is fake. Their wit can be used to disassemble transference traps and patient's defensive tricks. At the end of the game, if everything ends up well, transference will be settled and neutralised. The patient leaves without any nostalgia, as the analyst will have only been a liberating instrument. Enlightened and free, they will be ready for the real world.<sup>4</sup>

## Human beings and subjectivity empire

The story is very different if another point of view prevails, if another conception of human beings is at stake. A conception that accepts that the truth about human beings is that they are an invention. An invention so arbitrary and product of desire as any other. That they are an invention of the culture that they invented themselves. That traditions are no guarantee of truth, but they are the intimate structure of truth which is, eventually, kept by faith. That traditions are inventions enshrined by usage and are kept as long as they fulfil desires efficiently. That humans are virtual beings that live in a virtual world which is culture. That culture has to be constantly reinvented so as not to fall

3. The phrase: "If we do not help our patients fully understand what they are, no real change will take place in their personality" (Rosenfeld, H. 1988) is an example of this attitude.

4. A person that has become normal and free from the action of instinctive drives suppressed in their relationship with the doctor shall remain as such in their own private life, after the doctor has stepped down from it (Freud, S., 1974d).

apart. That it is the ability to invent, to invent and reinvent oneself, that human beings stand out from the rest of nature. That it is precisely because of that reason that they cannot be naturalised without being annihilated. Nothing can be eternal for human beings, everything is circumstantial, temporary and historical<sup>5</sup> (Gadamer, H.G. 2005). Therefore, human beings are not good housing for truth, at least not so for truth in the sense of reality (Rossi, C., 1999). To demystify human beings' traditions and inventions means to kill them. Human beings cannot be studied as an object of themselves without eventually disappearing. Human beings, thus, cannot be measured by external standards and their subjective reality is indomitable to any evaluation or measurement system. From this point of view, transference is not a prison in the past; instead, the way past experiences shaped the subject's perception is not a distorting filter, but a way to build and its resolution is the awareness of its inevitability and not its neutralization.

It is not possible to liberate humans from their fantasies, so that they can, without misrepresentations and illusions, dive into actual facts, simply because the latter is non-existent. The analyst is not the standard of reality and their traditions structure truth and reality to such an extent as any other and, therefore, they do not prevail over any other. There is no hierarchical superiority of the analyst's knowledge over the patient's (Aulagnier, P. 1979 and 1985). The analyst's subjectivity is as subjective as the patient's. Just like the patient, the analyst is always reinventing themselves and living the traditions that are holders of articulated inventions. It can be observed that from this point of view, the analyst is left without authority to be the marker of the balance and, on the other hand, there is nothing they could do with that authority, had they had it, because there would have been no safe ground where to take their patient.

The first referential outline is the heir of 19th century science and the second one, of 20th century thinking, for which psychoanalysis contributed to a great extent. Contradictions between both models live within psychoanalysis, which contorts in theory and in practice. Sometimes, psychoanalysis is as educated as Descartes and, other times, as disturbing and disturbed as Foucault<sup>6</sup>. In this sense, it participates in the epistemological tragedy of the beginning of the 21st century. In the second referential outline, what would the analyst's work be like? What would they do with transference? Where will they get with their job?

### **Transference and subjectivity**

What is the role of the analyst and where can they try to get with their job, considering the concept of human beings developed in the 20th century?

The condensed, short answer would be: help patients allow themselves to invent, so as to juggle their indomitably personal

5. In "The Order of Things", Foucault (1999) states that "the recent invention of archaeology of thought, man, will cease to exist in the near future".

6. "Maybe the goal today is not to discover who we are, but to refuse to be what we are". This phrase by Foucault (1995) is an example of how his thinking is disturbing.

inventions with their group's traditions, without submitting to the latter but always reinventing them in order to communicate and enjoy the relation with their peers. To that end, the analyst must be radically faithful to their own subjectivity, bordering it with the patient's in a kind of game that is gratifying for both of them. The goal would be to offer the patient a second chance to invent accompanied by someone and get pleasure from it as, of course, the first opportunity would not have been successful in the early age.

The analyst's interpretations and interventions would aim to show how much images of the world and self-images woven by the patient are overdetermined by unconscious formations that act like traditions immersed in the shadows. They do not look for safe image revelation. They try to help the patient understand how they are shaped by inner forces that lead them to feel and do things for reasons other than imagined. They try to make them aware of the fact that their reality is invented, but that their capacity to invent is limited and tends to spin around a series of axes that are typical for them. These axes and limits are the traces of the unconscious. The contents of the unconscious stop being important by themselves and become simply the means to get to know the relativity of reality apprehension.

The unconscious expresses through a negativity rather than through phenomena subject to any definition. It is no longer possible to remove the blindfolds or get to know it. We only know it is there and has consequences. Fábio Herrmann's concept of field rupture (1991), as the basis for psychoanalytic method, is a radical expression of that position. According to the author, psychoanalysis fulfils its goals by generating a crisis in the perception of reality and the patient's identity. This process, when repeated many times, would make them notice that it is useless to hold on to their theories about themselves and the world, thus liberating them. For that end, they receive remarks, isolated comments, they are repeated, with a different tone, what they said, their attention is drawn regarding gestures or posture, until they begin to doubt their conception of reality. The positive conception of self-knowledge is replaced with the idea that we cannot know ourselves because we are something in constant change and because we have no fixed and reliable support point for that.

Flexibility to accept the differences and freedom to create and think gain ground. Melsohn (2001) states that "the conscience as a strategy of drive disguise and unconscious objects gives place to the notion of a conscience that produces its intentions and the corresponding ways of thinking". More important than knowing the truth is being able to find ways to exchange, share and negotiate with the others (Rezende, A.M. 1999). Genitalia is becoming the main interest in current psychoanalysis.

There is no concern for the real or for reality. There is no intention to normalise the subject's perception. There is no intention to resolve transference so that it stops altering its judgements over reality of which the analyst would be the guarantor. The setting is no longer perceived as

an adequate state for regression, to then be able to escape from it and get back to the real and present world, and now becomes a scenario where the process of character creation and its supporting logic can be studied. The aim is to regain the capacity to perceive and cope with differences and peculiarities between subjects, inevitably different from each other and in constant mutation, and to enjoy the process. What is the means used to that end? The psychoanalytic method, with all its contributions from so many authors in about a hundred years of existence. The tool is always the same, what might change a little bit is the attitude and expectations on its use, which, of course, changes everything.

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## Tradition/Invention

For next Congress, Fepal recommends to us (or imposes on us) this non-traditional, rather unusual, title and requests that six colleagues, scattered over the region, react to the proposal, not to let it naked, stark, to cover it with reasoning and arguments prior to the Congress. Who will be the authors of this text? Those imposing or those being imposed upon? Or maybe it derives from a widespread discomfort of our tribe's culture (the scientific community that inherited the profession that Freud invented), a symptom that we will tentatively designate by saying that some past codes are insufficient and the new ones are not available yet, but have to be introduced. With these words, I highlight the fact that the procedure prescribes a plural and polysemic author to trigger an open debate, not only regarding affinities or confrontations of inherited theoretic paradigms, but also an unprecedented positioning to current civilising changes, which fuse technological changes and mutations with sensitivity. What an issue! In Freud's legacy, the authors are many and, dreadfully, languages and cultures spread out as Babel tribes. Let us then celebrate diversity, although it is difficult to hold the anathema back to (dis)qualify those who think differently. Because the theories that Freudians bequeath to us are not made of marble or bronze, they are rather successive systematisations that the founder reshaped throughout his life, as his thinking and the world he inhabited changed; some of his successors did their share. Then, the Freudian legacy is not only the construction of a huge theoretical work, but his explorer and stylist spirit (as Fabio Hermann said) to characterise the founder in his vocation to look into the interstices of installed speeches.

Also, the heirs of an experience and its theoretical formalisation inevitably face the dilemma of whether this is a doctrine, that is to say, a series of commandments and principles to adopt, or just a place to go to learn to think. A challenge that, paraphrasing Goethe, we can put as: what you inherit, you must take possession of first to deserve it.

At this time of societal and civilising radical changes, the alternative between fundamentalism and 'anything goes' forces us to transit the labyrinths that travel between tradition and invention. When

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thinking and disseminating the title among colleagues, the lapse to change innovation for invention was repeated, which expressed subjugation or freedom of a hypothetical primary truth, let us call it the Freudian unconscious. The parricide ghost of fraternal mob is more intense with the term invention, which refused to be imposed.

Being a psychoanalyst here and now, just like being a father or mother, does not depend only on theoretical affiliations or the unconscious ghosts of each thinker, but also on features prevailing in contemporary culture that today are processed and changed at a frenzied pace. Human beings are more like their time, rather than their parents, Max Weber contradicted Freud. And this vector gets bigger in a changing world. The knot of the thinking subject (a centrifugal one, from their thinking to reality and another from reality to their thinking) is, in every moment of history, an integral part of the subject's production. The Other's priority and the object's internal relations are not theories with an easy-to-articulate logical consistency and they strain the borders between the endogenous and the exogenous in the psyche.

Besides those who are inside or outside API, the prestige of psychoanalytic speech has served to shelter some practices of rather doubtful value or to attack sagacious and fruitful others. Human sciences are doomed to review their founding concepts in each socio-historical juncture, at the risk of becoming an empty speech.

The critical, questioning and self-theorising subject, typical of modern times, that would usually come to our couch, is many times absent or obsolete in those who request our services nowadays. How can we work with intimacy and the secret of our innermost ghosts at a time when technosociability turns them into transparent beings that can be exhibited to the four winds and not preserved to the privileged privacy of our room?

The repression of eroticism and sexuality, inherent to Victorian morality, which marked the setting for Freudian discovery, is now replaced by another opposing setting, where those who consult us can get pleasure from inhabiting multiple erotic characters, of different sexes and age, from the bunker of their computers, that is to say, overriding or erasing with the machine the skin smell and texture, so crucial in the encounter between sensitive bodies. Which paths, then, does erotic excitement, previously trapped in temptation and prohibition, travel? Why is it that beyond the natural disproportion of the little death of orgasm, which led our desire, it turns out to be necessary today to be stuffed with potent psychostimulants?

By this, I am only trying to show, very briefly, the distance of codes and logics between the exponent (a subject in the information age) and the listener (a mind shaped with the parameters of modernity). It is in these terms that I can frame and take possession of the genesis of the theme proposed for the Congress.

Heterogeneous codes that force us into an unprecedented ethnologist task to make even more complex the profession that the



founder already classified as impossible. But I find this present opening to contemporary anthropology indispensable; it enhances the perspectives of psychoanalytic endeavour of the third millennium and I regard it, for now, a more promising aspect than the borderlines with neuroscience and the stuttering of neurotransmitters. The dichotomy that Freud had to establish between the conscience and the Other Scene, between the inner world (the psychic reality) and the social reality was necessary to sanctify a different psychic causality and to define the specificity of psychoanalysis. This distinction has to be carefully maintained but also reformulated since the borderline between intimate and public now has very different characteristics than before. Even more so in a globalised and belligerent world where, with the power of unparalleled media resources (a power capable of producing virtual realities in which the biased fiction is more powerful and effective than a traditional determination to have access to the world as it is), findings are critically reviewed instead of imposing unquestionable or totalitarian certainties from the media world.

The phantasmal causality typical of the neurotic's family drama arises today tinted or imbued with eastern energies or philosophies that defy the most sagacious traditional psychiatrist's rationality criteria. These criteria and the system of ideals and values are mutating in this hypercommunication society. Concomitantly, so do criteria for success or failure, for discomfort and sublimation, of our heroic analysts and ourselves, immersed in a world that poses other challenges, questions and answers, in light of a crumbling religious or republican credulity.

We work, then, in the interval between the modern subject and the contemporary subject, where heterogeneous codes occur; these overwhelming codes force us into a strict semiology and a suspension of value judgements, either condemning or admiring, into which we can rush in bewilderment. Suspending judgement to listen, said Freud; semiotising changes before applause or anathema, proposes McLuhan, in light of a crumbling religious or republican credulity.

Paul Virilio spotlights that since the Industrial Revolution, speed has become a decisive factor and a leading player in history, not only in terms of transport (from horse to supersonic jet), but also in electromagnetic waves, that culminate in the Internet and its effects in hypercommunicability, with its unbroken flow of images and emotions (think of 9/11 or televised world football). Instantaneousness is characterised by swapping reflection for reflex; and this changes the way we think and inhabit the world. Since Gutenberg times, the reader was master and owner of their inner time. They can speed up, slow down, read again, switch off to imagine. The book is not only the reading, claims Antoine Compagnon, but also the mirror to look, recognise and understand oneself. Trigger of daydreams, as our brotherhood would put it, at times of more and more scarce respite, realm; it is a way to apprehend the world in its diversity and complexity

and, thus, co-builder of an individual, although unrealistic, identity. The accelerated flow of television images (“one minute, one piece of news”) allows for less space to that individual imagination, also hidden by phones and messages. In a flash, we move from an earthquake or genocide and famine, to a five-star hotel with a swimming pool, Chivas Regal and Coke. “The universe of total image is a world with less space for individual imagination”, he concludes.

In Latin America, there coexist the primitive world of sluggishness, external to the technology bubble, and the hypermodern world of speed.

In some rural area of the continent, children are starting to be named Jonathan, Jessica or Ronaldo, even when the accompanying surnames are of native or non-English speaking European origin. The fact is, in itself, insignificant but it dictates the intensity with which the TV preaches more strongly than tradition and enters the intimate world.

The TV exhibits a heavenly world full of all the goods that might fulfil deficiencies and hardship of the available, dusty and monotonous world, drowned in backwardness and exclusion. The institutions that study human development and living standards state that we are the most inequitable continent in terms of wealth and opportunities distribution. This surely marks the characteristics of the social ties, but saying that this has not entered until today in the scene of psychoanalytic cure will be heard as promoter of a politicized psychoanalysis or as demagogic message. Today, with the porosity between public and private, with its growing visibility, it enters by fear to growing power of organised crime to perceive us as a bourgeoisie besieged by the excluded. In any case, we are pretty much defenceless with Freudian legacy to work with this issue and we will have to come up with new means to do it. Traditionally, the object of psychoanalytic work could be limited to and focused on intimacy and/or private life. We must question if that limit is still in force or investigate how the visibility and transparency that the media world imposes are currently installed in the production of subjectivity.

Anyway, those of us who persevere in believing in the effectiveness of our profession and reflection (hopefully, due more to enthusiasm than to inertia); those of us who think about the relevance and effectiveness of the Freudian discovery as one of the privileged means to explore the production of subjectivity, both in its creative as its morbid facet, have to take into account that time and space coordinates of the contemporary subject are different from those of past decades.

The exponential multiplication of scientific and technological development has changed the parameters of the world we live in. And if the world changes, so does the mind. The basic benchmarks psychoanalysts use daily (family, sexuality, affiliation, work and leisure, norm and transgression, pleasure and discomfort) are not the same ones we used to handle in the past and we cannot help working with variations and algorithms of mutation, in order to listen to those who organise their psychic life differently than how we would.

Maybe, thinking does not mean the same as before. As Julia

Kristeva suggests, introspection and inner pleading that characterised modern subjects are nowadays outdated or modified. What is the point of psychoanalysis in light of a self-ignored discomfort? asks this author. Within the boundaries of space and, especially, my own knowledge and ignorance, I suggest these notes to promote a debate.

With these terms as triggers, we are urged to formulate, in few pages, some dilemmas of current psychoanalysis.

### Tradition

How to compress what has already been said a thousand times?

By focusing the Freudian discovery of that strange zone that lives in us, the foreign-familiar we house since birth until death and which, on occasions, visits and besieges us with insolence and defies the reason of conscience. Actually, Freud does not discover this land, already familiar to the mythology and literature of all cultures. Its originality lies in its ambitious commitment to relink that strange land to the functioning of the mind of illuminist western rationalism. To invent bridges that articulate the speech of reason with those rare productions, as meaningless as decisive. And, on top of that, Freud set the golden rules, engaging in and describing the frame that invites to seclusion that calls for “wild chaos of the intimate”, which can only be displayed in the promise of an absolute confidentiality, of inflexible ethics that oppose the visibility of medical action.

“Say it all, I will only say something that will surely not fulfil your expectations” is a violent proposal that establishes an original dialogue; the analytic dialogue that opposes other forms of caring dialogue that we also practise throughout our lives. Rules and frame, as Berta and Breuer suggest, are a masterly synthesis between experience and understanding, so fundamental and decisive as Newton discovering the law of gravity when watching an apple fall. The everyday Lord’s Prayer is not the same in every era and culture, so that when reciting it in the first person singular, although we go through repetition and mimesis, there will always emerge something that specifies and singles us out, and that sometimes amazes us, unknown land of another exploration of ourselves.

In the origin and history of psychoanalysis, two approaches have confronted and still coexist:

a) There is always the temptation to go back to rational consistency, to the anthropocentric rationalist ideal of a self-aware subject, as is the case in Zuiderzee metaphor or in *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden* (make the unconscious conscious) and they get to “I know who I am”.

b) Another perspective is to maintain the radical heteronomy of systems with as few claudications as possible, to try to talk to the crazy person inside us, who sometimes shows and sometimes hides, as Blanchot’s words illustrate in “The Madness of the Day”<sup>1</sup> (*La folie du jour*):

“I used to love doctors, I didn’t feel diminished by their doubts. What annoyed me was that their authority grew by the hour [...] they turned into monarchs [...]. They would jump into the folds and wrinkles of my thoughts and take possession of them [...] I would divest of myself, [...] my blood, my intimacy, I would give them my universe.

[...] To their eyes, not at all amazed, I would turn into a drop of water, an ink stain, I would shrink completely down to what they saw [...] and if I turned dull or null and gave them nothing to see, they would stop staring at me, very irritated [...] and stand up yelling: ‘– Where are you? Where are you hiding?’, Hiding is forbidden!, it is mischief!’”

This wonderful caricature of a great writer, at some point psychiatrised, illustrates the authoritarian logic that the genius and young Freud dismantled and reverted. Respect for the hysteric, that stops being an operetta clown, and its absurd acquire the dignity of an ailment and turn into a source for knowledge.

Not only is Charcot’s show visibility changed in the intimate confidentiality of the analytic room, but also when two think about the life of one, the other, up until then preacher of the good, on behalf of health and sanity, yields their place of authority and wisdom to be midwife of a truth that is not theirs. This subversion of power, so contrary to the common thinking, where it is always easier to have others think us and solve the conflict than the hardship of having to think it ourselves, is one of the most valuable traditions of Freudian discovery and it is never easy to deal with. Non-interference, which Stratchey translated as neutrality and others translate as indifference (*indifferenze*), is thornier than a porcupine.

The golden rule seems innocent and angelical, but it is barbarian and unattainable. We lead that unreachable utopia to localise where it is betrayed, and we use transgression as an entrance gate to unexplored inner labyrinths, dismantling the synthetic function of the ego and defensive self-delusions I have created. The complementary pair of floating attention turns us into rather professional detectives in exploring unknown lands.

With these simple and wonderful tools, Freud took us to child sexuality, navigated many years in the seduction theory until the *My hysterics lie* crisis, discovering in delusion something stronger than reality (*realität*) of conscience, so that there could appear the more effective phantasmal reality (*Wirklichkeit*). A giant leap from a naturalist practice to a structural thinking; from introspective reflection to phantasmal causality that establishes transference, the fake link that discovers other labyrinths of our inner life.

The symbolic effectiveness of the fictional, recognised in literature of all time, turns out to be, with the Freudian approach, a fruitful tool to tackle and modify the psychic ailment, the neurotic symptom, and proposes a new self-knowledge perspective, as well as to discover an unknown facet of human culture and social ties.

While medicine characterises symptom as an abnormality to

1. Blanchot, Maurice. *La folie du jour [The Madness of the Day]*, ed. Fata organa, 1986.

correct or suppress, in a two-fold line between pathology and normality, Freudism locates it as a cornerstone or key element of mental functioning totality, which houses, incompatibly, not only morbid aspects, but also creative ones. Not only the worst, but also the best of the human mind is lodged in conflict. If the procedure flourishes, not only psychic pain is relieved, but also stupidity, adds Freud at some conference.

Metapsychological models that Freud and post-Freudians have created to standardise these findings are conceptualisations to arrange the unmanageable complexity of experience. To psychoanalyse is not to apply a good theory, but to be available to detect and embrace the unparalleled and unusual that bursts into the vernacular experience of transference.

### **Tradition-Invention**

This author wonders if the hyphen that links or separates the two terms that rule this Congress have a disjunctive (oppositional) or conjunctive (complementary) value. Without hesitation, I would go for the second option: there is no tradition without invention. The dialogic experience that evolves in a psychoanalytic field is never repeatable. If it were, it would not be psychoanalysis.

Even though Freud worked for some months six times a week, and these frequency and duration parameters differ from present ones, the purpose of the adventure is the same: the attire changes, but not the core. I do not know if we copulate in the same manner as Adam and Eve did, or differently, neither do I want to know. The point is to unravel the unsaid of current time, as was the case with sexuality in times of Victorian morality.

The unsaid as a source for the symptom or discomfort in culture. In these times of late modernity, of information age (Castels) we are societies without a narrative (García Canclini), with an overheated present that devours the past and the future. What are the consequences for our profession, our discipline, of understanding these findings of changes that social sciences point to us? Rather than societies without a narrative, we are subjects traversed by a chaotic multiplicity of stories, unable to organise coherently in its diversity. D.R. Dufour<sup>2</sup> thinks that modernity was marked since 1800 by the Kantian critical subject and by the Freudian neurotic subject during the 20th century. The contemporary subject (consumer rather than citizen) is treated by the market as merchandise and is governed by instrumental reason (which mainly operates in the interval between the possible and the impossible), instead of leaning on pure reason (Kant) that engages in distinguishing between the real and the fake, and takes the judgement between what is right and what is wrong as an essential value.

Many times, the traditional way to present psychic conflict, its anxieties and defences, that would be displayed in a questioning and self-theorising narrative, are absent today in the encounter between the

2. Dufour, Dany Robert. *El arte de reducir cabezas [The Art of Reducing Minds]*, ed. Paidós.

analyst and their promising analysis. Not always, but that is often the case. The screaming of panic crises, scarification and/or mutilation, severe eating disorders, drug addictions and varied expressions of (self) destructive conducts are not usually maintained in a verbal correlation that enables the traditional intervention of the psychoanalyst. The symptom appears as a passage to the act where hermeneutic work of meaning search is not possible and, instead, there appears a sideration of the subject that disarrays the cognitive mapping of their thinking (Žižek).

The realm of the psychoanalytic device, the cadenced continuity of its regressive atmosphere that used to be a starting point that was installed from the proposal and the face-to-face attitude of the psychoanalyst, today is a shortfall, something to conquer or build. That is why Julia Kristeva wonders: What is the point of psychoanalysis in light of a self-ignored discomfort? The frenzied social time of the society of instantaneous information is many times transferred to an inner and experiential temporality of the same type, where immediacy and rush displace the slow flow of perlaboration. A thinned inner life, where urgency of satisfaction in consumption replaces the elusive adventures of desire. 'More is better' seems to be the social mandate to the individual, who retracts in the individuality of their accomplishment, at a time of dying ideals and collective utopias, which used to bewitch us and, maybe, alienate us.

But the declination of ideals and utopias, far from freeing us from superegoic mandates, leaves us at the mercy of its most ferocious and primitive traces. A saturation that barely hides the fear of emptiness, being nobody for no-one, evaporation of the other as "partner, rival, opponent or enemy" (Freud, 1919). The fatigue of being one-self in a hostile and competitive world that urges us into the gigantic effort of being someone and running until we are out of breath in order to have a place in the system or otherwise be excluded from it. A productive system that, materially and symbolically, will not cease to reproduce the cleavage between the included and the excluded. Fear of being nobody for no-one, says Norbert Lechner, of falling into the Wasted Lives, says Zygmunt Baumann, of becoming disposable or superficial human beings, as Marx, Arendt and Ogilvie put it.

## **Invention**

We used to work (we work) hard to localise and designate the inner conflict, its anxieties and defences, and change the repetition into perlaboration, organising a dialogic field in transference. That questioning and self-theorising narrative was (is) the core of our work, the target of our interpretation.

Today, that symptom appears as a stubborn presence of an operational thinking that works as a shield that hampers the metaphoric-metonymic movement of symbolisation. As if that inner life, which we call psychic space, had shrunk and turned unable to house the system or discomfort as conflict with its anxieties and defences, and expels it into the material body or deals with it in the passage to the act. Expulsion

into the body, closer to the psychosomatic disease model than to the hysteria model. In hysteria, there exists a narrative correlate that becomes the raw material with which psychoanalysis works, looking for new symbolisation itineraries. In current narratives, a cathartic, explosive, monochord voice endlessly describes the ailment of the symptom with no or few openings to the Other Scene of the ghost, the word has lost the ability to raise the issue of why and shelters in lack of meaning.

Speaking a shareable language, re-establishing a meaningful syntax for both members in the therapeutic duality, with its yearning search for meaning, is the first challenge and the first achievement to accomplish. Re-establishing the dignity of an invested and meaningful word that cultivates and deploys the transference space as a preferred and truthful, even enjoyable, value in view of the competitive presence of alternative therapies that promote the healing by avoiding this ailment and with which (im)patients usually provoke us with arrogance. It is this “invention” I have faced and still face when I talk with the children of the information age that cultivate Facebook and overstimulation of consumption. For minds shaped in modernity, the perseverance of a voice that gets stuck in lack of meaning and is immersed in a mundane void, that eventually becomes tragic repetition turns out to be amazing and bewildering. To dismantle this inertia and create a shared legality (Zuckerfeld) seems to be a starting point to establish the dialogic field of a human and meaningful bond. I have the feeling that accelerated social time has its correlate in acceleration of experiential time that is internalised. Times of instantaneousness, flashing or epileptic, that multiply at the expense of times of realm, of sedimenting and redefining the psychic phenomenon where, as Walter Benjamin said, *the dream bird of boredom* just acts.

This distortion in the balance of alternation between transitive experiential times and reflexive times must, indispensably, produce effects in the functioning of the mind. Which ones? I do not know. I do not know yet, but I think it is a relevant question for 21st century psychoanalysts. I do not know if as a precaution or out of ignorance and lack of talent, I think we are at the stage of looking for relevant questions rather than jumping into the answers. There seems to be kind of an agreement between what social sciences call societies without narrative (rather crisis or lack of traditional narrative) (García Canclini) and the cultural products it generates –video clips, rock, tattoos, piercing– and the kind of psychopathological problem young people bring into our room. Paul Virilio has taken care of this area (speed) in civilising mutation. In the same way that in a road, the excessive flow of vehicles at high speed has a critical point that produces the traffic jam, the dizziness of perceptive stimuli generates paradoxical effects of inertia and psychic paralysis. Virilio says it is about escaping the instantaneousness of an explosive, epileptic psychic phenomenon and regaining, still at high speed, the rhythms of life musicology. I add to rescue an experienced inner time where the present is a temporality that articulates yesterday memories with tomorrow wishes and projects.

The creative narrative (word in time, as Antonio Machado would put it) needs that triptych where the experiential time ties a past of wishes with a future of projects and illusions. Without this, a basic area of human condition is desertified into nothing.

“Our next need [...] is not building a universal culture in correspondence with the Esperanto language, nor is it the invention of a wide technology for human organisation, but to increase the possibilities of an intelligible speech among people that differ greatly in interests, looks, wealth and power, and that are still found in the same world where they stay in constant connection, and where, at the same time it gets harder and harder to stay off other people’s paths”.<sup>3</sup>

### **Post-Scriptum**

An early reader of my text criticised my lack of reference to our illustrious ancestors. But without them, my reflection could not exist and I admit to be creditor to that legacy. In a changing world, psychoanalytic reference of the third millennium is at the writing studio.

**Keywords:** *Culture, Subjectivity, Metapsychology, Discomfort, History of psychoanalysis.* **Prospect keywords:** *Invention, Tradition.*

3. Geertz, Clifford. (1988), in journal *La Diaria*, October 2006



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## Difference and inheritance

*To David Kreszes, Z'L.*

Human beings are animals that inherit. “To inherit” means to be included in the chain of transmission by means of language, neither genetic nor biological transmission and, thus, non-natural. The idea of inheritance in nature –merely genetic and biological– is a cultural construct, a metaphoric attribution or broadened meaning (as when we say that a dog laughs or a turtle waves) of the true inheritance, the human one.

The fact that inheritance is non-natural implies, right away, that it is about doing, an art of fiction. Inheritance is manufactured; it is the result of an art or a *tekne*. It does not take place spontaneously; it does not flow through blood or genes or any other phenomenon that would dispense with the active intervention of legators and legatees. In fact, that *inheritance doing goes against* nature, whose modality consists in the mechanic repetition of the same thing; thus, in in-difference. Inheritance, on the other hand, is based on, supposes and requires difference: each human being is other regarding who conceived them; the son is located in a place different from that of the father in the filiator chain. Otherness is in principle a matter of places, which implies a necessary and enabling condition of multiple consequences. It is that discontinuity between generations that makes it compelling to manufacture continuity; one that is always hesitant, always inconsistent, and always at risk.

As Lévi-Strauss defined the prohibition of incest not as mere passage, but as a leap between nature and culture, we could say that culture pulls that leap, already appropriated and incorporated into its own configuration. From one generation to another one, a leap puts everything at risk and at the same time is promising. Each new son is a bet, a decision, an act. Between father and son, an abyss: the chance that such succession does not occur. Hence –stemming from the lack of confirmed descendants– the need of a name.

Inheritance, then, far from being something clearly defined and identifiable, something with a plain and simple surface, is an intricacy: multivocality is its hallmark; the rough and folded is its aspect; inconsistency is its quality. How can we approach such a strange –and at the same time intimate– object?

Within inheritance the old and the new are interwoven; memory and oblivion; the known and the unknown; certainty and challenge. What is given to us and what we do with (or against, or despite) it; reception and creation. In short: tradition and invention.

### **Fashioning inheritance**

“Fashioning man is telling him about boundaries. Fashioning boundaries is putting the idea of the father in the limelight, directing interdiction towards children of both genders. The father is, first of all, a matter of symbolism, something theatrical, a living artifice that batters sociologists’ society and biologists’ science”, says Pierre Legendre.<sup>1</sup> This is it because, just as the author asserts, “the world is genealogically organised”. In other words, within and through language, which is the most ethereal and ephemeral reality. Human beings display their existences between two nothingnesses: before birth and after death. How can they keep standing; how can they avoid falling into the abyss that opens up below

1. Legendre, P. *La fábrica del hombre occidental* [The fashioning of western man] Buenos Aires, Amorrortu, 2008, p. 27.

the species; where can they lean on? Tradition would be that string hanging over the abyss, which means that it can break and throw us into the void at any time.

Tradition is that replacement of nature that humans long for. It serves as prosthesis in that place where we are absolutely separated from what we know will always happen in the same way. Human beings do not know; we cannot know what is going to happen: we are exiled from Paradise, that is, from the realm of the identical and predictable. Hence, we need something that encloses us, frames us and provides us with some kind of predictability, that is, of permanence, but not as repetition. That is tradition. It draws a horizon: it opens the possible but at the same time it encloses infinity; in that way, it allows the appearance of the inscribable and, thus, of the erasable. It enables –and demands– the decision.

Tradition, according to Yerushalmi, is not a silk thread that unwinds, but a chain of discontinuous links. “[...] A people ‘forgets’ when the generation holding the past does not pass it on to the next one, or when the latter rejects what they received or, in turn, they stop passing it on, which happens to be the same [...]. What we call oblivion in a collective sense appears when certain human groups are not able –voluntarily or passively...– to pass on what they learnt in the past for posterity”.<sup>2</sup> We could expand and make the issue more complex with a few lines by Hannah Arendt, in a text where she analyses what happened with French intellectuals and the Resistance, intellectuals who were suddenly called for action and then abandoned –with the abrupt end of that brief period– to their previous activities again, to “the weightless irrelevance of their personal matters”. Arendt begins her text with a phrase by René Char: “our inheritance has been bequeathed to us without a testament”. A phrase that the thinker understands as the quintessence of that orphanage; the inanity typical of that time. “By telling the heir about its legitimate will, the testament –says Arendt– bequeaths past possessions into a future. Without a testament or, to solve the metaphor, without tradition –which selects and names, transmits and preserves and locates the treasures and states their value– it seems there is no continuity bequeathed over time and, therefore, humanely speaking, there is no past or present, just an eternal world change and biological cycle of living creatures [...]. Loss, perhaps inevitable in terms of political reality, was consummated by oblivion, by a memory lapse... And this is *due to the fact that recollection, which is just a way of thinking, [...] is helpless outside a predetermined reference pattern*, since the human brain is hardly ever able to retain something totally disconnected. Thus, the first ones who could not remember what the treasure was like were those who had possessed it and who *found it so strange that they could not name it*”.<sup>3</sup> (This was emphasised by the author, D.S.).

In fact, it is a question of name since names show our foreignness with all its harshness, our loss, our constituent exile. Between the name and the thing there is only distance and otherness. Tradition is that referential network that Arendt speaks about; that distribution of places that denote (us) and bring us into existence in history. Only in that context –and we must remember the connotation of fabric the term carries– words tell and allow telling. Language makes us get lost and guides us.

However, if language and tradition move us away from nature forever –or, rather, denounce that original and unyielding remoteness–; if it is actually a creation, a device, a fiction, is tradition an artifice? Is it the result of human beings’ will and wit? And if this is so, does all inheritance not fall into arbitrariness? What would the reason, value, and power of what some people have invented, perhaps to deceive or subdue us be? Why should I respect or comply with what others, as human as we are, have imposed?

These questions weigh down all inheritance; following Arendt, what “is received and questioned”. It is important to keep the tension between both terms, without solving it in favour of one and removing the other. In order to question, one must receive. Receiving, far from implying mere passivity, entails a decision. As it was said: it is not about what flows

2. Yerushalmi, Y. H. “*Reflexiones sobre el olvido*” [Reflections on oblivion] in AA. VV. *Usos del olvido* [The uses of oblivion] Buenos Aires, Nueva Visión, 1989.

3. Arendt, Hannah. “La brecha entre el pasado y el futuro” [Between past and future] in *De la historia a la acción* [From history to action] Barcelona, Paidós, 1995

through blood or genes –in which case nothing can be done–, but about what is shaped in the signifying network we are immersed in, as listeners and speakers. But receiving is recognizing the other from whom what comes to me originates; assuming the statute of not being the first or self-begotten, not being original. In all inheritance what Harold Bloom has called “the anxiety of influence” is at stake; a sort of narcissistic pain due to the awareness that there was another one before, that I could not write (or think, or invent, or even be!) anything without that antecedent. At the same time, that background provides us with the text that we will have to “translate”, read against the grain, and deform enough so that it is not the same anymore or is barely recognisable; all tradition entails what Bloom himself calls “creative misreading”. All reading, a murder.

### Get off me, past!

The conflict between continuity and discontinuity runs parallel to the one which separates and binds heteronomy and autonomy. Tradition has always –*traditionally?* –been placed under the sign of heteronomy, while invention boasts, initially, the glories of autonomy. In each period –but in the present maybe in an exacerbated way–, rejection to tradition seems to be imperative, a cool gesture, a requirement to be considered postmodern. Shaking mothballs off, those old “values” and rites, those archaic speeches in order to gestate –paradoxically!– new rituals,<sup>4</sup> to be self-sufficient and ignore any precedence in knowledge... “Father” starts representing the name of oppression and the irrational, of the arbitrary imposition of empty manners and dominant hierarchies. The flag of equality sweeps away all difference: genders, generations, or places cannot be distinguished, in a crusade that confuses “equality of rights” or isonomy with simply “equality”, a substantialist notion and, consequently, dangerous and potentially totalitarian...<sup>5</sup>

However, it is necessary to revise and stir those false antinomies. A relation of plain and simple opposition could not be established between the terms in such pairs –continuity/discontinuity, heteronomy/autonomy–, as if they were in fact finished substances; rather, they are aspects or moments of a complex movement; faces that (like a Moebius strip) co-imply and signal a path. A poor “Kantian” reading has sought to change heteronomy and autonomy into crystallised categories, separating and confronting them in relation to the law and will. When reading Kant very carefully, it is obvious that the law –the categorical imperative, only law of will or practical reason– has the status of gift, it comes from another, it is imposed to the subjects so that they “embrace it in their decisions”.<sup>6</sup> Thus, it is that first heteronomy the one which founds subjects, forcing them to

4. The ritual, by definition, crystallises a group’s behaviour or vision of the world. That vision has been formed throughout many generations, and the ritual is its inscription mode in the individuals that are part of the group. It is obvious then that a ritual is not an individual, voluntary or conscious creation, but always and inevitably –like languages– part of an inheritance. Among the vast bibliography about the complex issue of the ritual, I can mention just some texts as a guide: the classical study by Hubert, Henri and Mauss, Marcel. “Essai sur la nature et la fonction sociale du sacrifice”, in *Année Sociologique* t. II, 1899. Spanish version: *Magia y sacrificio en la historia de las religiones*. [Magic and sacrifice in the history of religions] Buenos Aires, Lautaro, 1946; van Gennep, Arnold. *Los ritos de paso*. [Rites of passage] Madrid, Taurus, 1986; Bell, Catherine. *Ritual: perspectives and dimension*, New York, Oxford UP, 1997 and *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, New York, Oxford UP, 1992; Turner, Victor. *The ritual process: structure and anti-structure*. EUA, Aldine Transaction, 2009.
5. That notion of equality which is so emphatically debated nowadays has, in fact, a long history, which its supporters seem to ignore. Equality, just like the so hackneyed identity, aims at defining an essence rather than determining structural relations, relations between places (as it would be the case of equality before the law: it does not matter who or what you are, what matters specifically is the subject’s inconsistency before legality, whose function is to position and protect them). Simply equality, then, is what is claimed to vindicate “tolerance”: though you are black, or poor, or a woman, I am going to accept you in my country. It is Shylock’s argument: if you prick Jews, do we not bleed? Saying that men are equal to women, son to father, far from contributing to justice, it covers it in mud: the law implies and requires differences, precisely to rule equally for everyone. Otherwise, we are a step away from totalitarianism: it is always possible to find one that is not so equal in essence... like Nazism has shown very well. About this topic see the wonderful article by E. Levinas, “Algunas reflexiones sobre la filosofía del hitlerismo” [Some reflections on the philosophy of Hitlerism]. Cf. also by Milner, Jean-Claude, *Las inclinaciones criminales de la Europa democrática*. [Criminal inclinations of democratic Europe] Buenos Aires, Manantial, 2007.
6. This is the great Kantian step: disembody that other, snatching authority from the master of the time –political, religious or academic–, break up the childish conception that needs a flesh and blood father to ban or allow. In his text “What is Enlightenment?”, Kant elaborates on that maturity of man based on the law, which implies the end of submission to a sovereign other who believes to be above the law or be the law. Cf. regarding this, the article “Imperativo y Shemá” in my *Filosofía de cámara*, Buenos Aires, Ediciones Mármol Izquierdo, 2008. It is vital to understand that the “law of reason” is *the form of reason itself*, not a content that could be added or removed. Reason is nothing but a legality. Thus, autonomy: the law is, at a time, given, donated, other and structural. That “extimacy” of the law is what makes it impossible to oppose heteronomy and autonomy as substantial and independent terms.

choose and act. It will be at that point, assuming that law as an imperative inscribed in its reason that autonomy is shaped, *not the subject's* (who is always insufficient, incapable of knowing the thing itself, always subjected) *but the will's*, which will not depend anymore on monarchs or external human authorities for its actions, but on the law that structures its nature as a rational being.<sup>7</sup> Field of the undecidable –since neither an objective parameter, nor phenomenal knowledge ensures the truth of my decision–, autonomy is drawn as bets and risks, anchored, however, in the donation of a compass word. What subjects do with that –with what is given to them, calls for and demands them– is their responsibility; that is, their link with the law, with language and with the social aspect.

This Kantian development clearly shows that the otherness that calls for and positions – and thus founds the subject– *is not a personal other*; it is about the otherness of the law, as not appropriable. *Making it mine* is not the same as “making my own way”<sup>8</sup> with what does not belong to me. If the law belonged to me, it would be part of the world of objects, consumption or economy. Rather –as in relation to language– *the subject belongs to the law*, and not the other way around. As Legendre said, “fashioning man is telling him about boundaries”. And the boundary is Other. How could that boundary which brings me into existence come from myself?

### Tradition, ‘betrayal’ and filiation

Founding heteronomy requires, however, to be staged in narration: that otherness does not stand as mere abstraction but it needs mythical coating in order to come into force, to be inscribed in the subject and to work. Some personification, a certain incarnation is inherent to it, not as an accident or supplement, but as a part of its structure. In a game of similarities and differences, the law is “totemised”: it is inside and outside, it is internal and external, it obliges me and supports me. I devour it and it devours me. Moving away from it without cutting all the ropes –without disconnecting–, generating enough distance to read it; that is the question: will heteronomy be able to give rise to autonomy? Will discontinuity occur in the same path as continuity? Which strategies do human beings implement in order to be successful in that challenge?

Michel de Certeau attributes the brilliant idea of “postulating, at the origin of peoples, a genealogical violence (a struggle between the father and the son), the repression of which is the work of tradition (it hides the corpse), but whose repetitive effects are identifiable across their successive camouflages (there are traces left behind)”<sup>9</sup> to Freud. Thus, tradition, murder (of the father), violence and hiding go hand in hand. History, we know, is built with, on and among corpses; writing is about the remains. Moreover, “genealogical violence” is an eloquent syntagm that clearly states that *genealogy itself entails violence*. There would not be, a peaceful, harmonious, and calm succession (one without damage) could not exist: that is the leap, the difference that, as we observed, forms the very bone of human beings. If we cloned ourselves –instead of reproducing sexually– it would be a step from the same to the same, death would be excluded and there would be no language. If there is repetition, it is not of the same but, as de Certeau points out, of the efforts for erasing marks; but each trace that is erased leaves in turn a trace, a remain, the testimony of the erasure and of its impossible and constant inscription.

“A moment of discontinuity establishes, so to speak, a filiation, a filiation with its own stories”.<sup>10</sup> Discontinuity is part of the process of reception, not its opposite; filiation, hence, includes those leaps, those interruptions, those deviations which we will call interpretation. Naturally, we observed, all inheritance is affected by failures, erasures and rewritings. If tradition “conceals the corpse”, that happens because it is necessary to have someone to murder, and to have such death signified –incorporated, as Freud would say in *Totem and taboo*– even in the form of denial, in a tale on which our existence depends. “Human beings need a purpose to live for”, says Legendre, and that purpose is provided by

7. I owe Claudio Glasman this subtle and witty observation.

8. De Certeau, Michel. *Historia y psicoanálisis*. [History and psychoanalysis] Universidad Iberoamericana Mexico 2007, p. 26.

9. Benasayag, Miguel and Charlton, Edith. *Crítica de la felicidad*. [A critique of happiness] Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 1992.

10. Benasayag, Miguel and Charlton, Edith. *Crítica de la felicidad*. [A critique of happiness] Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 1992.

myths, narratives, and tales about the origin, which name us and host us in a shared history. Yet: if tradition conceals, distorts, displaces (in the sense of Freudian *Entstellung*), like a dream that inevitably moves us away from “that” which happened –or that is supposed as such–, why not getting rid of it? What truth lies in that costume game, those traps of memory? Well then, it is precisely that distorting task what recovers, again and again, in digestible ways, that original void. Since violence consists in that: the destitution of the origin, making the nothingness that precedes us apparent, the horrified expression of the abyss and the strenuous attempt to watch it. We are *sons of*, but we could have not existed. We have been called, so our existence depends on the ephemeral voice of another, on the fragile plot of desire and on language. Genealogical violence, once again, is the one that filiation exerts against nature, rallying against repetition and nonsense in order to establish what staggers.

### Inventing tradition

Summing up: tradition is true in the sense that it is permanently subject to an interpretation that sets it in motion again. Such truth as an interpretation is not based on the literalness of facts –supposing it existed– but on that power, that generative force that all tradition must possess in order to stay alive (and keep us alive). Yet, what is the beginning? What is the egg and where is the chicken? Could a historical perspective reveal the mystery?

History carries the mythical on its back. There cannot be any history without an other voice that invokes and sets in motion. I call that other voice or otherness *myth*. It is an invested authority; a starting point necessary to update history (individually and in groups; let us remember that according to Freud culture works with the same tools as the individual; hence, the relation between ontogenesis and phylogenesis). Human beings need to be authorised in their existence by a voice that calls them (in the double sense of naming and invoking), that ensures them they were expected and desired, that there is a place in the world for them and a place in succession. Only provided that they had been called, they will be able to generate their own history. Otherwise, they will be doomed –like Oedipus– to go back again and again to the place they came out of, twisting time on their hinges in search of that first moment, that glow that guides them, that bond that supports them and at the same time releases them. Oedipus gets, literally, “stuck”. Perhaps the biblical character Abram exemplifies the point correctly: the divine voice that calls him and orders him to go out of his father’s house<sup>11</sup> –as it will later do with Moses, from the burning bush– is the exact mixture of what is given and what we do. It is, in fact, an other voice, invested and authoritative; but it is an authority/otherness that authorises and orders –paradoxical as it may seem– to found another history, to break away from what is given, to begin. In the expression used by G’s<sup>12</sup> (“go to the land that I will show you”) the core of the problem appears, the key to the issue: *Abram was already on his way to that land*, Canaan, with his father; it would not have been necessary for G’s to show him the place as a novelty. But it is only after the father’s death –which occurred in the last verses of the previous chapter– that the future patriarch will make *his* way; hence, that land where he is going *is and is not* the one his father had chosen.

There are people who believe that Abram was crazy, and that that voice was a delusion. I would not discard such version so fast. The risk is, again, a false antinomy: believing in the objective reality (historical?) of that voice, or mocking the tale by attributing the voice to a psychotic delusion. Instead, I propose to think that in all foundation there is, in fact, a bit of delusion. After all, the term “vocation” expresses something like that: a vocative, a

11. Genesis, 12:1: “*lej lejd*”, that is, “get going, go”. The complete divine speech says: “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you”.

12. This notation of the divine name serves the purpose of piercing and breaking such name; it highlights that it is not a One-all, but the place of lack; in fact, a kind of way of transliterating the tetragrammaton (JHVH), since it is unpronounceable and elusive. If I write “God”, I speak more of Zeus –which is the same word “god” in Greek– than of the biblical god, that absence that the Law imposes.

call is imposed to me, comes to me –Heidegger would say that it is “the call to be” summoning the poet (and, of course, the prophet)–, as a gift that obliges me. The truth of that call obviously does not lie in its “factual reality” but in its effects.

When Moses comes down Mount Sinai carrying the tablets of the covenant and the skin of his face was ablaze with light, he also does it *in the name of*. Is Moses an impostor,<sup>13</sup> a skilful magician who was able to produce thunder and lightning so that the people believed in his investiture and in the power of That who had invested him? Delusion, imagination, invention: yes, a bit of all that dwells in each tradition in the sense that what precedes us is created, made a fiction, to provide it with power and set it in motion. When Moses attributes his mandate to “the G’s of our fathers”, a divinity that made a covenant with patriarchs a long time ago, he produces an authorising retrojection. It is the weight of the archaic, of the consecrated by centuries and bathed by the waters of history that will set a process in motion, as a kind of support and guarantee. Moses founds a tradition taking ownership of that founding instance. He places himself as a link of a chain; he invents parents. Positioning himself as a son will enable him, in turn, to be a father and pass on the law.

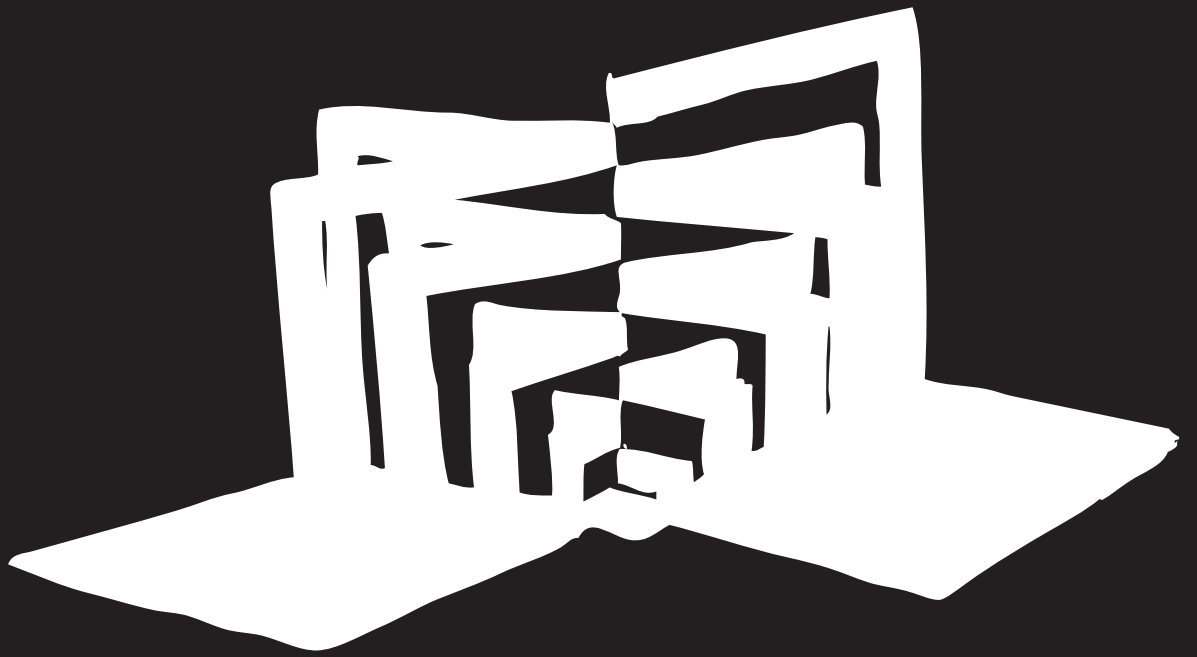
There are people who argue that Exodus should be the first book of the Torah since it is there that the mosaic saga (perhaps, the initial moment of the Hebrew) is told. However, biblical writers and compilers have acted wisely by putting the book of Genesis first with the patriarchs’ narrative; those who maybe have only been literary creations of a brilliant leader –who in the books is unified under the name of Moses–, but who should be provided with a certain “reality” so that they could serve the logics of the text.

The text that closes the Genesis, the first of the five books of the Torah, is eloquent: it narrates Jacob’s final moments, the last patriarch. Already on his deathbed, he calls his children to bless them; all of them except Joseph, whom he does not bless directly but through his children. The patriarch then, in an unusual gesture, grants his blessing (*berajá*, in Hebrew: issue that threads the entire biblical story) to his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh. The story seems to show that inheritance is about that: about going beyond, about broadening the horizon, about indicating a path *in absentia*. Bet and leap, action and decision. Levinas asserts –against Heidegger– that “man is a being to live beyond his own death”. It is in that afterlife that symbolic capacity is put to the test: in that place where substance is missing, where time depends only on what is inscribed in it, where uncertainty and infinity blend.

Human beings are the animals who have grandchildren. Children of children, sheer metaphor. Tradition reveals there its inventive character, its literary quality and its symbolic structure. Demanding objective verification or factual consistency from it is a foolish form of idolatry; undermining it due to its “unreality” or its arbitrary bias is the childishness of the one who stills demands that their father be infallible, forgetting that, in fact, father is a matter of symbol.

13. The issue is dealt with in an anonymous peculiar text, *Treatise of the three impostors: Moses, Jesus, Muhammad*, which circulated secretly at the end of the 17th century, a furiously anti-ecclesiastical work where “the merely human and political origin of the major religions is attributed to impostors” is stated. Cf. the edition by El Cuenco de Plata, Buenos Aires, 2006, magnificently prefaced and translated by Diego Tatián





Textual



## Hugo Achugar

He was born in 1944 in Montevideo, Uruguay. His vast career includes poetry, fiction and essays along with his academic work as a teacher and cultural critic. In 1973 he was dismissed from his chair by the dictatorship and he relocated in Venezuela as a researcher for Romulo Gallegos Centre for Latin American Studies. In 1980 he received his Ph. D in Latin American Literature from the University of Pittsburgh. Since then he has held a chair in the Faculty of Humanities in the University of the Republic (Uruguay). At present, he is the National Culture Director of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Uruguay.

### Selection of his essays

- The raft of the jellyfish: essays about identity, culture and the end of the century in Uruguay (Montevideo, Trilce 1992)
- The library in ruins: cultural reflections from the periphery (Montevideo, Trilce 1994).
- World, region, village: identities, cultural policy and regional integration (Montevideo, IMM Cultural Division and Goethe Institute, 1994)
- Planet without a mouth, ephemeral writings about art, culture and literature (Montevideo, Trilce, 2004)



## Theoretical babbling and fragmentary discourse

An interview with Hugo Achugar \*

**We start by listening to Hugo Achugar talking about his coming activities in different academic and interdisciplinary encounters in Latin American cities as a way of keeping in touch with his most recent interests.**

As I'm still working and I want to keep academic activity, apart from the official one *I.*, I'm especially interested in encounters on the Latin American cultural panorama, about literary theory and criticism of theoretical and academic work, not on "cultural policies".

For example, looking over my writings about memory, identity and others, I was asked which key words from my work I would choose. Suddenly, the fact that I work a lot with the idea of "fragment" came up; actually, I'm working on a poetry book based on texts called "fragments". And I said something about "the subject of fragment and dialogue" and I *had an insight into it*, so I commit to working on this perhaps in my next conferences and create a book later where I'll work on fragment; not only as a genre but also as a category or as a matrix of Latin American thought. I thought this due to my ideas about *Calibán* and "babbling" in Latin American thought.

**What do you think about the choice of *Calibán* as a name for a Latin American journal of psychoanalysis? Since you published the book *Planetas sin boca [Planets without a mouth]*, in 2004, until now would you keep the idea of Latin American discourse as theoretical "babbling" from which its richness and originality are taken?**

The theme of "babbling" has to do, in my opinion, with the dialogue with the "north" (not as a geographical reference) and with academic discourse, which I sometimes call dominant or hegemonic, North-American or European discourse.

\* Done for *Calibán* – Latin American Journal of Psychoanalysis, in Montevideo by Marta Labraga and Laura Verissimo (Psychoanalysts, Uruguay Psychoanalytic Association).

*I.* Hugo Achugar serves as Director of Uruguayan National Ministry of Education and Culture

Such discourse has a systematic and absolutely rounded structure, assembled and constructed, which I “resist” with my vision of what “babbling” is. I disagree with the renowned Hegel’s *dictum* that states that the Latin American continent is too “material”, too primitive to elaborate a philosophical and theoretical thought; I vindicate Latin America as a place of theoretical thought, maybe in disagreement with the structure or the systems’ patterns of thought from the north. I insist, the north is not a geographical category; it is a criterion of symbolic position. There is north here, in Montevideo, and “south” in other regions of the first world.

### **So, can the “north” be the centre too?**

The north is centre and hegemony. However, those forms of hegemony can also be in the geographic south; and the south can also be in the north, they are symbolic, geo-symbolic or geo-cultural categories.

Coming back to the theme of “babbling” and, in relation to Shakespeare’s “The Tempest”, in the dialogue between Prospero and Caliban, the latter shows that he cannot understand and that he sees the speech of the other, the native, who is, in fact, not a “native, but the “other”; he represents the “otherness” that is impossible to understand because that “other” cannot speak like him and he can only hear “turkey squawks” or just squawks. Actually, what Caliban cannot do is to speak the language of the coloniser, the dominant, the master, the king or, whatever we wish to call it, power, discourse of the hegemonic power. What Caliban does is just “babbling” to the eyes or ears of the other, but that discourse is also fragmentary. Then, there is a vindication in relation to my stance that has to do with two things: the vindication of babbling and fragmentary discourse, on which I’m working right now. As regards fragmentary discourse, I would say that it is not about the fact that it is not theoretically solid, but rather that this systematic instrument is not logically perfect, or completed from “a” to “z”, with established rules, let’s say a logical discourse... I remember a woman writer who shocked me long time ago. She said something that at this point I don’t know if she really said so or it’s my interpretation of her writing. She is Luce Irigaray, who states that opposing the hegemonic “Cartesian” male discourse there is a feminine derivative discourse, which is not articulated in a Cartesian way. She sets out this opposition and in a way vindicates, not the systematic discourse of male hegemony, but the derivative one, the discourse of “digression”. In a way what she is suggesting is an unsystematic systematicity from a male point of view. On the one hand, that impressed me a lot and, on the other hand, there is the mimicry discourse.

### **But wouldn’t babbling or squawking be *mimicry*? What is the difference?**

No, “babbling” represents precisely their own inability; it’s different from the one who tries to mimic and reproduce the hegemonic discourse. “Babbling” is a type of discourse that tries to construct itself as valid in its own but it doesn’t repeat the master’s formula, it doesn’t mimic, or it doesn’t reproduce

the other in a “mimetic” way. Then, babbling is another discourse... once I discussed this with Néstor García Canclini and he told me: “*No Hugo, babbling is a highly loaded word.*”

### **In fact, it is pejorative.**

Yes, it’s pejorative. But that is exactly what I’m getting at. On the one hand, there’s what I said about Luce Irigaray, which is one source, and on the other hand, we find “*black is beautiful*”, “*small is beautiful*” and the queer, the “*queer is beautiful*”. Silvia Molloy’s and many other people’s discourse transform the queer, the “freaky”, what is derogatory or pejorative or what is a stigma into a source of pride. It vindicates the stigma and it’s no longer such a thing, like in “*black is beautiful*” or in “*the queer is beautiful*”. At some point, there is so much in the feminine or feminist minority discourse as in the vindication discourse of sexual minorities; a particular time when what is pointed out as “less”: women can’t talk, women have no thought and all other forms of discrimination...there is a point when this situation is reversed and the stigma and what is pejorative is transformed into a source of pride.

Then, I come back to the issue of Latin American babbling, this alleged “impossibility” of thinking theoretically but in the feminist sense, as an assertion: this is a discourse that the hegemonic one doesn’t understand me, the hegemonic one can’t understand.

### **Could it be possible that out of pride, in relation to depreciation or the pejorative, we could reach a state of exaltation or, what’s more, a state of idealisation?**

Sure, there’s some exaltation in this discourse that is perceived by the other as “babbling”, understood by the other as the denigrated or denigrating, so I say: ‘no, this is our own and it is valuable’. It may be babbling for the others but it’s thought for us. Thus, the fragment, because it is supposed that the one who babbles can’t build a whole phrase or discourse, that’s why a fragment, partiality matters. The idea of the unfinished in a sense or what is a part or partial as an element. I haven’t had enough time to elaborate it more but I’m in the process of doing so. I believe that there is something, and I’m not looking for “legitimacy” in the Western tradition, but there is certain dialogue with the initial moment of the Western tradition where there’s a fragmentary philosophical thought built upon the bases of “aphorisms”, which are the remains because the book got burnt or because it wasn’t fully transmitted. They are fragments and, however, from those fragments discourses are constructed.

**We have to come back to this since we are close to psychoanalysis and the recognition of “the remains”, but picking up the thread of exaltation (a word we use but a questionable one) you said: “I’m not looking for legitimacy in the Western tradition”. At that same point, aren’t we going from the pejorative to exaltation, which also implies a lack of awareness of that other part which in a way constitutes us, which is the whole Western culture?**

I don't think so. Maybe I'm pretty much influenced biographically, an intellectual biography, since in the discipline I've worked during most of my life, which has to do with literary criticism, literary theory, and cultural theory, serious research was in English, the dominant language. For example, works in Spanish or in Portuguese weren't read; they were simply not "theoretically" readable if they weren't in English. It was just "theorised" that in order to have a theoretical dialogue with the world, one had to write in English. I believe that this scorn for the mother tongue is serious, not only the scorn for our language, Spanish or Portuguese but also for ... what's not English, not European or not German, or many times scorn for what isn't French.

Since it's very eloquent and significant, I started to incorporate, on purpose, certain concepts or expressions in Latin American aboriginal languages, for instance, in Guaraní. To say "we" in Guaraní there are two words that are distinguished: *ñandé* and *oré*. These two forms of "we" distinguish between "we" with them and "we" without them. I also found out that in Quechua there is a similar form, this way of thinking of "we" differs from the way it is thought in the Western languages, not only in English and French but also in Spanish and Portuguese. We think, "we" and "they", there isn't an inclusive "we". It leaves aside "they" but there is a "we" "with them", as opposed to other "they". I consider this particularly enriching to think about our place: I believe I'm from a Westerner, not from any other place. I was shaped in the Western tradition, of course, but within the peripheral Western tradition, like ours. Then, this "degraded" position that we have in this Western debate is the one that I intend to vindicate as a significant space, a space that can speak, where things can be said in the language of "them" and, above all, they can be said in another way, from which we profit a lot.

So, in this respect, Latin Americans can discuss in the hegemonic language because we've been trained and formed in this hegemonic discourse; however, we can also manage other discourses.

Yet there are other discourses and other languages; there are different thinkers in Brazil, many others in Paraguay, Chile and Peru who have another "discursivity", which is not the hegemonic one. The fact that we can manage both is part of our reality, which is an interesting one. *Being at the periphery you are obliged to know all the Western tradition apart from your own. When you are in the centre, you aren't.* They know what is theirs and the rest enters partially.

**This bears relation to this project of a Latin American journal, which is, at the same time, a journal of psychoanalysis for psychoanalysts.**

I found the choice of that name very interesting.

**When you talked about the fragment and babbling, you highlighted the specific features of psychoanalytic discourse, or at least a way of conceiving it, which privileges the fragmented, fantasy and memory "remains", association and occurrence.**

It comes to my mind the idea that the psychoanalyst's "floating attention" can only listen to fragments, but it's also true that the analysand can only utter or say fragments.

The fragment itself is such depending on the listener or speaker; in the speaker-listener relationship only the fragment is possible. Even when it is an absolute monologue, the listener only receives or perceives fragments and the monologue itself can only be expressed in fragments. The "whole" discourse, if that was possible or if that animal existed, would be a utopia, almost a "horizon", and as such, by definition, it is always beyond what one believes to perceive.

**It can be said that the analyst's listening doesn't aim at making an organised story, the unconscious relegates and cuts sequences, it juxtaposes them, memory and oblivion act, and there are "remains". As regards your personal experience, what has psychoanalysis given you?**

First, I was a user of psychoanalysis, of a very orthodox psychoanalysis at that time. Of course, I read psychoanalytic theory. Once I read that there's only "one" theory; there isn't one literary, philosophic or psychoanalytic theory; there is just theory, and that theory is for philosophers, psychoanalysts, literary critics, art critics, sociologists, political experts; that's to say, there is a set of bibliographic references we read that are common to different disciplines. The different moments of psychoanalysis are very enriching, and at the same time I believe that there are certain contributions that are partial, which are "dated", some of Freud's writings are. I mean they respond to a particular historical and cultural time and must be re-thought nowadays. I know that there are a lot of psychoanalysts who are interested in interdisciplinary dialogue and cross-reading, and I'm keen on that.

At first psychoanalysis contributed to raising my social awareness; it increased the awareness that I used to have about, for example, the relationship between psychoanalysis and society... it had a great impact on me, in the '60s, when Bauleo and Pavlovsky visited Uruguay to form groups of social psychology, operative groups. I was professionally trained, no, I wasn't trained, I took part in that movement for a long time. That increased my awareness about myself and about the group too. I've never taken part in group psychoanalysis, just individual. But, at the same time, that awareness about the functions and responsibilities in the society and in the group, that is to say, the community, the family, the country was raised from psychoanalysis, which allowed me to understand or deal with it. I'm not answering your question but...

**We believe you did. You're interested in other languages and that means that you're also interested in other contexts. For psychoanalysts like us, who were first trained in other disciplines like literature, in our case, this has been a theoretical and clinical opening. Reading about psychoanalysis "in relation" to other different socio-historical and cultural contexts and permeating the texts, delimitating boundaries between readings or as different subjective conditions.**

Thanks for your mentioning reading because what I think I've learnt from psychoanalysis is to read in a different way.

Many years ago I wrote an essay on Octavio Paz and I was called a "structuralist". I wasn't a structuralist, on another occasion I was considered a sociologist, but I'm not. In other words, I have been categorised in different disciplines, and the most important things psychoanalysis, and not only from psychoanalysis but also from multiple texts of various disciplines, is elaboration, being in contact or thinking with artists, novelists and philosophers, is that I've been learning and I find that interesting. Your challenge is to continue thinking about reality, society without limits and being able to make new readings that we couldn't make before.

In other words, when I face a text that I've read along my life, I read it differently finding new things never noticed before, not only because one "becomes" older, it's not a biological issue, but rather it's related to what the French linguist Pêcheux said. Pêcheux is a very interesting thinker who, in two of his chapters, can change the way you think. He stated that there are two kinds of "oblivion". One which makes you say "no, I meant something different" and the other one called "oblivion n° 1", which states that you cannot think beyond your ideological circle or horizon. Once you can think beyond the limits of your theoretical or philosophical "assumptions", you are out of that circle. At the same time, it's a kind of infinite Chinese box, you're in another ideological horizon and you can think according to your own current parameters, and there are things that you can't think because of your own constraints. Then, the possibility of thinking about something in a way you couldn't before because you didn't even recognise it, that is to say, you couldn't see them because you didn't notice them. Maybe that has to do with ethics...

## **Epics...?**

Ethics. You will explain me about epics later. I mention ethics because it has to do with the other, that's to say, I can't think or I can't see what the other sees, or I make them invisible because my horizon prevents me from doing so. The other doesn't exist in my horizon, it's just another element of the landscape, it hasn't got any particular "singularity", which is a term you probably understand and use more than me; and it's ethical the possibility of leaving that horizon, a sort of iron corset that prevents you from individualising or recognising that other who you previously couldn't ....

## **It leads you to an "othercide", as Daniel Gil said...**

Exactly, but "othercide" is committed precisely because the corset prevents you from recognising them. Why have you mentioned epics?

## **I thought that there was something about a project, a program in your proposal that has to**



do with “thinking without boundaries”, in other words, to gradually extend those boundaries that enclose us. I evoked the last book by Dany R. Dufour: *L’ Individu qui vient*, which portrays Don Quixote in the cover together with a dedication that reads: “*To Rocinante*”. Considering D.R. Dufour’s thoughts, who will attend the UPA2 Congress, and your words I came up with the idea of a “heroic deed” of thinking work...

I think that is what matters. As a depressive person, I would say that I do believe that a heroic deed is always possible, that it is possible for Rocinante to keep on riding; it’s always possible to get to another horizon. This leads us to the epic deed of knowledge, not a “Quixotic” one but to the “modern” idea of limitless knowledge that can overcome the horizon again and again.

### **The modern idea of “progress”?**

I believe that indefinite progress is a dream because there are impediments or there are such strong structures that make it impossible to get out from that structure of thought, but there is a movement of theories...

**In psychoanalysis as praxis it is very important to think about the theory statute so how is theory present in each analyst? The French psychologist Piera Aulagnier called it “floating theorising”.**

It’s a good expression. Talking about theory, it takes me to the situation of being unable to control the other’s discourse, what the other decides to read. That is fantastic and it seems to me a humility bath, which I had to withstand. And on the other hand, it is better than the one who reads and reproduces absolutely everything that you say like a machine...

### **Here knowledge is rounded out, that rounded knowledge you were talking about.**

Right. Because it doesn’t allow for the individual’s space of construction. I believe that here we either have a space of freedom or we have dogma. The dogma seems to be necessary because there are necessary norms, even the routine of certain norms is necessary for the construction of certain freedom.

But I also learnt that the routine can be acquired first and then free expression, like Picasso to whom the value of the Academy came first and then the value of freedom. I believe that the possibility of listening and making our own senses is also a way of being individuals and a form of individual identity. Maybe individual is not a correct term. When I refer to an individual I’m not only thinking in terms of individualisation, of a unique human being, but also in terms of communities, which also happens collectively in institutions.

**We asked if your theoretical thought has changed since 2004 in order to demarcate freedom and dogma, to articulate what is related to continuity and to creative changes.**

I don't know if I can answer this question, but I'll tell you an anecdote first. Maybe it is a tribute to those relevant people in my academic formation like Bauleo's and Pavlosky's visit to Uruguay in the '60s and Yolanda Martinez, my psychologist aunt. Once, while talking about what had been worked in the group, she said: "the ultimate goal of every institution is to preserve the institution". That phrase uttered 40 or 50 years ago is still relevant in the sense that every institution will have as its main goal their self-preservation and self-reproduction, but under which conditions? What are their members offered and requested?

Institutions, associations or instruments are created to advance in knowledge, in the organisation, the improvement of the discipline practice and profession. Necessary norms are established with an order and a system. By doing so an institution is regulated and controlled. But, at the same time, it creates that "horizon" I mentioned before within which one can think, it allows you to think and at the same time it makes you think according to those norms and so....

**It also restricts and creates possibilities of "othercides" and inbreeding.**

Right. But you either live in the anti- institutionalisation, and thus you can't construct because in order to construct you need rules and institutions, or you construct with these permanent efforts, with this dilemma, which demands efforts and a great intellectual and professional honesty. Don't be defeated by institutionalism and the apparatus structure and maintain the freedom of constantly re-creating and re-founding it.

**There is a permanent "tension" between the model of institution for its continuity and that constant freedom of re-foundation. The experience of analysis itself, a peculiar one, is at odds with the institution and its general guidelines, but at the same time the institution is needed or at least trusted.**

You need the frame. But what happens? And so I recall Picasso's case, which is fundamental for me. First, Picasso completed his formal studies and then he makes the "gesture" that creates, and he creates something different; but you need the institution to create, and the institution must allow for rupture and the "anti-institutional" gesture. If it is not permitted or if the individual doesn't make the rupture gesture, they don't have the peculiar possibility. Coming back to Pêcheux's ideas, he stated that in every discourse there is a primary hegemonic discourse and a secondary one.

So once I wondered how is a change between a hegemonic and a subordinate discourse produced or explained? Because if there is always a hegemonic discourse and a subordinate or secondary one and if this is it structurally under

any circumstances or during any historical time, how can you explain the change? When does the secondary discourse become hegemonic? Or how is the hegemonic discourse eroded and transformed into an alternative?

I believe that the explanation to this is that, from the structural point of view, discourses coexist. However, the secondary discourse, when it is powerful, has the possibility of eroding the hegemonic one till the situation is reversed. Sometimes it fails and is forgotten. There are hundreds of examples in history of subordinate or secondary discourses which weren't filed, but forgotten, erased, deleted; but there are some others which, in a way, due to perseverance, were progressively eroding hegemonic discourse. Otherwise, there is no possibility of change, which is present precisely in this duality between a hegemonic and a secondary discourse. The power of secondary discourse lies on mining and highlighting what nobody wants to see, it's like saying: "the king is naked".

**The hegemonic and the subordinate are also present in psychoanalysis in different associations in different countries, which results in the phenomenon of theoretical "pluralism" Are theories substituted or lost? Do they decline? How do they coexist? What do you consider as possibilities and limits of the inter-theoretical debate?**

I believe we're living through a period of multiple debates. The other day I was having a conversation with the visual artist and theorist Carlos Capelán and we thought that it would be interesting to have a discussion this year in Uruguay about the present state of the debate in which we talk about periphery, centre, north, south. I insist not simply as geographical places but rather symbolically. We both agreed that there isn't "a" debate, but a multiplicity of simultaneous debates. I mean. I believe that this concerns everything not only psychoanalysis. There are multiple coexisting agendas. We can generalise and organise that multiplicity and reduce it to one or two topics but, in fact, we're witnessing a plural multiplicity.

**But do we agree that this perspective of multiple pluralities, agendas and debates is different from the debate that is "nullified" in the name of pluralism? In the name of tolerance to apparently "reduce" anguish or "avoid" conflict?**

There is a plurality of debates and agendas from which I believe anguish also comes from. Recently I was reading a text by one of your colleagues about Freud's *Civilisation and its Discontents*, posed in interdisciplinary terms.

I told him that the "discontent" in culture at present was relative (without vindicating absolute and irrelevant relativism) since it doesn't only depend on biological age.

It's not only old people, like us, who talk about discontent when we look at young people's world, but we must understand that what some people perceive as a discontent in culture, some others may have a sense of "content" in culture. I think that these different assessments between discontent and content in and of culture have to do with the different positions of relativism as well as with a fragmentation of views in the

multiple spheres of debate. Today we are witnessing the existence of many interpretative communities coexisting, where hegemonies, which are not clear, have been in dispute for a long time. There are hegemonies, which are quite unclear or besieged, which are heading, I hope I'm wrong (or not), towards a transition where strong hegemonies and weak subordinations will probably be re-established.

Faced with it, I can only say "I hope I'm wrong" or "I don't know" since we don't know what would be desirable. I insist, I don't know, and I'd like to emphasise my uncertainty in this sense, is it better to have a strong hegemony and also a clear subordination? I don't know how to assess this difficulty we have, this discontent for some who feel we don't know what is happening because there are many simultaneous debates and many interpretative communities discussing different agendas. It's like the juggler who has many balls floating in the air at the same time. We were not used to that because we weren't trained for that. Things were in their place, for better or worse.

**On the other hand, during our professional training, and due to the historical and cultural contexts we lived in, we went through "revolts" and debates with hierarchies. Many times journals were the place for discussion of what was "new". What do you think about their role?**

Journals are still very important within culture, they are like the breeding ground for thought, of "work in progress". They show like a seismograph what is going on in each region at present better than a book since the journal shows what is happening in real life. I'm not referring to the unique modelled journal.

What is the anguish of that? Anguish comes from the multiplicity of things you have and the difficulty we have in dealing with them. There is an important issue there, which is also a political image that talks about the fragmentation in the Uruguayan society or the "fragmentation" of today's society. Of course, it is not easy to deal with it, we are not expert jugglers who can handle seven balls in the air!

In my opinion, having a single view, a "unique" journal is not good since it's like having a unique totalising thought. I think that journals are important because they allow you to show what is being produced, to think together and move on. I insist, I prefer journals to books because you can find the current production whereas the book is "post facto", it arrives some years later. The journal is life itself. On the other hand, the journal, as an institution, an artifact, is restrictive. That is to say, the journal is essential when it is open, when there are possibilities of debates. **There are journals which have changed the history of disciplines and thought** because they can open problems by means of "dossiers", the convergence of articles and debate, also by illustrating or recording debate. **It is dangerous when the journal becomes a church that sanctifies dogma.** That is to say, when you publish because you're "beatified" and when the journal is the voice of the institution it sanctifies. Thus, creativity is lost.

**There, the conservation of the institution is done through adaptive “modelling”.**

The thing is that, maybe I’m wrong, there is an irresolvable tension between the necessity of “modelling” and the necessity of “deconstructing modelling”. Thus, the human being becomes free because they can’t be free without models and they can’t be free with all “models”.

**What does the title of Fepal Conference (October 2012) “Invention-Tradition” suggest to you?**

There is something important here: in “tradition” and “invention”. I may be old but I believe *there is no possibility of invention without tradition*. There is no invention without tradition. There isn’t any problem in the “dialogue” between invention and tradition, the problem is when tradition oppresses invention. Yet, the problem has to do not only with the institution that imposes tradition, but also with the individual, each of them, who by enthroning tradition or by dissolving into the community is unable to be free.

**It is a way of current subjectivity, which some people describe -coming back to Dufour- as making “a *tabula rasa*” of the past, which produces a self-referenced individual, who must find in themselves their own reference and who remains in the subjective effacement and in the apathetic dependence on merchandise, in the waters of depression, addictions and perversion.**

True. But there are historical moments and periods in which this is recurrent. There are multiple examples in history, such as in the Chinese Cultural Revolution. I’m not sure if it is the same in the absolute sense in which you raised the issue. I think that structurally the effects are the same when the intention is to make a “*tabula rasa*”; however, it is different when one can recognise where the change comes from. It is better to recognise your father or your grandfather and say that you don’t want to be concerned with them than to deny them and invent everything. It’s totally different.

I think that in Uruguay, I’m not sure if throughout Latin America, I’ve been to different countries in Latin America and they are not the same... but at the same time, while telling you this, I’ve just realised I have to highlight I’m thinking about the “elites”. What we’re discussing is not the same in terms of elites as in terms of othernesses and of different communities. For example, ignoring who Figari, Xul Solar or Guayasamin were as well as other multiple fine arts referents is a topic for the elites. But there are other sectors, other communities, including linguistic and cultural ones, where there isn’t any word for “psychoanalysis” that means the same or can be translated by it. There are communities where the values of tradition mean nothing. So wiping out all the mentioned referents: Figari, Torres Garcia, Reverón in Venezuela. Rufino Tamayo in Mexico, means nothing because they have never meant anything. Then, it can’t be said that there was rupture or preservation of tradition because these issues are different according to different cultural

communities. Saying “I’ll break with Figari” has a strong meaning for some cultural heritages. There is a group of poets in Venezuela, which I was linked to, that paraphrased a poem by a great Venezuelan poet called Fernando Paz Castillo. A verse from that famous poem reads: “*we come from the night and toward the night we go*”. This group of young people, not so young today, were my students many decades ago and they published a manifesto called “Traffic”. They said: “*we come from the night and toward the street we go*”, which was part of a dialogue of the Venezuelan intellectuals and elite, who understood each other. For those who didn’t belong to that elite the phrase “we come from the night and toward the night we go” meant nothing and neither did the “gloss”!!!

**We were talking about short circuits between discourses, which can also be present in transference in analysis. Would you add the question of “orthodoxy”? Would it be what conducts a non-revised psychoanalytical theory in relation to the contemporary world and with today’s patients or with the anguish forms in today’s culture?**

I believe that this also has to do with another thing. What is important is the place it has, not what is “abject” that has other connotations. What is important is the place of “execration”, I don’t know if this is the appropriate word, the place of what is ‘condemnable’, and the place of what is forbidden. For an analyst’s cultural capital, this doesn’t necessarily belong to something specific... I’m not thinking of patients from the same social class, cultural capital or age range as the analyst’s, but there is a sector that may not have access to psychoanalysis, but whom psychoanalysis must know to avoid the risk of inbreeding.

**Yes, it is risky. The aim of psychoanalysis is also to go beyond the borders of established theory and of interpretative community itself...**

Right, let’s assume that we go beyond. Then, there comes the risk of short cuts between what is “execrable” or what is the product of “cultural discontent” of the psychoanalyst’s times and the patient who comes with another cultural capital, with another background, where what is a “no-value” for the psychoanalyst is a value for the patient. What can be done?

**If we understand that there is communication between the social subject and the subject of the unconscious, then that excluded or execrable side comes from the interpretative community to which the patient belongs, which is also part of the analyst and all human beings, those who have access or to psychoanalysis or not. You were saying that the patient comes with their own experiences that can be totally foreign to the analyst?**

Exactly... how does the analyst work if they have never had genuine contact with those experiences? How do you empathise? This is not new in the history of psychoanalysis. There have always been psychoanalysts with patients with whom they can't empathise because they hadn't had the same experiences in many cases, like perversion. But there's something else, we referred to this when we mentioned that there was a multiplicity of debates and simultaneous agendas at present. This makes a difference, in my opinion, since it may allow the encounter between the patient and the psychoanalyst in an informative sphere. But when the norms, values and ideological horizons aren't shared, the listening and analysis strategies of what is said may produce an interference that makes it impossible to read outside preconceptions, as if there were no tools or parameters to listen to what the other says.

### **The limit of what can be listened...**

Yes. Anyway the multiplicity of debates and agendas is growing. Someone may find this interesting. There is a French theorist, Philippe Lejeune, who wrote a text entitled "The Autobiographical Pact". He develops a concept that I find interesting, which I think is relevant to the contract between the patient and the psychoanalyst. There is a reading contract. In any text there is a reading contract. When I read a novel, there is a reading contract by which I know I'm reading fiction. It's an "as if", and it's not reality. When I read a statement, a testimony or a biography, the reading contract is different, what I read is not "as if" but "it occurred like this". I find the issue of the reading contract very interesting. I'm no expert here but I suppose that the kind of reading contract that is established in the relationship between the analyst and the analysand has been theorised and analysed. I suppose, or speculate, that the basic reading contract is: I'm telling you all the truth and you're telling me or analysing what I say and what I don't, but it's based on truth, simulation and lie ...

### **A "pact" that includes all the transference's radical "misunderstanding", mainly, at the starting point where the analysand believes that the analyst is the one who knows, and the analyst thinks that the other is the one who knows but ignores that fact...**

Then, let's start from the reading contract or the listening contract in this case. The contract of "saying" and listening. In this contract established between them there is a key issue that has to do with the contract's conditions, which I believe are not always explicit and where the kind of contract is not clear. The phrase "Somewhere in la Mancha, in a place whose name I don't care to remember" establishes a reading contract where I have to accept that the man who says "Somewhere in la Mancha, in a place whose name I don't care to remember" is telling me a true story in the first person. So there is no possibility of simulation. What I believe today is that the rules

of the game have changed, maybe we have more than 100 years of psychoanalysis which for a certain sector of the society, middle class, educated, semi-educated, who is the human capital that has access to this discipline or this kind of therapy, there is a sort of learning of the discourses which “are supposed” to be expressed.

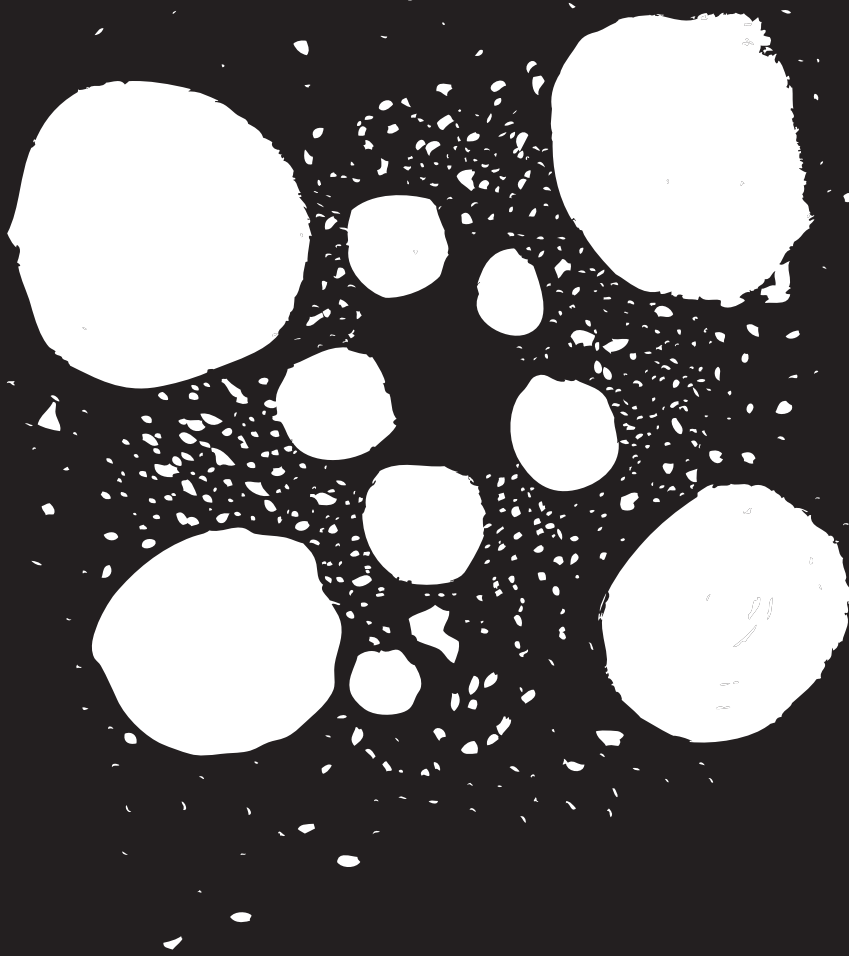
**This problem of mimetic reproduction of certain discourses, almost by “drilling”, is serious in psychoanalysis training. Doesn’t it also occur in the academic or university field?**

When we talked about journals before, I had the idea of telling you about something that is happening to me which is terrible and dramatic if I become “operative”. I can read the title and the first paragraph of an article in an academic journal and tell you the rest. In one of my books, I talk about knowledge or research. If this is considered as a rigorously controlled safari, there is no research but just an excursion, a short programmed safari where you are told that you’re going to see a lion or a rhino, and at the same time you’re told what you’re going to meet at the end. Then, there’s no research, challenge or adventure. There is no mystery of what you can see. There’s no revision, norms, from the foreseeable to the “fore-seeable”, which has nothing to do with research.

**You find what is known beforehand, that is to say, you find nothing.**

Of course, the premise is: “Artigas’ white horse is whit





*Vortex*

The transmission of psychoanalysis

# Transmission and teaching: an old tension in search of new answers

Alberto C. Cabral \*

A remark by J. B. Pontalis can bring us straight to the heart of the debate –recurrent and heated at times– about analytic training: “There is not a single psychoanalytic institute in the world that has not questioned itself about its selection and training procedures, about the training modalities that it teaches, about what makes a “candidate” capable of being an analyst. There is not a single one that does not regret, with some degree of hypocrisy, the fact that nowadays a Ferenczi or a Tausk would not have the slightest possibilities of completing the hard path as a fighter which the analytic training has turned into. Here and there, the prevailing conformism is condemned; requests for creativity are made. The question arises: why do the curious spirits, why do the young researchers who want to learn something not come to us? And the responsibility is placed on an excess of bureaucracy or an excess of laxity. *After which, re-adaptation occurs.*”

We are not unaware of the sceptic tone, even disappointed, which Pontalis uses to conclude his reflection. It is an effect of, we believe, formalism, of the cathartic intention or even the intention of changing everything in order to provoke no change at all that these questions are usually dealt with, using invocations which are functional to the maintenance of the status quo. Faced with this alternative, we aspire to **recover its cutting edge**, convinced that **it can help undo at least some of the resistant knots that have been obtruding the possibility of offering new answers to old controversies in our societies.**

Even more, in the environment of the societies members of Fepal,–due to our cultural tradition–, which are more permeable to that **cannibalistic vocation** that Brazilian poet Oswald de Andrade would defend, which still urges us to devour foreign productions, and digest them carefully to *transform them into something new.*

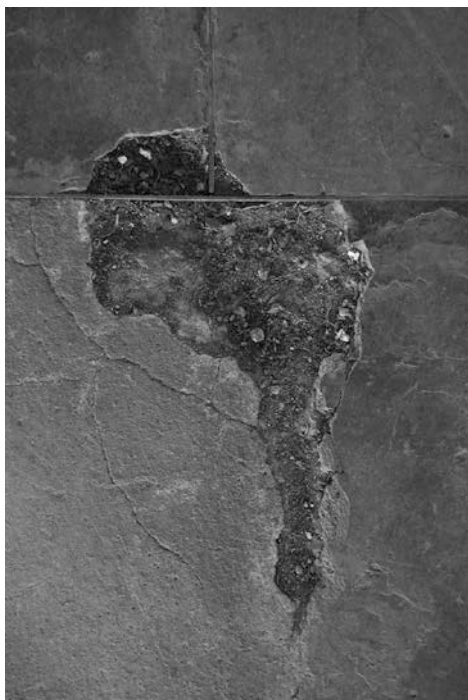
From that perspective, we suggest that we revisit the conditions under which early analytic training developed, before the generalisation of the famous standards introduced by Berlin Institute. We will perform this task with the help of S. Bernfeld’s critical testimony: a Viennese analyst who belonged to the close group surrounding Freud, and who later emigrated to the United States. We will make some of Berlin Institute’s voices be heard, and we will also discuss Freud’s ambivalent position regarding “the Prussian spirit” that M. Eitington, its founder, would proudly defend.

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### Analysts historicising analysts

When we deal with –in our capacity of analysts– the history of our movement, we do not do it from the perspective of the anatomists, who operate with *consummated* and *consumed* bodies. We do this task by trying to recognise – in what we historicise– those remaining parts that are still beating as *non-consummated*, while they continue articulating the old Freudian desire to create the appropriate means for the spread and transmission of psychoanalysis. **An unattainable desire, by the way...which, however, embodies perfectible shapes during each period of time.**

We are interested, as a consequence, in emphasising the process by which the standards have slipped, in the collective imagination of some colleagues, into the place marked by the first meaning of the English term: “flag” or “emblem”. We recognise in it the feature of the ideal around which the group is constructed: in our case, the analytic group...but as mass training. It is understandable that **in this context of questioning –the analytic mass – any questioning about the standards is seen as disturbing and –in its extreme– as promoting dissolution fantasies.**



Faced with this slipping, we find it convenient to relocate and even more **highlight the difference between training analysis and didactic analysis.** The latter was the result of

the requirement to institutionalise, regulate, and systematise the training analysis, which – indeed– was always considered the cornerstone to become an analyst. That was not the case with didactic analysis, which –since its establishment, as we will see– has always been a controversial issue.

Therefore, we believe it is more appropriate to place it within *one* of the many possible answers

The standards have slipped, in the collective imagination of some colleagues, into the place marked by the first meaning of the English term: “flag” or “emblem”. to the challenges posed by training analysis: **a historically determined answer, and therefore, contingent.** So much so that during the Budapest Congress in 1918, a proposal submitted by H. Numberg was rejected, which imposed the obligation of an analysis on future analysts. But it was the first attempt to move forward with the process (using terms of Bernstein) of establishing “in the field of obligations what had been an option until then”: with the effects stemming from the mortification of desire, which illustrates the clinic of the obsessive.

It was not until 1927, during the Hamburg Congress, that one of Radó’s proposals, motivated by Eitington, about an *obligatory regulation* regarding the training of prospective analysts was approved. Let us recall that Dutch and Anglo-Saxon analysts voted at the time against the proposal. Their votes could not stop, during the same Congress –Jones recalls it– Eitington from having the creation of an International Commission for Psychoanalytic Teaching being approved, “in charge of *standardising* as much as possible psychoanalysis teaching methods in the various societies”. Let us state that between Berlin (1922) and Marienbad (1936) Congresses, German psychoanalysts, who were greater in numbers, were able to easily guide the international institutional policy towards the direction they considered most appropriate...

From this historic perspective, we will recapitulate the key aspects of the alternative analytic training “models” currently valid in IPA: the French one (with the slight variations between the French Psychoanalytic Association and the Paris Psychoanalytic Society), the Uruguayan and the British ones (see pages 124-

126). We will also include the testimonies of four Latin American colleagues, all of whom have completed their training within the framework of one of the above mentioned models.

### **Standards, IPA, and heterogeneity**

Let us consider some remarks that stem from this section of our journey.

Firstly, we find it important to regain a perspective that makes the sheer existence of the standards, and not just their specific contents, **the contingent result of institutional and political junctures rather than the obligatory corollary of a conceptual debate**. Thus, we will read D. Widlöcher –using terms borrowed unambiguously from political discourse– recall that as a result of the reforms voted in 1971, “the French Psychoanalytic Association abolished the didactic component in 1971, and the Paris Psychoanalytic Society followed the same path in 1994” (see page 126).

Secondly, and paraphrasing Hamlet, we could say that the three models are a good example that in IPA “there are more things between heaven and earth than the rigorous compliance of the famous standards”.

Thirdly, it is clear that none of the three models encompass the diversity of training proposals that are currently coexisting in the IPA galaxy. The members of the Latin American psychoanalytic institutions (except, of course, Uruguayan Psychoanalytic Association colleagues) will surely be able to take notes of those aspects by which the society contributes with a personal and differential characteristic from the above mentioned models.

These remarks bring consequences with them. **Verifying the heterogeneity that currently defines the compliance with the standards can contribute to a loyalty requirement** that flies as a threat over our collective imagination, causing a phantasmagoric hindering effect over the attempts to rethink the foundations of the analytic training. Knowing that IPA is nowadays showing an inclusive tolerance towards very different proposals may help abate those fears and –through that way– contribute to make more audible the squeal which our training devices have been producing. Squeals silenced too by the inertial effect of what A. Aberastury would evoke as “the adoration of the

consummated act”: a conformist stand that generates a naturalisation of discomfort in our institutions, resulting in the cancelling of the willingness to change which it could provoke. It is a subjective stand that surely contributes to the effect of sceptical disappointment that we found in Pontalis...

It is, after all, about consequences –tied to our observations– which confront us with old problems **with more open attitude towards the cannibalistic invention than towards the inertial rumination of tradition**. With a certainty, if we consider the persistence of what could be called the *push to renovate* in our institutions (the reviews of the Uruguayan and French models are a testimony of them), we would conclude that it is also **part of the best of our tradition..., a willingness to be periodically distant from it, in order to give way to fertile moments of invention**. As proof of that, we will tinge our journey with some categorical opinions about training, kneaded in this fertile and necessary critical distance, of well-known colleagues from the region (see box under this section).

Lastly, during the recent meeting of Fepal’s Psychoanalytic Institutes (Montevideo, 2011), there were several presentations (we will focus on a few of them) that suggested elements for an essential reflection: one related to the incidence of our new times on the paradigms which until now have framed the psychoanalytic practice and, therefore, the methods and contents of analytic training as well.

### **Paradox of didactic analysis**

Probably H. Sachs’s reflections (see “Ruling spontaneity”, page 122) are the first explicit reference of didactic analysis as a “warrantor” of the analytic training process. A characterisation that has been kept until now and which has simultaneously been in constant search of “warranties” that “guarantee” their efficient performance as “warrantor”...An endless –logical people know it– search. **The standards which specify the didactic one were summoned to this problematic area**, and which turn it into a particular modality of training analysis.

What we call the “paradox” of didactic analysis lies in the gap between the expectations it created and the deficit results it seems to have yielded: bluntly referred to in the claim which

has frequently been made to “transform didactic analysis into an analysis more similar to an ordinary analysis” (see charts under this section). After all, **the standards on which the expectation for optimising the efficacy of the cure would be placed end up being recognised as responsible for its weakness.**

The emergence of the French and Uruguayan models (despite the specific difficulties that their application may create) is situated **in a process of weakening of the sacralisation of the standards and – correlatively– of recovery of the old training analysis concept.** It is a process that also welcomes an invention stand which – undoubtedly– will allow us to elaborate those new answers that Arminda Aberastury was already claiming for more than 60 years ago.

### A common thread

Our impression is that, despite the anecdotes, its main characters and even the regional particularities, **the various episodes of this tortuous debate have a common thread: the one made up by the tension between the two poles that constitute analytic training, transmission and teaching.** We believe that the various current training models express some of the possible oscillations between them. In that sense, we can think that each model defines its peculiarity by the prominence levels of one or the other pole it promotes.

Let us remember that Freud refers to a differentiated use of these two notions in a brief piece of writing. It was the Prologue he wrote for the edited publication during the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute. He tells us that one of the functions of the Institute is “to ensure a centre where *teaching* Transmission and teaching: an old tension in search of new answers *theory* of analysis and where the *experience* of more senior analysts can be *transmitted* to students *willing* to learn.” **For Freud, theory of analysis, thus, is capable of being taught; the experience of analysis, however, is articulated according to him with the transmission and is sustained in the dimension of desire.**

It is from this perspective that the teaching-transmission polarity puts us in contact with a dimension of cure –its capacity of *experience*– which is opposed to the integral apprehension efforts from theory. This

dimension that slips away, resistant to the concept and *thus to systematisation*...constitutes the mark of the impact of the unconscious in the analytic training process! And in the same way as the best explanation of a joke is incapable of making us laugh, the most systematised teaching of our discipline lacks the power of persuasion in relation to the existence of the unconscious which can only provide its experience in the course of an analysis.

These are the reasons why Freud favours the experience of the personal analysis –to transmit to the future analyst the conviction of the existence of the unconscious– over the “proofs of the existence of the unconscious”, which he had introduced in 1914. An old philosophical debate can be found in **this Freudian commitment to the effects of experience over logical proofs.** A debate that is developed around the impossibility of passing directly from the *concept* (that is, from the universal) to the *affirmation of the existence* of a particularity. A typical example is that of the unicorn: the most rhetorically persuasive and logically consistent speech about the unicorn can be developed; however, none of us would be convinced about its existence.

**Thus, the powerlessness of the university discourse when it tries to make the Freudian unconscious its new unicorn!**

Due to the same reasons, the *subjective stand* of the analyst cannot be precisely *taught* either. It is also acquired as a *transmission* effect in the cure itself. In this respect, **the notion of transmission becomes more consistent if we base it on an old tradition,** evoked by Lacan with his reference to the Liberal Arts and whose genealogy has been traced more recently by Foucault. **It is the tradition of spirituality,** based on the conviction that the subject, *as it is*, is incapable of the discovering the truth. No act of knowledge in itself could possibly allow this discovery if it was not accompanied by a transformation in subjects themselves. For us, analysts, it is about those **subjective transformations** which we specify –for example– as the lifting of repressions and the fall of identifications, which allow the subject to discover the truth of their desire.

**The modern perspective, however, is**

**another one:** it aims at determining the methodological conditions that are *internal* to the knowledge process which would make the discovery of truth possible –by themselves. And **it avoids the payment for this discovery**, owed by subjects in terms of transmutations of their own being.

From this perspective of an articulation between psychoanalysis and spirituality, it becomes suggestive to discuss the growing tendency in our times to substitute analytic training for the supply of master’s degrees, diplomas, and university post-graduate degrees which would enable the “uncomfortable” and “anachronic” requirement of personal analysis to be avoided. We could possibly argue that in this attempt to modernise psychoanalytic training, the aim is to break the adhesions that it has with spirituality, tuning it with a time that is more and more determined to promote a one-dimensional and “without-attribute” person who R. Musil referred to.

**It is an approach that promotes in training an excluding dominance of the teaching pole to the detriment of the transmission pole.** We believe it is a perspective we should consider when rethinking the various possible modalities of articulation between our institutes and university, already present in many of our institutions. A perspective that also warns us about the impact of the **university style** of teaching about our training models. A style that –with the prestige

of its sequential pathways, its pre-established routes and its supposedly exhaustive contents– keeps the illusion that psychoanalytic theory constitutes **a systematic, consistent and unified body of knowledge, which, because of that, is susceptible of being apprehended by a programme of study.**

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# Better environment for the experience of the unconscious

Abel Fainstein \*

The relationship between psychoanalytic societies and their institutions, and psychoanalysis is, in Capó and García's words, structural and necessarily "disharmonious".

I put aside the concerns of societies and institutes in the process of training. I think that even though institutes deal specifically with the topic, the institution plays a key role if we view training as permanent. This forces a joint leadership of both of them, which is not always easy.

That structural disharmony is enhanced when its functioning, as Madeleine Baranger claims, does not have "*a close enough connection with its declared and acknowledged purpose*" **and in our case, psychoanalysis** "*is not ruled by its specificity in comparison with other disciplines, even with the ones that might be alike, such as medicine or psychology*".

This author adds:

*"It is still surprising, and maybe shocking, that standards established in 1919 by Eitingon in Berlin are kept as sine qua non models for psychoanalysis and its teaching"*. (Madeleine Baranger. "Psychoanalytic training. The 1974 reform, thirty years later". *Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Volume 60, Issue 4, 2003).

To Baranger, institutions must also "*[...] keep in mind socio-cultural conditions in which they are immersed and, first of all, must not forget the evolution of such discipline [...]*".

I think we can sum up those qualities in criteria such as:

- Rely more on the institution as a permanent action, avoiding crystallisation and bureaucratisation.
- Avoid becoming places of knowledge that correspond to demands of knowledge, making room for non-knowledge. But to insist, "inventing" something new each day, on transmitting knowledge beyond the assumption of the art of our profession, to new generations of analysts. For instance, Working Parties on "Specificity of Psychoanalysis", the video or the cinema are very useful means for that end and might be included in the training.
- Keeping in mind that no theory can account for the complexity of its field of study, working with several of them seems to be the right path to its scientific development.
- A necessary articulation with university that preserves the singularity of discourses and structures in search of

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contextualisation of knowledge and the necessary credentials.

- A solid integration in culture, society and community that houses it with extension policies.
- A democratic administration, alternating its freely elected leaders, and devices that avoid or neutralise the phenomena derived from mass psychology, based specially in prioritising the full independence of institutions and their powers of members' analysis.

Even though scientific pluralism is, nowadays, a prevailing trend in IPA societies, it is not accompanied by acceptance of different training models, according to the theory that supports them. Only in the last years, IPA has abandoned the idea of a unique standard based on Eitingon system and four sessions a week, and recognised three models, Eitingon, the French and the Uruguayan which, virtually, base their differences in the frequency of weekly sessions of the analyst's analysis required for their training and in simultaneity or non-simultaneity of complying with seminars, supervisions and the analysis itself. Nothing related to the psychoanalytic theory that maintains each training criteria.

Keeping in mind that transmission and teaching should be based on the subjective experience of the trainee, it is important to prioritise the importance of favouring singular paths that avoid, when possible, standardised curricula.

I think it is a debate between:

**a) The ideal of training based on solid confidence in the responsible use of the option with a base on the analyst's desire (Cabral).**

**b) The need to protect the culture of rebellion and destructive mania of the individuals.** It is the Freudian argument in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927). The norms, institutions and commandments fulfil this task.

An extreme posture centred on the free domain of the option based on the analyst's desire goes into conflict with the necessary institutional responsibility in the analysts' training. This demand for a narrow gorge that cannot do without personalised attention to each analyst in training and makes it difficult to be subjected to unifying standards. Being able to have the rules that allow this path as smoothly as possible is the challenge of psychoanalytic institutions.

Considering that the transmission of the experience of the unconscious cannot be guaranteed and that it is strictly personal, we can only offer the best conditions to try to favour it. It just happens that, as Szpilka (2002) points out, the peculiar nature of the unconscious needs to rely on institutions that shelter it and, the other way around, ironically, institutional structures need, in order to survive, to tame, appease and calm the object with the transmission they maintain. That tension is unavoidable and the effectiveness of institutions in psychoanalysis transmission depends on how it is handled.

I agree with the author (p. 178) in that the more knowledge and power combine, the more blocked knowledge dialectics gets with ignorance, which is essential to maintain radicality of the unconscious. For this author, solutions can be searched from reason and truth. From reason, they would be measurements such as mitigation or dissolution of differential strata, teaching commissions that include teachers and candidates, and free curricula in search of work *identifications and productions more in accordance with the non-kidnapped desire of every subject*. But, just like reforms aim at reason, only the subversion of analysis itself would aim at truth. For these reasons, training, for Szpilka, should be more centred on subversion of cure than adaptation to the institution.

Then, the analyst's analysis is crucial in this process and it is necessary to debate about its relation with identification phenomena.

Keeping in mind that institutional belonging is based on identifications, how can we achieve such belonging without sacrificing the singularity that the transmission of the unconscious demands?

Being aware of the importance of necessarily constitutive imaginary identifications of an institution means to relentlessly think in devices that aim at avoiding mass psychology and its harmful effects on institutional functioning. In this sense, the analysts' analysis lessens this risk by limiting the importance of identifications with the analyst, the theories or the very institution that generates mass effects.

Being able to maintain work transference requires analysis usefulness in pursuit of a de-identification process which is not always achieved. In some cases, it is not only not searched for, but it also intends to support transference with the institution or with the theory



at issue, through an analysis with analysts of the same institution.

I think that, based on the state of affairs, it is more advisable to let the postulant choose their analyst, instead of regulating what cannot be regulated, due not only to the impossibility of controlling its fulfilment, but also by the possible interference that entails the analysis process. It is about evaluating the postulant's involvement, always singular, in psychoanalysis, which will ultimately contribute to work transference with the institution and the possibility of avoiding mass psychology by rescuing processes from the analyst subjectification.

According to the requisites of an important psychoanalytic institution that does not belong to IPA, these requirements are summarised on its website:

*“Given that the analyst’s personal analysis is one of the pillars of our training, we believe its fulfilment to be essential, but it does not need to be performed by the Society members nor in a predetermined standard model”.*

According to Mustapha Saphouan, *“being an analyst is a fact that is proved in the discourse that determines the relation of the analyst with the issues posed by the unconscious experience”* and *“it is about dilemmas that the analyst alone could not answer”*. Thus it justifies the creation of a society of psychoanalysis.

In this sense, and beyond the training function of its Institutes, I nominate the whole institution as a place for the constant training of the analyst. To fulfil that role, it is important to highlight the relevance of articulating the work of scientific pluralism .

### Enemy of the healing task

“Reading a letter from Camus to Salvador de Madariaga (*“Los adoradores del hecho consumado”* [Worshippers of the accomplished fact]) gave me an idea for the title of this work. Camus defines those that struggle against “the worshippers of the accomplished fact” as representatives of the relentless effort that searches the truth: they refuse to be satisfied with words and fight tirelessly to solve the needs of their times.

**[...] We cannot deny the time passed since the formulation of the conditions for training and subsequent evolution of a psychoanalyst; we must accept, then, that today solutions have to be different to those that were useful in the first era.**

When I began my career as an educational analyst and took my first candidate for analysis, an absurdity was revealed to me: I found myself thinking about that candidate's *career* just as much or more than about their *healing*. At the same time, the candidate seemed more concerned in estimating when they would start seminars than in deepening self-knowledge. One could think that this experience worked as an antidote against similar cases. It was not like that, at least, for me. And I still found it difficult to leave the absurdity of this accomplished fact: some candidates that ask for educational analysis come to pursue their career instead of being analysed. From that first day, *the biggest challenge I have found in the educational analyst's task is to make therapeutic analysis out of educational analysis*. In my account on “Teaching psychoanalysis”, read at Congress (1957), I pointed out that this ambition opposed the Institute organisation. Yesterday, Garma's and Grinberg's works bravely stressed the difficulties inherent to educational tasks, which *is mostly an enemy to the healing task”*.

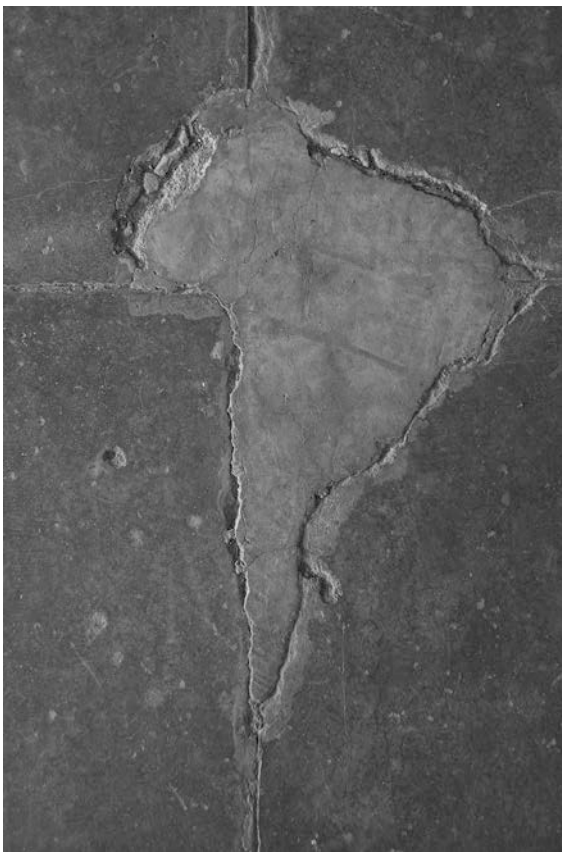
#### Source:

Arminda Aberasturi, “The philosophy of the accomplished fact”. In Journal of Psychoanalysis. Vol. 16, Book 4, 1959

# Cultural change and psychoanalytic training

(Seminars of Fepal institutes)

*In response to a provocative call (“Effects of cultural and societal changes in psychoanalytic practice and reflection. New realities and/or resistance”), the Seminar of Fepal Psychoanalytic Institutes was held in Montevideo, in September 2011. Here, we offer a clip of some of the interventions.*



## Teodoro Devoto

When we started to organise this meeting, we asked the directors of the Institutes to tell us what topics they deemed urgent. As you can imagine, many topics arouse, which will surely be a matter of discussion in the small groups. But there was one issue that was persistently mentioned, regarding problems inherent to educational supervision. **The cultural changes we mentioned at the beginning make it difficult for candidates to have high frequency patients fit for official**

**supervision.** And this is where the title of this seminar gains importance: *New realities and/or resistance.*

**There comes into play what we understand as psychoanalysis** and the analyst's different positions. From Sandler (1982), who states that “*psychoanalysis is what psychoanalysts practice*” to those who place great emphasis in the framework and, specifically, the number of sessions and those for whom accepting to supervise patients with less than four sessions a week is a form of resistance.

**In the last few years, several analysts, without denying the importance of framework, thought the emphasis should not be placed here.** Let us remember that Freud, in his technical articles, starting point for considerations about framework, already opposed “technical mechanisation” and presented his rules as “pieces of advice”, without expecting them to be unconditionally mandatory (1913).

Green (2002), when referring to the necessary flexibility of framing in cases of “private madness” conveyed the theme with a wonderful metaphor of “active matrix” and the “case”. The active matrix is what this author calls the dynamic or constant part of framework, which consists of that particular functioning of the analytic couple, drawing from the patient's free association and careful listening of the analyst. The case (or casket) is the variable fraction, composed by the use of the couch or “face to face”, the frequency of the sessions and their duration. **To Green, the flexibility is given by the different forms of the case, without the active matrix being affected.**

Madé Baranger refuses to think about the differences between psychoanalysis and psychotherapies in terms of differences in framework. I quote verbatim: *“Expecting psychoanalysis to still be ‘orthodox’ or a ‘typical cure’ (which actually never was in full) would be to turn it into a dead object or a museum piece (historic piece, if you wish) that is no longer effective. In order to survive, psychoanalysis has to evolve, widen its possible applications, sharpen its clinical and theoretical comprehension, incorporate resources that make it more effective”.*

## Gladys Franco

Psychoanalysis is a product that, because of its revolutionary proposal, generates resistance. And looking after that “plague” condition is a powerful challenge for our psychoanalytic institutes in whose framework we take the responsibility to create transmission. **Because it is not easy being a**

**“plague” in the 21st century, in the Western world, immersed as we are in a system that aims at digesting and assimilating rather too easily everything that is uncomfortable, different, disturbing, that points to a deviating path.** Within the ruling system in the West, and particularly since the second half of the 20th century, manipulation of human desire is a disturbing constant in which we are all involved; the system organises need strategies to place products that become pseudo-necessary, even indispensable; on those dynamics, humans are subjects to the creation of a need. It instills in us the need for useful devices, ornamental objects, credit cards, holidays, religious beliefs, long distance communication, banks, physical beauty, wars, medicine, freedom, special knowledge, certain ignorance, automobiles, perfumes and free time for happiness. It is also sold as the need for fast access to happiness condensed in self-help books that are always cheaper than analysis sessions. **In the task of building and creating needs, the imperative and evanescent quality of desire is drowned,** deceived by the zirconia of a diversified market.

Resistance to psychoanalysis is not the legacy of those who militantly oppose it; **resistance also inhabits every psychoanalyst as a dark shadow that is sometimes disguised as “reality principle”,** other times wears the cape of melancholy and other times of frivolity; thus camouflaged, it carries out transactions that involve the fundamental concepts, analysability, the conditions of framing that convey our impossible profession. **Resistance on the part of psychoanalysts shall never be clumsy manifestations of lack of time or interest in history, but they will be able to be manifested in the desire of agreement with the others, to whom their rush, lack of time and opportunities for involving beyond surfaces and pre-texts will be recognised in a non-critical fashion.**

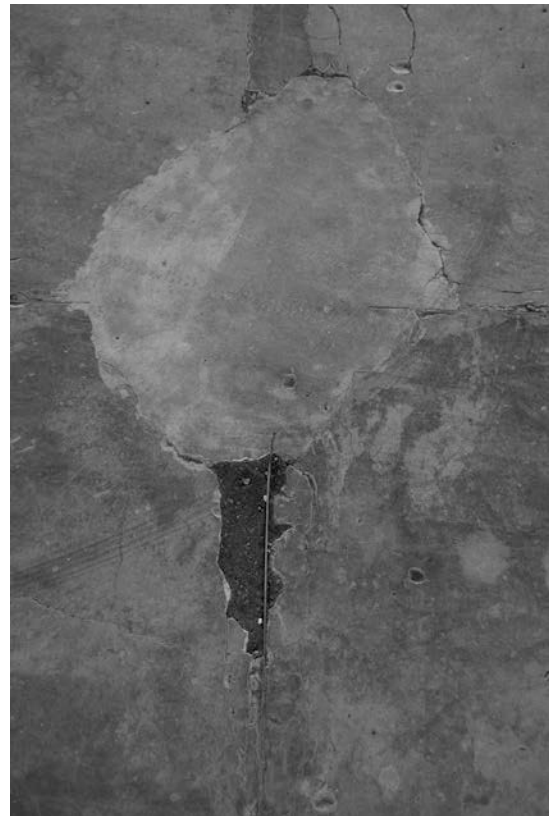
[...] Finally, it may be possible that we use the meeting to wonder about theoretical pluralism, a characteristic that became constant with the growth of psychoanalysis and development of different theories. Is it possible to maintain an inter-theoretical dialogue? Much has been said about a “Babelisation” of psychoanalytic community and it seems possible to me to note a certain level of occlusion in the possibility of dialogue.

What phenomena are generated in the different institutes as a consequence of this reality? **How does training of candidates run through theoretical adherence of their analysts and lateral transference with their supervisors? Is detachment of transference remains possible, with the aim of analysis?**

Or a certain threat of repetition spreads over the new analyst, which can become a real hole, as it happened to our former friend, Sergei Petrov?

## Marcelo Viñar

Maybe when the analyst and the patient share the same cultural codes, the inner conflict is the decisive fact to work, but the epidemic of the pathology of the act (addictions, serious eating disorders, self-destructive or hetero-destructive risk behaviours, skin scarification and isolation) tells us about the coincidence of the inner conflict, family dysfunction and social misfits, which will be factors to think about in simultaneity for the treating of the case.



**This multidetermination is not always contemplated in modernity paradigms, nor is it a meaningful component of theoretical training in seminars and psychoanalysis transmission.** This short work intends to draw attention to the matter.

[...] City life and information technology revolution modify the input of our perceptive universe, both in its magnitude as well as its speed. The register of data to metabolise in civic psychic life is exponentially multiplied, both in its quantity as well as in its rhythm. **There is no-one who could fully evade that accelerated and elated social time, some of us give in partially; others in total sinking.** It is what Pierre Nora calls *Overheated present* and Manuel Castells calls *Timeless time*. Present time of an epileptic, dazzling or explosive time that saturates mental space and devours the past of memories and fades the future of projects. **I find**

**this way of inhabiting psychic temporality a relevant incidence factor in our practice and reflection.** [...] A neat semiotics (a similar task to that of ethnologists) that aims at establishing shared codes between patient and therapist, before or during the traditional work about the psychic conflict.

[...] **APU has opened up to educators and anthropologists, as well as sport coaches and young film makers** to widen the perspective of understanding young cultures. The task is emerging but promising and we recommend its inclusion as **an additional vector of psychoanalytic training, as antidote or counterpoint to a confinement in traditional paradigms** that we have inherited and assimilated.

## Before Berlin: “Report on a disturbed one”

“The idea of training analysis is not much newer than analysis itself. From the late 1890’s, Freud’s class attendants told him about their dreams or asked him for help in treating their neurotic symptoms. *These early analyses were truly didactic.* In those times, Freud thought that a few months were enough or that at least were better than nothing.

Towards 1905, Freud started to conduct psychoanalysts’ analysis that lasted longer and had higher therapeutic goals. He adapted the duration and teaching measure included according to his patient-student desires, as well as to the nature of their neurotic complexes. [...] He carried on with this practice long after the establishment of institutes *despite the discomfort and embarrassment of “the authorities”*, as he would, at times, refer to them ironically.

[...] For instance, in 1922 I talked to Freud about my idea to settle in Vienna as a trainee analyst. I was aware that our group in Berlin encouraged beginner analysts to take didactic analysis before starting their profession and I asked him if he thought that training was necessary for me. ‘It is ridiculous’, he answered. ‘You just start. You will surely have difficulties.

When you face a problem, we’ll see what we can do about it’.

[...] *I still think this is the ideal environment for training*, even when I can understand the solid causes and the good reasons that led to its systematisation. Thus, **never have I been convinced that the disadvantages of school organisation in training can balance its advantages.** [...] **In psychoanalysis, as in all other areas, institutionalisation does not promote or favour thinking”.**

This conference (with a clear critical tone) was delivered by Bernstein before the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Society in 1952, but was only published 10 years after his death, preceded by a publishing warning signed by Rudolph Erksstein. In the introduction, he remarks that the conference “is a **testimony of Berstein’s disturbed reactions**” facing analytical training: for him, it is about “problems experienced by a man whose primary identification would be found in relation to *the teaching process* rather than *the training organisation*”.

Source: S. Berstein, *On psychoanalytic training*, 1952. In *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, Book 31, Issue 4, 1962.

# Berlin Institute or “Prussian style” training

Some of the functions of its Teaching Commission were the following:

- Demand candidates an analysis at least six months long (this period was extended throughout time).
- Choose the analyst with whom the candidate would pursue analysis and decide as well on its access to further stages in training, including ending the analysis.
- Choose the analyst for supervision, keeping the right to withdraw the patient if the candidate proved to be incompetent.
- Request a written promise from candidates by which they would wait the commission’s authorisation to register as a “psychoanalyst”.

## Ruling spontaneity

“We have implemented programmes and (as it may seem to some) **we have tried to regulate, even to rule, some things in a Prussian style, but**

**that has not made our work less spontaneous,** because we have acted and only then did we establish the rules, reflecting on our way of doing”.

“**We have had the courage of aspiring to be an authority** [...] and given that psychoanalysis must be learned, it is us who represent that learning place”. (Excerpts from the speech delivered by M. Eitington on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1928, at the opening of the new Berlin Institute office).

“Didactic analysis must become guarantor of the fact that freshly acquired knowledge shall remain, beyond its difficulties, properly administered and used. [...] **Didactic analysis, practised by experienced analysts apart from their duties, was introduced at Berlin Institute for the first time, as an independent branch of analysis**”. (H. Sachs, in his contribution to the issue commemorating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the institute’s foundation).

Source: *On forme des psychanalystes. Rapport original sur les dix ans de l’Institut Psychanalytique de Berlin*. France, Denoël, 1985.

# Berlin and Freudian ambiguity

Source: Freud's prologue. *Le cursus théorique*, F. Alexander. In *On forme des psychanalystes. Rapport original sur les dix ans de l' Institut Psychanalytique de Berlin*. Denoël, France, 1985.

It is not difficult to gather signs of Freud's ambiguity regarding Berlin Institute. Although on the one hand, he surely encouraged (or at least did not publicly discredit) a project based on his expectations to institutionalise psychoanalytic practice, on the other hand, he kept expressing his reservations in relation to Eitington's initiative.

In this sense, it is interesting to compare the enthusiastic and even epic style with which Eitington presents the accomplishments of the institute in the collective volume that celebrates the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation, with the cold and formal tone of the *Prologue* written by Freud for the occasion. Its affirmation, only a year earlier (in his *Profane Analysis*) according to which "[...] a programme of study fit for future analysts' training *still has to be created*" **implicitly accounts for Freud's deficit balance regarding the institute's "accomplishments"**.

In the same sense, and in the same text, his **argument against an "exaggerated regulationism"** is presented. In actual facts, Freud opposes the intention of the *State* to regulate analytic practice and training. Within that frame, he poses a question that still remains valid: **"Is the practice of psychoanalysis a topic that should be subjected to authority intervention, or is it more adequate to leave it to its natural development?"** The *undetermined* nature of "authority" he refers to [...] entails **an invitation to extend his critics to the regulatory intention of all authorities, state or institutional**. Diametrically opposite to Eitington's crucial claim: "We have had the courage of *aspiring to be an authority* [...]".

This Freudian ambiguity did not escape from being noted by some members of the Berlin group. Franz Alexander, one of them, remembers his contribution to that collective publication: Freudian objections towards avoiding that the new discipline, pressed by the need of self-teaching, could be prematurely fixed by a **"scholastic systematisation" that contributes to its "sclerosis"**. And he slips a comment off, surprisingly updated in relation to the debates that we hold within the frame of our institutes: "The interests of the development of psychoanalysis and its teaching recognise, since then, *two opposing directions*".

## Make more "common psychoanalyses" out of didactic ones

"Despite these variations [the ones introduced by the 1974 APA reform], which are important in our opinion, *the basic problem of didactic analysis is not solved by them*. [...] **If there is something that didactic analysis should distinguish is the attention to overcome difficulties generated by their own frame, in order to turn them into more common psychoanalyses**".

The analysis of the patient's psychoanalytic vocation has intrinsic difficulties, given that it implies the very roots of the therapist's identity. If the analyst's resistance is the axial problem in every therapeutic process, it is in this issue where they are particularly increased.

The link to "institutional affiliation", for both of them, and the pressure of a normality conventional guideline make production and elaboration of regressive aspects and psychotic traits more difficult in these treatments".

Source: Galli, Vicente Martinto de Paschero, Lucía Solvey, Pablo. Report for Fepal's 10th Educational Pre-Congress, Buenos Aires, 1984.

# After Berlin

## a) The English model

- A minimum one-year analysis of five sessions a week to start training required.
- The analysis must be with a didactic analyst acknowledged by the British Psychoanalytic Association and must continue at least until getting a degree.
- The Students' Progress Commission (SPC) has power over subsequent steps in training.
- They make their decisions based on seminars reports and meetings held by the candidate with their *individual adviser on progress (IAP)*, a member of SPC.
- SPC decides when the right time for the student to start dealing with their first clinical case related to training is.
- The candidate, *together with their IAP*, chooses a supervisor. Supervision cases must correspond to a five session a week analysis.



### The implacable gatekeeper

“As it was stated in *Time Magazine* (Grossman, 20 January, 2003), there are currently

5,000 patients under analysis in the United States. That means there are a little less than *two analysands* for each member of the American Psychoanalytic Association, a figure that is diminishing in a professional organisation in which the average age of its members is 62, and going up. *Similar figures also apply to the British Psychoanalytic Association: the average age of its members is 66, also going up.* [...] The energy of many men and women from these institutions, very intelligent in general terms, were devoted to administering an entity that worked as an implacable gatekeeper, whose main goal was to *keep the great crowd away from the club*. It seems clear, nowadays, how successful they were in fulfilling their mission. (Douglas Kirsner, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia, *Psychoanalysis and its contents*. Unpublished text, courtesy of A. Fainstein).

## b) The French model

- The requirement for starting training is having taken personal analysis with any analyst belonging to IPA, even though they are not a member of the institution (in the case of the Paris Psychoanalytic Society), or with any analyst recognised as such by the institution, whether or not they are a member of IPA (as in the case with the French Psychoanalytical Association).
- The analytic couple are free to decide on the characteristics of the framework (three or four sessions a week).
- The candidate freely chooses their supervisors.
- The certification procedures of supervisions become truly important in this context and vary for both institutions.
- In the French Psychoanalytical Association, candidates are interviewed by a group of *titulaires*, who submit a report to the Training Commission.
- In the Paris Psychoanalytic Society, the group of *titulaires* that interview *supervisors* includes the nine-member commission responsible for accepting or denying the candidate.
- The candidate can choose between attending seminars and participating in work groups, selected from a list determined by the institution. The teaching staff is only required to control regular attendance and level of participation.



## Abolition of the didactic

“The common principles in relation to training, which with minimal variations sustain the two French societies that constitute IPA, radically differ from the principles the latter usually adheres to.”

“As part of the reforms proposed by J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, the French Psychoanalytic Association finally *abolished* didactic analysis in 1971. The Paris Psychoanalytic Society followed the same path and, in 1994, overrode the requirement for future candidates to have been analysed with a *titulaire*”.

“This three-session model is already about 60 years old and has never been questioned for its clinical effects, nor for its theoretic implications” (D. Widlöcher).

## c) The Uruguayan model

- The 1974 reform *separated the candidate’s personal analysis from institutional incidence*. It is the specific commissions of the institute (Admission Commission, Supervisor Group) and not the Institute analysts that intervene in subsequent transits of training (accessing seminars, beginning and ending of supervisions, selection of supervisors).

- The *Didactic Groups* (Group of Institute Analysts, Supervisor Groups and Teachers Groups) take on the duties that used to be centred in didactic analysts.

- These groups are open to all membership and are formed by self-nomination of its members; the institution reserves the right to accept or deny each individual request.

- The candidate shall carry out two curricular supervisions of adult patients’ analysis with a frequency of at least three times a week.

- Towards the end of the curricular supervision, the candidate shall submit to the supervisors’ group a *written production* that must have previously been subjected to a personal exchange with two supervisors appointed by the same group.

- The candidate freely chooses the seminars they will take from the offer proposed by the teachers’ group members each four-month period.

## Against high frequency fundamentalists

“Given that the analysis is personal and extra-institutional, in theory, the institutional authority ignores the weekly frequency in which it evolves, but there is a basic agreement of a minimum of three sessions a week (which is a regulatory standard) and there is a strong claim about the virtues and advantages of working in stages of four or five times a week, when the transference temperature so demands”.

“The consensus that stems from our experience, as valid or soliptic as *high frequency fundamentalists*, is that these work conditions in their flexibility allow for regression and the more resisted aspects of transference, with the same possibilities for success or failure as with the imposition of high frequency constituted as a mandatory standard” (M. Viñar, M. Fulco, C. Uriarte, M. Casas de Pereda).



*PIECE OF WORK THAT ILLUSTRATES THIS SECTION:*

*Runo Lagomarsino, ContraTiempos.  
Slide show, variable dimensions. 2010.*

*The starting point of this piece of work is Ibirapuera Park in São Paulo, designed by Oscar Niemeyer and Roberto Burle Marx and opened in 1954, as part of the celebrations for the city’s 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The photos shown register the search that Runo Lagomarsino carries out of the image of the South America map in the breaches of the paved path that joins the different buildings inside the park. There is an element of performativity in Lagomarsino’s walk along the 28,000 square metres of the path (indoor) of “Marquise” reviewing the aged concrete in search for cracks that resemble his idea and his memory of this territory’s contour.*

# Solidifying institutional identity

Catalina Bronstein \*

The Psychoanalysis Institute of British Psychoanalytic Society keeps the basic elements of Eitingon's training model, beyond changes introduced over the years. All kinds of analytic training pose difficulties. Besides political and institutional causes, these difficulties have to do with reasons inherent to our *métier*, like constantly having to confront emotions emerged not only from the encounter with patients, but also with transference and countertransference elements at risk in relationships with supervisors and colleagues. These elements will be present, whether the analyst belongs to the institution offering the candidate's training or not. The relationship with the supervisor is not exempt either from suffering the impact of these projections. **The French training, which focuses on supervision, sometimes exceeds the limits, in my opinion, of the role the supervisor must have, risking they take on an analytic role.**

In Eitingon's model, as practised in BPS, the candidate (throughout their training) must be under analysis five times a week with a didactic analyst that is a member of the institution. I think that besides ensuring that that candidate is analysed by an analyst with sufficient professional experience, **this demand has also the advantage of solidifying the institutional identity.**

In order to be able to supervise candidates, one must also be a teacher. **The requirements to become one are quite strict and sometimes create an uneasy situation within the institution,** with interrogations about the apparent power the teachers have over other standing members. There are some situations where **potential candidates under analysis with non-educational standing members prefer not to pursue analytic training rather than to change analysts.** This situation is currently under discussion at BPS.

**The analyst's intervention in the candidate's analytic training is only limited to their authorisation to start with seminars.** This possibility is kept mainly for extreme cases, such as when there are serious psychopathological elements, which in the past have harmed patients, as well as the institution. The courses are divided into clinical and theoretical seminars. Without

detracting from the importance of theoretical training, there is great emphasis on clinical training. Theoretical seminars are divided into mandatory and optional. Candidates have an **individual progress counsellor** with whom they check different options, as well as any problem they may face during training, supervisor selection, etc. This role is very important, but quite difficult, as the counsellor must, at the same time, consider the student's needs and problems and moderate with the Progress Commission. For instance, **if a student wants to change supervisors, this shall be discussed with the individual counsellor, who in turn will discuss it with the Progress Commission and the supervisor before authorising such change.** The candidate shall also be informed of every assessment carried out on their involvement in clinical and theoretical seminars.

Candidates have a candidates' association and they send designees to participate in discussions of certain committees, such as curriculum discussions. Students also have their say in writing (anonymously) about every course and the educational quality of the corresponding teachers.

There have recently been a certain number of changes to facilitate training to candidates living outside London. They can follow the courses over the phone and, in some exceptional circumstances, they can have four analysis sessions a week. There is also a "New Entry Scheme" by which psychotherapists with enough analytic experience with four-or five-sessions a week patients who have been under analysis also four or five times a week with an didactic analyst can be accepted as associated members after observing a case under supervision for eighteen months and follow certain courses and clinical cases discussions.

**All the systems run the risk of infantilising the candidate,** but I think it is utterly important that the institution be able to deliberate on this, so as to **distinguish between what can be power abuse and the need to have certain parameters to decide who can be a psychoanalyst.**

\*Psychoanalyst (British Psychoanalytic Society)

# To put a stop on repetition

Magdalena Filgueira \*

When reflecting upon the UPA Postgraduate University Institute on Psychoanalysis I remembered several experiences I had in all the years I have been a part of it, but when it involved providing fresh testimony on some of them, like an obstacle revealing knot, the heart of the training it offers, I found myself writing about formal, organisational aspects and their benefits. **It shocked me to find out how the resistance to deconstruct a totalising and idealised worldview of the institutions we are a part of is always active.** An idealisation that could work as support for the fragility of the theory, a model (any), relaunching an illusion, one of existence.

The knot is the non-ending training within UPA, which is permanent and, at the same time, intermittent, given the **interplay of being able to be independently in didactic functions**, whether directing an analysis, a seminar or as supervisor. Transience of functions that allows for permanence and intermittency. The fact that it is temporary would imprint trademark effects to experiences, in the bends of a psychoanalyst's training path. From the beginning, **the function, whichever, has a temporary tint, it is as long as it is maintained.** That opens up, not conflict-free, the institute's availability for rotation among them; for analysts from different generations and theoretical tendencies to go in and share the functions. Generous gesture, open to theoretical and political pluralism, rich and committed to exchange. I stress that there is unrest, **tension between the express intention that the groups of functions are renewed**, which also allows for every analyst's training from the selection of the first seminar to be heterogeneous, **and the tendency to reinstall the constituted figure of the didactic analyst performing at all times all the functions, with the level of power this entails and, again, of reassurance.** The tension is given in belonging with a critical and attentive attitude.

Conflict is reassembled, together with the **idea of psychoanalysis as shared, teachable and assessable knowledge system, based on common metrics.** Let us take a look at assessment in theoretical seminars; even when the study programme states: "*A minimum necessary evaluation shall be applied*", **there occurs**

**decentring of the transmission-teaching axis towards teaching of a certain kind of clotted knowledge.** A constant point of contention, showing **the impossibility of a training analyst to equally fulfil the expectations of a score of teachers** who, as expected, will express the most disparate opinions. This prevails, and caused valuable psychoanalysts to turn away, as well as a claim not to provide comments in reports regarding purely personal aspects of a candidate. Likewise, even when one can choose teachers and supervisors, there is always the opportunity to make change suggestions, which could lead to parallel *side-training*.

Another point is **the structure of the institute's direction with a democratic profile, which collects aspects of good college lineage, when it comes to what is co-ruled.** Wide structure, movable by nature, which runs the risk of being stiffened or stereotyped. There is a review instance, Institute Seminar, open to all members, which has the potential for deep transformations, but which is not always used to generate them; but it **might not be used or it might be used as a means for political-institutional approval, more than as a promotion, as the breed for ideas with founding force**, although I did participate in several of them when this is what happened.

The last point I want to reflect on is institutional intimacy, which in its *pulsional* rumbling (given the investment psychoanalysts grant to it) is subject to **slips towards the *passional***, on its own topic and dynamism. This led a group of colleagues, at the start of our training, to think about a certain "*training metapsychology*". Some irony, given the necessary invoked effects and turning point when **there arises harsh hostility among analysts, deriving from the vivid interest in confronting towards fight among peers**, being the Institute's admission criteria one of the privileged scenarios. When writing this text, there re-emerges in me a conception, a *mythical* construction with Freudian roots, by the way, every time we prove there is no *metaguarantor*, Father, but in their names, or given there is no religion involved, the chance of symbolic Law or the chance to pursue it within the phratry opens up.

**The biggest hit of the so called Uruguayan Model, beset by some *modelling* moments, is the incorporation of devices that could put a stop on repetition, clear openness to limiting attempts.**

# To put a stop on repetition Distress guidance

Admar Horn \*

When I arrived in Paris, towards the end of the '80s, I was already fluent in French and I presented myself to take analytic training in the Paris Psychoanalytic Society (PPS) where I was asked to look for a psychoanalytic colleague from the PPS to do a personal analysis that I had started years before in Brazil. I think it is important to highlight that in the last few years, the only requirement is that the psychoanalyst that will carry out the didactic analysis be a member of IPA (International Psychoanalytic Association); not necessarily a didactic analyst. The number of sessions for every psychoanalytic process in PPS is three sessions a week.

This initial level is characterised by writing a letter addressed to the Paris Psychoanalytic Society, requesting the beginning of psychoanalytic training. In this letter, you shall make clear the reason why you want to become a psychoanalyst. After receiving the approval to your request from the psychoanalysis institute, you will be able to visit the three members of the institute designated by the organisation's administration (*comissários*). These colleagues, tenured psychoanalysts in the society, will interview you and give you their opinions. If these are positive, you can start your training at the Paris Psychoanalytic Institute. **This process of interviews and reply reception is relatively long, approximately two years.**

One of the main features of this training is the fact that it does not have **any academic structure**. You are to choose the theoretical seminar you wish to take. I particularly adapted very well to this format, but **I heard many critics from colleagues arguing that they felt a little bit distraught and that they preferred a more rigid frame**. In this sense, the PPS created a "tutors" commission, that is a list of about ten names and you, as candidate, can choose one of them to go to in case you need it. Another point is that supervisors, especially the individual supervisor, are professionals with whom you can also have an open dialogue to dispel doubts.

In general, candidates start that training after having performed their personal analysis and when they are at the final stage. Back in my times, the average age of training candidates was 40 years old. All the theoretical seminars offered by the Institute are open to the different analysts' categories, from those beginning their training to didacticones.

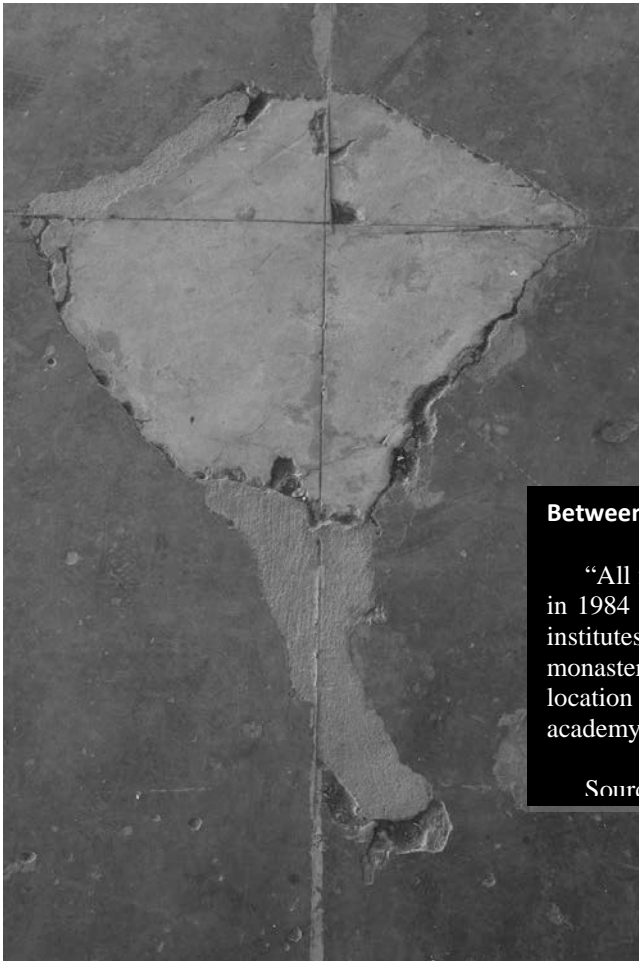
There is a requirement for individual as well as group supervision. Usually, these supervisions are performed separately, but nothing prevents them from being carried out simultaneously. Individual

\*Psychoanalyst (Sociedade Psicoanalítica do Rio de Janeiro)

supervision is agreed upon between you and your supervisor analyst and it has a weekly frequency. Group supervision, on the other hand, is carried out by a didactic analyst, on a weekly basis, where all candidates present their patients' clinical material. In general, there are five colleagues in the group of candidates. The average time in psychoanalytic training in PPS is six years. All of your requests to the Institute's administration during your psychoanalytic training are addressed and previously supported by your supervisor. They shall be present at the educational commission meetings, where these issues are posed. That is something very important, as these supervisors, both at individual and group level, are the ones that will back you up once you feel you are ready to request, by means of a letter, the closing of your "cursus" in the institute. It is the educational commission that informs you that the closing of your "cursus" was accepted. Then you

shall request, always through a letter, to be an affiliate active member of the Paris Psychoanalytic Society.

In my opinion, what was left from that psychoanalytic training acquired in Paris was a huge notion of freedom, immersed in a quite psychoanalytic context that favours listening and seems to constantly pervade the institution.



#### **Between monastery and technical school**

“All four models of Institutes described by Kernberg in 1984 remain relevant. He argued that psychoanalytic institutes were located somewhere between the monastery and the technical school, when its optimal location should be between a university and an art academy.”

Source: Douglas Kirsner. *op. cit.*

# The word, not the grade: process and *cursus* in psychoanalytic training

Leopoldo Bleger \*

There is not and there cannot be, a perfect psychoanalytic training nor an ideal psychoanalytic institution: the object we deal with, the unconscious, escapes all kinds of regulations. Each device, each functioning modality of psychoanalysts' training and the institution that groups them allows, and at the same time hinders, that transmission, it makes it possible and at the same time it *slips up* something crucial. For some psychoanalysts, administrative goals and purely psychoanalytic goals are opposing and contradictory. As for me, although I do not think about it in such categorical terms, I believe it is easy to verify that institutional goals tend to occupy an essential part of the tasks and that the psychoanalytic goal is most of the time about to get lost, to collapse. This brief introduction is a way of saying that what I will develop now shortly is *one* possible modality functioning with its advantages and disadvantages.

One of the most frequent critics we receive is that the training in FPA usually lasts more than ten years. I said "usually lasts" because there is nothing that determines an exact amount of time and there are **analysts in training (a term we prefer to "candidate")** that take a lot more or a little less. It is not about asserting that duration: **what matters is what it means to train psychoanalysts.**

In a sense, what is called nowadays *training*, in French would be called *formation*. But in *training*, it seems to me there is a tinge of "exercise", physical exercise, for example (although the word mainly implies the idea of teaching). If that is so, it would rather correspond to the French word *cursus* and not to *formation*. The word *cursus*, according to the dictionary, is "the gradual staggering of taught subjects", that is to say, something pre-established rather logically with an educational purpose.

In the French Psychoanalytic Association, there are two committees composed in a radically different manner and with clearly defined functions. The *teaching committee* is in charge of seminars and work groups, some of them rather institutionalised; the *training committee*, integrated only by "training" analysts, is concerned with the admission into the institute of new analysts in training, the validation of supervisions and the standardisation of the *cursus*. It is at that point, standardisation, that the different activities the analyst in training has performed throughout the years could be thought of as a *cursus*. **The *cursus* can only exist *après-coup*, it cannot be outlined in advance.**

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**In the word training, I feel I hear the idea of outcome of forces, of creation of a new form, in the fashion of commitment training or symptom training.** I think the training of a new

There is not and there cannot be, a perfect psychoanalytic training nor an ideal psychoanalytic institution: the object we deal psychoanalyst has a bit of a new journey, a process and that process does not only have a place in the future analyst's analysis. Every stage in their training implies compromising something of the neurosis of transference again, that is to say, what opens or rather allows to experience the difficulty of the contact with the unconscious and, at the same time, makes it possible. Difficulty and possibility go hand in hand.

It is about maintaining the tension between the organising character and the regressive character that said project implies. Or in any case, **not to evacuate the moments of possible disruption that the journey entails.** And that is why it is intrinsically linked to the analysis of the analyst in training.

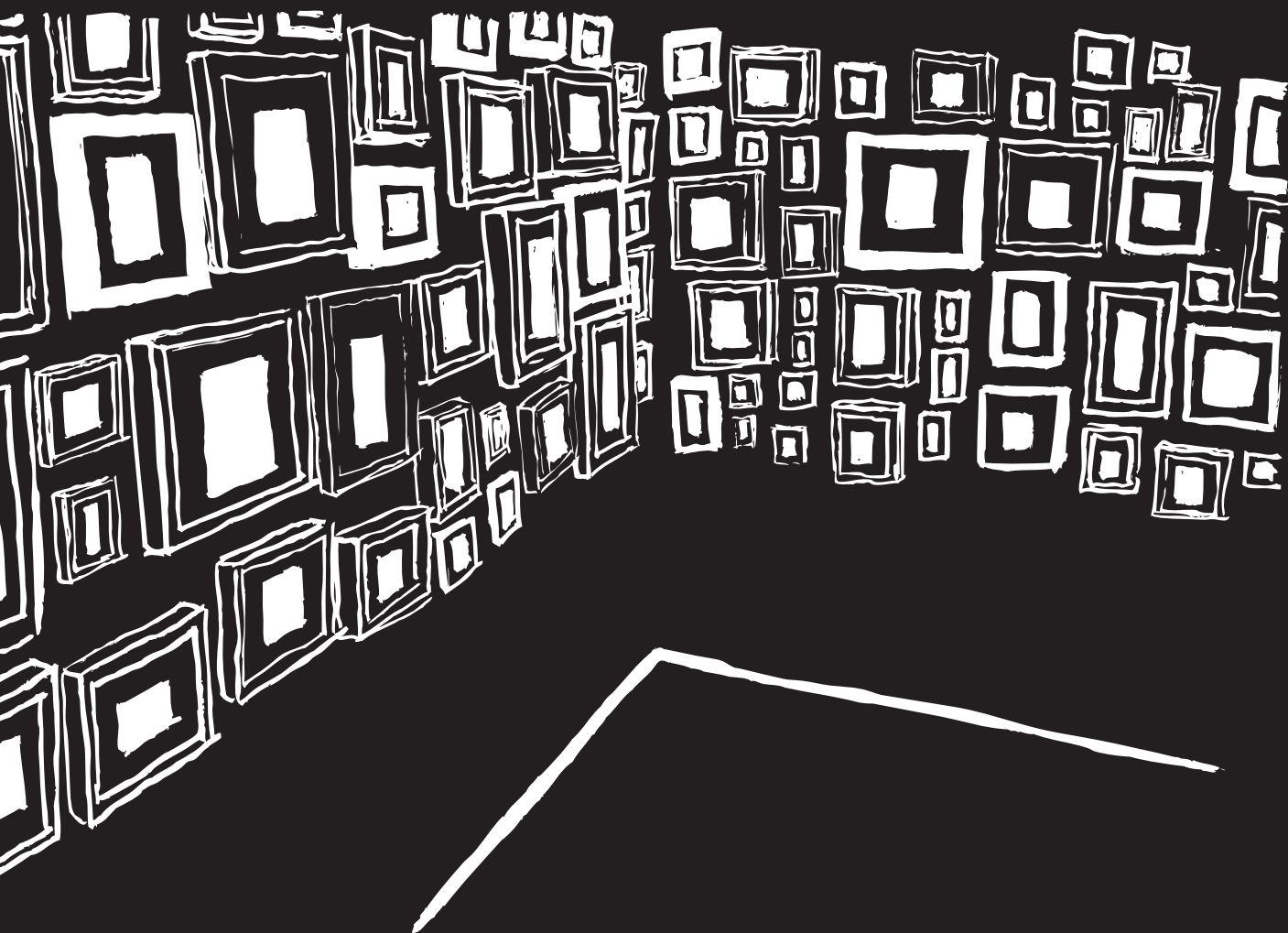
I like the analogy with the "training novel", the Bildungsroman, like Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, or Stendhal's The Red and the Black. The "hero" goes through a series of episodes and adventures that take him to maturity, but rather to a certain position in life. **What he learnt is not the most important thing; the fact of having gone through it is.**

I believe what is essential in a psychoanalyst's training is that something happens to them, that they go through things that allow them to touch something of the strangeness which is the object of psychoanalysis, **that training is, above all, a process, and less of a *cursus*.** And that process, that passage we call training, **can be reactivated throughout the life of a psychoanalyst, no matter how trained they are.**

Actually, only now can I say what I pointed to. What caught my attention during those years training in FPA is the distinction between two different levels, although most of the time they are linked: the level of training or learning and the level of the personal word as an analyst. In practice, this means that analysts in training do not only participate in the scientific life of the association (it is not uncommon for an analyst in training to be invited to deliver one of the so-called scientific conferences), but also some aspects of their administration.

What I wanted to share is how little by little it became clear to me that, in scientific discussions, the personal word or the ability to elaborate prevail over the status in institutional hierarchy.

**The word, not the grade.** It may seem like a small issue or, on the contrary, an evidence, an ordinariness in the psychoanalytic world. It still shocks me. It is not that common. But when I hear some "young" colleague that manages to flee from the institutional level, **when there emerges an "inhabited" word and in contact with the "psychoanalytic" issue, it surprises me... and it soothes me.** Not all is lost.



*Dossier*  
Contemporary art



**Regina José Galindo**

(Guatemala, 1974.

She lives and works in Guatemala)



*Regina José Galindo: Confesión. Performance.  
Caja Blanca. Palma de Mallorca, Spain. 2007.*

*(Photographs: Julian Stallabrass)*

## The end of passports?

### In her own flesh

Moaning, blood, surgical procedures, a freestyle wrestling session. Tiny pieces of paper with poems scattered in the wind as well. All of that can be (and all of that is used by) the art of Guatemalan Regina José Galindo, who, in 2005, won the Golden Lion prize at the Venice Biennale in the Young Artist category. Stunning visual impact in “a great courage action against power”, as the jury sentenced *Cinismo* (*Cynicism*), the winning video she starred. Or rather a part of her body: what viewers could see was the recording of a hymenoplasty, a hymen regeneration surgery.

In August 2008, Regina exhibited at the Centro Cultural España Córdoba (Argentina) a high impact showpiece, which was, at the same time, characterised by infuriating, almost minimalist in nature, nudity. The performance was named: *Reconocimiento de un cuerpo* (*Recognising a body*): the spectators were to walk into a room disguised as a morgue and there, on a litter, Regina lied unconscious, doped, covered by a sheet. The “action” the artist planned especially for Córdoba unquestionably intended to establish a link to recent history of Argentine horrors, pointing out topics like the disappearances last military dictatorship orchestrated, but it also aimed at producing a wider reflection in the Latin American context on the habit of stealing bodies and erasing their traces. “I thought about creating a piece where both contexts could meet- Regina said a few hours before undergoing anaesthesia to lie motionless on the litter-, the place where I will perform the action and the place I come from. The history of many Latin American countries is similar. In Argentina, they used the Río

de la Plata; in Guatemala, the Pacaya volcano. The art piece demands for the spectators’ participation; I assumed it is a familiar gesture for both.”

This, among other actions by Regina José Galindo, can be understood within the framework of contemporary art experiences that are displayed from Latin American contexts, without giving in to the demand for exoticism or representational patterns of an alleged continental identity. Experiencing in her own flesh confinement, limitation, ailment, exclusion or mutilation are some of the roads taken by the “performer”, as she calls herself, in an array that goes from the harsh reality of cutting oneself until bleeding or putting on a straightjacket to more subtle records. Simply art. Art with no last names. But strongly involved in political or gender issues that shape social relations in Latin America.

She can be quite often seen in performances that test the limits of her flesh and emotions, but that also test the resistance of the “social body” when it comes to confronting its darks areas. Being an artist has implied, for Regina, having herself violently splattered with a riot control hose in a piece called *Limpieza social* (*Social cleansing*), being stoned, transforming an exhibition space into a confinement cell, getting a beat for every woman murdered in Guatemala between January and June 2005, shaving all traces of hair (including eyebrows, armpits and pubic hair) and walking around the streets naked, hanging from a net without any clothes on and in an advanced pregnancy status. In every instance, the extreme situations she undergoes do not aim at overacting originality or shocking the unguarded spectator, but rather turning on an emergency light regarding racism, violence, misogyny or terror issues. A political art. A protest art, properly said.

The video *Confesión* (*Confession*) is among the most shocking ones: the

man in charge of martyring her repeatedly takes her by the head and immerses her in a water bin, during an exhausting torture session, which in police jargon is known as “submarine”. It was a clandestine performance carried out in 2007, in the basement of a building in Palma de Mallorca. The attendants were secretly summoned by phone to witness the drowning sequence: seven seconds immersed, seven seconds with the head out, seven times.

Other interventions were being thrown inside a plastic bag in the Guatemala municipal dump, hiring a professional wrestler for a combat at a clear disadvantage or asking a cosmetic surgeon to draw on her body with a marker the alleged “defects” that should be corrected in her anatomy according to beauty standards that lead thousands of people to sacrifice at the aesthetics altar.

The hymenoplasty she underwent in *Cinismo* warned about this practice, widely extended in certain societies with the purpose of restoring female virginity, and which is directly related to machismo ruling and cases of sexual exploitation. It has to do with exposing a patriarchal domination system by means of a procedure that mimics its practices and, at the same time, martyrs the vision. Regina does not play the victim, she rather “takes upon the victim’s pain”, like critic Thomas Miccheli pointed out, she absorbs it and returns it to show that is how a belief becomes flesh, that is how an ideological and subjugation order is made to bleed.

#### **Bolívar in a train**

Ten thirty in the morning, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009: Leticia El Halli Obeid got on a train to travel between Buenos Aires station Retiro and Zárate city, in the province of Buenos Aires. Along the way, she handcopied Simón Bolívar’s *Carta de Jamaica (Jamaica Letter)*, a text written in English in 1815, a founding document for the political

plan of uniting the emerging American countries into one great nation but, at the same time, an accurate diagnosis of the continent’s reality and a forecast of the storms that were to come. Bolívar quotes Montesquieu to warn that it is harder to get a people out of servitude than to subdue a free one.

The Argentine artist attributed a “spooky accuracy” to the Bolivarian text to predict the future: the broken utopia, independence and its pending bills, the dream of liberation shaken (still, two centuries later) by the colonial nightmare. Yet, what could have been a checking exercise developed into surprise. “It was like developing a photo” and coming across an unseen reality.

Three cameras recorded the action, alternating takes of Leticia copying the letter, images inside the train and visuals of the suburban landscape. The result is *Dictados (Dictations)*, a 25-minute video included in the travelling exhibition “*Menos tiempo que lugar. El arte de la independencia*” (*Less time than place. The art of independence*). The exhibition, produced by Goethe Institute, gathered artistic works of Latin Americans and Germans, as well as essays from intellectuals summoned to work on the idea of the Bicentennial.

Nothing could be further from the school exercises of historical fiction that disguise an actor as hero and place them on Plaza de Mayo to reflect upon the history among honking. *Dictados* is a harsh visual piece, tightened by poetics that will not allow spectacular scenes or low blows. In many excerpts, Bolívar’s text is superimposed to images, and the relevance of *Carta* is activated as if it were the subtitling of what we see: within the carriage, still and silent people, workers, sellers compelled to surviving; on the other side of the window, a steadily declining landscape, the typical sequence that alternates depressing suburbs with defensive walls of private neighbourhoods. The resource, simple



as it is, is highly effective. But, due to its political density, *Dictados* evades the postcard of hardship, beautified and served to be consumed at museums. It is about “archaic writing in a place that will not accept lyric arts”<sup>1</sup>, in the words of German curator Alfons Hugh, who adds: “In her performance, Obeid compares what was the historical promise with current reality and, in view of the emerging abyss, she critically wonders about the legality of celebrations around the Bicentennial.”

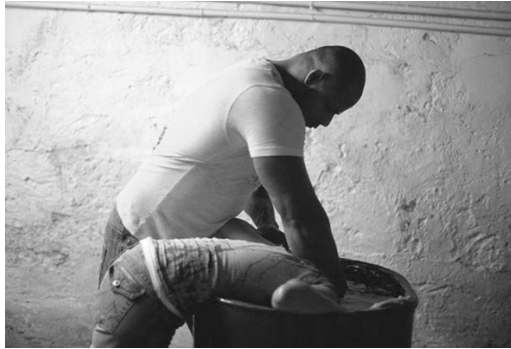
The artist herself was in charge of highlighting an aspect of the work that, in railroad terms, counter-travels celebratory optimism of the Bicentennial: “There is a visual fact in *Dictados* that in my opinion is very meaningful: as the train approaches slum areas, the carriage population turns less and less white. This is a delicate issue, as ‘whiteness’ is a relative thing, if any. As I heard anthropologist Alejandro Grimson say: Obama can be called ‘the first black president’ in the United States, but when walking through Pelourinho, in Salvador de Bahía, he will surely be called *white*. I think it is an ideal reasoning to remind us we are facing a very complicated category. Now, it is unquestionable that Argentina still sustains an identity idea as the White Nation in Latin America, a hilarious and racist self-definition. I thought this issue would be widely discussed during the Bicentennial, but it was only raised in the most confined academic spheres. In a sheer omission, we deny having the most basic characteristic of societies that emerged as colonies: a pretty rigid

ethnic stratification that follows the mould of class frontiers. Not being able to see or talk about such basic reality seems to reflect lack of autonomy to think about our own destiny, even as a problem we have in common with many other societies.”

#### **Metonymy exercise**

Isn’t that lack of autonomy to think about our own destiny, which Leticia El Halli Obeid poses as an inward reproach, also related to the situation where artistic practices of the continent are trapped when they try to argue in equal terms with other manifestations or to define the debate terms? How many aspects of Latin American culture could be thought of in the context of a never fully accomplished independence? Is it possible to step away from the subordinate position, from “ways of reacting”, from the situation (as Gerardo Mosquera pointed out) of having to give the serve back?

When the exhibition “*Menos tiempo que lugar*” had to stop in Buenos Aires, critic Claudio Iglesias reproached the curatorial project for moving in the wrong direction and put the finger on an old sore spot. Because of the enrolment in a bigger project motivated by the bicentennial independence processes, “*Menos tiempo que lugar*” seemed to be a “too little emancipatory” exhibition. On his look upon Latin America, there is “too much picturesquism”, he pointed out, and although he avoided analysing the problem in terms of a persistent



cultural hegemony, he warned that if matters do not change, “we will keep seeing European artists marvelled by native weaving and local artists that can only look at them in dismay, in projects that are said to be motivated by exchange, but with incomprehension as a usual common factor.”<sup>2</sup>

#### Today we have Europeans for dinner

The Brazilian avant-garde of the 1920’s was a greatly original and bold response to the situation in Latin American culture. The Modern Art Week, held in 1922 in São Paulo, and the publishing in 1924 of *Manifesto da Poesia Pau-Brasil* (*Manifesto of Pau-Brasil Poetry*) started to modify the scene of literature and visual arts, introducing a critical regionalism that aimed at settling the bases of modernity in dialogue with issues in the Americas and that opened the paths to a national creative awareness.

Compared with other expressions of South American avant-garde, such as Argentine *Martinfierrism*, the options of Brazilian modernity were characterised by unprecedented fury and radicalism. Poet and novelist Oswald de Andrade was the main theoretician and driving force of renovation deriving from the idea of cannibalism. In 1928 he drafted *Manifesto Antropófago* (*Cannibalist Manifesto*), where asserting the idea of nationality and self-defence did not expel elements considered to be foreign, it rather recommended to absorb them, to devour them. “Tupi or not Tupi, that is the question” was the phrase used by the poet to carry out the

ritual of ingesting the foreigner.

The parody, posed in the first lines of the manifest, entails replacing Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” with the word “Tupi”. The text was published together with the drawing *Abaporu* (which in Tupi means “eating man”), by Tarsila Do Amaral, a groundbreaking artist in visual translation of the motto of devouring European culture and reality carnivalisation, one of the central points in the anthropophagic project.

With its metaphor of ingesting and regurgitation, anthropophagy reconfigured a pivotal debate over the possibilities of subverting hierarchical and subordinate relations with European culture. In 1932, a few years after drafting the manifest of cannibal ambitions, Jorge Luis Borges published the essay “*El escritor argentino y la tradición*” (*The Argentine writer and tradition*), a text that ridiculed self-exoticism experiences, the efforts to find “national topics”, the abundance of differential traces and local colour. He lets himself write about what he calls a little confidence: “For many years, in now happily forgotten books, I tried to word the taste, the essence of extreme neighbourhoods in Buenos Aires; of course I overused local words, I did not avoid words like *cuchilleros*, *milongas*, *tapia* and others, and thus I wrote those forgettable and forgotten books; then, about a year ago, I wrote a story that is called ‘*La muerte y la brújula*’ (*Death and the compass*), which is some sort of a nightmare with elements of Buenos Aires distorted by the horror of the nightmare; I think of Paseo Colón and I call it Rue de Toulon, I think of Adrogué farms and I call them Tristele-Roy; after that story was published, my friends told me they had finally found in my writing the taste of Buenos Aires outskirts. Precisely because I had not planned to find that taste, because I had given in to the dream, I accomplished, after so many years, what I searched for in vain before.” The well-known closing of

that sharp exercise of Borges' irony is to claim the right to every Western culture, available as a legacy that has to be taken ownership of with disrespect and without essentialist superstitions.

When compared, *Manifesto* is a battle cry. As Haroldo de Campos analysed, the critical swallowing of universal culture legacy does not derive from "the subdued and reconciling perspective of the 'good wild' (...), but according to the disenchanting point of view of the evil wild, the one that eats the white, the cannibal"<sup>3</sup> that gobbles down the enemies they respect for their braveness and from whom they draw strength.

Despite being strongly linked to a historical context, far from having diluted, as set forth by Gerardo Mosquera, Cuban curator and theoretician that emerged at the beginning of the 1990s as one of the most acerbic voices on contemporary art formulation from Latin America, the paradigm of cannibalism persisted as an element articulating the strategies to think and legitimise "critical, selective and metabolising appropriation of European artistic trends" by Latin American culture. "This notion has been widely used to characterise the paradoxical anti-colonial resistance of Latin American culture by means of its tendency to copy (...), as well as to mention its relation to the dominant West."<sup>4</sup> In the line of "modernity fighting for its origins", cannibalism was the central theme of decisive 24<sup>th</sup> Biennial in São Paulo in 1998, and in previous decades it fed different politics of hybridisation and high impact notions, even beyond artistic ghettos (for example, in the psychiatric field), as the concept of "cannibal subjectivity", developed by psychoanalyst and curator Suely Rolnik. However, roughly evident optimism of notions based on cannibalism has shown warning signs on its relevance for many years. As for the Brazilian case, forced to review the

results of countercultural movements and its power clash loss, Rolnik concluded later in the expression "cannibal zombies" to cast doubts on the virtues of cannibal responses and to determine that "Brazil proved to be a true athletic champion of flexibility at the service of the market."<sup>5</sup>

Gerardo Mosquera is the person who has placed greater emphasis on the need to "break with the too affirmative vision implied by both cannibalism and transculturation, as well as other notions based on appropriation". Without giving up on irony, he points out that "following the cannibalism metaphor, it is necessary to stress the digestive battle that the relation it poses implies: sometimes the consequences are addiction, constipation or, even worse, diarrhoea. As Buarque de Hollanda has warned, cannibalism can stereotype a problematic concept of a carnivalising national identity that always processes, to its advantage, everything that "is not theirs". Although cannibalism refers to a "critical swallowing", in Haroldo de Campos's words, one must be on the lookout for difficulties of such pre-postmodern programme, as it is not carried out on neutral grounds, but it is rather subdued, with a praxis that implicitly assumes dependence contradictions."<sup>6</sup>

In the controversial essay "*Del arte latinoamericano al arte desde América Latina*" (*From Latin American Art to Art from Latin America*), published in 2003 in *Art Nexus*, Mosquera even got to refuse that the moniker of "Latin American art" could reasonably describe the way in which contemporary artists of the region produce and exhibit their works in the global context and urged to give that term the treatment that an imposed colonial label would deserve.

The exit cannot be found either in a "multiculturalist" paradigm, which feeds the market of diversities without altering the schemes of power, nor the major corridors of art. "The new glorification of difference and

multiculturality implies another way of cultural colonialism”, warned Mari Carmen Ramírez in an essay in 1996. The art’s customs still request passports and one of the risks is that they are only granted at the price of an effective overacting of difference.

The crossroad is not a simple one. The timely criticism to cultural nationalism and essentialism, just as the identification of a “semiotic racism” that has also worked in the artistic field establishing predominance of a white West, does not mean that everything has been said. In certain spheres, one can attend what Joaquín Barriendos calls “a re-essentialisation of the hybrids”, which turns it into a new hierarchicalising and mandatory category, and into a fetishisation of half-breed that only fattens proselytising use of the multicultural and the “aesthetisation of their own cultural borders through museumisation of diversity.”<sup>7</sup>

A tragicomic response to that super-hybrid can be found in a scene that took place in the new Quai Branly Museum, in Paris, opened in 2006, which currently gathers 3500 cultural works from Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas, compiled by “French natives” (as Néstor García Canclini jokes). Although the museum is the proof of a great effort to neutralise ethnocentrism “de-hierarchising relations among cultures”<sup>8</sup>, emphasising its creativity or its elegance, the result might not be the desired one. Covering one of its segments, anthropologist James Clifford captured a conversation between two people that looked for each other inside the museum through their mobile phones. “Where are you?” asked one of the visitors. The other answered: “I think I am in the Americas.”<sup>9</sup>

### ***Salpicón and compota***

It is possible that, just as it happens to the visitor at the Quai Branly Museum, nobody knows exactly where they are when faced to artistic works

or experiences that go into the flow of a globalisation that has apparently pulverised the national borders. On the one hand, as curator Philip Larratt-Smith points out, the distinction between Latin American art and non-Latin American art (with the subsequent support of geopolitical categories that would not operate any more in a field that became completely international, as the artistic one) has become obsolete and unprofitable. On the other hand, it is unquestionable that the process of growing visibility that has occurred in the major art centres produced from Latin America took place and still does in a controversial way.

One of the means to overcome the age of tantrum and essentialist positions was “Global Conceptualism. Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s”, a critical, historiographical and explanatory intervention, in charge of Jane Farver, Rachel Weiss and Raúl Camnitzer, carried out in 1999 at Queens Museum of Arts in New York. If, as Larratt-Smith notes, conceptualism turned into the art’s *lingua franca*, the English language with which the world of art communicates and carries out its exchanges, the exhibition had one precise goal: “Decentralising the history of conceptualism and taking it out of the dominant clock to allow for the appearance of local histories.”<sup>10</sup> The strategy consisted in snatching a key trend from canonical historiography and trying to play a winning card in a kind of epistemological tournament, conceiving conceptualism no longer as a characteristic of fundamentally Euro-North American movements



with secondary implications in Latin America, but as a “phenomenon that took place in a federation of provinces, where the traditional dominant centre is one province among many.” Camnitzer, a Uruguayan artist that settled in New York many decades ago, adds that it “helped reveal that many manifestations within conceptualist strategy occurred in places considered to be peripheral first and then in those self-defined as central and that other ‘later’ local movements (China and Korea, among others) were equally valid and non-derivative.”

Beyond some chauvinistic little game of the kind “we did it first here” (which Camnitzer rules out) and the playful tone of the gesture, “Global Conceptualism” managed to establish a distinction capable of operating forward: retaining the notion of “conceptualism” for certain practices of Latin American scene, associated with a political project and a cultural phenomenon of greater reach than an artistic style, and *granting* the category of “conceptual art” to Anglo-American practices. From that theoretic abrupt turn, not only the time line that always determined that in Europe and the United States the first styles emerged to be later swallowed by other regions could be reversed, but also conceptual art itself became a “little anecdotal mark (Camnitzer *dixit*) in the history of universal art.” Suddenly, colonised people encompassed the colonisers.

Camnitzer also published, after many years documenting, the book *Didáctica de la liberación. Arte conceptualista latinoamericano* (Didactics of

liberation. Conceptualist Latin American Art), a reference work in new mapping and different chronologies. He elaborated on his idea that conceptualism is not a style in a history of art led from New York, Paris, London or Berlin, but rather a set of strategies (both from art and other activities) that emerge as a response to the surrounding reality, many times defined by political contexts of struggle and liberation. His story begins with Simón Rodríguez (known as Bolívar’s tutor) and can be extended, in a non-orthodox way, until reaching certain actions of Tupamaras guerrilla, to which he attributes “beautified military operations” and the “activation of creative processes in non-artistic areas.”<sup>11</sup>

So that the narrative on conceptualism can include Tupamaros (among many other analysed phenomena ranging from *Tucumán Arde* [*Tucumán on flames*] to *Superbarrio Gómez* [*Gómez Superneighbourhood*]), Camnitzer developed the notions of *salpicón* and *compota*, two untranslatable words, two methodological metaphors that, assuming a certain level of daringness and ludic position, allow him to derail the canonical narrative and dismiss terms such as genealogy or constellation. Such creativity turns out to be indispensable when carrying a vision from the outskirts and it is a confirmation that, in order to write another history, one must create their own words. Words to which requesting a passport would be meaningless.





## Against Latin American art

Relationships among contemporary art, culture and internationalisation have revolutionised in recent times. Only fifteen years ago, we lived in another era. Besides the rise of electronic information, the impact of the much debated globalisation, the end of the Cold War and modernity (rampant, at times) in vast areas of the world, the change in art has been specifically triggered by a geometric expansion in its practice and circulation.

We have left behind the times of isms and manifests. The critical issue in today's art is the extraordinary increase of its practice and regional and international circulation through a variety of spaces, events, circuits and by means of electronic communications. It is estimated that there are about two hundred regularly periodic biennials and other artistic events across the globe, just to mention one aspect of the growth in art circuits. In this explosion, there is a wide multiplicity of new cultural and artistic actors that circulate at international level and that did not exist before or were restricted to local levels. Let's think, for instance, that several Asia-Pacific countries have moved away from the traditional culture of contemporary art and skipped modernity. In a way, "they learned" contemporary art through the Internet. This leap has triggered a fruitful proximity between tradition and contemporaneity,<sup>1</sup> or, on the contrary, has provided art with the audacity, boldness, candour and spontaneity that characterise those who will not drag the chain of historical evolution.<sup>2</sup>

Together with the growth in

international circuits, today there emerge new artistic energies and activities that are carried out locally in areas where, due to historical, economic and social reasons, one would not expect to find a valuable production. My work in places like Central America, India, Palestine or Paraguay has made me witness not only powerful and plausible artistic practices, but also the foundation of alternative groups and spaces, boosted by absence of infrastructure and the rise of actions against prevailing commercial art and ruling power, or external to it.

A great part of this activity is "local": resulting from personal and subjective reactions from artists facing their contexts, or their intention to have an impact (cultural, social or even political) on them. But these artists are usually well-informed on other contexts, on dominant art, or they look for an international projection. Sometimes, they move inside, outside and around local, regional and global spaces. In general, their production is not anchored in nationalist modernisms or in traditional languages, even when they base their work on vernacular cultures or specific backgrounds. These contexts have become global through their interconnection with the world. According to Manray Hsu, we are all cosmopolitan as there is no longer a "world out there": Heidegger's being-in-the-world became being-in-the-planet.<sup>3</sup> Even in the middle of a war, as in Palestine, it is possible to discover punchy works that challenge our preconceptions and validate how decentralised artistic dynamics are becoming.

The world of art has changed very

23. As we can see, for instance, in artists such as Cai Guo-Quiang, Kuang-Yu Tsui and Xu Bing.

24. Let us think, for example, in Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, Apichapong Weerasethakul and Xu Zhen.

25. Manray Hsu, "Network Cosmopolitanism. On Cultural Exchange and International Exhibition", in Nicholas Tsoutas (editor), *Knowledge+Dialogue+Exchange. Remapping Cultural Globalisms from the South*, Sydney, Arspace Visual Arts Centre, 2004, p. 80.

much since 1986, when the 2<sup>nd</sup> Biennial in Havana carried out the first global exhibition on contemporary art, gathering 2400 works by 690 contemporary artists from 57 countries<sup>4</sup> three years before *Les Magiciens de la Terre* and without including traditional art. Thus, it inaugurated the era of internationalisation we experience nowadays. Multiculturalist speeches and practices from the 1990s, which implied correctness, quotas or neo-exotisms policies, have lost relevance, to the point of being used as disqualifying adjectives that connote a simplistic programmatism. Until recently, the aim was to find a balanced national plurality in exhibits and events. Now the problem is the opposite: curators and institutions have to respond to the contemporary global immensity. The challenge is to be able to keep up to date in face of the emergence of new subjects, energies and cultural information that are bursting everywhere. It is no longer possible for a curator to work in accordance with the New York-London-Germany axis (as it was the case until recently) and to look down on the rest with raised eyebrows.

I will try to analyse the new artistic-cultural situation with the help of a fable. In 1994, I wrote an essay on art in Latin America for the catalogue *Cocido y crudo* (*Cooked and raw*), the wide international exhibition curated by Dan Cameron for Centro Reina Sofía, in Madrid. I closed it with a Galician joke that my mother used to tell, used there as an allegory about a possible strategy to face the Latin American dilemma (and that of post-colonial and periphery orb) between, on the one hand, the dominant Western metaculture and internationalisation and, on the other hand, personality of their own context, local traditions, irregular modernity, Non-West.

A countryman had to cross a bridge in very poor conditions. He carefully walked into it and, as he moved forward with caution, he said: “God is good, the Devil is not bad; Good is good, the Devil is not bad...” The bridge creaked and the countryman kept repeating the phrase, until he finally got to the other end. Then he shouted: “The hell, both of you!” And continued along the path.<sup>5</sup>

That was the end of the fable in that old context, as it was published in the catalogue. But something unexpected happened then: the Devil showed up to the countryman, who stood motionless, seized with horror. The Devil looked at him calmly and said: “Don’t be scared, I’m not vindictive. I’ll tell you what: you follow your path, on your own, but let me come along; take me in and I’ll open the gates of the world for you”. And the countryman, scared, pragmatic and ambitious, agreed. Thus, fourteen years later, “Latin American art” has followed its path, but as per the Devil’s strategies, who, on the other hand, is not as mean as he seems. Luckily, the tale kept its happy ending, though slightly different: both the Devil and the countryman were happy with a mutually beneficial deal, and they keep going on together.

As a result, Latin American art is no longer so and rather became art from Latin America.<sup>6</sup> *From*, and not so much *by*, *in* and *here*, is nowadays the key word in the rearticulation of ever more permeable polarities at local/international, contextual/global, centre/periphery, West/Non-West levels the fable referred to. Let us take a look at the theoretical context of artistic-cultural interaction before mutation, focusing on a Latin American perspective.

Brazilian modernism built the

26. *Segunda Bienal de La Habana '86. Catálogo general*, Centro Wifredo Lam, Havana, 1986.
27. Gerardo Mosquera. “Cocinando la identidad”, in *Cocido y crudo*, Madrid, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 1994, p- 32-37, 309-313.
28. Gerardo Mosquera. “El arte latinoamericano deja de serlo”, in *ARCO Latino*, Madrid, 1996, p. 7-10.
29. Oswald de Andrade. “Manifiesto antropófago”, in *Revista de Antropofagia*, Sao Paulo, Year 1, Issue 1, May 1928.

paradigm of “cannibalism”<sup>7</sup> to legitimise its critical, selective, metabolising appropriation of European artistic trends. This notion has been widely used to characterise the ironic anti-colonial resistance of Latin American culture by means of its inclination to copy (as it is well known, only the Japanese excel us in this regard), just as to allude to their relation with the dominant West. Now, the paradigm goes beyond Latin America to highlight a procedure typical of subaltern and postcolonial art in general.

Unlike Homi Bhabha’s<sup>8</sup> notion of mimicry, which raises the issue of how colonialism imposes a foreign mask on the subaltern, from which it negotiates its resistance in the middle of ambivalence, cannibalism entails an attack: to voluntarily swallow dominant culture for personal benefit. It just happens that the notion is built by Latin American modernism in, and from, a postcolonial situation. It is also related to the early international inclination of Brazilian culture, influenced by the modernising drive of an enlightened and cosmopolitan bourgeois.

As of its poetic launch, the cannibalism metaphor has been developed later by Latin American critics as a key notion in the continent’s cultural dynamics. On the one hand, it describes a trend that has been present in Latin America since the very first days of European colonisation; on the other hand, it poses an action strategy. Its line not only has survived the original feisty modernism: it has been driven by the upsurge of poststructuralist and postmodern ideas about appropriation, resignification and validation of copying. Cannibalism was even the core

issue of the historic 24<sup>th</sup> Biennial in São Paulo, curated by Paulo Herkenhoff in 1998.

The emphasis on the dominant culture appropriation as resistance and assertion record of subaltern subjects is also manifested in the term “transculturation”, coined by Fernando Ortiz in 1948 to spotlight the implicit bilateral exchange in every “acculturation”.<sup>9</sup> Actually, all cultures are hybrid in anthropological as well as, in Bhabha’s words, in linguistic-Lacanian terms, due to the lack of unity and constancy of its signs.<sup>10</sup> They always “steal” each other, either from situations of control or subordination. Cultural appropriation is not a passive phenomenon. The receptors always reshape the elements they seize according to their own cultural patterns,<sup>11</sup> even when they are subdued to strict control conditions. Their incorporations are often not “correct”, as what matters is the productivity of the element taken for the purpose of the seizer, not the reproduction of its use in the original environment. Such incorrectness is usually at the base of the cultural effectiveness of appropriation and often opens up a process of originality. That is why Brazilian critic Paulo Emilio Sales Gómez, when referring to Brazilian artists’ cosmopolitan will, with their eyes set on the mainstream of major art centres and uninterested in popular culture, would say his luck was that they did not copy right,<sup>12</sup> since what was valuable in them is what personalises them within an international language spoken with a foreign accent.

Even when appropriation is a process always present in every relation between cultures, it turns out to be more critical in conditions of subaltern and post-

30. Homi K. Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Men. The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse”, in *October*, New York, Issue 28, 1984, p. 125-133.

31. Fernando Ortiz. *Contrapunteo Cubano del Tabaco y el Azúcar*, Havana, 1940 (published in English in New York by Alfred Knopf in 1947). This neologism acknowledged by Bronislaw Malinowski in his preface to Ortiz’s book and by Melville J. Heskovits in *Man and his Works. The Science of Cultural Anthropology*, in New York, Alfred Knopf, 1948, although it was not adopted due to how settled the word “acculturation” was in the language of anthropology. The term nowadays is widely used in Spanish and is belatedly entering English by means of *cultural studies*, taken from Ángel Rama, *Transculturación narrativa y novela latinoamericana*, Mexico City, 1982.

32. Homi K. Bhabha. “Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences” (1998), in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (editors), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, London and New York, Routledge, 1997, p. 207-209.

33. R.H. Lowie. *An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*, New York, 1940.

34. Quoted by Ana Maria de Moraes Belluzzo in dialogue with the author.

colonialism, when right from the start, one must deal with a culture enforced by power. In this regard, it has been claimed that peripheries, due to their location in the maps of economic, political, cultural and symbolic power, have developed a “resignification culture”<sup>13</sup> of repertoires imposed by the centre. It is an unconventional strategy from dependence positions. Besides confiscating for personal use, it works by questioning the canons and authority of central paradigms. It is not only about dismantling totalisations in the post-modern spirit, as it also implies the anti-Eurocentric deconstruction of self-reference in dominant models<sup>14</sup> and, beyond, of any cultural model.

Nonetheless, it is necessary to break away with the too affirmative vision that implies cannibalism as well as transculturation and other notions based on appropriation. Following the cannibalism metaphor, it is necessary to highlight the digestive battle that the relationship it poses tacitly implies: sometimes the consequences are addiction, constipation or, even worse, diarrhoea. As Buarque de Hollanda warned, cannibalism may stereotype a problematic concept of carnivalising national identity that always processes for personal benefit everything that “is not theirs”.<sup>15</sup> We must pay attention to the difficulties of such pre-postmodern programme, as it cannot be carried out in a neutral, but rather a subdued area, with a praxis that tacitly accepts the contradictions of dependence. We must also take into account whether the level of transformation the devourer experiences when incorporating the appropriated dominant culture does not subsume it within it.

As for transculturation, Ángel Rama himself had pointed out a while ago that the concept “does not correspond enough to selectivity and invention criteria.”<sup>16</sup>

Thus, it leaves aside new cultural transformations and creations in response to new and different environments and historical situations in which transcontextualised cultures have to evolve.

Cannibalism, transculturation and, in general, appropriation and resignification are related with another set of concepts proposed from modernity to characterise cultural dynamics in Latin America and that have even come to be stereotyped as traits-synthesis of Latin American identity: crossbreed, syncretism and hybridisation. Just like appropriation, these concepts correspond to certain processes that are very relevant in cultural interaction of such complex and diverse environment as Latin America is. Besides, they have proved to be very productive to analyse the continent’s culture and its processes. Nonetheless, it turns out to be problematic to use them as generalising mottos to particularise Latin America or the post-modern orb, since, actually, there is not a non-hybrid culture. This does not mean they are not particularly useful to analyse the post-colonial culture, since due to the wide scope of differences, asymmetries, contrasts and situations of power involved in its formation in terms of ethnicity, culture, race and class, hybridisation processes were especially important there.

Now, a problem with concepts based on synthesis is that they blur imbalances and tend to erase conflicts. Worse yet: they can be used to create the image of a fair and harmonious blending, concealing not only the differences, but also the contradictions and blatant disparities according to the myth of an integrated, all-participating nation, as can be clearly seen in Mexico. Salah Hassan has pointed out how Fidel Castro, when asked about the absence of black people in the Cuban power structure, or their presence as tokens with no real enforceability, he once

13. Nelly Richard. “Latinoamérica y la posmodernidad: la crisis de los originales y la revancha de la copia”, in her *La estratificación de los márgenes*, Santiago de Chile, Francisco Zegers Editor, 1989, p. 55.

14. Nelly Richard. “Latinoamérica y la posmodernidad”, in *Revista de Crítica Cultural*, Santiago de Chile, Issue 3, April 1991, p. 18.

15. Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda. “Feminism: Constructing Identity and the Cultural Condition”, in Noreen Tomassi, Mary Jane Jacob and Ivo Mesquita (editors): *American Visions. Artistic and Cultural Identity in the Western Hemisphere*, New York, 1994, p. 129.

16. Ángel Rama, *ibid*, p. 38.

answered: “we are all black here.”<sup>17</sup> Even though the answer is correct in cultural terms, it is not in racism, difference and power terms, using the helpful notion of cultural crossbreed to avoid the debate on the racial issue in Cuba.

Another difficulty is that the hybridisation model triggers the thought of intercultural processes through a mathematical kind of operation, by means of division and addition of elements, where the result is a *tertium quid* derived from the combination. This kind of models darkens cultural self-creation, which is not necessarily a consequence of the fusion, but of the invention or specific, different use of non-hybrid elements. On the other hand, it tends to take in all the cultural factors as open to the combination, and stops considering those that do not dissolve, and resistance to hybridisation as a result of asymmetries that are hard to juggle. What’s more important: Wilson Harris said that in every assimilation of opposites there is always a “void” that prevents a full synthesis,<sup>18</sup> creating what Bhabha has called a “Third Space”, where cultures can meet in their differences.<sup>19</sup>

Co-opting threatens every cultural action based on syncretism, despite the fact that the latter, to a greater or lesser extent, has always been a resistance and affirmation channel for subalterns. The difficulty lies in that the fusion usually takes places towards the central or most powerful component, in an operation that answers and simultaneously re-inscribes its authority. Néstor García Canclini has pointed out that the hybridisation concept “is not a synonym for fusion without contradictions, but rather it can help account for particular ways of conflict

generated in recent interculturality in the middle of the decline of national modernisation projects in Latin America.”<sup>20</sup>

Another problem is that appropriating subaltern subjects reinscribe the Western model of the sovereign subject of Enlightenment and modernity, without a debate on the fallacy of these subjects centred and, what’s more, to what extent subaltern subjects are actually an effect of dominant power and their speeches. It does not mean a denial to its capacity of action, that appropriating paradigms place at the forefront in a very valuable twist in epistemological and political terms. But this capacity cannot either be oversized as an accommodating figure that solves the problems of cultural subalternity by means of a simple reversion. It is necessary to make the constitution of subaltern subjects and their actions more transparent and to analyse appropriation in a more complex and ambivalent way.

Today, it seems more viable to see the power network and the differences within a dialogic relation, where imposed culture can feel as “internal-external”, as Mijail Bajtín said when talking about literary multilingualism,<sup>21</sup> that is to say, accepting the external as internal. Dominant cultural elements are not only imposed, they are also accepted,<sup>22</sup> facing the power network by confiscating control elements and, at the same time, ambivalently changing the appropriating subject towards what is appropriated, their senses and speeches.

Beyond these interpretations of cultural processes, there remains a maybe even more difficult issue: the flow cannot always remain in the North-South

17. Salah Hassan’s testimony in response to a question from the audience after her speech at the international symposium Where Are Worlds Meet: Multiple Modernities and the Global Salon, organised by the Venice Biennale and the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti at Palazzo Cavalli Franchetti, Venice, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

18. Wilson Harris. *Tradition, the Writer and Society*, London and Port of Spain, New Beacon, 1973, p. 60-63.

19. Bhabha. “Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences”, *op. cit.*, p. 208-209.

20. Néstor García Canclini. *Culturas híbridas. Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad*, Mexico City, Grijabla Publishing House, 2001, p. II.

21. Mijail M. Bajtín. “De la prehistoria de la palabra de la novella”, in his *Problemas literarios y estéticos*, Havana, Arte y Literatura Publishing House, 1986, p. 490-491. On the issue, see Gerardo Mosquera. *Global Islands*, in Okwui Enwezor, Carlos Basualdo, Uet Meta Bauer, Susanne Ghez, Sarat Maharaj, Mark Nash and Octavio Zaya (editors), *Créolité and Creolization. Documenta 11\_Platform 3*, Ostfildern-Ruit, Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2003, p. 87-92.

22. Ticio Escobar. *El mito del arte y el mito del pueblo*, Asunción, 1987, p. 76.

direction, as power network dictates. No matter how viable appropriating strategies are, they entail a rebound action that reproduces such dominant network, though they reply to it. It is also necessary to reverse the current; not in an effort to establish a “rupture repetition”, as Gayatri Spivak would say, which would keep bipolar antagonisms, but to pluralise within a multiple active participation, enhancing international circulation. It can be seen that I am not talking about a neutral, “multiculturalist” pluralism, where differences remain neutralised within a sort of Bantustans, made relative in the relation to dominant cultures, nor as a mixture of available, interchangeable options, ready to be consumed. I am referring to a plurality as an international action-taking for a variety of cultural subjects, who, when acting based on their own agendas, productively diversify the cultural dynamics, for everyone.

Conditioned by this entire constellation of processes and situations, there are readjustments going on today in the equations among art, culture and internationalisation. In a process full of contradictions, the geometric leap in practice and circulation of contemporary art everywhere is starting to transform the *statu quo*. The old paradigm of cannibalism and cultural strategies for appropriation and syncretism are being replaced more and more often by a new concept, which we might call the paradigm of “*from here*”. Instead of critically appropriating and refunctionalising an imposed international culture, transforming it for personal benefit, artists are actively *making* that metaculture at first instance, without complexes, from their own imaginary and perspectives. This epistemological transformation at the base of artistic speeches entails the change of a creative incorporation operation (theorised by appropriation) into a direct international construction one *from* a variety of subjects, experiences and cultures.

In general terms, the work of many

artists nowadays, rather than naming, describing, analysing, expressing or building contexts, is created *from* their contexts at international level. The context, thus, is no longer a “closed” *locus*, related to a reducing concept of local, in order to be projected as a space from which international culture is naturally built. This culture does not articulate like a patchwork of explicit differences in dialogue within a framework that compiles and projects them, but as a specific means of recreating a code and methodology set dominantly established as a global metaculture. That is, cultural globalisation multilaterally sets up an international coding, not a multifaceted structure of differentiated cells. Such coding acts as an “English language” that allows for communication and is forced, disarrayed, reinvented by a variety of new subjects that access strongly expanding international networks. Many artists work, as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari said regarding “minor literature”, “finding their own underdevelopment spot, their own *patois*, their own third world, their own desert,”<sup>23</sup> within a “major” language.

The difference is increasingly built through specific plural means of creating artistic texts within a set of languages and international practices that change throughout the process, and not by the record of representing cultural or historical elements typical of particular contexts. In other words, it lies in action rather than in representation. This inclination opens a different perspective that confronts the cliché of a “universal” art in the centres, derivative expressions in the peripheries and a multiple, “authentic” environment in the “otherness” in traditional culture.

Artists are less and less interested in showing their passports. And, if they were, their gallerists would probably urge them not to declare local references that might affect their potentialities at global level. As Kobena Mercer has said: “diversity is more visible than ever before,

23. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. “What is a Minor Literature?” in Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha and Cornel West (editors): *Out There. Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, The New Museum of Contemporary Art and MIT Press, New York, Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London, 1990, p. 61.

but the unspoken rule is not to announce it.”<sup>24</sup> This does not mean that certain common traits to some countries or areas cannot be acknowledged. What is essential is that these identities start to show rather in their traits as an artistic practice and not in its use of identifying elements taken from folklore, religion, physical environment or history. Thus, there are artistic practices that can be identifiable for their way of creating texts rather than projecting their contexts. We can recognise an installation made by a Brazilian artist not because it is based on *candomblé*, but rather for the specific way, derived from neo-concretism, of working its morphology, and by its unique intimacy with the material.

“Walking with the Devil” is a viable strategy in the globalised, post-colonial, post-Cold War and pre-Chinese-centric current world. Naturally, it is not an unhindered path and many challenges and contradictions remain. More important than quantitative internationalisation is the qualitative scope of the new situation: how much artists, critics and curators are contributing to transform the dominant and restrictive previous situation into an active plurality, instead of being digested by it. An abstract or controlled pluralism, as we see in some biennials and other “global” exhibitions, it can weave a labyrinth of indeterminacy that confines the possibilities of an active real diversification.

Even though art is enriched with the participation of artists all around the world that circulate and influence at international level; on the other hand, it is simplified by everyone having to communicate in a *lingua franca*, dominantly built and established. Now, the diversified active construction of contemporary art and its international language by a multitude of subjects from their “foreignness” entails not only an appropriation of that language, but also its

transformation from divergence into convergence. Language is thus pluralised in itself, even when it is widely instituted by the *mainstream* orientation. That said, as this process takes place, artistic manifestations that do not speak the language of prevailing codes are excluded beyond their contexts, marginalised in ghetto circuits and markets.

Appropriating paradigms would reproduce the control situation by depending on an imposed culture: the cannibal is only so if they have someone to devour. The paradigm “from here”, even when it does not state emancipation and confirms the dominant authority, has simultaneously turned the oppositions, appropriations and foreignness of subaltern subject shift into a new artistic-cultural biology in which it is inside the central production *from* outside.

Culture in Latin America has suffered from an identity neurosis that is not completely cured, and of which this text is a part, even by opposition. Nonetheless, towards the end of the 1970s, Frederico Morais linked our identitarian obsession with colonialism, and suggested a “plural, diverse, multifaceted” idea of the Continent<sup>25</sup>, as a result of its multiplicity in origin. Even the very concepts of Latin and Ibero-America have always been quite troubling. However, the idea of Latin America is not denied nowadays, as some African intellectuals do with the concept of Africa, thought of as a colonial invention.<sup>26</sup> The self-consciousness of belonging to a cultural-historical entity, badly named as Latin America, remains, but as a problematised one. Nonetheless, “*What is Africa?*” by Mudimbe<sup>27</sup> increases its validity on a daily basis when transferred to our environment: what is Latin America? Among other things, an invention we

24. Kobena Mercer: “Intermeso Worlds”, in *Art Journal*, New York, Vol. 57, Issue 4, Winter 1998, p. 43.

25. Frederico Morais: *Las Artes Plásticas en la América Latina: del Trance a lo Transitorio*, Havana, 1990, p. 4-5, First Edition, 1979.

26. Olu Oguibe: “In the ‘Heart of Darkness’”, *Third Text*, London, Issue 23, Summer 1993, p. 3-8.

27. V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1998.

can reinvent. Now we tend to accept ourselves a bit more in the fragment, the juxtaposition and the collage, embracing our diversity and even our contradictions. The danger lies in coining, faced with modernist totalisations, a post-modern cliché of Latin America as the kingdom of total heterogeneity<sup>28</sup>.

Now, despite Latin America's diversity and the balkanising tendency in its history, geographic, historical, economic, cultural, linguistic and religious affinities that made up the region, and their ambiguous positioning before the West, have made us still identify ourselves as Latin Americans. It is about a real conscience that can lead us to solidarity as well as to provincialism.

During the 1980s and part of the 1990s, Latin American art was frequently asked to expressly state its difference or satisfy exoticism expectations. Works were not usually observed: from the very beginning, passports were requested and luggage was checked in suspicion of any kind of smuggling from New York, London or Berlin. As a result, some artists decided to *otherise* themselves, in an ironic self-exoticism. This situation was also triggered by nationalist mythologies that expressed a traditional cult of "the roots" and by the romantic idealisation of conventions about history and the values of the nation.

When in an old text in 1996 I said that Latin American art was ceasing to be so,<sup>29</sup> I referred to two processes that I observed in the continent. On the one hand, overcoming the identity neurosis among artists, critics and curators. On the other hand, Latin American art begins to be appreciated as art with no last names. Instead of urging it to declare the context, it is recognised more

and more as a participant in a general practice that does not necessarily have to expose the context and that, at times, refers to art itself. Thus, artists in Latin America, as well as those in Africa or Asia, are exhibiting, publishing and influencing outside the *ghetto* circuits.

Nowadays, artists prefer to participate "from here" in the dynamics of an "international artistic language", widening its capacity to represent, in a dense and refined way, in the interest of dealing with the intricacies of societies and cultures, where multiplicity, hybridisation, contrasts and chaos have introduced contradictions as well as subtleties. Artists, rather than representing contexts, build their works *from* them. Identities and physical, cultural and social environments are now more operated than showed, in contradiction with exoticism expectations. They are usually identities and contexts concurrent in the construction of "international" artistic metalanguage and in the debate on "global" contemporary issues. Their interventions introduce anti-homogenising differences that build the global from positions of difference, highlighting the emergence of new cultural subjects in the international arena.

Has the Devil been useful? Or, did we sell our souls? Whatever the answer, the art of the entire orb has gone out the "otherness" of the ghetto of the specific circuits and markets due to the rampant expansion of international circulation of art, as well as to the artists' inclination towards completely international practices and projections. Maybe we are the Devil now.

## Gerardo Mosquera

28. See Mónica Amor: "Cartographies: Exploring the Limitations of a Curatorial Paradigm" in Gerardo Mosquera (anthologist): *Beyond the Fantastic. Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, Institute of International Visual Arts, London, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1995.

29. Gerardo Mosquera: "El arte latinoamericano deja de serlo", ARCO Latino, Madrid, 1996, p. 7-10.



## Cultural trips, modernities and anachronisms

One of the most appealing aspects of the present is the imaginary generated about its possible developments. Technology has an impact on the field of culture allowing us to think past and present in new formats. Yet, it mainly allows us to predict the potential and boundaries of the future. Visual arts, in general terms, condense in particular images the complex weaves of time, of precise contexts or of time conceptions. Single images (a painting, a sculpture) or, as the most contemporary art has proposed over the last two decades, those made up of fragments, when disciplines cross one another, edited by post-production activity. The merge of assembling, acting, art with life has allowed, for example, an artist to conceive his exhibition in a gallery as a dinner that he himself carries out, during the opening, for his guests (Rirkrit Tiravanija). We are referring to the most contemporary examples of what has been called “dematerialisation of the art object”; in other words, the dissolution of that unique object into the multiple materials and actions that are exhibited in the present. A work of art can no longer be defined by its material (oil painting, watercolour, marble or bronze) but by transition, intermediate zones between the accumulation of materials and even of different artistic languages (video, poetry, sculpture, painting). Technological developments are added to this general idea. A work may be performed in a specific place, but it can be broadcast in real time to all the

universe connected to the net. The speed with which these novelties have been introduced in the last twenty years impacts on the way of thinking art productions. If all this change has been packed in such short time, what may not happen in the near future? The technology available allows us to state that the information we have access to nowadays will multiply geometrically over the next years.

This introduction intends to propose some lines to think about the complexity of time from the point of view of art productions; to stop on the kaleidoscopic structure proposed by their images. Such structure accumulates a history that can be thought from art’s non-linear terms. This reading seeks to reflect upon the way in which images allow us to conceive historical time. We are going to stop, at the same time, on a set of productions located in certain geographies. We are interested in conceiving the condition of works of art within the political and cultural tension of Latin America. To consider, for example, how agendas that referred to the legacy of European modernity as well as to the challenges posed by the new world were negotiated in these images; the cultural and political reality of Latin America where those images acquired meaning and were involved in a new way of working of culture. I am going to refer to the temporal complexity of images and to the geopolitical tension that arises when they are conceived from a particular place to function in a specific context. Even to propose a radical inversion regarding the flow that has always marked

the relationship between European and Latin American metropolises. Why not rearrange the traditional genealogies of art by interpreting Latin American influence –or other ‘peripheral’ influences— on the places classified as centres?

I am also going to stop on the dynamics of the trip. Not only of people, bodies, but mainly, of ideas, concepts, cultural materials that, coming from a special circumstance, become a source of new knowledge in a different geography or time. Thus, we are going to observe the modernist and the global trips, which process the culture of connected forms but, at the same time, different ones. This text covers different times, different ways of elaborating with images the relationship between Europe and the Americas, a process of compacting meanings inherent to artistic productions capable, in a single act or a single image, of condensing different filigrees of the past that are present in each public exhibition. An anachronism that transforms that past time trapped in the work into a device capable of activating the present. The coverage is sequenced in topics that propose different ways of entering and exiting these general ideas.

### **Cannibalism**

Few images turn out to be as powerful as that of swallowing from which Brazilian culture elaborated its own modernity. The cannibalistic act unfolded the mechanisms of an articulated meal which consisted not only in capturing and killing the prey (that other, in this case represented by dominant culture); that is, metaphorically, not only in the act of violence that can open a dialogue between two cultures, but also the process of chewing, swallowing, digesting and expelling it. The metaphor became completely scatological when Helio Oiticica took it up in his stunning text “Brazil diarrhea”. A nourishing act that processed the dynamics of the cultural contact with Europe, that culture which the Brazilian one devoured and assimilated,

retaining its nutrients and getting rid of everything that was not useful for its own growth and development. For Brazilian avant-garde an act of cannibalism had been a starting point of a new chronology. That way it dated his extraordinary “Cannibalist Manifesto”, signed by Oswald de Andrade in 1928, in the year 374 after the swallowing of bishop Sardinha. For Brazilian culture, this act that the West world considered as barbarism was a date of initiation and beginning.

The founding moment of Brazilian modernism did not ignore the mechanisms of European avant-garde, specifically futurism. There was in it an iconoclastic metaphor that Marinetti made productive and foundational when he proposed to burn museums. To cause institutions to shake, to eat European culture, the actions shared the idea of blank slate, of a new beginning. Oswald de Andrade and Tarsila do Amaral (the former the author of the text manifest, the latter of the visual manifest, both published together, as a unique example of alliance between image and text), had travelled to Europe, where they were in close touch with the new avant-gardes. At the same time they wanted to conceive a Brazilian culture, anchored in the dynamic urban context of the big city of São Paulo. An environment in which modernity (Ford cars, viaducts) mixed with the smell of coffee. A tropicalised major city, in which power poles were taking roots. *Abaporu anthropophagia*, by Tarsila do Amaral (1928), compacts in one image a possible inscription of the anthropophagic metaphor. In this work the figure, naked, is arranged in an anamorphic representation. Its broad feet and long fingers are oversized as the figure is thinner towards the face. All its power comes from the earth, nakedness is culture. Oswald de Andrade’s text reinforces this idea of contact, reaction and new beginning. “*Tupí or not tupí*, that is the question. / Against all the catechesis. And against the mother / of Gracos. / I’m only interested in what’s not mine. Law of / mankind. Law of the

Anthropophagus. (...) Anthropophagy. The permanent transformation of / taboo into totem.”

The formation of Brazilian modernism still shows another complexity. In 1924 Oswald de Andrade published his manifest “Pau Brazil”, in which he states Brazilian art as export art. “Pau Brazil”, a product on which they, partially, based the Brazilian colonial system, a term of exploitation, subverted as a motto of a new exportation. A dynamics that equals the idea of economic negotiation (of products, prices) to that of cultural dynamics. An affirmative sentence regarding the value of Brazilian culture which removes the ideas of peripheral, dependent or epigonic that go with the tale of Latin American avant-gardes, which are always told as happening “after” European avant-gardes, with the idea of borrowing, adoption or importation.

Brazilian modernism endorses a narrative different from the one which points out the idea of European modernity. A model in which artistic movements are presented as natural, as if each transformation of language was followed, logically, by the one which introduced the next movement. A genealogy of forms that could be, in principle, continued in any part, but which were generated mainly in Paris and from there were distributed into the world like productions that would provoke secondary works. Markets of smaller, less bright and less original copies. Anthropophagic modernism subverted these representations. Faced with European culture, more than learning, it is vital to devour. Eating to choose some things that nourish a different body, capable of continuing its own life. Urban, modern, conceived from devices inherent to European avant-gardes (the ideas of cutting, new beginning), Brazilian modernism added a new operation that European culture could not consider in terms of civilisation: more than learning or continuing the legacy of the West, devouring it.

## Abstractions

The great European war and the post-war period shaped the way in which cultural dialogues were established, the modalities in which the forms of artistic cultures from Europe and the Americas were in touch. The European trip was considered in two scenarios. On the one hand, the one configured by readings about Europe and its culture before starting the trip. Thus, an anticipated representation that guided European contacts and the assimilation of what was seen there was conceived. But in Europe, Latin Americans thought in their own contexts. The general idea was that those new materials they were discovering would influence their culture when they returned to their cities. They would transform in terms of modernity. But the transfer was not, could not be, horizontal. Only certain people, some networks, were in touch. On the other hand, when they came back, the cities that they found were not the same as the ones they recalled in Europe. Not everything they had learnt could be applied to the new contexts. However, the trip represented a central and powerful articulation in the modernity prior to the war. The war and its aftermath established a break that imposed a different cultural dynamics. For young artists who, like in any avant-garde, wanted to change everything, the trip was not possible. In 1944 a magazine brought together writers and artists from Buenos Aires, Brazil, Uruguay and Chile. *Arturo* was a front that investigated an abstract programme. Still ambiguous, but which would soon acquire a virulent radicalness in Buenos Aires: it developed opposing standpoints; it burst in different organisations, in different groups that even organised magazines. I am interested in stopping in the cultural dynamics that marked this moment of Latin American avant-garde.

Abstract Argentine artists such as Tomás Maldonado, Gyula Kosice, Lidy Prati, Alfredo Hlito, among many others, were self-represented immersed in the tale of European

abstraction prior to the war. Let us clarify their devices briefly. The tradition of modern art is based on an evolutionary argument of shapes. The different movements of modern art, since Courbet, in 1848, until the great exhibition Abstraction-Creation, in 1930, could be understood as chapters of a great history that led the shapes of art to its autonomy from reality, to the creation of a language that is justified by the inner world of the piece of art instead of by its mimetic relation with the real world. Abstraction was the arriving point to which all art form seemed, from this specific perspective, determined to go. Our hypothesis holds that the concrete artists who became visible as of 1945 in Buenos Aires organised their actions based on what allowed thinking European modernity and its peculiar circumstances marked by the war and post-war periods. The invasion of Paris by the German, in 1940, also represented the idea of a culture in danger. Civilisation was threatened by Nazism and barbarism. The forced exiles of intellectuals and artists (mainly to the United States, but also to Mexico and Argentina) reinforced the idea that it was in the Americas that European culture could be continued. If the system of European visual modernity was, on the one hand, based on an evolutionary model, and if the context in which it was developed was besieged, unable, both lines allow thinking that abstract artists could continue that modernity, with all its components of innovation and radicalness, in Buenos Aires. From this city, and from many other Latin American cities, European modernity was re-founded in each new avant-garde movement. They were not, then, aloof from Europe, but they did not reproduce or copy their repertoires later on either. They continued those avant-gardes that, due to their conceptual schemes founded on the idea of evolution of language, could be continued anywhere, not necessarily in Europe.

Some elements coming from that

context of emergency marked by the war and post-war periods are added to these representations. The trip was impossible, the publications did not arrive so frequently, and the materials available were scarce. These circumstances provoked an effect of intense reading of a set of images that were available among the group of avant-garde artists and they were discussed insistently. Some works by Mondrian or Malevich were analysed in order to extract their boundaries and possibilities of a new inscription from them. They were images whose originals these artists had never seen because they could not travel and which they knew from reproductions that flattened their textures and thinned down the strokes. Thus, they could not see that what in a reproduction of a Mondrian seems to be homogeneity and plain of colour and texture is in fact an accumulation of material in which the trace of the paintbrush can be clearly perceived. It cannot be seen that there is a world of difference between each level of colour in the original, tiny particles of overlapping pigments that show successive layers of material. These translations, from the original into the copy, generated ways of interpreting and consequences that were elaborated as poetics of innovation. From the renovation scheme that posed the replacing order of European avant-gardes these artists considered themselves as the new avant-garde. They questioned not only the audience from Buenos Aires, but also the audience of modern art worldwide.

What we propose considers the material conditions of an interpretation historically placed. We can add to it the socialisation environment or cultural interaction in which this knowledge was discussed, mainly in bars and cafés, privileged spaces of interaction for artistic culture of Buenos Aires. A culture of reproductions and ideas, and of specific

contacts between people, interaction of bodies.

As avant-garde artists, they imagined their works projected into the future. That time was anticipated as the accomplishment of the integration of visual arts with architecture and industrial development; a kind of art devoted to design, committed to the functional aspects of contemporary culture. Not an abstraction isolated in an ivory tower, but used by the modern citizen in daily objects and in a new architecture. A kind of art capable of influencing, with its forms, the constitution of an individual free from the load of illusions and simulation entailed by realism. Citizens surrounded by true, new forms; realities themselves rather than reflections of other things. This is what these artists called "concrete art".

### **Globalisation**

Since the '90s the ways of representing the future and understanding cultural relations have been deeply modified. We cannot predict the scale of that change, its future consequences, or how we will evaluate its current radicalness in the times ahead. For the time being, we can describe it. In the specific field of visual arts we can see an intense flow of information and a transformation in the dynamics of the trip and of the relation with the centres of culture, located in Europe and the United States until the '80s during the last century. If during the '60s Argentine artists resumed the trip to Paris and then to New York to get to know the new art there and also to contribute to found it from those central spaces, what characterises international flow of art today is its nomadic condition. Workshops of artistic investigation and biennials are the central stations of renewed interactions. Workshops or work seminars that take place in different parts of the world gather a group of artists during a short period and

promote research and dialogue. These environments are visited by curators who have an impact on the networks of art visualisation. It is frequent to find that the curricula of the artists who take part in over two hundred biennials around the world and in the great event of *documenta* in Kassel, have participated in several workshops. Artists do not necessarily travel to a city that functions as the centre of artistic renewal, but they visit workshops and biennials organized in the most remote places of the planet. In this context, cities, rather than countries, stand out. They are artists who travel to different metropolises, who even have ateliers in different places, and who at the same time develop specific projects generated by institutions that invite them and fund their proposals for investigation and works. Thus, an artist can create a piece for a context that does not belong to their origin. Francis Alÿs, a Belgian who lives in Mexico, developed a project about Patagonia from a proposal made by the Latin American Art Museum of Buenos Aires. Alÿs captured a very specific, very local image having just an episodic and bookish contact with Argentine traditions and landscape. These schemes of production break with the traditional national discourse or the traditional identity relations.

The relation introduced by information networks is added to these new relations. The trip of bodies, the transfer, has become somewhat unnecessary. The Internet allows surfing exhibitions, interviews, catalogues, and even attending symposiums, seminars and conferences in real time. In 2011 a great number of the conferences that took place in the world of art were broadcast, recorded and stored in the websites of museographic and academic institutions enabling people to listen to them again. The universe of images online increases daily. Undoubtedly, the contact with the piece is still irreplaceable, but we do not

know, with certainty, for how long.

The shapes that structure art have also modified their articulations. We said at the beginning of this essay that the most contemporary art is organised by editing. An installation juxtaposes objects, sound, video, food, movement, drawing, painting, texts. Artistic materials are the traditional ones and everything that comes from the real world. We can no longer refer to a language of autonomous shapes that are justified by their internal articulation. The real world, the most refined objects or the lowest, even scatological ones, can be found in an exhibition hall. The artist conceives the project but they put it together in that place, with materials collected for the production in the place where pieces are set. These are no longer transported from one place to another (transport and insurance expenses are avoided); but rather they are assembled and disassembled in the place where they were exhibited for the first time. I think, in that sense, of the numerous projects that Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar carries out in different places of the world, conceived from specific invitations. The possibilities of edition and postproduction also enable productive support for the critical disarticulation of instituted accounts, of the images that are part of the narratives of power, of the representations of the nation. This is visible in the critical and ironic approach that many artists propose for the analysis of the configuration of those discourses celebrated by school manuals, the means of communication and political powers every day. *View of western painting* (2002) by Fernando Bryce (an artist born in Peru who lives in Lima and Berlin) is a great example. Bryce reconstructs from drawings and reproductions from the Museum of Pictorial Reproductions of the National University of San Marcos a sophisticated criticism to the programme

of institutions which transmitted the tale of modern art from copies of the works of great museums. Bryce reproduces the heritage of this museum of copies of works recognised by western tradition and the document filing that explains how it was made up. The framed copies of the works and the documents, organised on the wall with the format of a framed record and of an exhibition of paintings in a Hall or in a museum of history, reproduce the canon of Western art and its reproduction strategies. Around the middle of the 20th century, the University of San Marcos did not devote its resources to collect Peruvian art or world art, but copies of the works recognised by the most famous museums. By means of the tension between the originals of documents (the hand-made copies of the documents from the file that Bryce made) and the copies of originals (the collection of the museum of the University of San Marcos), Bryce investigates one of the many ways and moments that organised the power plots of Western culture. Much of what is produced in contemporary art is characterised by the construction of files. In the case of Bryce, the critical reproduction allows us to bring those images and that history to the present in order to analyse them from the present.

The ways in which traditions are constituted and the ways in which they develop as survivals are particularly productive in the case of artistic images. The dialogues between past and present, the transformations established by the new technological conditions, the possibility of understanding contemporary art as a great stage where critical agendas are created, are conditions that artistic productions perform from the specific power of images: alone, understandable at a glance, they can be expanded into multiple meanings by research and by the new contexts in which they are placed. From this perspective, art images allow approaching historical and, at the same time, anachronistic representations. In other words, what Walter

Benjamin referred to when he wrote as an epigraph in his Book of passages: “Creating history with the own Detritus of history”

# You shall paint the world

*What is our Argentine tradition? I believe we can answer this question easily and that there is no problem here. I believe our tradition is all of Western culture, and I also believe we have a right to this tradition, greater than that which the inhabitants of one or another Western nation might have.*

JORGE LUIS BORGES, "The Argentine writer and tradition".

In 2008, Gabriel Orozco was invited to give a lecture at the National School of Plastic Arts of Mexico. By then, Orozco was already one of the most important figures of international art. Two years later he presented his retrospective at MoMA in New York, the highest institutional pinnacle for a contemporary artist to reach, but he had already exhibited in very prestigious spaces such as White Cube in London, Reina Sofía in Madrid, Hirshhorn Museum in Washington and innumerable biennials across the globe. Outstanding critics such as Benjamin Buchloch and Yve-Alain Bois wrote texts about his work; he was invited to give conferences at Harvard and Marian Goodman, the New York gallery, had been representing him for a decade while private and public collections were full of his works.

Orozco had studied at the same school in Mexico at the beginning of the 1980s and later he taught courses there, so he looked relaxed and seemed to be enjoying the lecture with the students. At a given moment, one of them asked him what, in his opinion, his responsibility with Mexican art was. And Orozco answered quickly: none. Then, he laughed to lighten up a bit, but none of the students understood the joke because, in fact, there was no joke. Orozco systematically refused to take part in exhibitions that had the phrase "Latin American" in their title. As a Mexican who lived a great part of his life abroad, he was aware of how muralism,

magic realism had become luxurious jails for Mexican artists and he refused to carry the weight of representing a national or political identity over his shoulders.

Orozco joined international art circuits during the 1990s. He was accompanied by Cuban artist Félix González Torres, who, as Orozco conversed with Duchamp, built his work within the tradition of North American minimalism. Both demanded, in some way, to be part of the contemporary art scene as artists rather than as Latin Americans. By that time, the figure of Frida Kahlo had become the main icon of Latin American art abroad. For this new generation of artists, getting rid of the name of Latin origin meant also breaking with the exoticism, the lush landscape, painting with surrealistic and oneiric tones and the biographical exhibition of Kahlo's works, which were elements that had come off the fanaticism for the artist to settle in any art coming from the South.

Minerva Cuevas, a Mexican artist who has developed works abroad, wonders in one of them why we need hell if we have our homeland. The thing is that Latin American art, as a category, is a problem. Those who defend the term may be at risk of assuming deterministic positions, reducing the chances of interpreting the works or



replicating an inverted Euro centrism, as well as forgetting that only recently (and incipiently) the relations among Latin American countries started to strengthen. Those who are against it seem to forget that behind each work there is a social texture influencing it, a cultural tradition in which it is inscribed and that its level of significance varies according to the relations it establishes with dominant institutions.

Since 2000, a series of institutions have devoted to collect and bring out into the open a set of works of art that examined modernism in Latin America. By means of documents and research, exhibitions and catalogues they rejected the idea of “derivative art” that weighed heavily on Latin American art to propose it as an original and own expression. In recent exhibitions the tradition of political conceptualisms in Latin America during the 1960s has been reviewed, which revealed a dense set of works and artists and wove relations among Latin American countries that had been ignored. These efforts, which aim to revalue and study projects, are important and relevant series in the history of art, and have been useful to

propose a new, more complex, vision of Latin American art.

That being the case, the new generation of Latin American artists who are part of the international circuit prefer to conceive their pieces as actions that respond to specific situations and, rather than as Latin American artists, tend to describe themselves as artists who act in Latin American contexts. The situation of living and working in Latin American countries usually appears as working material (there are overwhelmed cities, institutional fragility, aberrant architectures and sensitivity for ruin), and also Latin American traditions appear, such as political conceptualism, which are rescued and put to use. However, it will be strange that any of these artists raises the flag of Latin American art and, when asked about their responsibility for it, would answer like Orozco: none.

It does not mean denying a tradition but a name that, by putting Latin American art in the place of the Other, it turns suspicious.



**Minerva Cuevas: activism**

(1975, Mexico City. She lives and works in the same city)

In 1998, while in New York, Minerva Cuevas noticed some strange signs hanging inside the subway cars. They read “Be careful if you fall asleep”. Then, during her next trip, as if it were a service that the company offered, she gave out little bags with caffeine

pills to the passengers. That first work encoded the seed of her next work, in which infiltrating the logics of companies, using and perverting it would be central elements.

That same year she developed her most famous work: *Better Life Corp*. It is a fiction corporation, with its logos, letterheads, offices and web page, which offers ridiculous services, little gestures to ease people’s

lives in cities. *Better Life Corp.* distributes student cards to get discounts, bar codes that can be printed and stuck on the purchases made at supermarkets to pay less, letters of recommendation to apply for a job, etcetera.

Minerva Cuevas has even said that what she does is not art, but activism and that her presentations in the dozens of museums, galleries and biennials since the late 1990s are not exhibitions but ways of parasitising those spaces and stretching a bit the limits of the purposes they can serve. There lie the

referents of her work like *Insertions into ideological circuits* that Cildo Meireles performed between 1968 and 1970, in which the Brazilian artist printed political statements on the banknotes that circulated in Brazil or on Coke bottles that were then returned and re-used by the company and marketed again. But if in the works by Meireles what can be read between the lines is an authoritarian and silencing government, several works by Cuevas intend to make up for the fall of Welfare State and its daily effects.

< On the previous page:  
Minerva Cuevas. Label that  
can be downloaded from  
[mejorvida.org](http://mejorvida.org).

**Mario García Torres:**  
**a past for the future** (1975,  
Monclova, Mexico. He lives  
and works in Mexico City)

A handful of pictures of landing runways in California used during the Second World War which are presented in a book as if it were land art. The creation of a museum in Sacramento, Mexico, almost lost in the desert, without heritage, which proposes that artists lend works as projects or instructions to be done by other artists or by anyone who visits the museum. A series of images in which you can see tourists next to the tower of Pisa, all pictures taken by different people who display different people in the same place acting the same picture: holding the tower.

In a recent interview, García Torres explained: “I have made a great effort so that there is no mark in my work; so that I didn’t create a style”. His work is developed in different formats and makes use of procedures that are so different that it is impossible to be looking at a piece of his and say “It is a piece by García Torres”. At first sight, there is nothing that relates them, except for the insistent reference to the conceptual



art developed during the 1970s, the elegant and ascetic setting, the denial of authorship and a sort of ironic and playful tone that appears in his projects.

García Torres has investigated and continued works by artists such as Martin Kippenberger, Alighiero Boetti, John Baldessari, Robert Barry and has even based one of his videos on the famous scene of *A Bande Aparte*, by Jean Luc Godard, in which the protagonists run across the Louvre trying to break Jimmie Johnson's record, who, according to the film, went all over it in less than ten minutes. His work is sometimes similar to that of a historian of micro-history searching on the margins for lost instants that could have changed the tale, parallel sequences that could have been central. Beyond their differences, García Torres discovers hidden potential in these works, brief forgotten moments of revolution, which he rescues and recreates so that they resound in the future.

*Mario García Torres: Some Push Some Hold and Some Don't Even Know How to Take a Picture, 2004. 24 colour slides (35 mm). Courtesy of Monclova Projects, Mexico.*

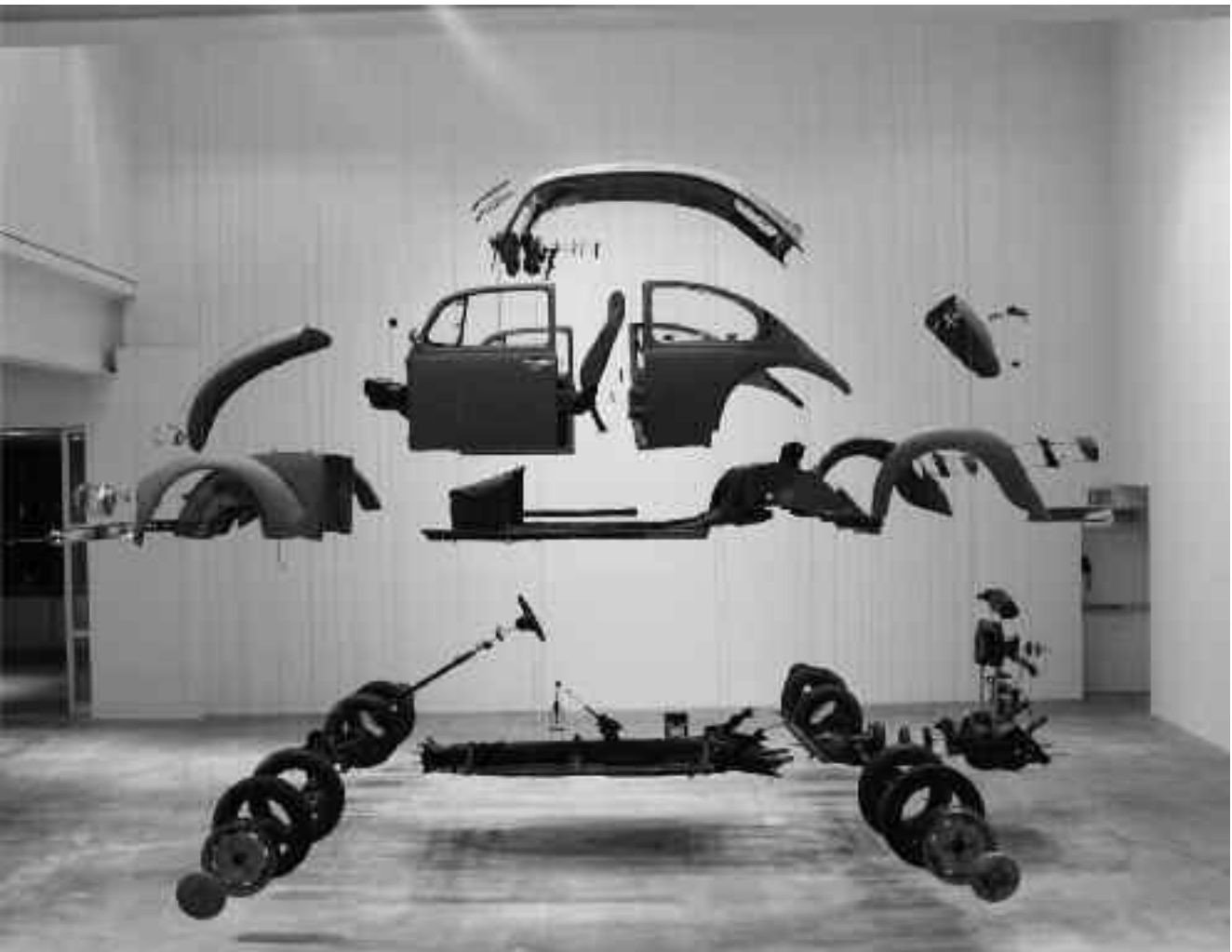
**Damián Ortega:**  
**look before it explodes**  
(Mexico City, 1967. He lives  
and works in Berlin and Mexico City)

At first glance, the works by Damián Ortega seem to work in that area of post conceptualism that transfers daily objects to the museum and quotes historical conceptualism ironically: a tower of corn tortillas, 120 bottles of Coke deformed in different ways, a series of pictures in which grass can be seen growing among the paving stones in the city. On them lies a deep

disappointment with modern architecture and city life and a permanent reflection upon our ways of perceiving.

For his work *Skin*, for example, he starts with the plan of “Housing Unit” with which Le Corbusier planned to build cheap and worthy houses in Berlin. Printed on cow leather and cut into stripes, the project hangs from the ceiling like meat in a slaughterhouse. In 2009, at Gladstone Gallery in New York, he presented piles of bricks, somewhat hieratic and worthless; the works made reference to the weak houses

*Damián Ortega: Cosmic Thing, 2002. Stainless steel, cable, Beetle '83 and plexiglass. Variable measures. Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Kurimanzutto, Mexico City.*



that fill up Mexico, rudimentary housing made by the inhabitants themselves who pile up bricks next to the house for future modifications.

However, his most famous work is, undoubtedly, *Cosmic Thing*, a VW Beetle that Ortega dismantled, carefully separating doors, windows, handles, wheels, etcetera. Its fragments, ordered as if they were in the running car, hung from the ceiling and produced a sense of frozen blast, a disturbing mix between collapse and systematicity, as if he had found the precise moment when the

car can still be recognised before it becomes disconnected pieces.

In several interviews, Ortega has explained that the Beetle, whose manufacturing began in Nazi Germany, is one of the most used cars in Mexico. Many times, its owners make so many repairs on the car that it ends up being a jumble of parts of others. In this, Ortega performs his essential operations: building and dismantling, dismantling and building, which in his works encode the way of understanding the world.

**Luciana Lamothe:  
architecture is crime**

(1975, Mercedes, Province of Buenos Aires.  
She lives and works in Buenos Aires)

In Amsterdam, houses usually have hooks in the gable that are used to lift furniture up to high floors. Once she was invited to take part in an exhibition in that city and she reproduced one of those hooks with a structure made of pipes. It was a sculpture made imperceptible by its height and by the presence of hundreds of similar hooks in the city, but it was also a weapon. Anyone who walked below it could pull the threads and break the building glass.

Some years ago, she made sculptures in the street. Between sabotage and children's concern for understanding how things work, she unscrewed chairs in waiting rooms until she dismantled them, she put padlocks in shop doors, she applied paint remover on bars. In one of her last exhibitions she presented a sculpture made of pipes, a sort of scaffolding with sharp endings. The hall wall was perforated and rests of plaster piled up on the floor, as if the sculpture had penetrated the wall. Through the holes one could see

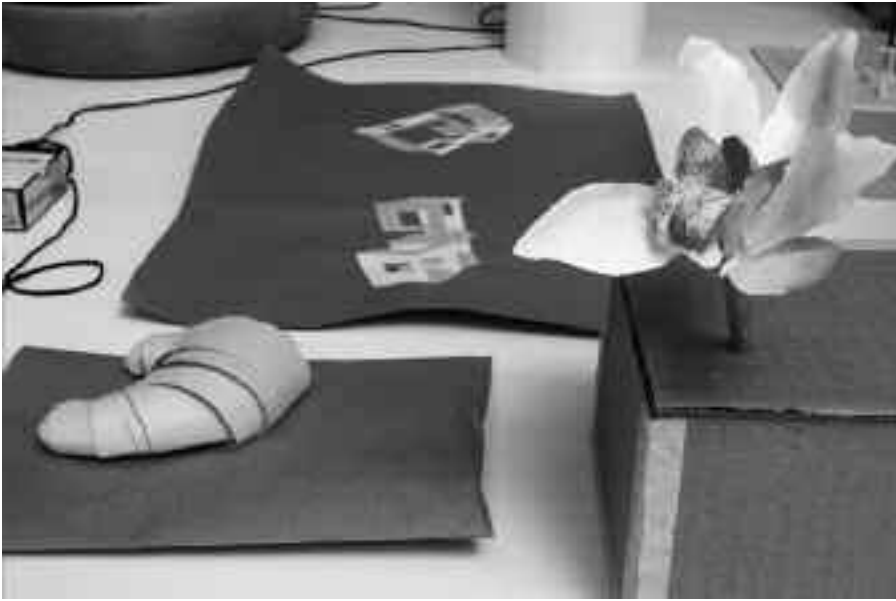
the background of the gallery where the exhibition took place.

It could be said that Luciana Lamothe is a sculptor or that her work develops in the field of sculpture. Yet it would be a mistaken approach because even though constructive concern and work with the material appear in her works, they are mainly actions, shapings that

take action or invite to take action. Far from being sculptures like an illusion, the one which represents shapes of imagination, Lamothe's works are established as tools that put a strain on the possibility of building and destroying; they are projects that stem from architecture and reject it.



*Luciana Lamothe: Buying, stealing, killing, 2010.  
Courtesy of the artist.*



Mateo López: *Anecdotal topography (detail)*, 2007. Courtesy of: Gallery Casas Riegner. Photographer: Oscar Monsalve.

**Mateo López:**  
**in the country of mirrors**  
(Bogotá, 1978. He lives and works in Bogotá)

Between a flaneur and a traveller artist, in many of his works, Mateo López works on experience and memory. His project *Motorcycle Diary* is a kind of logbook in which López makes notes, takes photographs and draws a trip across Colombia riding a motorcycle. He stops and comments on a restaurant closed a while ago, he copies the receipt of a laundry, he draws a road landscape. The project was presented as a book and as an exhibition: in its two formats -drawing and photographic image- they became the only way of taking over the trip experience.

Yet, rather than photography, it is drawing the technique that López has chosen to develop a purist, neat aesthetics, in which even a mistake seems to be planned. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the emergence of photography dismissed copying and the mimesis of the set of problems which plastic arts were facing. And it was a relief since then many artists could conceive art as a space to express themselves.

López, instead, takes up drawing and even makes use of antique techniques such as the camera lucida, a device used by painters during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (and perhaps earlier) to copy perspective in the most accurate way.

In his installations, López is capable of creating a world with paper and cardboard. The work with such materials gives his artwork a fragile and unreal touch shared by the rationalisation of the scale model and the illusion of scenography. One of his first individual exhibitions, in 2006, consisted in installing a replica of an atelier inside the hall of a gallery. Anyone who entered the exhibition could see him working, so visitors walked silently so as not to bother him. Yet, everything around him was fake, like in a theatre: some cigarette packages made of painted cardboard, his boxes of Rotring pens made of the same material. Leaning over the table, López was drawing the boxes and tools on paper that, hanging, made up a parallel exhibition of drawings. Placed next to its referents, the drawing became heartwarming due to its fragility, but mainly to the manual effort, to involuntary mistakes, to the impossibility of copying.

**Jorge Macchi:**  
**the horizon will never be vertical**

(Buenos Aires, 1963.

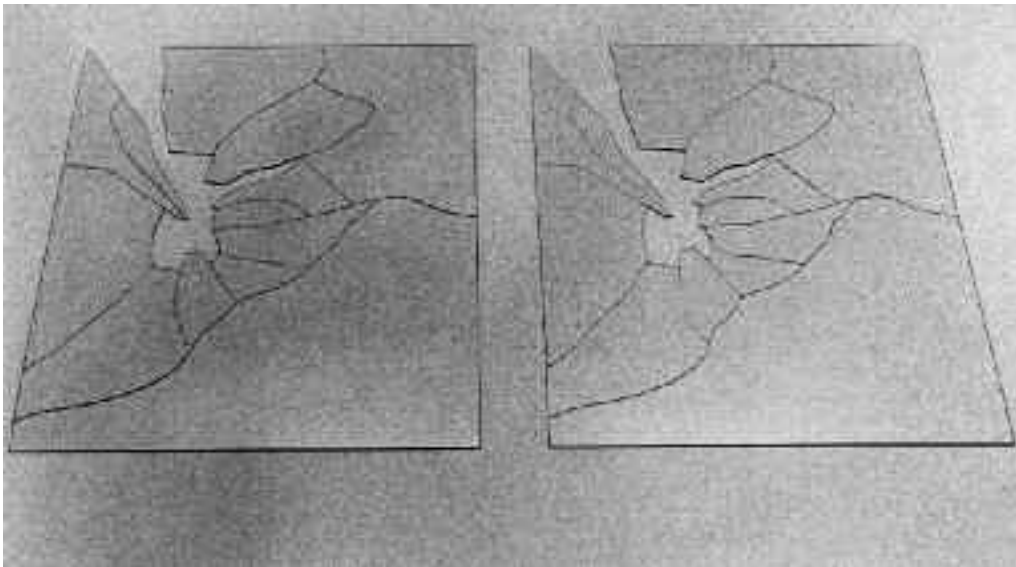
He lives and works in Buenos Aires)

Although he rejects categories, Jorge Macchi has been presented on several occasions as one of the most important exponents of sensitive conceptualism, a term that nobody seems to have coined but that is used over and over again to account for a wave of artists who make use of daily objects to create an intimate and poetical effect. His works are the expansion of simple metaphors that become powerful and evocative images.

Thus, a row of illuminated nails becomes a horizon, or the identical break of two sheets of glass is read as the map of a life in his work "Parallel Lives". In a series of photographs of 2007, a new match stands arrogantly, and behind it, its shadow replicates it already burnt. Another of his

works consists in a step that, removed from the staircase, looks like a coffin forgotten in the room. During the last years, the scale of his work has been increasing and developing towards installation. In 2011, he put a light bulb in the basement of a gallery and built a wooden structure to occupy the darkness projected by a column, as if it were that shadow's architecture.

They are impossible situations, visual paradoxes that, however, are part of a grammar with which Macchi is able to activate ordinary, indifferent objects to make them provocative and strange by means of minimal operations. One of his last exhibitions was called "The Anatomy of Melancholy". It is a very accurate title since there are few works as saturnine and sad as Macchi's works. Behind his accurate images fold out the chance of accidents, what is tiny and fragile in our lives, the lightness of romance and the inevitable passing of time.



*Jorge Macchi: Parallel lives, 1998. Glass. Two sheets of 60 x 80 cm.  
Collection Foundation Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, New York.*





*Ernesto Neto: Anthropodino, 2009. View of the installation on Park Avenue Armory.  
Photograph: James Ewing.*

**Ernesto Neto:  
from soul to body**

(Rio de Janeiro, 1964.

He lives and works in Rio de Janeiro)

As it was for Renaissance artists, measure and proportion for Ernesto Neto is the human body. His works, sculptures and installations that are displayed in the space, always ask the spectator to touch, go through or inhabit them. Usually made with fabric, the shape of his works, circular, soft, full and hanging, refer to the organic world. Due to its transparency, they sometimes look like chrysalis or stalactites. Due to its shapes, they have been compared to caverns and to the inside part of our organs. Its textures and aromas, which are key elements in Neto's work, appeal to body experience as another way of exploring the world, as a way of

thinking.

His first works, sort of cushions with abstract shapes into which spectators could put their heads, arms and legs, were interpreted as questioning to minimalist tradition. The fabrics were synthetic and industrial products and abstract shapes, but they demanded an interaction that minimalism denied. Perhaps more accurately, his work can be conceived as a continuation of the proposals made by Brazilian neo-concretism, in which the work challenged the spectator to get physically involved with the works and to be a part of them. It was libertarian art, made with cheap and simple materials, which meant creating works in which the authority would move from the artist to the user. The spectator would decide what to do with them and, thus they would be

placed at the centre of artistic creation.

Above all, and more and more often, Neto's hanging installations, made of crochet or nylon stockings, invite to think of an alternative architecture. His works reject right angles and geometrical structures and offer themselves as a space favourable for another kind of relations, detached from

functional or productive paradigms, closer to playing, conversation and sensory experimentation. Unlike few artists' works, the ones made by Neto are fun without resorting to humour since what is fun about them is not only their amazing shapes, their greater and greater dimensions, but what we can do inside them: walk, climb, smell, jump, talk, etcetera.

*Eduardo Navarro: Art Chapel Centre, 2008.*



**Eduardo Navarro:  
altered landscapes**

(Buenos Aires, 1979.)

He lives and works in Buenos Aires)

Between humour and ethnographic research, Eduardo Navarro's works take place at the crossroads of two social universes and their conventions. Therefore, in 2005, he organised an anti-tobacco marathon in Palermo woods, in Buenos Aires. He spread the event, reproduced the podium, the registration desks and he harangued the

group of friends and unaware people who showed up that morning at the park and ran. In Germany, in 2008, he placed chairs and an atrium to put up a chapel that, being blessed by a priest, became a real chapel where religious service could be held, while it worked, at the same time, as a work of art inside an exhibition.

His works seem to be honest ventures, doomed to failure due to their naivety. In 2010, he presented at the Biennial of Sao Paulo "*El dorado*", a heap of earth and plans of the excavations that Navarro made in the Amazon in search of gold. Three years earlier, he had invited the world of art to *Once*, a neighbourhood in Buenos Aires where Chinese bargains, fake brands clothes and technology pile up and flow frantically, being sold wholesale or bit by bit among the crowd of people who pack in browsing products and asking for prices and discounts. Navarro had installed a small and precarious factory of puddings and guests could see how it worked inside a commercial gallery on Rivadavia street.

So close and so distant from institutional criticism, his works always seem to hide reflection on and mockery of art as a system. Behind the marathon, one can hear laughter at "artistic race" (most of the runners were, in fact, artists), the gallery in *Once* (a roofed street in the most Phoenician neighbourhood of Buenos Aires) could be the brutal and honest version of the artistic gallery of high-class neighbourhoods, the search of gold revises the metaphor of the artist as an alchemist. Yet, it would be unfair to reduce Navarro's work to those terms. In his works, fiction, representation and reality are contaminated in a complex and unstable way, and its naive approach moves it away from any sermon or social complaint. Navarro observes, reproduces and connects dissimilar social situations in works that he calls "sort of absurd sculptures of reality".



**Gabriel Orozco:  
praise of efficiency**

(Xalapa, Veracruz, 1962. He lives and works in Paris, New York and Mexico)

It has been said that what characterises Gabriel Orozco's work is efficiency. In general, his works draw from daily objects, elements we see every day without paying attention to them, and that, with very little transformations, Orozco provides them with surprising and effective poetry. In *María, María, María...*, for example, he takes a sheet of the phone book and deletes all the names from it except for that of his girlfriend called María. Suddenly, the impersonal world of the phone book, which mixes and equals all the names with indifference, has become a love letter.

It has also been said that Duchamp is Orozco's great influence. His works, which could be described as ready-mades, always call for, however, an existential reading. In 1997, he drew a chessboard with graphite on a skull. There *memento mori* crashed, in a sinister way, with abstract art; the eternity

of art with the finite nature of humans; geometry's precision against life's fate; the smoothness of graphite against the hardness of bone. Some years earlier, he had presented a big ball of Plasticine that weighed the same as Orozco himself. The piece, called *Yielding stone*, had been dragged through the streets to the exhibition halls and had the traces of that journey on its surface.

More than a set of works, what Orozco proposes is a way of seeing. His photographs, a series of images that disregard the quality of the shot, document trivial scenes but with poetical resonance: a flake of foam in the street strainer, a dog dozing on the rocks, the sky reflection on a puddle. In that transition where public becomes intimate, where the ordinary collapses before the magical, is where Orozco works. Like few artists, he has developed poetics of what Duchamp called "infra-thin", that evanescent zone where what has just happened leaves a material memory, lasts some minutes and then disappears forever.



*Gabriel Orozco: Black Kites, 1997.  
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery  
Kurimanzutto, Mexico City.*



**Doris Salcedo: unanswered prayers**  
(Bogotá, 1958.  
She lives and works in Bogotá)

In 2007, Doris Salcedo made an intervention in the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern in London. She was the first Latin American artist invited to exhibit in that place, where Louise Bourgeois, Anish Kapoor and Olafur Eliasson, among others, had already done so. Salcedo dug a huge crack on the floor at Tate, a sort of wound that split the floor like an earthquake and made the architecture look ruined or catastrophic. The intervention was called “Shibboleth” and referred to a passage from the Old Testament, in which a tribe recognises foreigners because they pronounce that word differently and they murder them.

Salcedo’s work has always been crossed by political violence. Her work is built as private monuments that cope with the pain and memory of those who are alive of those who have died. In the mid-80s, in her native Colombia, Salcedo exhibited *Atribiliarios*. They were a series of objects, daily elements, used by victims of Colombian guerrilla and state armies, which Salcedo had collected through interviews and meetings with their relatives. A pile of ironed shirts with pieces of iron through them, a chair covered with cement, a mural of shoes covered with leather: sort of altars that accounted for the absence of their owners, the veil of memory and the ability to heal.

Her language, sculptural, with domestic dimensions, converses with minimalism. In her exhibitions, the elements are usually repeated and ordered as cubes, columns or grids. Yet before minimal coldness, these objects are powerful and expressive; they are relics that are repeated as a litany or a prayer. In one of her last exhibitions, she put a series of tables in a hall. She scattered earth on them and put another table, upside down, on top. When walking in, this hall could be seen full of dark furniture with the size of coffins. From the dust in between the tables, some blades of

grass grew. Although Salcedo starts with specific, datable situations from political history, the references become blurred in her exhibitions. It can be hard to find documentary elements in them. In her works, violence and pain are universal elements that have been present with human beings throughout history in the way they relate to others.

## Philip Larratt-Smith

**“Curators seem to stand in the same kind of relationship to artists as analysts stand to their patients”**

**You’ve worked a lot with Louise Bourgeois, an artist who was strongly influenced by psychoanalysis. How do you see this relationship between art and psychoanalysis?**

It could be said that both are systems of knowledge and ways of seeing the world. To some artists, such as Louise Bourgeois, psychoanalysis and art exist as part of the same continuum. Both of them are attempts to heal oneself.

**In the past, there were times and geographies in which artists were strongly influenced by psychoanalysis, like Surrealism in Paris or Modernism in Brazil in the 1920’s. How do you think this issue influences at present? Is psychoanalysis a sort of inspiration for today’s artists? Why?**

I suppose that the use and abuse of Lacan in intellectual circles account for the everlasting energy of psychoanalytical ideas, or at least for its success, by providing Freudian formulations in a jargon of elevated theory. The rise of psychoanalysis as a motivating force or exploration site for artists and the production of art seems to have an end, if by psychoanalysis we understand the differentiated clinical practice related to history developed by Freud and his followers. However, the artist’s psychology will always be fundamental since it gives them the power to make objects that touch the spectator’s emotions.

**What kind of relationship have you had with psychoanalysis? How and why did it start?**

My relationship with this field has been mainly through reading. Working as Louise Bourgeois’ literary archivist shaped my thought as a curator. Besides, since all her work has a strong psychological nature, it has been inevitable to deeply commit myself to psychoanalysis.

the analysis is a jip  
is a trap  
is a job  
is a privilege  
is a luxury  
is a duty  
is a duty towards myself  
my husband my parents  
my children why  
is a shame  
is a fare  
is a love affair  
is a rendez-vous  
is a cat + mouse game  
is a boat to drive  
is an interment  
is a joke  
makes me powerless  
makes me into a cop  
is a bad dream  
is my interest  
is my field of study -  
is more than car manager  
makes me furious  
is a bore  
is a nuisance  
is a pain in the neck



### **Which psychoanalytical books have squarely influenced your work?**

Sigmund Freud's case studies (although *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *Civilisation and Its Discontents* were key texts to my exhibition *Bye Bye American Pie*), D.W. Winnicott's *Playing and Reality* and Melanie Klein's writings. I'm fascinated by Wilhelm Reich's thought.

### **You've been the curator of many exhibitions in many countries. What do you think about art exhibitions in Latin America? Can you find any particular movement in Latin American art? Something that really differentiates it from art in general?**

The art exhibitions I organise in Argentina, Brazil or Colombia could be exhibited anywhere in the world. I'm interested in what moves me, in the existing mystery in the relationship between the visual and the psychological dimension of a work of art, which operates in a way I don't fully understand, like the attraction towards someone.

Having said this, I acknowledge the fact that there are still differences between, for example, Buenos Aires and London. I also believe that organising art exhibitions that contribute originally to the discourse surrounding the work of an artist or a group of artists is the only way of levelling the playing field.

Since I'm not totally acquainted with Latin American art, I hesitate to give my opinion, though one of the main aims of working in Buenos Aires is to learn more about it. However, I think that the distinction between Latin American and non-Latin American art -the insistence on geopolitical categories in a moment when the world of art has become completely international- is obsolete and even counterproductive.

It's a curious time. Globalisation in the world of art has apparently broken down all national barriers and conceptualism is the *lingua franca*. The paradox is that this international language had to take geopolitics specificities as a method of underpinning its relevance. The complete meaning of a work of art produced in this way derives not only from the game of ideas that was the original territory of conceptual art but also from the unquestionable attractiveness of identity politics.

### **In your opinion, what can we -analysts- learn about contemporary art?**

Einstein pointed out that he had learnt more from Dostoyevsky than from any other scientist. I tend to agree with Freud's idea that artists express and reveal a part of reality in their works that psychoanalysts would only learn to describe with difficulty after a long observation, and as if seen from the outside.

**Having lived in New York, which are, in your opinion, the differences between psychoanalysis in the United States and in Latin American countries?**

I find it difficult to answer this question without falling into a great simplification since it was not until recently that I started to stay longer in Buenos Aires and I've had limited contact with the psychoanalytic community. However, it's obvious that psychoanalysis is part of Buenos Aires' cultural life. It's surprising to hear a taxi driver talking fluently about Lacan!

It's fascinating to find out that there is a strong formalist trend in plastic arts here, the world capital of psychoanalysis. The history of Argentina in the last 70 years has been a history of crises; there is a sensation that the end of the world is always round the corner. The marked taste for the fantastic, the unreal, the Baroque and the apocalyptic is rooted in Argentina's history as well as in its geography. While being in Buenos Aires one often feels as if one has arrived in the last huge city, at the beginning of the end of the world. It's a flight from content, which is manifested by its preference for formalism in terms of culture (it can be a way of emphasising technique and surface over theme and narrative). Also, it is manifested by a highly theoretical inflection in terms of psychoanalysis.

**You've recently organised an exhibition where you wanted to show the aftermath of the collapse of the American dream. What sort of contemporary art better discusses current issues? In psychoanalysis we are used to thinking that artists can predict human nature issues better than analysts. What does contemporary art talk about nowadays regarding analysts' interests?**

A true artist has a unique capacity to allow their unconscious to speak freely as well as intelligence and sensitivity to find formal equivalents or symbolic representations for their emotions. Therefore, the artist frequently captures the early signs of shifts and changes in culture, which become notorious for the rest later.

The seven artists in *Bye Bye American Pie* (Jean-Michel Basquiat, Larry Clark, Nan Goldin, Jenny Holzer, Bárbara Kruger, Paul McCarthy and Cady Noland) reflect and criticise the changing cultural values in the United States in times when the American dream or its lifestyle seem to be overshadowed. These guys belong to the post-war period; they are part of the first generation who grew up with images. They are heirs to the *big bang* that was Andy Warhol. Their works of art inevitably reveal the social breakdown and cultural fragmentation during the 1960's.

I'm more interested in artists who start with the personal and the pathological and end up talking about big issues rather than in the ones who start the other way round. Those kinds of art that resemble a collection of fragments of a CNN newscast can have a brief topical relevance and invariably end as an old newspaper. While the world of emotions -which, by quoting Cézanne, Bourgeois called *petits sensations*- will be always in force.

**In your opinion, how does psychoanalytic theory contribute to the exhibitions you curate?**

Psychoanalysis is a theoretical framework based on clinical observation -at best- a unit of theory and practice. As such, it may serve as a model for the curator's job which frequently seems to stand in the same kind of relation to the artist as the analyst stands to the patient.

I think that psychoanalysis is still an insurmountable tool, particularly sensitive and unique to analyse and diagnose the individual's mental life. Inevitably the art object has to do with the maker's psychology, though its complete meaning can't be reduced to mere personal or autobiographical issues, of course.

*Louise Bourgeois working on SLEEP II  
in Italy, 1967. Photo: Photographic Studio.  
© The Easton Foundation.*



## Paulo Nazareth

“Invention means discovering what to do with what tradition offers us”

### What are the roles of tradition and invention in art?

Sometimes I believe that some contemporary artists are afraid of what is called tradition. However, tradition has a fundamental role in contemporary art as well as in any other discipline. I think that a great deal of art is based on tradition, either denying it or reinterpreting it. That is the role of tradition. It's a chain of events that lead to others: invention means discovering what to do with what tradition offers us.

### From your point of view, is it possible to think or talk about “Latin American art”?

I believe it is as possible as to talk about Brazilian, Argentine, Guatemalan or Mexican art. The geographical and historical context can unify those who are immersed there, but each of them does so from their own individuality. When talking about Latin American art we should consider all that unifies us within our history. Well, to begin with, we can mention the process of colonisation, exploitation and colonialism done by Europeans from the Iberian Peninsula. I thought that Brazil was isolated due to linguistic issues, but it isn't, or maybe it is... I don't know. There were times when we didn't talk to each other. We didn't talk to Argentines, Uruguayans, Paraguayans, nor did we talk to each other. There was little dialogue between southeast Brazilian artists and artists from the north or northeast... But this also occurs in Argentina. People don't usually mention artists from Formosa, do they? And I don't think this happens due to lack of artists there. There are artists who are willing to communicate and in that way dialogue starts. We started to find commonalities, which is also something art does: breaking with regionalism.

Sometimes I think that military dictatorships in Latin America in the 1960's and 1970 united artists in the region. What united us were the dictatorships we went through. Thus, our art became political. Today our desire is to break free from our colonialist heritage. Then, I do believe that we can talk about Latin American art; an art that can become global without losing its local identity.

*Paulo Nazareth: News from the Americas.  
esidence in transit (performance), 2011-2012.*



**Is it possible, does it make sense, to talk about “Latin America”? From your point of view, in what way do we differ from other regions?**

Yes, it's possible to talk about Latin America, but not at as a single America but rather as many. What are we going to use to define Latin America? The language of Latin origin? If this is so, Quebec in Canada is Latin America because French is spoken there, whereas Suriname in South America is not since Dutch is spoken there. Likewise, French Guiana is Latin America but it forms part of the European Union... and the United States is slowly becoming Latin America because Spanish is consolidating as a second language. However, here, where we officially name ourselves Latin America, there is a particular way of organising things, there are parties, laugh, improvisation... We could make one land out of Latin America. In the same way we could make many countries out of Mexico, Brazil or Argentina. There are so many differences within those countries as there are within Latin America. I thought that all Hispanic American production has a strong political content but not everything is strictly political. It's true that there is quite a lot, but there is also so much poetry; there are aesthetic concerns besides political ones.

**You've travelled a lot through Latin America, what is your way of producing art?**

It's so difficult to talk about the way the other produces or the way we produce! Many times I stand still, thinking, looking at time, staring at the horizon, watching images in the world, seeing how the world becomes world. Images come with words, listening to what happens in the street, listening to stories of children and elderly people, short stories, cases, seeing how life happens. Would you like a technical answer? Actually it is like this. I go to the square and there I stay watching, listening, raving a bit, tasting the world. Every day I break down into pieces in the desert... Light is incredible! I just have to let the world be what it is and stand still there as if I were desert. I sometimes take walks around the city just to have a look, to see what I may come across, to read signs. Sometimes I read aloud like a child learning to read. I read in the language it is written even if I don't speak the language. I write stories about what happens, what people tell me, what I hear and what I remember. This is my way of producing.

**Why have you chosen the “performance” as a fundamental way of working? The performance seems to be the way Latin Americans stand out on the global stage. Do you agree? Do you know any reasons why this is so?**

I think that my job is a chain of events, pieces, many times incomplete ones, pieces yet to be done. It's an <sup>1</sup>*amador* job, *amador* for love... because I love doing what I do. I think that my work is unfinished, it's not as tidy as other artists'. Maybe bustle reigns in my work; it's a mess.

At the beginning, I used the word “action” to define what I did. I didn't really like the word “performance” because it was an Anglican term and I

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<sup>1</sup> “amador” means “amateur” in Portuguese

was against linguistic colonialism. In the end, it's the same. Spanish and Portuguese are also imposed languages, and so is English. I'm not sure about the reasons why I chose that modality at work. Artists travel more, they move, they exchange and communicate with others thanks to the *performance*. Actually it's a piece that requires the presence of the artist or the presence of someone else chosen by them.

### **There is a constant allusion, an ironic perspective of miscegenation in your work...**

Miscegenation is all over the Americas. I believe we like mingling. I'm mestizo by nature. I usually say that, like Arabs, I'm between Africa, Asia and Europe. This is due to the indigenous peoples and the theory of the population settlement in the American continent, black Africans and their offspring here and the Portuguese, the Italian, the Spanish, etcetera, as a European contribution. You can see these traits on my face and on many of my compatriots'. Miscegenation was considered by some authorities as something bad, ugly, insane. However, they couldn't impede it. We are not like other creatures; our miscegenation is fertile. Some people say that during the colonial period in Brazil, black people fucked white women and had children with them as a way of protesting against the colony. Whether it's true or not, I think that, as a form of art, having mestizo children is a beautiful way of rebelling against any "race" or colour supremacy since it is said human beings can't be defined by any race. Maybe one day if we continue mingling, we'll be told that there's no colour to define human beings. What is more, there will come a day when there won't be any social term that separates us. Only then would we be truly equal.

### **It seems that part of your work refers to an eternal *foreignness*, doesn't it? Do you conceive it as the artist's place?**

In many art pieces I think about me and the other, what we have in common, what brings us closer and what keeps us away. Yes, I think that there are many allusions to certain foreignness. I'm from Governador Valadares, a city where foreignness is always present in everyday life. A foreign land is a myth. The foreigner is a good person, a newcomer, a distant person. Being from abroad, from a faraway place, from the United States, from Europe, is synonymous with being the best. That applies to objects and goods. However, many times it also applies to people, to professionals. Actually, there are two stories: the story of those who managed to cross the borders and the story of those who lost everything in the attempt.

I grew up listening to the myth of the United States as the Promised Land, then the Spain and Portugal promise. I also listened to stories about those who came to Brazil to make a fortune, European immigrants, black Africans. Maybe it's an allusion to foreigners who become natives or who try to adapt themselves. Miscegenation as something physical. That's why I wear black long hair, to remind me and remind the ones around me that I/we are partly Afro. This is my work, my hair is my work. I've heard a friend of mine using the denomination "art of conduct", something like art related to behaviour,

it's an unfolded performance. It's strange that my hair makes me a foreigner even in Brazil, where I was born and raised and where I've always lived.

Our hair shows the way we are. Having curly, kinky or coily hair in Brazil is like having bad hair. I thought this only happened in my country but I've heard that it also occurs in Cuba and other parts of the Americas. Thus, I wear fizzy hair and a turban so I'm classified as foreigner. My accent, the way I speak and my slightly nasal voice make me a foreigner. All of this is my work material. Yet I think it's a foreignness that integrates. My maternal grandmother is of *krenak* origin, indigenous natives from Minas Gerais. Since they are nomadic, they are sometimes seen as "foreigners", ugly, bad, uneducated, drunk people. The *krenak* and the *kaingang* in Brazil are equal to the *qom* in Argentina. This view must be changed and maybe art can help us to reflect upon this issue.



Paulo Nazareth: *News from the Americas.*  
*Residence in Transit (performance), 2011-2012.*



## Runo Lagomarsino

### A fight in his shoe

**At the beginning of the last century, Freud's ideas were crucial for the emergence of Brazilian surrealism and modernism. Is psychoanalysis an interlocutor or a stimulus for an artist of your generation nowadays?**

I think that psychoanalysis is (and it will probably continue to be) a very important interlocutor in art due to its focus on the way it speaks, what is said or what is not said, and also due to the meaning that can be found in silence, in mistakes and misunderstandings. I think that discussions about language, about communication (or lack of it), about questioning about the self, and about trying to be someone else, and about fantasy will always be key issues for art. I also believe that there is confidence in the unconscious, dreams, thoughts which are not entirely adjusted or delineated. Being an artist is to be on the border between oneself and one's other selves.

I'm answering these questions in Spanish, though this is not my first language. I was born in Sweden, I lived most of my life there but my parents are Argentine. Spanish is not only my second language but it is sometimes my third language when working as an artist, after Swedish and English or after English and Swedish. Today I'm living in São Paulo, Brazil, in another place with a different language. How will I be able to communicate? How will I understand myself or how will others understand me? How can I, in one way or another, translate all this into a language of art? I believe that psychoanalysis can be part of this translation, this narrative. It can be an interlocutor between me and me, between me and others, between others and artifacts and between others and others. As Paco Ibañez's song goes: *If I have lost my life, my time, I threw everything away like a ring into water. If I have lost my voice in the undergrowth, I only have words left.*

**What is the role of tradition in art? And what is the role of the invention?**

I try to think it like this: *the way the cat jumps onto the table is political.* Maybe the place is neither the table nor the cat, but the space in between. "Or the idea of living in the world or in-between worlds", as Walter Mignolo writes. I think that what I'm looking for (and hope not to find) is exactly that space. I think that there is neither tradition nor invention in art, but there is a cat, a table, a jump and what is political and probably not in this order.

**What do you think about today's art movements in the world and particularly in Latin America? From your point of view, is it possible to think or talk about "Latin American art"?**

I don't think there are clearly defined movements, maybe future art historians will think about it but, for the time being, it's difficult to think about movements while living the present moment. There are as many Latin Americas, or representations of Latin America, as there are Europes. I hope that when "I" try to define Latin American art, when I believe that I can catch it, I realise that it is changing, that it's already in another place. Our analyses are doomed to fail.

**Your work has been widely legitimised in Europe, the United States and in other parts of the world. What do you think the Other (art biennials, fairs, etcetera) has found in it?**



Untitled (Territory), 2007. Pencil and tape on paper.  
Paulo A. W. Vieira Collection, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

**Being an artist with one foot in Europe and the other in Latin America, how is Latin American art perceived outside this continent?**

My surname is Italian. My grandfather was from Genoa and, like many Italians, emigrated to Argentina after the First World War. It's Lagomarsino or *lago/mar/si/no* (*lake/sea/yes/no* as translated from Italian). I don't think it can be divided in this way but it may work as a metaphor to break with (or at least it can try to break with) geographic dichotomies. Am I Swedish? Yes/no. Am I Argentine? Yes/no.

Of course, *clichés* about an idea of what Latin American is and what Latin American art is are constructed and reproduced in several exhibitions, texts, etcetera within the production of art. Clearly, there are a lot of people who from their different parts of the world are deconstructing and questioning that way of writing history.



OtherWhere, 2011. 168 postcards and stones, 6 painted wooden tables, 100 x 133 x 59 cm

Courtesy of Nils Staerk, Copenhagen.

### **How do you conceive poetry and provocation, so present in your work, in relation to art?**

I've never conceived my work as provocative. I just try, in one way or another, to move artifacts slightly outside their system (be it ideological, ordinary, personal, etcetera) and I try to reconnect them with other semantic logics and creating a narration which is parallel to the system.

In 2010 I made a work of art which was simply a *letraset* text on a museum's wall. I wrote: "*This wall has no image but it contains geography*". I was interested in the idea of a vacuum, but loaded with history and geography. The narration is on a physical white wall but, at the same time, it includes its previous history, other works of art that were previously hung on it, the space itself and my movement.

### **How do you see your work in relation to social changes and movements?**

My brother once told me about a Bolivian man who wore a US flag in his shoe while marching in favour of the new constitution of his country. He was making an individual protest within a collective one. There was a fight in his shoe. It was a silent, content-laden fight which was meaningless at the same time. I'm interested in that position between the shoe and the foot. Impossibility has always been something important in my work, as Fogwill says: "There's so much to do and, however, people insist on making up stories." I try to think that the relationship (or the many different relationships) must be close and distant at the same time, like a boomerang (sorry for the terrible metaphor). It's important for me to conceive art and its

relationship with politics in *another* way. I think, project, reject, construct and work on this other way over and over (the idea of a boomerang comes back). It's a position where criticism is behind the image, in-between worlds.

### **How do the unconscious, insanity and anguish echo in your work?**

During many years my work focused on many questions related to geography, displacement, narrative construction, the idea of trips, places, the relationship between historical times and our contemporaneity. My view on these issues and its variations establishes a position, a conceptual, artistic and critical dialogue, which makes all these fields meet and intertwine.

These interests were established in an intellectual path. But recently, I've realised that they are closely related to my history (my histories, having lived in different places, having spoken different languages), and everything is present there in my work. Sometimes it is so easy to spot that I don't know whether to laugh or feel afraid.

This has become more and more updated in me after "returning", "coming", and "going" to São Paulo. This happens not only when I stay in this city, but also while I'm in transit when crossing the Atlantic, one way or another.

Of course, this place (the no place, the place in the plural form, the place in-between worlds) has always been a creative position too, like an ability to translate.

When I was a child, at a key familiar moment I asked: "where should I place myself?" I think that idea of never knowing where to stay, where to go and, at the same time, looking for that place, but unwilling to find it, is what still defines my position as a subject and as an artist.

### **How is the idea of beauty linked to horror?**

In John Coltrane's music, on the faces of Pasolini's movies, and in each comma, period, word and phrase by Duras.

### **Have you ever had an approach to psychoanalysis or psychoanalysts?**

I approached it through my parents' narration when we arrived in Sweden. They imagined a country where questions about the unconscious, about *words*, family, incapacity, anguish and dreams were part of everyday life. They also imagined that people discussed this way at a café, that politics was politics in its many ways, but cafés closed very early and the coffee served there was so bitter. It wasn't like in Bergman's movies such as "Persona". On the contrary, he was rejected by the left wing because of his narrations about the bourgeoisie and for thinking too much about the *other* reality and not about the reality in the streets.

I also approached it through Franz Fanon's texts, especially his thoughts about decolonisation, orality and psychoanalysis. *Oh my body! Make me someone who always enquires!*

Also through my own therapy sessions, which I started less than a year ago in São Paulo.

Document

# Cannibalist Manifesto

Only Cannibalism unites us. Socially.  
Economically. Philosophically.

The world's single law. The  
disguised expression of all  
individualisms, of all collectivisms.  
Of all religions. Of all peace treaties.  
Tupi or not tupi that is the question.  
Against all catechisms. And against  
the mother of the Gracchi.  
I am only interested in what is not  
mine. Law of men. Law of the  
cannibal.

We are tired of all those suspicious  
catholic husbands put in drama. Freud  
put an end to the woman enigma and  
to other frights of printed psychology.

What hindered truth was clothing, the  
impermeable element between the  
interior world and the exterior world.  
The reaction against the dressed man.  
American movies will inform us  
about this.

Sons of the sun, mother of the living.  
Found and loved ferociously, with all  
the hypocrisy of nostalgia: by the  
immigrants, by the slaves and by the  
touristes. In the country of the giant  
anaconda<sup>1</sup>.

It was because we never had  
grammars, nor collections of old  
plants. And we never knew what was  
urban, suburban, boundary or  
continental. Lazy in the world map of  
Brazil.

A participating consciousness, a  
religious rhythm.  
Against all importers of canned  
consciousness. The palpable existence  
of life. And the pre-logical mentality  
for Levy-Bruhl to study.

We want the Carahiba Revolution<sup>2</sup>.

Bigger than the French Revolution.  
For the unification of all the efficient  
rebellions in the direction of man.  
Without us, Europe would not even  
have its poor declaration of the rights  
of man.

The golden age proclaimed by  
America. The golden age. And all the  
girls.

Filiation. The contact with Brazilian  
Carahiba. Ori Villegaignon print terre.  
<sup>3</sup> Montaigne. The natural man.  
Rousseau. From the French  
Revolution to Romanticism, to the  
Bolshevik Revolution, to the Surrealist  
Revolution and Keyserling's  
technicised barbarian. We walk.

We were never catechised. We live  
through a somnambulist law. We  
made Christ be born in Bahia. Or in  
Belém do Pará. But we never admitted  
the birth of logic among us.

Against Father Vieira.<sup>4</sup> Author of our  
first loan to gain his commission. The  
illiterate king had told him: put that in  
paper but don't be too wordy. The loan  
was made. Brazilian sugar was taxed.  
Vieira left the money in Portugal and  
brought us wordiness.

The spirit refuses to conceive the spirit  
without body. Anthropomorphism.  
The need for a cannibalist vaccine. For  
the equilibrium against the religions of  
the meridian. And foreign inquisitions.

We can only attend to the oracular  
world.

We had fair codification of vengeance.  
Scientific codification of Magic.

Anthropophagy. The permanent transformation of Taboo into totem.

Against the reversible world and objectivised ideas. Cadaverised. The stop of thought which is dynamic. The individual victim of the system. Source of classical injustices. Of romantic injustices. And the forgetting of interior conquests.

Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes.  
Routes. Routes. Routes.

The Carahiban instinct.

Death and life of hypotheses. From the equation I part of the Cosmos to the axiom Cosmos part of I. Subsistence. Knowledge. Cannibalism.

Against vegetal elites. In communication with the soil. We were never catechised. What we

And we knew how to transpose mystery and death with the aid of some grammatical forms. I asked a man what Law was. He replied it was the guarantee of the exercise of possibility. That man is called Galli Mathias. I ate him. Determinism is only absent where there is mystery. But what do we have to do with this?

Against the stories of man which begin at Cape Finisterra. The undated world. Unsigned. Without Napoleon. Without Caesar.

The fixation of progress through catalogues and television sets. Only machinery. And blood transfusers.

Against the antagonical sublimations. Brought in the caravels.

Against the truth of missionary peoples, defined by the sagacity of a cannibal, the Viscount of Cairu: -It is

really did was Carnival. The native dressed as a senator of the Empire. Pretending to be Pitt. Or featuring in Alencar's<sup>5</sup> operas full of good Portuguese feelings.

We already had communism. We already had surrealist language. The golden age.

Catiti Catiti

Imara Notiá

Notiá Imara

Ipejú.<sup>6</sup>

Magic and life. We had the relation and the distribution of physical goods, of moral goods, and the goods of dignity.

often a repeated lie<sup>7</sup>

But those who came were not crusaders. They were fugitives from a civilisation that we are eating because we are strong and vengeful like a Jabuti.<sup>8</sup>

If God is the consciousness of the Uncreated Universe, Guaraci is the mother of the living. Jaci<sup>9</sup> is the mother of plants.

We did not have speculation. But we had the power of guessing. We had Politics which is the science of distribution. And a planetary-social system.

Migrations. The escape from tedious states. Against urban sclerosis. Against Conservatories and tedious speculation.

From William James and Voronoff. The transfiguration of Taboo in totem. Cannibalism.

The pater families and the creation of the Moral of the Stork: Real ignorance of things + lack of imagination + feeling of authority before the curious prole.

It is necessary to depart from a deep atheism in order to arrive at the idea of God. But the Carahiba did not need it. Because they had Guaraci.

The created objective reacts like Angels of Fall do. After Moses wanders. What do we have to do with this?

Before the Portuguese discovered Brazil, Brazil had discovered happiness.

Against the native with the torch. The native son of Mary, godson of Catherine de Médicis and son-in-law of D. Antonio de Mariz<sup>10</sup>.

Joy is casting out nines.

In the matriarchy of Pindorama<sup>11</sup>.

Against the Memory source of custom. Personal experience renewed.

We are concretists. Ideas take hold, react, burn people in public squares. Let us suppress ideas and other paralyses. Through the routes. Believe in signs, believe in the instruments and the stars.

Against Goethe, the mother of the Gracchi, and the Court of D. John VI.

Joy is casting out nines.

The struggle between what one would call the Uncreated and the Creature - illustrated by the permanent contradiction between man and his Taboo. Daily love and the capitalist modus vivendi. Cannibalism.

Absorption of the sacred enemy. To transform him into totem. Human adventure. The mundane finality. However, only the pure elites managed to perform carnal cannibalism, which brings the highest sense of life and avoids all the evils identified by Freud, catechist evils. What happens is not a sublimation of the sexual instinct. It is the thermometric scale of the cannibal instinct. From carnal, it becomes elective and creates friendship. Affectionate, love. Speculative, science. It deviates and transfers itself. We reach vilification. Low cannibalism agglomerated in the sins of catechism -envy, usury, calumny, murder. Plague of the so-called cultured and Christianised peoples, it is against it that we are acting. Cannibal.

Against Anchieta singing the eleven thousand virgins of the sky, in the land of Iracema -the patriarch João Ramalho founder of São Paulo.<sup>12</sup> Our independence has not yet been proclaimed. Typical phrase of D. John VI: -My son, put this crown on your head, before some adventurer does!<sup>13</sup> We expelled the dynasty. It is necessary to expel the spirit of Bragança, the law and the snuff of Maria da Fonte.<sup>14</sup>

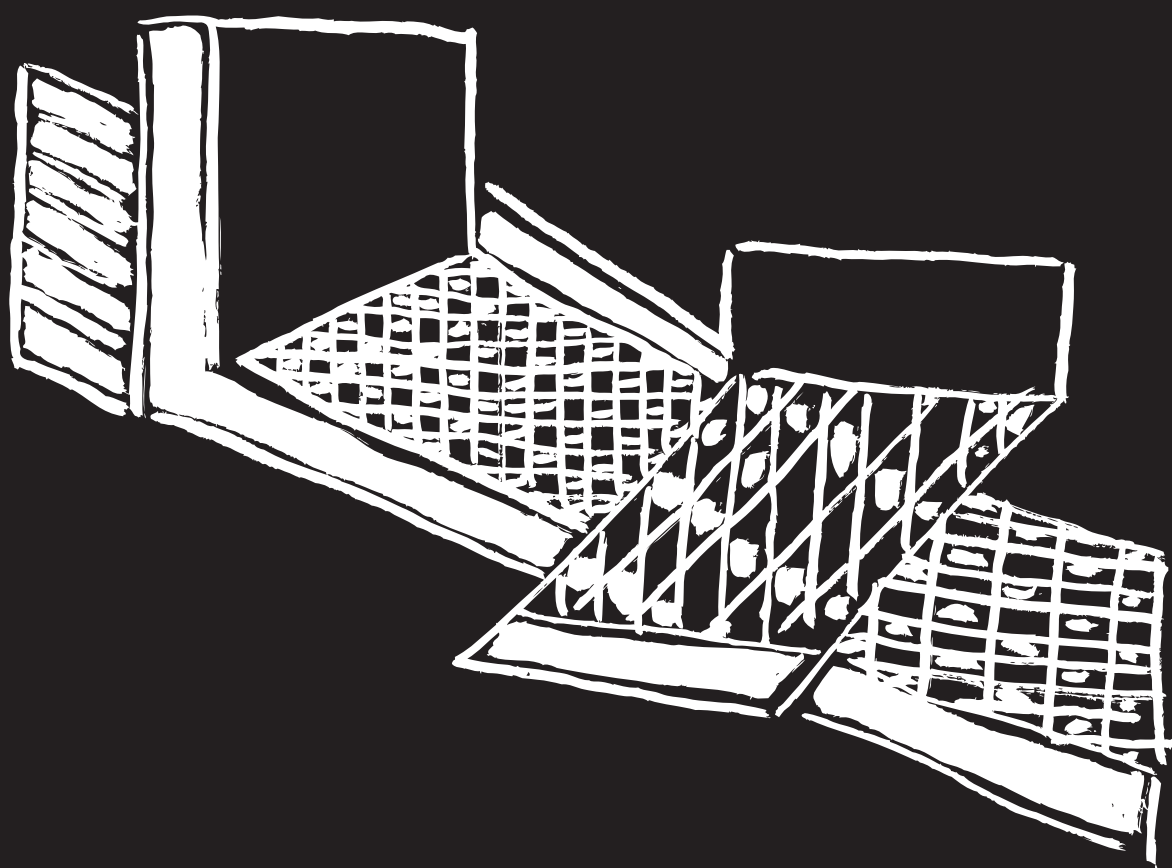
Against social reality, dressed and oppressive, registered by Freud - reality without complexes, without madness, without prostitutions and without the prisons of the matriarchy of Pindorama.

*Oswald de Andrade*

In Piratininga<sup>15</sup> Year 374 of the swallowing of the Bishop Sardinha<sup>16</sup>

1. The Giant Anaconda, the spirit of the waters according to native Amazon mythology.
2. Oswald de Andrade refers to two native peoples at the same time with the term Carahiba: the Caribs, in the north, and the Tupis, coastal inhabitants when the Portuguese discovered Brazilian territory.
3. Durand de Villegaignon, founder of Antarctic France (1555), in the island of Guanabara Bay (Rio de Janeiro). Michel de Montaigne, author of *On Cannibals*, chapter XXI of his *Essays*.
4. Antônio Vieira (1608-1697), Jesuit Portuguese father who lived in Bahia and who, for Oswald de Andrade, is a symbol of the rhetoric influence at the service of the catechisation of the natives and the colonisation of Brazil. In that fragment, the author refers to a Vieira's proposal of 1649 to organise a campaign in order to exploit the sugar produced where the State of Maranhão is found today .
5. Reference to the English statesman William Pitt (1759-1806), included as a symbol of the European parliamentary mask, which hid slavery structures and to José de Alencar (1829-1877), author of the native novel *O guarani* (1857), in which native Peri, the protagonist, has attitudes that imitate the great Portuguese misters. The novel inspired a homonymous opera by Carlos Gomes (1836-1877).
6. In Tupi language: "New Moon, oh New Moon, blow memories of me; here I am, I am before you; make me only fill your heart", translation found in *O selvagem*, by Couto de Magalhães.
7. The Viscount of Cairu was a liberal economist in the early 19th century who convinced Portugal's King John VI, settled in Brazil from 1789, to accept opening of Brazilian ports "to all the nations that had friendly bonds with Portugal".
8. Land tortoise that is a symbol of cunningness, patience and physical strength according to native mythology.
9. In native mythology Guaraci is the sun and Jaci is the moon.
10. This is, according to Haroldo de Campos, an ironic allusion to Peri, the hero from *O guarani* he mentioned before. Oswald de Andrade also mentions other facts and/or myths associated to the "Europeanised" natives from Brazil, like Paraguassú, who went to France during the 16th century with her husband, Portuguese Diego Alvarez de Correia. The native was baptised in France and –according to a false version that was included in school books- had Catherine de Médicis as her godmother.
11. Pindorama means land of palms in Tupi-Guarani language; by extension, it refers to Brazil, where palms are one of the icons of the country.
12. Jesuit father José de Anchieta (1534-1597) arrives in Brazil in 1553 and in 1595 writes *autos sacramentales* and a grammar of Portuguese and Tupi. Apart from being an anagram of America, Iracem is the protagonist of the native homonymous novel by José de Alencar published in 1865. João Ramalho (1493-1580) was a Portuguese castaway that arrived in 1530 at São Vicente Island (São Paulo). He married Bartira, daughter of legendary native cacique Tibiriçá (c. 1440-1562), chief of a part of the native nation established in the territory of today's city of São Paulo. He was the first native catechised by José de Anchieta.
13. Typical phrase, which is part of the repertoire of Brazilian history. John VI says it to his son, who proclaims the independence of Brazil and rules with the name of Peter I until 1831.
14. References to the Portuguese monarchy, laws and customs. Maria da Forte was a Portuguese peasant who led a popular uprising in 1846 in Portugal.
15. In the language of the guayaneses, name of the plain where São Paulo was built in 1554, around a school founded by the Jesuits.
16. But Fernandes Sardinha (1496-1556) was the first bishop of Brazil. Back in Portugal, his ship was wrecked in the river Coruripe (State of Alagoas) where it, supposedly, served as food for the native caetés.
17. Translator's note: Footnotes extracted in part from: Schwartz, J. *Latin American vanguards. Programmatic and critical texts*. Mexico, FCE. And also de Souza, R., in the CD-ROM *Antologia de textos fundadores do comparatismo literário interamericano*. Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul: Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras, 2001. <http://www.ufrgs.br/cdrom/>





Classic & modern

# José Bleger and his dialectic framing: current validity <sup>1</sup>

*“Thinking is always a dialogue and its instrument is dialectic, or rather, the very process of thinking is dialectic, whether you are aware of it or not.”*

2. José Bleger 2

## Thinking a classic

To the question ‘What is a classic?’, Italo Calvino answered that it is *that book that has never finished saying what it has to say*; and also it is *a text that takes a new meaning for every reader and in each reading*.<sup>3</sup>

I bumped into the temptation enunciated by Borges in one of his tales about the “possibility” of drawing a map of José Bleger’s work in a 1:1 scale. Of the new readings that arise from Bleger’s work we shall validate that the creative potential of his dialectic thinking keeps saying what it has to say.

As for me, I’ve chosen an option: José Bleger *is* a classic author. And in this context, I propose to consider the relevance of dialectic thinking in our author. (In ironic complicity with my commenting function, Calvino invites to always read the original and not the comments since a classic, after arousing “dust” in critical discourses about itself, manages to shake them off constantly...).

If I tried to summarise Bleger’s thinking, I might contradict my own project and deprive the reader of the means to access the dialectic of the author’s thinking on their own. I have chosen to focus my reasoning in the Blegerian conception of dialectic framing.

Even at the risk of incurring in a somewhat impressionist style, I will also mention some of the many problems Bleger posed in his writings (classes, courses, research groups, study groups, supervisions) to highlight his anticipation power, his *relevance*, provided that the *reader* had thought about re-contextualising the moment when they were written.

José Bleger explored the basic assumptions implied in psychoanalysis to frame the problems, to look for the right answers, to contextualise an issue; he intended to compare the use different authors made of the terms.

He used to say, quoting Freud: “If we start by compromising words, we end up faking ideas”. He was especially careful to acknowledge his sources; he always quoted authors. The position of not knowing (of which Marion Milner and W.R. Bion, as well as Lacan, spoke) was seen in his way of thinking, of teaching dialectic, *of teaching to think*, in summary.

Let’s complete the quote on top of this work: “Being able to think [...] is being able to tolerate the unknown, is being able to accept a *quantum* of anxiety, is being able to problematise, and being able to accept the contingency of having to start again because systematic (dialectic) thinking is like *Cronus*: it destroys its own children”.

Co-thinking (thinking together with) is what Enrique Pichon-Rivière called this function that Bleger so masterfully incarnated, of finding, within ourselves, a way of thinking that *concerned us*.

The first book on psychoanalysis that José Bleger published in 1958 (at 34 years old) was written, we might say, as an act of ethics to create a theoretic context that would justify his decision to train as an analyst (back in the 1950s) in Argentine Psychoanalytic Association.<sup>4</sup> This book received negative criticism, some of which Bleger responded to by referring to “my master Freud”.<sup>5</sup>

Under the term psychoanalytic practice, Bleger (1969, p. 288) includes the complex relation between psychoanalytic theory, technique and psychoanalytic institutional organisations. He criticises a piece of research carried out from a naturalist position and fosters

a type of investigation he calls phenomenal (he also usually calls it phenomenological); he analyses the implicit assumptions in meta-psychologic theorisation *and* in clinical experience theorisation, pointing out the *contradictions* it focuses on. *Likewise*, he explores the *contradictions implied in clinical experience theory*. Thus, for instance: “having to admit [...] the existence of projective-introjective identification for *all* cases demands the assumption that every subject is a ‘closed system’ and communicates with other human beings by other means, while admitting the *participation as an original phenomenon* implies [...] that human beings [...] derive from an organisation as “open system” and that [...] becomes individualised [...]’ (*Symbiosis and ambiguity*, p. 189, added italics).

Together with Pichon-Rivière, Bleger focuses his psychoanalytic reflection on practice. His dialectic thinking leads him to include *contradiction* as a study object. He believes the study object can be de-dialectised and his research needs to be framed within the dialectic logic. He poses, thus, a difference between the problem and the way of thinking about it (pp. 293-294). This is his epistemological project.

*Thinking together with our author, it is currently valid to pose the error that consists in investigating according to formal logic, which is the same one that rules the studied process. Differentiating between the problem and its investigation is eliminated in this case.*

I could have imagined it, given my training with José Bleger, but it shocked me to prove (when reading for the first time his 1969 work) that, unknowingly, I enrolled in *his epistemological project* by wondering if, in order to listen to narcissism, we could propose a “non-narcissist theory” *that studied narcissism without embracing the narcissist beliefs of ego* (Faimberg, 2005, p. 3).

I was shocked because Bleger<sup>6</sup> criticised Freud’s concept of narcissism by considering it a closed system. As for me, I have worked on the problem of the narcissist relation between generations by studying narcissism as an open system. I derive from the *Freudian* concept that “the heart-warming parental love, so childish deep inside, is nothing but the parents’ revived narcissism [...]”.

The conclusion of this example is that *Bleger’s dialectic thinking gave me the means to study narcissism from my own perspective*. In this respect, my reading of Freud differs from Bleger’s reading. On the other hand, as of Bleger’s conceptualisation, I could think about the dialectic pair (open system/closed system) in which my hypothesis inscribes (on which I based my reflection). I can thus highlight my debt to Bleger by the means he provides to think about the problem: its object (to shorten, let’s say, the narcissist bond between generations) represents my otherness. The *relevance* of José Bleger’s thinking appears in the manner of looking for *contradiction*, since formulation of contradictions *changes* as new problems arise.

The main question that José Bleger posed throughout his work and which is perfectly valid is: *It is no longer about wondering how human beings become social, but how they came to be individualised*.

If we go back to the example I was using, the concept of narcissism that Bleger challenged on Freud, calling for an open system for study, we can say that in Freud himself I found the basis to study narcissist bonds drawing from an open system. This kind of *discord* confronts us with the problems of anachronism misunderstandings that, inevitably, come from Bleger’s premature death at 49 years old, 40 years ago.

### **Anachronism misunderstandings**

We don’t know how José Bleger would have re-read Freud, a project he intended to carry out the year he unexpectedly passed away.<sup>7</sup> We have already mentioned Blegerian position towards narcissism.

The repeated criticism that Bleger made to the “biological” concept of the theory of the instincts *contains an error that, ironically, legitimises its own criticism*: it claimed Freud called instinct what he actually designated as *Trieb* (drive). In this sense, in its own error, *his criticism anticipated* what would later be recognised as mistranslation.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, José Bleger argued, in his classes and writings, *that the psychic ways*

of functioning defined by Freud anticipate the use of dialectic logics to study the psyche instead of formal logics. He also revealed to us Lacan's mirror stage (connecting it to H. Wallon) at a time when this article, a *classic*, was not usually quoted yet.

When I asked him about why thinking in terms of conduct<sup>9</sup>, Bleger answered with an example: tears *do not depict* sadness, they *are* sadness.<sup>10,11</sup> I understood he anticipated an (implied) criticism to those who consider interpretation as simultaneous translation.

José Bleger anticipated a way of thinking psychotic functioning and psyche with the ability to generate new ideas. Conceiving psychic training according to an open model is the basis for one of José Bleger's most original contributions: presenting a *glycho-charique*<sup>12</sup> position, logically<sup>13</sup> and chronologically, before a Kleinian paranoid-schizoid position. As far as he considers together with Bion *that in every patient there is a psychotic functioning that co-exists with neurotic functioning*, Bleger states that there is a dialectic movement between the two.

Again, it is not about wondering how the patient came to be a social being but, on the contrary, how it became individualised. To Bleger, in paranoid-schizoid position, the first categories to organise original indiscrimination (conceptualised by *glycho-charique* position) are created.

Drawing from practice, José Bleger establishes the dialectic pair "neurotic Oedipus" (subject to conflict) and "psychotic Oedipus" (dilemmatic). The symbolic places that indicate the unconscious family structure (father, mother, children, siblings, masculine and feminine) in these cases are not discriminated and cannot constitute dialectic pairs subject to conflict (unless they are analysed). We refer to the textbook case of Ana María, mentioned in his writings. This widening of psychoanalytic listening of psychotic functioning allows him to also turn psychotic patients analysable by the discrimination of what is there, indiscriminated.

*This way, it avoids the obstacle of adapting the oedipal problem to the neurosis model, just like any "orthopaedic" attempt (as Lacan would put it) of adapting to a single reality.* Thus, Bleger questions, in order to criticise it, the basic assumption implied in psychoanalysis that there is *only one possible key to reality*, that it is the analyst who has it, that it is regulatory in nature and that the analysand should adapt to *The* reality.

*What possible articulation does the reader see in what Lacan's said with "the real"?*

### **José Bleger's dialectic framing**

In his essay *Psychoanalysis in Psychoanalytic Framing*, our author examines the psychoanalytic meaning of framing, not when it poses a problem (usual study object) but precisely when such framing does not constitute a problem. Quite frequently I heard him say that certain "pseudo-scientific" infinite precautions, at stake in psychoanalytic research or discussions, were obsessive rituals with which a resistance to think was manifested.

In the same resistance perspective, Bleger studies the analytic framing considered to be an institution in which an obsessive ritual can be installed with the single goal of maintaining the analysand's psychic survival and I add: maybe the analyst's too?<sup>14</sup> (the difficulty to conceive a framing ritualisation, before Bleger pointed it out, could be due to the fact that the framing is, by definition, repetitive and constitutes the logic frame in which the analytic method is displayed to discover the unconscious dimension). Bleger would say that, in order to investigate the framing and determine if it has turned into ritual, we must resort to the dialectic logic to "diagnose" whether the study object uses the formal logic or not.

Now I will contribute with a supplementary key to facilitate Blegerian text reading. José Bleger implicitly uses the Hegelian concept of *Aufhebung*.<sup>15</sup> This concept refers, simultaneously, to denial, abolition and conservation of a term that has been transformed and lies at a superior level (in the sense that Kojève applied in his teachings; that is how I conceive the dialectic spiral Pichon-Rivière talked about). As we know, in Hegelian tradition, *Aufhebung* constitutes an operation in relation to a dialectic pair. From the Blegerian text, I will choose two dialectic pairs.

Bleger implicitly participates in a "me/not-me" dialectic pair when he refers from the beginning to "not-me". He states that "not-me" has *existence*, it is not possible to consider "not-me" as "nothing" (p. 243). Once "not-me" existence has been stated, the author can argue, as he

actually does, that the framing houses the patient's "not-me". In Hegelian tradition, "not-me" is the "determined denial of me" ("not-me" defines something that is determined by self-denial).

I design as the second dialectic pair what constitutes José Bleger's very original main thesis: there are *two framings* (not just one) to be *differentiated from one another*. One of the framings, which the psychoanalyst proposes and maintains, is consciously accepted by the patient; the other one *is granted by the patient* and is often kept silent for a very long time.

*Jaques Lacan and José Bleger were the only ones who raised the issue of framing ritualisation, but their stances differ in one precise point. Lacan, based on his signifier theory, aims for solving the framing ritualisation by making it mobile (scansion). For Bleger, framing ritualisation is a resistance symptom that can only be analysed by the psychoanalytic method itself. The analyst must guarantee framing conservation because a process can only be investigated when the same constants are maintained; they, precisely, make up the framing (p. 237).*

The strict keeping of the framing by the analyst constitutes a *necessary and absolute condition* to overcome its ritualised functioning. Bleger recalls that, being the framing an institution, like any other institution, it follows a law: *to turn the original objective* (for which it was created) *into a survival objective*. *For this reason, the strict keeping of the framing does not constitute sufficient condition.*

When preserving the psychoanalytic framing, the analyst preserves the analysand's "not-me" (their estranged aspects) until the second framing, which is kept silent for a long time, starts "talking". This is possible as long as the analyst is able to listen to and interpret it, so that the analysand can *hear how their contribution to the second framing concerns them*.

I would like to quote an example of his way of not closing problems prematurely and his tolerance to leaving questions unanswered for a long time, until finding a key.

*"I have always found it amazing and thrilling, in psychotic analysis, the co-existence of the analyst's total denial with an exaggerated susceptibility to any kind of deviation from the 'usual' (the framing) and how the patient can become disorganised or violent, for example, for a few minutes at the beginning or the end of the session. Now I understand it better: their meta-self, which is largely everything they have, is disorganised (p. 238, italics added).*

Now I would like to refer to one of Bleger's cases as well as one of my own. In both cases, it is relevant to remember José Bleger's comment: "I believe we always haste to talk about an 'attack' towards the framing when it is not complied with by the patient, who 'brings what they have' and is not always an 'attack', but its own organisation (although disorganised)" (p. 242, note).

Bleger's patient's example will help us understand how the analyst *detects which is the condition of the patient's existence that is at risk in the framing it provides when it (the framing) starts "talking" (and when in a second round, the patient wants to "shut it up")*.

It is about a patient that used to pay on time; for the first time, they incurred into a debt with the analyst: the second silent framing started "talking". Bleger understood that for the analysand, the analysis would preserve its ghost world (which was the patient's existence condition) in which *no lost was recognised* (in this particular case, disdain on family fortune lost many years before). If there was only one framing, it would have been possible to speak of an "attack" on the framing when incurring into a debt and the goal would be to restore, quickly, fulfilment of payment. With the two framing dialectic, the patient's silent framing (masked by framing ritualisation) starts "talking". When the patient rushes into settling their debt, Bleger states, through interpretation, the differentiation of the two framings: to pay quickly means (he interprets) to obliterate the analyst in their *otherness*.

My hypothesis is that Bleger's interpretation represents an *Aufhebung* moment in the dialectic between the two framings: in this case, it marks the moment of *recognising otherness*<sup>16</sup> (both the analyst's and their own).

Now we see *in what way* José Bleger was the first one to simultaneously approach the framing ritualisation issue and the need to keep it stable. Posing the framing ritualisation issue without having at hand the solution found by José Bleger would have led to a no-win dilemma.

One session with an analysand that I have analysed for seven years made me wonder, retrospectively, why I had opted for interpreting as I did, since there was another listening line

possible. Based on an excerpt from that session, I will talk about the relevance in José Bleger's thinking, where I got to hear his truth the most: drawing from the experience in the session and *where I least expected it*.<sup>17</sup>

Jean had consulted because he did not recognise what was his own desire in life projects (he had pursued studies he was proud of and now he wanted to find his vocation). In the months before this session, he examined the possibility of saying that, maybe, he might think that... he might put an end to analysis. His reluctance to word it makes me think that *wording* it might be dangerous. That day, I hear the doorbell thirty minutes before Jean's session; it is the analysand, to whom I ask to return at session time. Half an hour later, lying on the couch, he says:

Jean: I don't understand what happened to me. I was sure it was my time. [...] (Silence). Yesterday afternoon, my father called me. He was somewhat confused. He asked if my mother was there, [...] should have been there half an hour before the date they had and was not there yet. Dad didn't tell me he was at my building entrance. When I was on my way here this morning, I was wondering *if I was going to say* what happened, if I was going to say he came up my house, if I was going to share what we talked about. (Silence).

(In French, '*sonnette*' may refer to the intercom buzzer, and '*sonnette d'alarme*' is the expression used to refer to the ambulance alarm siren or to call attention on a risk...).

Analyst: You rang the "*sonnette d'alarme*" (alarm "ring") to indicate that *something you were not going to say had to be heard by me, at any cost*.

Jean: Yes...I didn't want to say it because I was telling myself with regrets that I should have done something for my father, have him checked by a doctor. And I imagined *you'd tell me* something like "no assisting person in danger".

Analyst: Given that you are the one who accused yourself of that, we might think that *what I don't know, doesn't exist, although they are your own thoughts*.

Jean: Yesterday, I asked my father a few clear questions and found out that he speaks easily when I ask him. And was I not shocked when he told me as a child *he always knew* that his father had a double life. (Short silence). *But that was never talked about*, neither with his father, nor with his mother. Nor with us. *My father told me that when I was born, they left me with his mother, my grandmother, who was so abandoned by her own husband, like dead, and she wouldn't go anywhere. As soon as she held me in her arms she came back to life and I became her source of life*. My sister didn't want to visit her, *to me it seemed normal to revive her*, she brightened up so much [...].

Analyst: Another "*sonnette d'alarme*" came up in the last sessions, when you said you didn't know how you could ever think about putting an end to analysis. Now we can hear you wonder how to leave in me a *grandmother deprived of her "therapeutic grandchild"*. *An analyst that could stay alive thanks to her patient*. (At this point I thought I was researching if I had other patients in "his session" half an hour before).

Jean: Yes... (Thoughtful silence).

The rest of the session was dedicated to *talk extensively about what in his family (maternal and paternal) "was known", but everyone knew they "should not talk about": despised aspects in the family history*.

A retroactive reflection allowed me to recognise the implicit position from which I had heard and interpreted. The original Blegerian concept of *double framing* appeared as a backdrop from which listening and interpretation became clear to me. *A posteriori*, at that unique critical moment in framing (with Bleger), I found out that *the framing that had never posed a problem had started to ritualise*.

The condition for this discovery to have taken place was that when the analysand caused the crisis, the analyst kept the very framing, highlighting the existence of a second framing that started "talking" in the session: the analyst heard that "*something was not to be heard and she interpreted it had been heard*"; what?: "*something that should and at the same time should not be considered as existent*" ("or that I don't know whether it exists even though it's their thoughts").

## Conclusion/opening

Enrique Pichon-Rivière found his Zito Lema, which allowed him in an unforgettable dialogue to tell his story included in History. With his premature death, José Bleger could not find “his” Zito Lema to be able to tell us how his story is engraved.

I have been wondering if the dialectic way Bleger had to pose problems would not be circulating in the new generations, who did not get to know him personally. That this modality refers to a *different problem*, in a new dialectic spiral, *is totally coherent with Blegarian thinking*. Recognising this transmission does not place our otherness at risk, as he respected, in the dialogue, the path chosen by each one of us and helped us *think about what we still didn't know we were thinking about*. For him, disciples did not mean followers; I'd say it meant learning to question what is hidden by the so-called “common sense”, the “naturalist approach”. It lead us to question what is presented as “already given” as if it were a natural fact that does not require to be examined.

*José Bleger is the first one to approach the framing ritualisation issue and the simultaneous need to keep it stable. The solution he provides is the two framing dialectic: it makes up its original concept which allows the Aufhebung of the problem.*

If Italo Calvino's criterion lingers as a way of thinking why José Bleger is a classic, it would be up to his readers to have his writings say what they are not done saying...

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1. A different version was given at Buenos Aires University, at the tribute seminar for José Bleger, on November 11, 2006.
2. *Acta Neuropsiquiátrica Argentina*, 1959, 5, 478.
3. I have proposed to test this definition in order to differentiate the true classics from idealised works.
4. Bleger chose to train as a psychoanalyst at a time when those with Marxist practice would not choose to be psychoanalysts (I'll mention a few exceptions I know, such as Wilhelm Reich, Otto Fenichel, Enrique Pichon-Rivière, Marie Langer...)
5. When Bleger handed me over the offprint in which he dismantled one critic's misleading rationale he said, mischievously, he didn't want said gentleman to have a name for setting a controversy with him. That was the reason why he finalised the debate with this article.
6. I believe Bleger thought that, inevitably, the Freudian model of narcissism was a meta-psychologic theory based on a closed model.
7. Personal communication in March, 1972.
8. I think in light of Lacan's writings and Laplanche and Pontalis's *Vocabulaire*.
9. Pichon-Rivière would have said, together with Bleger (to criticise them) that “behaviourists” (such as Watson and William Mc Dougall) privileged the areas of the body and the outer world, leaving aside mental functioning. On the other hand, both Pichon-Rivière and Bleger criticised those analysts that make the study of the body and the outer world depend exclusively on the area of the mind. Bleger thought about behaviour in relation to the works of George Politzer (who had them fully translated, writing a preface and many notes), Lagache, Merleau Ponty and Sartre.
10. Jean-Luc Donnet (seminar carried out in the '80s) provided as an example of interpretation “their sadness are their tears”, formulated by Joyce Mc Dougall.
11. To contextualise this answer, let's think about Enrique Pichon-Rivière's theory on the three areas of behaviour. We don't have enough space to expand on this point, nor the extremely close connections between Pichon-Rivière's ideas (who was the master) and Bleger's (the brightest disciple). Let's just say that the Enrique Pichon-Rivière's bonding theory provided a dialectic matrix which is essential in José Bleger's thinking. And it is this theory that made Melanie Klein's and Fairbairn's thinking be already reinterpreted by these authors. The perspective change that the bonding theory gave Pichonian and Blegarian's theorisation leads to a *radical change in the relationship with the object*, even when referring to Melanie Klein's paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions: such positions are subjected to a *reinterpretation*. In Latin America, the well-known and so valued works by Isidoro Berenstein and Janine Puget have developed, in their own fashion, this creating thinking line. As far as my own thinking is concerned, the bonding theory, just as I conceived it in Enrique Pichon-Rivière's seminars with José Bleger, together with the unconscious inscription of the analysand in a family structure, provided a radical *decentralising* in the way I conceived the object relation theory, the construction of different spaces we study in psychoanalysis and the function of recognising otherness, the difference in generations and sexes. Curiously, when my book was published, this way of posing problems was associated in Argentina with Piera Aulagnier's thinking. When in a dialogue with Piera Aulagnier, I explained what points I agreed so much with her ideas... We couldn't come to an agreement! Probably and partly, this was due to the fact that she didn't accept Winnicott's notions, nor Bion's, even when I articulated them with Freudian thinking (Piera preferred to talk about her theoretic “options”, as she called them, and radically dismissed others). Piera played a role in French thinking, which I would equate to Pichon-Rivière's and José Bleger's in Río de la Plata thinking, and beyond.

12. Thomas Ogden referred to a position previous to paranoid-schizoid, probably not knowing that Bleger had proposed and developed it from his perspective in the '60s.
13. I thus contextualise his ideas in light of the dialectic notion of temporality (an implied issue in his writings). We lack the space to expand on this key issue.
14. I'm thinking about the notion of "bastion" (M. and W. Baranger, 1961).
15. "To overcome" is the approximate translation. I suggest not translating it as "synthesis" if we want to respect the meaning given by Kojève (which is my case).
16. I don't mean the analyst as a real person, but the recognition of the analytic function and also the recognition of the analyst as another.
17. I italicise what called my attention in my floating listening or what I want to draw the reader's attention on.

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# Invisible cities



## Paper cities. Imaginary paths and landscapes

We are going to open this section from a strange and attractive origin, born like an oxymoron: psychoanalysts, who live “almost” in urban anonymity, in the extraterritoriality of their private practice, write about their cities. The fact that analysts are asked for a “sort” of chronicle to sketch our cities in today’s varied and changing Latin America encloses the paradox of revealing urban geographies presented, remembered or imagined. From a practice of psychoanalysis, which is always a kind of protective bastion, despite the many different subjectivations of our listening, they show us the labyrinths of reality, in the growths and transformations, sometimes vertiginous and violent, of streets, neighbourhoods and inhabitants.

The texts about São Paulo, Caracas and Bogotá are each written in a way that leads us across their “real” cities, with their ways of living and analysing, determined by their original measures and current distances and they allow us to know, by inference, those urban worlds that no architecture or urbanism treaty can include.

Psychoanalysis is urban. It is born to a subject of modernity, isolated from the possibility of revealing their knowledge and truth which were earlier given by religion and the Church. It resorts to medical knowledge first and then to the

“treatment of souls” to get that intimacy which subjectivity had been discovering as such since the end of the 18th century.

Yet, it is true that everything in our daily life reminds us that today we are far from those Vienna, Paris or Buenos Aires which allowed living the surprise of the intimate nature of the new place of analysis. Perhaps, also far from the extreme point of conceiving them as “unlivable” and thus only dreaming them, as Calvino wrote: “*Invisible cities are a dream born out of the heart of unlivable cities*”. It seems strange that psychoanalysts, by accepting our request, quit theoretical reflection to give rise, through free association, through remains of oneiric and insomnia dreams, to something that reflects “their” city to them, while they try to live and survive in contemporary cities whose rhythms turn with the passing of time against psychoanalysis and its times. With a beauty done and undone out of the “aesthetics of the ugly”, the one introduced by Baudelaire, who was able to capture how the city “was changing faster than the human heart”, show that passage to “another world” that took place at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the “*phenomenon of shock*”, as Benjamin calls it, theorising the fleeting encounters in the city, from the poem *A une passante*.

However, 21<sup>st</sup> century’s cities rebel even more against the scansion of the unconscious, against the peculiar position of the analyst, against their “letting arrive”, receiving, the language of the other and not street noise, with the opening to silence that invites to talk. Besides, our analysts were asked to let their “cities” emerge from their live experience, with that schizia between the eye and the look, with recreations of angles and perspectives different from the habitual ones, built from their own

subjectivity and that of their analysands, from the territories they are familiar with and “know” about, beyond and around offices.

Chronicles cannot be made without pathways, without changes of place, without journeys. When talking in transference, in dreams and their fragmentary associations, the most frequent metaphor is that of the journey because it is about transfers. “Something always moves” when there is analysis and streets fork out, there is a crossroads, there are itineraries across unknown cities, collages of house fragments inhabited at different times; always childhoods and also mourning. The world-precinct becomes smaller and stretches in strange and erotic measures, with represented bodies and dramas of remains. Out of the daily remains of urban life and desire, those imaginary paths and landscapes are created with the source of the strong pregnancy of bodies and shapes moving in spaces different from the inhabited ones.

### **Today cities of 2012**

The analyst is and is not a citizen at the same time: *The task (is) “impossible” since the analyst cannot be, for their work to be true, either in the position of fascination (of infatuation) or immersed in the vertigo of the community, or assumed as desiring subject (that is the analyst). The analytic task forbids them to be that. Their only desire must be that the analysand recognises their desire as pure desire. This implies that floating attention is also an otherness, a non community with themselves.* (Daniel Gil, *Errancias*, 2011).

What do our metropolises make us feel?

While it is a bastion, our listening

makes us part of a “whole” of “all” the fellow citizens, which is mediated and movable. Two phrases by Lacan enclose these unsolvable contradictions: “*you cannot be an analyst without meeting in the horizon the subjectivity of your time*” and “*there is in the analyst, like in Socrates, an atopian position in the order of the city*”. They are subjects of the polis and will always be crossed by language and history and at the same time are out of place, deterritorialised, since it is the unconscious dimension that works in order to turn the analyst an eccentric: they cannot feel comfortable in the ordinary social environment and give their opinion; psychoanalytic praxis and institution never fit completely and collective regulations must leave space for what is unique and impossible about the articulation between the subject of the unconscious and the social subject.

We know Latin American cities, populated or small, which in our personal history passed from being a collection of related known neighbourhoods with a sharp delimitation of elites and margins to being centre and marginalisation at present.

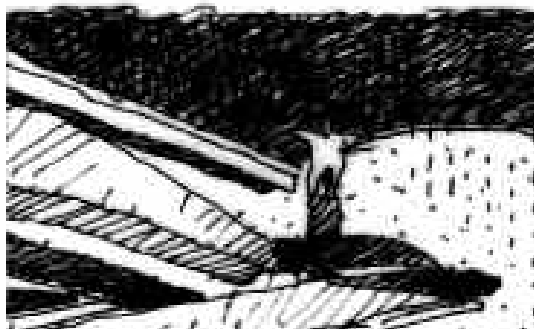
How has that changed our clinical practice? Is there anything for us of “polis” in our cities? Is it not a willingness to participate and communicate what encourages journals?

The painful exiles of Latin Americans and among them of many analysts, contributed to the emergence of “other cities” where they could live and continue to analyse in touch with other subjects, in other places. We also asked those analysts for their reflection about what that moving meant to them and, many times, that daily state “between two languages”. Many of them managed to create and recreate their practice due to those ways of forgetting and the

experience of loss that help to get out of the confinement of nostalgia and repetition in analysis. The other path is that of art which has always found a continuous source of creation and expansion in cities, by means of metonymy or metaphor, and these current paths in Latin America are so original and profuse that we witness their transformations with renewed bedazzlement.

Thus, in this section, I believe that the constant internal tension of the continent will also take place: a “present-day” of our cities as “non-places” made up by multiplied and standardised places, which have lost their memories and local references, with individuals who are not such, but rather anonymous and isolated consumers, among those excluded by consumerism; but at the same time, vital and artistic displays and a subjectivity that is always threatened but which survives and unfolds even in excess.

## Psychoanalysis in a megalopolis



Psychoanalysis cannot be conceived without taking into account its time and place of birth. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Vienna was one of the ten biggest cities in the world, the metropolis and capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in a changing Europe. Migrations from the countryside to the city increased year after year while those looking for the new world, America, gained strength. If we read Freud's four classical clinical cases (Dora, Hans, Rat Man and Wolf Man) as historical documents, we would be impressed by the amount of information they give us on the matter. In Dora we find a clear opposition between country and city. In Hans we observe a child frightened by life in a metropolis where human beings and animals seem to live together in the same space. In Rat Man the shifting borders of the declining Austro-Hungarian Empire emphasise the obsessive movements of a tortured man with imminent breakout of a war. In Wolf Man expatriation sets the tone for the primary scene of that

individual who, deprived of their first references, has to face Hobbes's aphorism *Homo homini lupus* in an abrupt opening of windows. Also this opening of windows provides guidelines for the fallacy of conceiving a "pure inner world" in which many psychoanalysts fell after Freud. Subjectivity without city is impossible as much as humanity without culture is also impossible.

I have been a clinical psychoanalyst for over forty years in São Paulo, including seven years prior to my official training at the institute of Brazilian Psychoanalytic Society of São Paulo (SBPSP for its acronym in Portuguese). My city has changed a lot during this almost half a century and so have I, as well as my clinical practice. The SBPSP, despite having changed its head office twice during this period –today it is located in a building called Olympic Tower–, seems to have been the one which changed the least regardless of the great transformations which have taken place in it since the IPA gave it official status at the beginning of the 1950s.

In forty years, São Paulo increased its population from 7 to 15 million inhabitants; it became the biggest megalopolis in the southern hemisphere and the biggest Brazilian economy. A city that today preserves few characteristics of that city described by Baudelaire in which monuments, squares and houses always referred to a personal and collective history. São Paulo's vertiginous growth

Psicoanalista (Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise de São Paulo) became a huge urban spot where luxurious buildings coexist with favelas in a strange and disturbing maze. Traffic is chaotic and transportation is difficult since the underground network is quite precarious, which forces us to use private transportation. When I began my didactic analysis, in 1975, I easily travelled

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from the hospital where I did my residence to my consulting room and my analyst's consulting room, by car or motorbike in ten or fifteen minutes from one to the other. Today it is common to receive a phone call from an analysand at the time of the session to tell you that they will not be able to arrive on time because they are stuck in traffic. The choice of an analyst by name gave way to a geographic choice. In general, it is necessary to spend two hours and a half to go to analysis and come back...

How many psychoanalysts are needed for 15 million inhabitants? We are nearly eight hundred IPA associates, including candidates and members. Although today it is one of the societies that receive the greatest number of new applicants all around the world, our growth is derisory in presence of the demand of attention. Other innumerable training institutions grow a lot more, whether they are serious or not. If forty years ago being an analyst member of the IPA was regarded as proof of professional competence, today in our city that is a less important fact: in the megalopolis of São Paulo, a psychoanalyst is almost anyone who claims to be one, a greater symptom of the globalised anonymity at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Besides, this is a sign that there is something that must be changed in our psychoanalytic institution. If psychoanalysis can only exist from living discourse, are we nowadays correctly trained to listen to the contemporary world and the voices of this new subject who emerges from the globalised world of cyberspace and from those non-places into which our megalopolis transform? Or have we been taking shelter in our olympic towers, only seeing ourselves and our families? Very few people are able to have

two or two hours and a half in their routine, four times a week, to see their psychologist in São Paulo. Some make time to go twice a week. Those who go three or four times are the candidates in didactic analysis. Most people, just once. Calling this fact resistance means denying the contemporary world. Giorgio Agamben made a valuable contribution to psychoanalysts. In his book *Stanzas. Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, by presenting the close relation between melancholy and Freudian *verleugnung*, showed that in both the lost object is something that was never possessed because it never existed.



How to help the inhabitant from our megalopolis with psychoanalysis is the task imposed to analysts from São Paulo, whether we are didactic or in training. “My plane has just landed in Congonhas two hours late so I won't be able to get to my session in time. Do you have an opening available today?” was the message I heard on my voicemail at the time scheduled for that analysand three days ago. This situation is more and more usual day after day in my clinic. The fact is that the speed of the new times along with the spread of a vibrant megalopolis places contemporary subjects at a paradoxical time, a mix of delay and urgency, always needing a “reschedule just today”. Tomorrow they might be in another city again and their flight might also be delayed.



These subjects' access not only to the analyst's consulting room but also to their own houses is, at the same time, urgent and postponed, not only due to the detours of their desire but simply by living in the space of the contemporary megalopolis, the place of the present-day subjects.

I have not made the classical agreements of traditional psychoanalysis any longer. I have built a specific setting with each analysand throughout the process. A setting that is closer and closer to the fundamental rule of free association and fluctuating attention. Temporarily, I have named it "fluctuating setting". It is an *aggiornamento* of the nickname of the city of Paris "*Fluctuat nec mergitur*" for São Paulo at the beginning of this century. A great part of my clinic is made up by professionals aged between thirty and forty, many of whom come from other cities and countries and now have settled in São Paulo. Expatriates, so to speak, like a Wolf Man a hundred years later. Their transfer is their own existence, doomed to displacements that always put them in another place.

Unlike analysts from the beginning of the last century, I feel as a witness of existences rather than as an interpreter of the dreams of these new analysands who, in most of the cases, prefer sitting instead of lying down on the couch: recognising and being recognised is the basic need for a subject lost in a world without borders or

gravity, constantly ranging between the prison of traffic and the immensity of new cyberspaces. One of my young analysands, thirty years old, would spend a lot of his time with me describing the suffocating environment of his workplace in an investment table and would also tell me a lot about his recurring dreams, in which he saw himself sitting in an armchair that flew over a huge, unrecognisable city. Another one told me he was happy when he returned to Brazil every week and recognised, from his seat up in the sky, the Brazilian coastline: he was getting home... A third one introduced himself as an Anglo-Italian, who had just arrived after three years working in New York, where he had met his current wife. She convinced him to move to São Paulo at this time of economic changes in the world. A hundred years after the times of the great migrations, he came after "his American dream" in a chaotic and frightening São Paulo. Another one is an unusually successful professional who builds a house in his hometown, where he expects his children, his new partner's children and his birth family to live in harmony at least one weekend a month. This has not happened yet although the house, built in record time and equipped with furniture chosen especially in different parts of the world, is ready to use. There is always an unforeseen event or somebody is not able to attend. A beautiful allegory of an attempt to recover an idealised place which was lost forever.

Witnessing in the Latin sense of *superstes*, the one who was present at the place where something happened, is a basic function of today's psychoanalyst in a megalopolis. As if in a farewell to the Freudian topic, discourse lives on the "new subject"; it opens more and more towards the path of the *Verleugnung*, the one marked by Freud in the beautiful article about fetishism, except that it is not about many languages that intertwine in the brightness but in the darkness of our contemporary world. In a very beautiful poem, *Viek mei*, Ossip Mandelshtam talked about the fracture between one century and another. Haroldo de Campos, from São Paulo, translated it from Russian replacing the original meaning of century with era. "*Minha era, mina fera, quem ousará, olhando-te nos olhos, colar com sangue a fratura de tuas vértebras? ...*" ("My era, my beast, who would dare, looking into your eyes, to stick with blood the fracture of your vertebrae?..."). It is in this fractured spot of the contemporary world where the psychoanalyst is placed. It was also in this same spot where Freud was placed. The sphinx has always been at city gates.



Drawings: Architect Daniel Villani.





By heart

# By Heart

Jorge Bruce\*

## “A country like yours”

André Green: a committed testimony

*Engagé*. This was the term used by Manuel Macías to describe André Green in a book of interviews<sup>1</sup> in 1994. At that moment, a paradigm rupture was taking place in France -as far as I remember initiated by Didier Anzieu<sup>2</sup> in his interviews with Gilles Tarrab-. Such rupture implied an unusual display of secrets, in an environment that had been characterised by activist discretion regarding analysts' privacy. By happenstance, Anzieu was my thesis director at the University of Paris and Green was my analyst. Therefore, reading those texts where two historic analysts seemed to break the sacrosanct agreement of neutrality had a dual impact on me.

Undoubtedly, Green approved of the term chosen by Macías as the title of the text in which he indulged himself with some personal disclosure. The term *engagé* was frequently used in France to refer to intellectuals, according to Sartrean tradition, who actively participated in the polis life. This is what is nowadays called a public intellectual in the Anglo- Saxon world. We, Latin Americans, talked about the committed intellectual -an expression that seems to have succumbed to the fall of the Berlin Wall- with that funny unconscious ambiguity (which also works in French) referring to the promise of marriage. Likewise, it is an expression that seems to stand up for said neutrality, even though it is understood that this refers to the relation with theory and institutional activity. It is not possible to be neutral and *engagé* at the same time since the environments are not isolated, as it will be seen in the testimony I allow myself to submit to the readers of *Calibán*.

Why a committed psychoanalyst? Committed to whom? “To psychoanalysis, evidently,” I think I hear the slightly irritated voice of André who, as it is well-known, placed doubt concerning his decisive affirmations on the edge of insolence. True, but this commitment, this passion, which sometimes had a bit of a conceptual and emotional tsunami, has a background and also implications that concern us and I will try to address them here. I will avoid repeating what everybody knows about his fundamental contributions to clinical thought, as he called it in one of his books. I am sure that others will approach with a more suitable distance than mine a piece of work which I would not hesitate to describe as monumental. Rather I will try, from my proximity, to account for some issues concerning every one of us Latin American analysts, that is to say, sorry for being redundant, analysts who are not European or North American, except Mexican ones. Since private matters have been mentioned, let me first make some references to my experience with the man whose recent death has left an empty space in the psychoanalytic movement because he represents, in a sense, an endangered species. He was not only a committed psychoanalyst but also a totaliser. It is something similar to the total novel writers who started to disappear in the nineteenth century in Europe; in the first half of the twentieth century in North America and in the second half in Latin America to give way to that style ranging from fragmented to narcissistic that proliferates in bookshelves and electronic media today.

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One of the reasons why I decided to move from Lima to Paris in 1980 was to be analysed by him. Such decision was exclusively based on bookish reasons, at least at a conscious level. What is absurd about this motivation is that in the seventies Green's texts were scarce in Peru. Those books were characterised by the structuralism that was all the rage in the intellectual circles at that moment. Actually, having read Saussure or the Russian formalists led me to Lacan and Green. Having a young and hardly analysed omnipotence, I mentally chose the latter. From all perspectives, it was a big misunderstanding since the analytic relationship should not be based exclusively on readings. (This like when one admires certain writer's books and then one meets them in person, at the risk of realising that the person does not coincide with the image created through reading). However, this was the case.

Once I started my therapy sessions in 1983, I made the odd, maybe contradictory, decision not to read his texts again while being in treatment. Nor did I want to learn about anything concerning his private life, which was much easier in Paris, where there are far more analysts than in Lima, where we are less than seventy and gossip spreads fast. Only once did I attend one of his conferences over that period. There I had the chance to see him pounding on the table -his hallmark- during his famous performance. I am not entirely sure, probably because now I am on this side of the couch, but I have the impression that this idealised innocence in the relationship with analysts has lost a lot of prestige. At that time, as the Bible says, that reverential fear was part of tradition and had a role worthy of being explored in the relationships between analysts and analysands.

However, his notorious intemperance did not seem to be part of his analytical tools. I will not say that he became a kind and sympathetic exegete of transference, as one could imagine Winnicott, for example, but that anger many of us have observed in scenes that are already part of the black legend of IPA congresses or meetings in societies in our region was not present in our relationship inside the consulting room. This does not mean he would give up his stand as an orthodox and cautious analyst. By contrast, unlike the French reputation for practising silent analyses, Green did not do so. Instead, he could elaborate on the sense of an interpretation showing a strong obstinacy, of course.

I accurately recall the very few times when he felt obliged to prove me right.

When we started having therapy sessions his consulting room was on *Rue de Seine* in the Latin Quarter. As its name indicates, that road ends in the river and it is in a neighbourhood with art galleries and cafés like *La Palette*, which is at a cinematographic corner where the most unfriendly waiters from the *rive gauche* worked (they were well-known for this in Paris, which means a lot). As time went by, he moved into a tiny modern and functional office located in the endearing neighbourhood of *Rue Mouffetard*. It was quite close to my place, which I found very convenient. However, I was surprised by the fact that it was obvious that his move had nothing to do with an enhancement in the area or the building, but for one reason or another, I did not ask anything.

About a year later we moved, so to speak, to *L'Observatoire* Avenue, near Luxembourg Park, very close to Lacan's apartment (who had died in 1981). I knew it because I would teach Spanish to his daughter Judith, which allowed me to pay my sessions with Green. I used to joke about this on the couch. This was definitely a distinguished place -I remember the heavy drapery framing the prestigious *La Pléiade's* book collection- and so I let myself ask about those moves. Since Green remained silent, I kept on making associations and I noticed that even the decoration had drastically changed; now it had a more feminine and elegant touch. Suddenly, I realised that it was a divorce, something that I could not dare to think, though it might have been obvious for some readers by now. This time I was uninhibited and I spoke about this intense fantasy. After some minutes of silence, when the session was about to finish, I heard the calm, deep, rather oracular voice of my analyst saying: "You are right ... but one office late."

The second time, and this is the point I would like to address, it was related to the issue of languages. It would be no exaggeration to say that I learnt French on the couch, that is to say, French related to the beloved ones and meaningful experiences. However, those who have been analysed in a language other than their mother tongue know the difficulties and limitations the task entails. Actually, we spoke English in some sessions since that was the language of my childhood as my father was an engineer associated to the oil industry. However, I used to complain that I had to express in other languages ideas written in Spanish in my mind. This constant translating task tired and bothered me. It made me feel constrained and imprisoned (I now think of my Brazilian friends and colleagues and of the still unaddressed difficulty about languages in Fepal, but which is gradually better dealt with, as evidenced by this *Calibán* issue).

One day, I was really peeved and I told him that it was ironic that having a knack for languages, he did not speak Spanish. To my surprise, he immediately agreed with me.

I asked him why, but he remained silent again.

It may seem striking but back then I completely ignored his Egyptian origins, nor did I know that Barcilón was his mother's surname. To me, Green was a first world, cosmopolitan, educated Jew, a typical product of the French illustrated bourgeoisie. Once I asked him if he was a relative of the French

writer of American origin Julien Green. He did not answer (and at that moment Google did not exist). I did know, instead, about his passion for Shakespeare, which makes me suspect that my ignorance of his origins was not involuntary and I occasionally set some “traps” for him during our sessions. For example, I mentioned Prince Hal at random while making associations and some minutes later he managed to let me know that he perfectly knew that Prince Hal was Henry V, the eldest son of Henry IV, who was the winner of the battle of Agincourt. I felt that during those moments analysis took a ludic pause, a “cultivated” one, beyond the oedipal competition. However, now I realise that those games would have never taken place based on readings by Juan Carlos Onetti, César Vallejo or Clarice Lispector (Borges was an exception to this. Green as well as Anzieu wrote about him, but Borges is considered European by Europeans).

Of course, they would not have to do so. In fact my thesis, directed by Anzieu as I previously mentioned, was based on the analysis of Peruvian writer Julio Ramon Ribeyro’s work, which was fortunately translated and published by Gallimard, whose narrations fascinated Anzieu. I aim at focusing on a symptomatic collusion between analyst and patient to deny or exclude their third world origins. Having mentioned Shakespeare, we are now on the wild and fertile lands of *Calibán*.

I came back to Lima in 1993. In 1994 Green was invited to the Fepal Congress that took place in this city. I was in charge of translating his interventions and being his companion. It was the first time, after finishing our sessions, I had the opportunity of establishing a different kind of relationship with my former analyst (Is it possible to talk about a former analyst?). I even invited him for dinner at home, we had some drinks and I could ask him everything-you-always-wanted-to-know-about-Green-without-dying-in-the-attempt. Later I visited him at his place on *L’Observatoire* Avenue in Paris more than once. However, it was not until now -feeling sad to hear of his death and shocked by the sadness it provoked due to its forcefulness- that I realise what I am trying to communicate, unsuccessfully so far.

By then I already knew about his Egyptian origins and I learnt from him that he had returned to his birthplace after many years. He told me that rather than a journey into the past, it was a journey into that country’s fabulous civilisation and culture. He told me that he had broken conclusively with Egypt long time earlier and thus there was no turning back. There was nothing that linked him to Egypt any more. In his interviews with Macías he stated that: “French was spoken in all the families of the community concerned, whereas Arabian was only spoken to communicate with ‘the natives’, as my mother called them. I used to think that such name specifically referred to Arabians and not to the inhabitants of a country. It took me a long time to understand that Egypt belonged to the Egyptians and not to the Europeans who lived there, regardless how beneficial their presence in Egypt was.”<sup>3</sup>

Now that that I have read this fragment about raising awareness about the postcolonial situation in order to write this text, I have found it very enlightening since it led me to what I felt as a linguistic limitation. It was, though not exclusively. My impression is that André’s titanic effort to become one of the main analysts in the Western world required his blending with the European mindset irreversibly. For my part, being a Peruvian who belongs to an illustrated social class of European origin in a third world country -originally inhabited only by “native”- had resonance with that division of the colonial condition, on the one hand, and the third world stamp on the other.

I have described a scene on the streets of Lima in an article for the Cordoba’s journal called *Docta*<sup>4</sup>, where I asked for Green’s opinion on a debate regarding my participation in public affairs through media (I weekly write a column for a national newspaper where I give my opinion, from a psychoanalytical point of view, on varied issues related to the polis). How did this *engagé* attitude affect the analyst’s neutrality? After some minutes of reflection, he answered: “You couldn’t have done anything different in a country like yours.”

I have undergone three different moments when processing this answer. At first, I felt relieved that I was authorised not only by my former analyst but also by one of the most passionate and important advocates of analytical identity and orthodoxy in the world. If Green granted me his certificate of good conduct, then I did not have to worry about any eventual criticism of my local colleagues (and my own doubts, of course). For some time that allowed me to continue with my stuff.

However, I gradually started developing a second reading of this answer. Wasn't Egypt a country like mine? It was then that I started thinking about the process outlined above, that is to say, about the blurring of his postcolonial origins in a reality as hybrid as the Peruvian one or any other Latin American (or African) nation. I also thought about those high costs we have to pay to undertake such enormous tasks, with high achievements like those "payments to the land", paraphrasing an expression belonging to traditional Andean cultures.

Finally, while writing this I wonder why this should be restricted to "countries like yours", namely third world postcolonial nations, with hybrid cultures, García Canclini *dixit*. In fact, it was in France where I observed and learnt about analysts' public interventions -meaning "public" or "committed intellectuals"- in the national debate. Nowadays, it is a very common practice and, as far as I know, it is hardly an object of criticism in the analytical environment: another fractured paradigm, another broken silence. Therefore, we analysts can -maybe many of us should- be social actors involved in fields of culture which are not restricted to practice. Of course, we all know that this has been so since Freud's work. I am referring not only to participating through books, but also to through today's immediacy of mass media, including the internet of course.

Austrian sociologist Helmut Dahmer insistently remarks in his books as well as in his newspaper articles<sup>5</sup> that there is a sequence that defines the destiny of the Freudian discovery and its posterity:

Freud noticed the structural analogy between the soul and culture institutions. Although both of them seem to be natural events, they are not.

The post-Freudian generation lost track of the link between cultural criticism, the theory of drives and therapy ("the process of reduction of Freudian criticism to a restricted and soft technique to treat intractable patients through other means has started").<sup>6</sup>

Finally, the process of reconstruction of Freudian theory that will enable a reversion of its "counterproductive institutionalisation" has also started.

It is paradoxical, I know, that in this evocation of one of the greatest analysts in the second half of the twentieth century, I have referred to what I reflected upon and analysed *a posteriori*, from a blind spot in our relationship. However, I am comforted by the idea that André Green would have considered this exploration of the *non-dit* between us as a continuation of the analytical process; a continuation of this endless analysis -Freud used to talk about "the unsolved transference" in *The Wolf Man* and Green was, after all, one of the greatest theorists about the work of the negative- that represents the best possible way to honour one of the most passionate fighters that the history of psychoanalysis has ever seen.

1. André Green, *Un Psychanalyste Engagé. Conversations avec Manuel Macías*. Paris Ed. Calmann-Lévy, 1994.

2. Anzieu, D., Tarrab G. *Une Peau pour les Pensées* Paris, Ed. Clancier-Guénaud, 1986.

3. Op. cit. p. 18.

4. Jorge Bruce. "¿Sabes con quién estás hablando?" [Do you know who you're talking to?] (p. 188) In: *Docta*, journal of Psychoanalysis. Year 8, spring 2010. Publication by Psychoanalytic Association of Córdoba.

5. *Psicoanálisis y Política. [Psychoanalysis and politics]* *El Comercio*, 22.07.10.

6. *Ibid*



# Logbook



## *A psicanálise nas tramas da cidade*

**Bernardo Tanis and Magda Guimarães Khouri (Organisers)**

This compilation gathers the papers presented during the I Latin American Symposium of Psychoanalysis, Culture and Community, which took place in São Paulo, Brazil, in April 2008, sponsored by Fepal Board of Community and Culture (2007-2008). This meeting aimed at holding a transdisciplinary debate on issues related to contemporary subjectivity in the paradoxical urban setting of megalopolises, structuring *locus* of citizens' mental life. It includes texts by Juan Vives Rocabert, Alcira Mariam Alizade, Claudio Laks Eizirik, Luís Carlos Menezes, María Teresa Lartigue, Ruggero Levy, Ignácio Gerber, Jorge Bruce, among others.

**Casa do psicólogo/SBPSP/ Fepal: São Paulo, 2009.**



## *On forme des psychanalystes. Rapport original sur les dix ans de l'institut psychanalytique de Berlin, 1920-1930*

**Several authors**

Published in its original edition in 1930 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the foundation of Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute and translated into French as part of the collection *L'espace analytique*, directed by Patrick Guyomard and Maud Mannoni, this text gathers the reports presented by different members of the Institute. The prologue by Sigmund Freud, the *marital* speech by Max Eitington, and testimonies by Hans Sachs, Otto Fenichel and Franz Alexander, among others, as well as the presentation for the French version by Fanny Colonomos are invaluable texts.

**Denoël: Paris, 1985.**



## *On the concept of history*

**Walter Benjamin**

Compiled and organised posthumously, these fragments and loose pieces comprise the intellectual testament of one of the most original and influencing thinkers of contemporaneity. They are not “theses” like some entitle it since Benjamin never practised academic and systematic thought: he was, above all, a sensitive reader, an outsider, an unclassifiable author who did not undergo labels. With a captivating tone and overwhelming pace, these pieces are almost a fleeing composition which suggests clues and invites us to reflect in an unprecedented way about what was already known.

**Caronte: Buenos Aires, 2009**



## Invisible cities

**Italo Calvino**

Guided by the wish to “discover the secret reasons why people live in cities”, the author outlines a fictional tour across cities invented through the travel story that Marco Polo, as an analogy with “A thousand and one nights”, tells Emperor Kublai Khan. “Cities – says Calvino– are a combination of many things: memories, desire, signs of a language; places of bartering... but not just goods, but also bartering of words, desires, memories”.

**Siruela: Madrid, 1998**

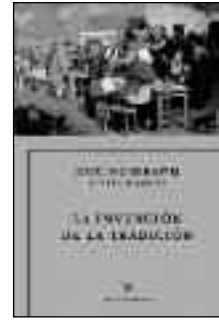


## On private madness

**André Green**

In these essays Green accounts for, among other things, the way in which post-Freudian thought questions, as an *après-coup*, the classical model suggested by Freud, mainly regarding borderline pathologies. The author even analyses the very notion of border in psychoanalysis, and he even makes Oedipus give his place to Hamlet. Like any classic, the repercussion of this book exceeded its original objective. The private madness ended up being everyone’s madness: a right rather than a pathology.

**Amorrortu: Buenos Aires, 1990**



## The invention of tradition

**Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger**

It is the result of the colloquium organised by the journal “Past and Present” in 1983. Hobsbawm, who is considered the most influential historian alive, draws from the confirmation that what is considered “traditional” and thus “very old”, has been in fact –and often– recently constituted. That arises to ensure identity and cohesion, especially faced with the rapid transformation of what is consolidated.

**Crítica: Barcelona, 2002**





## Filosofía de cámara [Chamber philosophy]

**Diana Sperling**

The essence of philosophical discourse does not consist in answering the questions that human beings constantly pose about existence. It rather consists in keeping the questions and the validity of the evocation proposed by such task. Here is a text written in Talmudic code, with non-linear structure, in which there are fragments, discussions and dialogues between wise people and thinkers from diverse times and places, attesting in the attempt to suggest the path and the requirements that the philosophical act proposes to us.

**Mármol/Izquierdo:**  
**Buenos Aires, 2008**



## Truth, reality and the psychoanalyst. Latin American contributions to psychoanalysis

**Sergio Lewkowicz and Silvia Flechner (Editors)**

Originally edited by Karnac, and intended to promote some remarkable contributions of Latin American psychoanalytic work, with English-speaking analysts and the sponsorship of Fepal board of directors 2002-2004, with Serapio Marcano as president and Gloria Gitaroff as director of publications, this compilation, with a prologue by Daniel Widlöcher and Claudio Eizirik, holds texts signed by R.H. Etchegoyen and S. Zysman, B. de León and R. Bernardi, M. Baranger, L. Kancyper, S. Vinocur, A. Muniz de Rezende, J.F. Jordán Moore, N. Marucco, A. Támez-Morales and V. Ungar. O. Kernberg, A. Ferro, J. Canestri, J. Grotstein, N. Symington, C. Botella, S. Erlich and F. Guignard comment on the input. An essential contribution to the psychoanalytic Babel.

**International psychoanalysis library/IPA: London 2005**



## The art of shrinking heads

**Dany-Robert Dufour**

Which notion of subject is applied to this time marked by the vicissitudes of late capitalism? Are the definitions by Kant and Freud (of critical subject, endorsed by the former, or of neurotic subject, proposed by the latter) on which the ways of perceiving during Modernity were built sustainable and effective? Today's subject, defined by Marcelo Viñar as a consumer rather than as a citizen, ruled by an instrumental reasoning that places them as commodities, is unravelled in this deepessay with great impact on the understanding of our burning contemporaneity.

**Paidós: Buenos Aires, 2007**



## On the utility and liability of history for life

**Friedrich Nietzsche**

This is the text that changed, once and for all, the way of conceiving history. Nietzsche holds that reflecting upon history only makes sense “from the point of view of life interest”; that is, he moves history away from the grounds of science and directs it towards the field of art. His revulsive and poetic reflections set a precedent that none of the later thinkers can ignore.

**Biblioteca Nueva: Madrid, 1999**



## “Symposium on the relations among psychoanalysts”

**Several authors**

This publication, the first Latin American psychoanalytic journal edited in our latitudes, includes the presentations made in the meetings that took place in 1959 at the Argentine Psychoanalytic Association. In the testimonies by Ángel Garma, Arminda Aberastury and León Grinberg, among others, we find critical and sharp reflections upon our training mechanisms. Its harsh relevance now, over half a century later, constitutes an annoying mark since it points out that our resources for invention have not met, until now, the expectations of inherited tradition.

**Journal of Psychoanalysis (APA). Vol. XVI, book IV, Buenos Aires, 1959**



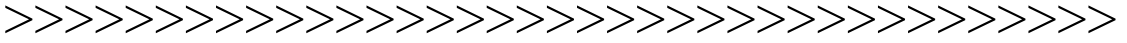
## Paper city

**Alfredo Fressia**

The author proposes a tour across cities –Mexico City, Prague, Buenos Aires, among others– with histories and geographies, from the past and the present, through their writers’ evocation and the transformations of Latin American identity, drawing from the –always– subjective paths between what is observed and what is recalled. Fressia, who has lived in São Paulo since 1976, writes: “São Paulo seems to function as an aerial: it captures the news coming from exclusion, the deaf ears of clamour, and spreads it across the south of the Third World”.

**Trilce: Montevideo, 2009**





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Professor at Institute A. Garma, Argentine Psychoanalytic Association. He has published the following books: *“Cuestiones en psicoanálisis”* [Critical issues in psychoanalysis] (2000) and *“Lacan y el debate sobre la contratransferencia”* [Lacan and the debate on countertransference ] (2009).

He has written many articles in Latin American publications. Co-author of *“Tiempo, historia y estructura”* [Time, history and structure] (2006), *“60 años de psicoanálisis en Argentina”* [60 years of psychoanalysis in Argentina] (2002), *“Itinerari sul perdono”* (2010) and *“Actualizando la clínica lacaniana”* [Updating Lacanian clinic] (2012). [accabral@intramed.net](mailto:accabral@intramed.net)

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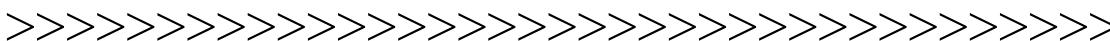
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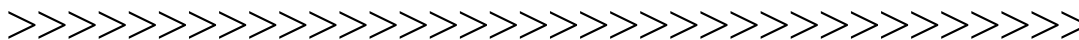
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Runo Lagomarsino was born in Lund, Sweden, 1977 and is an artist based in Malmö and São Paulo. After studying art at the Valand School of Fine Art, Gothenburg and *Malmö Art*



*Academy*, where he got his master's degree (2003), he attended the Whitney Independent Studies Program in New York (2007-2008). His work has been presented in international collective exhibitions such as 54<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale (Danish pavilion) and 12<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennale.  
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Born in Toronto, Canada, in 1979. He is a writer and an independent curator. He lives and works in New York and London. He was the curator in the exhibitions "Louise Bourgeois: the return of the repressed"; "Andy Warhol, Mr. America"; "Robert Mapplethorpe: sacred and profane", among others. He has written about the work of Tracey Emin, Jenny Holzer, Milton Resnick, Irán do Espírito Santo and Roni Horn, among others.

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Born in Havana, Cuba, in 1945, he is an independent curator and art critic. He was one of the organisers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Havana Biennale in 1984. Curator of the *New Museum of Contemporary Art*, New York, from 1995 to 2009. Currently, his activity is mainly international. He travels, gives lectures and is exhibition curator in over 70 countries. At present, he is the art director (2011-2013) of PHotoEspaña, in Madrid.

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Born in Governador Valadares, Minas Gerais, Brasil, 1977, now he lives and works in the metropolitan area of Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Performer and visual artist. Member of the collective Kaza Vazia / Itinerant Art Gallery. Puppeteer member of *Associação de Teatro de Bonecos* State of Minas Gerais / Brazil. He participated in *Platform of Performance Porto Alegre* (2009)  
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# Guidelines for authors

*Calibán – Latin American Journal of Psychoanalysis* is the official publication of the Federation of Psychoanalytic Societies of Latin America (Fepal for its acronym in Spanish), an organisation connected to the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA), which has been issued regularly since 1994 entitled *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicoanálisis* [Latin American Journal of Psychoanalysis].

The aim of this editorial proposal is to foster the spread and development of Latin American psychoanalytic thinking in its specificity and to promote its interaction with psychoanalysis from other parts of the world. It seeks to encourage reflection and debate by inserting issues relevant to psychoanalysis into contemporary scientific, cultural, social and political contexts. It is published every six months.

Each issue will include articles with the format of an essay, a scientific article, an interview, a review or other formats deemed appropriate by the Editors.

The works to be published will be unpublished and written in Spanish or Portuguese. However, if the Editors consider that certain works that have already been published or presented in congresses, round table discussions, etcetera, are particularly interesting, they can be published mentioning the place and date when they were originally presented. Original works in other languages without versions in Spanish or Portuguese can be published.

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The presentations must not exceed 8.000 words in A4 format, Times New Roman 12-point font size, double-spaced. The bibliography, which will not be included in the maximum length, will be the essential one and will conform to the references explicit in the text. Some works for specific sections of the *Journal* can have additional specifications.

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