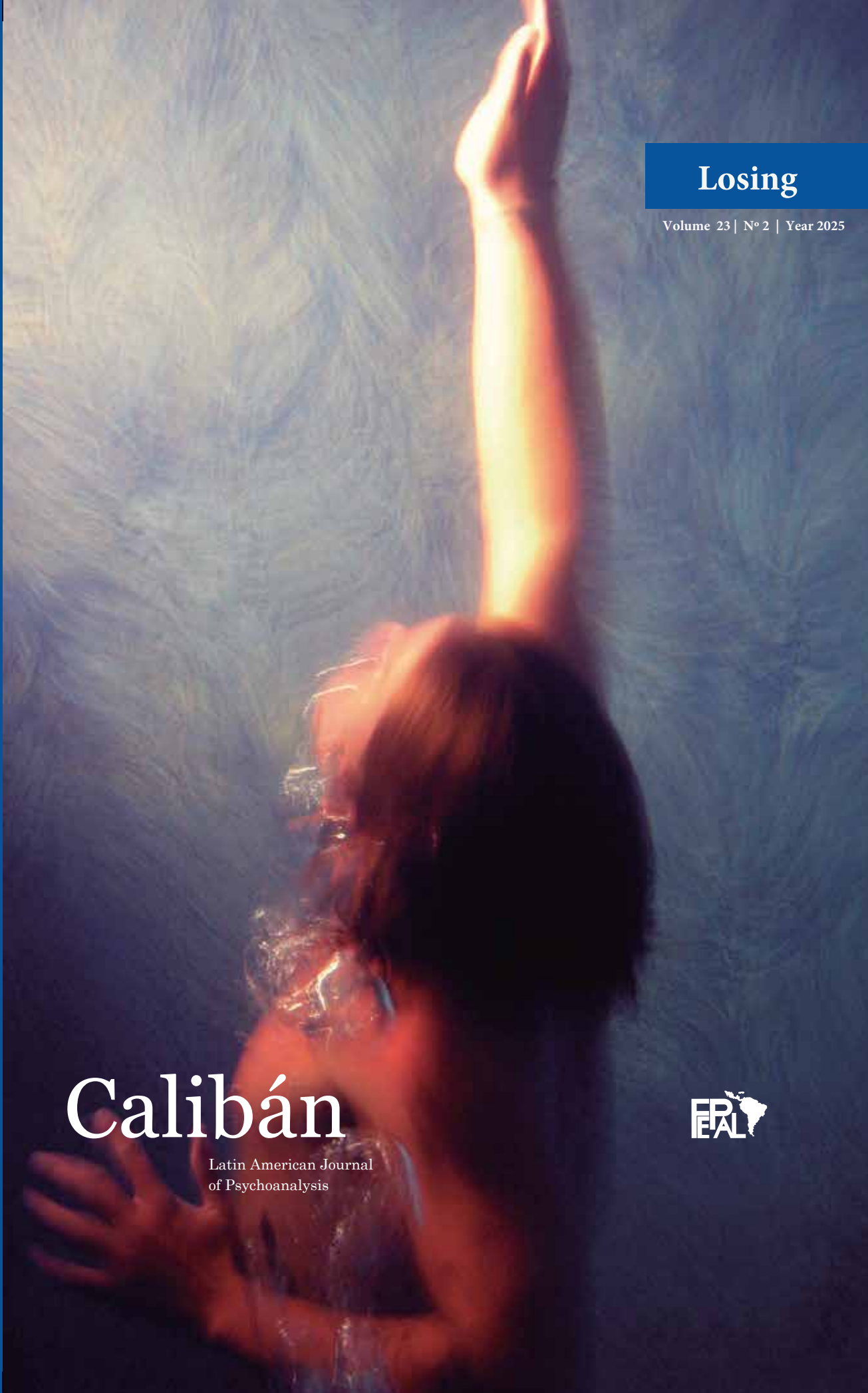

Losing

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FEPAL

Héctor Solari
Looking at War (1), pastel on paper, 2015. 38.5 x 65 cm

Héctor Solari
Looking at War (37), pastel on paper, 2015. 38.5 x 65 cm

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Editorial assistant: Arena Hernández

Art and design direction:
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The vanity of being and the eye of the partridge

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same
[…]
If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss

Rudyard Kipling, *If,* 1910

Landscape with the Fall of Icarus

Landscape with the Fall of Icarus (ca. 1560)[1] shows us a rural scene alluding to everyday life, composed of a fisherman, a farmer, merchants, animals, and ships, where the presence of Icarus's death is subtly and casually included, submerged in the water after his fall. Following his father Daedalus in flight and sharing with him the hybris of defying the law of gravity, the young man gets too close to the sun and, burning his wings, falls, amidst the indifference of the others. Countless suggestive readings for psychoanalysis have been made of this myth beautifully described by Ovidio in Metamorphoses (translated in 2008).

What interests me to highlight about the painting, inspired by a recent seminar on art and psychoanalysis taught by Leandro Drivet[2], is the eye of the partridge, which, as it gazes intently at Icarus, seems to be the only witness to his fate. This crucial point in the relaxed setting of the painting, the Barthesian "punctum" (Barthes, 1980/1989), evokes the inescapable nature of our own death. It's as if the painting were telling us that even if humans are captive in their labors around "progress"—one could include the most recent technological developments—the partridge reminds us that it is impossible to avoid the overwhelming reality of death.

It is no minor detail that Icarus died bearing the guilt of his father Daedalus, who had murdered his talented—and therefore threatening—nephew Talos by casting him from the Acropolis. Pallas, guardian of ingenuity, transformed him into a partridge before he hit the ground; hence Talos is also known as Perdix. The gaze of the partridge, then, evokes the terrible consequences of failing to accept the limits of our capacities, the possibility of defeat despite our striving, or the inherent lack that accompanies being, that is, losing.

The Vanity of Being

It is not merely that humans have no choice but to accept their finitude; we also know from Freud that the ego is constituted through loss- whether of object or of omnipotence as he metaphorized in the narcissistic wounds of humanity: the loss of the central place in the universe, the loss of human superiority in relation to their own animality, and the loss of the ego as the sole master of their own home. This view is explored in *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917 [1915]/1984a) and, in greater detail, in *The Ego and the Id* (1923/1984b). Lacan (1956-1967/1994) critiques the illusion of unity, showing that loss is structural and that desire is born from lack. Klein (1940/2011) contributes her notion of infinite alternation of positions, in which loss can be experienced without becoming threatening. Winnicott (1965/1993), speaking of progressive disillusionment, suggests that being able to lose the subjective object is the path to a meaningful psychic life. These are just a few examples of loss in the psychoanalytic theoretical corpus. However, the unitary vision of the self, so strongly entrenched from modernity to the present day, continues to attempt to deny this condition.

As psychoanalysts, we can affirm that the catastrophe lies not in losing, but in the pretension that the subject can remain intact, univocal, without conflict, and untouched by the foreignness implied by the existence of the unconscious and its mul-

1. Attributed to Brueghel the Elder, dated to the first third of the 16th century. Although the workmanship of the work appears not to have been done by the painter, the composition of the painting is.

2. I am referring to the seminar "Aesthetics in an Anesthetized World: Art and Psychoanalysis," conducted by Leandro Drivet, a psychoanalyst with a PhD in Social Sciences from the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), Buenos Aires, Argentina. It was organized by Ivonne Sanguinetti Cultural Space and held online in May 2025.

tiple textures. Of course, this vanity of being- which eludes fracture and gravitates toward certainties about itself- is a risk that also concerns the analyst´s position, who would have to begin by accepting loss so that their patients can do so as well.

Escaping the sovereignty of the unitary being has always been the contribution that the perspective of psychoanalysis has offered, and should continue to do so. To resist the assaults of a seemingly neutral and ideology-free positivism that simplifies existence, rendering the heterogeneity and opacity of all that lives unacknowledged—this is the true catastrophe, the loss of what we might call humanity.

Just to mention one of the possible consequences: when the drive-laden body, the desiring body, the body marked by the incarnate traces of the unconscious loses its complexity, it also loses its folds and potentialities, and becomes vulnerable to forces against which it can do little. Thus, this body runs a greater risk of expressing itself increasingly as a soma, as a commodity for consumption, as an entity on the operating table, as meaningless skin.

Losing as Part of a Process

To the problem of loss of unitary being and the logic of possession, we must add the irrefutable fact that, as in all vital and non-vital circumstances, losing is part of a process of movement and transformation. Philosophy spoke of this earlier and more clearly. From Heraclitus, in the 6th century AD, regarding the perspective that everything flows; through Deleuze and Guattari (1980/2004), and the importance of loss in processes of deterritorialization as a condition of creation; and ending with Braidotti (2013/2015), whose vision of posthumanism sees the self not a closed unit but as a node within continuous processes- losing is transformation.

The very notion of the grieving process implies the movement of a journey toward recovery as much as the risks of remaining trapped in the static of pain in order not to lose.

Curiously, the obsession with the development and growth of human economic "evolution," magnified in advanced industrial capitalism, refutes the idea of becoming and replaces being with the control of being. By demonizing loss, it is not conceived as part of a movement where losing is not an end, but a passage, a fold in becoming. Losing is inherent to becoming a subject; we already know this, but we easily forget it.

As long as losing is valued within a complex process, there will be many intervening variables that produce diverse, unique experiences. It is clear that we all suffer in more or less similar ways from the traumas of humanity, as McDougall (1995/1997) calls them, but it is impossible to ignore that these are experienced and processed according to different social, cultural, historical, and age contexts. Hence, losing is always relational.

Anamaría McCarthy
Infinity Room (2024), intervened photography, 80 x 100 cm, *Empty Rooms* series

The Cultural *Hybris* of Not Losing

Adam Phillips (2024) considers that losing has become a taboo, going against the culture that seeks to dominate loss at all costs, unable to surrender. Politically, this has serious consequences if we think of politicians who can never give up or be seen giving up.

The effects of the culture of having and not losing drive powerful economic sectors to extremes of shamelessness, privileging their interests in violent contexts of social and political trauma. What were face is not the threat of the return of the repressed or the split-off; rather, it seems like the return of *hybris*- both individual and cultural. the pretension of always winning and never losing. What has changed is not so much what we lose but our way of existence, which is increasingly reluctant to lose. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why a growing need to lose oneself emerges as a response.

For some time now, we've known about *hikikomori*, the term used in Japan for people who withdraw into their homes for extended periods. But relatively recently, and also in Japan, the number of people who voluntarily disappear from their homes, even from comfortable circumstances, to live as simply as possible, even as homeless people on the streets, has grown. These latter are known as *johatsu*, which in Japanese means "evaporated" or "disappeared," because most of them vanish without a trace, losing all previous references, even their identity. This radical act of voluntarily losing everything, as if stepping out of the game of social life, invites reflection on active loss to avoid passive loss, or perhaps a retreat to live on the margins as resistance against a demanding and oppressive system. Win Wenders' beautiful film *Perfect Days* (2023) could illustrate this.

Returning to the painting of the fall of Icarus, perhaps we would still wish to live like the villagers, simply and carefree, without facing death, avoiding being caught in the anguish provoked by its looming presence, which the eye of the partridge reminds us of.

From this everyday scene, open to infinite interpretations of loss, and from the gaze that the partridge's eye returns to us—like the psychoanalyst attentive to what, as individuals, we avoid seeing—the horizon of this issue of *Caliban* opens. Here, losing is not merely absence, tinged with nostalgia for what is no longer there, but a moment within the continuum of relationships, a fold in the process where what changes does not vanish, but transforms.

Arguments opens the issue, and as usual, with the central theme: *Losing*. This time we encounter the account of clinical experiences, unusual in this section. We have, thus: how much is lost if there is no awareness of the analyst's place of enunciation from a supposed ontological neutrality (Ayouch); the loss in the everyday, that "migrant tooth" that evokes the original scene, unknowable and forever missing (Michelson); the "snail-shell home" of human life that we must lose, yet never cease to yearn for and seek through narcissism (Toyos); the unnameable pain of a dead child in Piedad Bonett's writing, seen through a psychoanalytic lens (García Cannock); the desperate attempt to control the uncontrollable that characterizes life as much as death, and its effects on the analyst himself (Luyando Hernández). Extreme situations of loss such as that of an adolescent with a traumatic history of social vulnerability (Mello de Vilhena and Graneiro Bastos), and finally, an invitation to dare to embrace the as well as the invitation to encourage us to accept loss of the psychoanalytic theories (Trotta).

The guest of **The Foreigner** section is Argentine writer Ariana Harwicz, who, with the sharp wit that characterizes her writing, inspires an interesting dialogue with psychoanalysis. By proposing that "writing is without judgment," she invites us to reaffirm, with the same forcefulness, that psychoanalytic listening is without judgment, or at least should sustain the desire to suspend it.

For the **Vortex** section, the suggestive choice of the theme *To be able/To lose: The Place of the Analyst* leads us through the harsh territory of the clinic. From the intimacy of the analytic process, some writings focus on the *expertise* of losing that inhabits the psychoanalyst, the death of the analyst as a point of convergence of previous losses, and the psychoanalyst's concern about aging. More situated within institutional issues, other texts delve into the limits of power associated with the capacity to lose, how these limits become more difficult when the institution is endogamous and closed, as well as the need to confront the importance of critical investigation into what happens "behind the couch."

In **Incident**, we encounter two evocative texts that speak to the truly extreme situations we are experiencing as humanity. The need to speak in the first person about loss when working with populations who have lost everything (Romero). The radical situation of a president who, with his political aspirations, seems to have lost all restraint, even shame (Hirschhorn Gheller).

With the theme *Saudade*, ***Dossier*** offers us, from its editorial, a complex, elusive, and ambiguous experience, just as this word condenses around encounter and disagreement, presence and absence, farewell and nostalgia. An experience that simultaneously intertwines lack and fullness, nostalgia and happiness. And, as always in this section, it does so in a sensitive and subtle way, through multiple approaches: linguistic, historical, cultural, social, and personal.

The interview with Carlos Granés presented by **Textual** bears the evocative title of a verse by Hugo Mujica that the interviewee mentions during the interview: "Deep down there are no roots, there is what has been torn away." Here, he alludes to his view that in Latin America, there is a great deal of experience of loss, even of identity, and therefore the need to find it, whether in the Indigenous, the Spanish, the North American, or any other place.

In the **Classic and Modern** section, Marta Lewin reflects on the contributions of psychoanalyst and scholar of childhood mourning Marilú Pelento, proposing that in childhood, the capacity for, working through grief do not yet exist, which is why an unsymbolizable remainder always persists.

For **Invisible Cities**, Zachrisson describes a Guatemala of successive disasters and reconstructions, but also a green and beautiful city, multilingual, pluricultural, and multiethnic.

Off the field includes the text, winner of the 2024 Sigmund Freud Prize from Fepal, by Míriam Cristiane Alves. This text proposes that the zone of non-being, far from being barren, concentrates many potentialities to generate new meanings, to create realities out of colonial distress, and to construct identificatory processes that

break with the duality that confines being in relation to the other.

In the **By Heart** section, Duarte Gavião offers a heartfelt remembrance of the renowned and beloved Roosevelt Cassorla. The text traces the contributions of this prolific author, who extended his influence beyond Brazil and left a significant mark on Latin American psychoanalytic thought.

Finally, **Binnacle** presents two prominent artists participating in the issue. Peru-based American photographer Anamaría McCarthy evokes the delicate journey of grief recounted by Anny Duperey in *The Black Veil* (1992/1994). McCarthy accompanies the openness to loss that this issue attempts to convey with a sensitive aesthetic, showing us how memories are transformed, reinventing bonds and experiences. Uruguayan artist Héctor Solari masterfully presents space as a stage for loss through images, which he then translates into words in his own text, also included in the section. I suggest you linger over these artists' images and allow the possible dialogue, unique to each individual, to find its place.

I conclude this article with a few lines from Agamben (2025) and invite you to read *Losing* with the depth of the tremendous saudade left by Marcelo Viñar, a teacher to many and a close friend of *Calibán*.

> The only way we can think about the new is to read it and decipher its hidden features in the forms of the old that pass and dissolve. […] That which has served its time and seems to dissolve loses its relevance, is emptied of its meaning, and becomes, in a way, possible again. (paragraph 1)

María Luisa Silva Checa
Editor, *Calibán* - RLP

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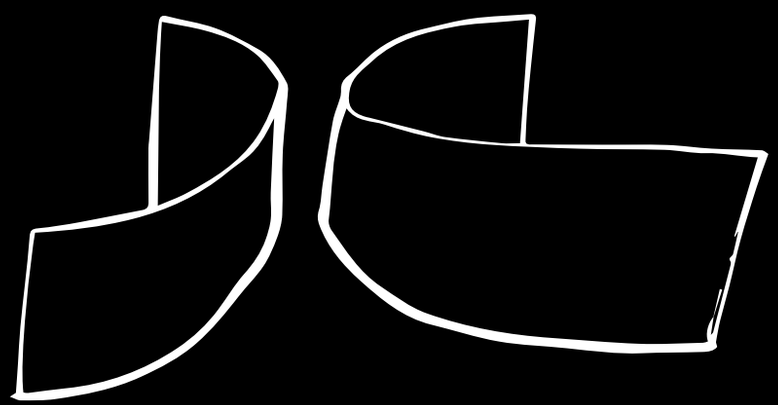

Arguments:
Losing

Calibán - RLP, 23(2), 16-33
2025

Thamy Ayouch*

Psychoanalysis and race melancholy

Psychoanalysis emerged as one of the latest products of modernity, in the context of flourishing capitalism, the sexuality apparatus, and the prosperous colonies of the 19th century. However, it frequently exempts itself from a study of the coloniality that permeates its own clinical or theoretical framework. Coloniality refers to the enduring effects of colonization beyond formal independence, and to its ongoing consequences in the present: it constitutes an episteme, a site of enunciation that traverses culture, politics, economy, and subjectivity.

Here, race is central: it legitimizes dehumanization, massacre, and exploitation of colonized and enslaved bodies, naturalizing their hierarchy. But race doesn't exist. Nevertheless, it permeates relationships between groups and between subjects. Constructed through a long, often omitted history of violence, race continues to operate today as a system of power, a principle of social stratification. It produces undeniable psychic effects that mainstream psychoanalysis—also shaped by colonial indifference—frequently overlooks. One such effect, often neglected by both social and psychic perspectives, is melancholization of race

What does this process of melancholization of race consist of, and what might psychoanalysis be able to hear in it? To approach this question, we must examine the psychic consequences of racialized social relations on the subject and on the subject of the unconscious.

Here, I draw on the distinction in French between *racisé/e* (racized) and *racialisé/e* (racialized). Racization is only one aspect of racialization processes: it refers to the production of a designation of domination. Racization is a negative and inferior form of racialization. While racialization affects everyone, racization concerns only non-white individuals. Those considered white are racialized, but not racized.

Addressing racial melancholization entails raising a series of questions. One must ask, then, what it means to grow up as a racized subject in a self-proclaimed white country, and what effects raciality has on the processes of subject identification. But the issue also concerns the way in which the social violence experienced daily by racized analysands can be perpetuated in the analyst's office when the analyst conceals social relations of discrimination behind a universal subject of the unconscious. What kind of melancholization does this provoke?

* Professor in the Department of Psychoanalytic Studies at the University of Paris-Cité, Paris, France.

Within the analytic dispositif, race is first linked to how heightened exposure to vulnerability shapes the positions occupied by analyst and analysand in the transference. This raises the question of whether a specific form of subjective silencing exists—distinct from Freudian repression or language alienation—and to what extent it is perpetuated in the analytic setting. How might we dismantle the silencing effects inherent to race melancholization within the clinical encounter?

Collective construction, subjective effects

The race system

It is necessary to first define race. Unlike the plural biological categorization of *races* theorized in the 18th and 19th centuries, *race* does not refer to any naturalized phenotypic belonging, but to social relations of power: it is neither biological nor ontological, but *relational* . The term refers to the historical, social, and political fabrication of hierarchies through colonization, the massacre of indigenous populations in the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Oceania, slavery and the African slave trade, followed by incentivized or regulated processes of economic migration, all elements that underpinned modernity and the development of capitalism. Race is a social construction, resulting from the categorization and hierarchization of populations based on their languages, cultures, practices, religions, and economic interests in the distribution of labor. The sociological use of *race* , rather than the biologizing and pseudoscientific use of *races* , invalidates essentialist and naturalizing classifications of populations and points to their permanence in social relations.

In this sense, race remains the organizing principle of social relations, even in democracies, and of relations between nation states. Aurélia Michel (2020) points to a series of everyday experiences in which race acts in a trivialized way:

> When we enter an important public building, such as a museum or a university, we are not surprised to find everyone in their place, according to their racial status: we know, no doubt unconsciously, to associate phenotypes and geographical origins with the individuals we perceive as security guards, cleaners, administrative employees, and people in positions of responsibility. In the classrooms of French national education, we also know in advance the attitudes students will adopt based on their "origin" and the attention adults will offer them in response, which, moreover, will

> produce the expected results in terms of their academic and then professional careers. It is also understandable that some nations have to manage others' waste on their territory, or the climatic consequences of their consumption patterns [...].
> Many of our attitudes are clearly organized by race, whether or not we are aware of it [...].
> This division, internalized by all, is often perfectly explicit to those who are its victims, while the beneficiaries, who have not really asked to be so, ignore it and often say that they "do not see color." (pp. 336-337)

Therefore, it is important to understand that racism is not just an individual or psychological issue, but a system of ethnoracial hierarchies that prevail at many levels. Racism legitimizes an order in which some retain an advantage over others, in terms of dignity, education, housing, access to employment, or income. Racism refers in general terms to a social mechanism, sometimes without directly racist subjects, that assigns different positions and distinct «identities» to groups based on social power relations.

Racism, beyond a psychologizing perspective that would regard it as an individual phenomenon—belonging to racist subjects or groups—is the result of institutional operations that differentially distribute privileges and disadvantages. Certain segments of the population, due to their ethnoracial, religious, or cultural differences, are consistently subjected to policies and practices that, while not explicitly targeting them, nonetheless affect their lives, education, employment, housing, and interactions with public institutions or law enforcement.

Institutional racism, therefore, does not mean the intentional persecution of racized individuals by malicious white people; rather, it is the impersonal way in which race undermines equal opportunity.

Racism stems from the very structure of society, from the «normal» way in which political, economic, legal, and familial relations function. Rather than a pathological or abnormal phenomenon, it is a process that occurs without individuals' knowledge and is part of a historical and political tradition in which social conditions of systemic discrimination against racially identified groups are directly and indirectly perpetuated.

Race is not just a matter for explicit racists: it is a global social order that emerged in the modern era to organize the distribution of labor, wealth production, and social relations on a global scale. This social construction has a history.

With and without history

It may be useful to establish a dual genealogy of race: one rooted in the Iberian Peninsula and shaped religiously through the (Re)Conquest [1]and the exactions of the Inquisition; and another in the colonial expansion toward the Americas, grounded in the necessary classifications of populations that sustained it.

1. Was there a true reconquest, "the recovery of the Spanish territory invaded by Muslims in 711", as the *Dictionary of the Royal Academy defined it* in 1936, or simply an expansion and conquest by the Catholic Monarchs of a territory held by Muslims? Contemporary historians debate the idea of a *Reconquista*, a myth that did not emerge until the 11th century and became an ideological and political artifact in the 19th century, as evidenced by the capitalization of the term.

1. Following a policy of Christianization of Jews and Muslims that opened up marital alliances with members of the old Christian society to a large number of converts, in the mid-15th century, the approval of the *Statutes of Blood Purity* regulated access to the social promotion established by these marital alliances: the descendants of a converted ancestor were excluded. The rejection was based more on the presence of Jewish blood in the ancestry than on beliefs or crypto-Judaism: it was the first naturalization of the race.

This ontologization, inherent to the fabrication of race, also implied the timeless nature of conversion (Fabre, 1999). The terms «*new Christian*» or «*convert*» referred both to the converted ancestor and to all of their descendants.

2. Rather than managing marriages or social advancement, race in the Americas served to justify the division of labor (semi-slavery or slavery) and the atrocious treatment suffered by indigenous people and African deportees. The colonization of the Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands, Cape Verde, São Tomé, and later the Americas, and the development of sugar plantations in these lands, gave rise to a racialization of the world: forced labor of «Indians» and the trafficking of Africans began to replace Amerindian labor on plantations and in mining operations (p. 97). Religious, philosophical, anthropological, and scientific arguments attesting to the inferiority of the 13,000,000 deported Black people, as well as that of the indigenous people of the invaded lands, were developed to reconcile this distribution of labor with the supposedly «humanist» values of religion, the philosophy that promoted reason and the Enlightenment, and the political theory of equality and democracy.

Race was biologized in the 18th and 19th centuries, giving rise to classifications of the world's peoples, perpetuated by anthropology, the «science of races» of the 19th century. This «scientific» evolution was accompanied by a popularization of race: «human zoos» at world exhibitions, literature, the press, postcards, travelogues, theater and film, etc.

While the eugenic theories of Gobineau, Le Bon, and Vacher de Lapouge flourished in Europe, policies to attract European immigrants to the Americas literally applied this social engineering. In republics like Argentina and Uruguay, civilizational whitening was accompanied by the extermination of a large portion of the Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations.

This social Darwinism gave rise to a series of race-based legislations (Jim Crow laws in the United States, the legal apparatus of Nazi Germany, Vichy France, and apartheid South Africa), culminating on European soil in the atrocity of the Jewish and Roma genocide. The Shoah seemed to mark the return of the repressed beyond Europe's borders—it resurrected what had been created in Europe in the 15th century, had fueled the worst colonial cruelties, and was now reproduced within Europe itself: race.

Yet, while race is part of a historical process, its modes of social application and effectiveness rely precisely on the erasure of that historicity. This notion, "scientifically" established in the 19th century, links fixed moral and intellectual qualities to geographic, climatic, or phenotypic traits attributed to a people, assigning different human groups an immutable, timeless, innate nature, transmissible through genealogy. As a "naturalization of social and historical relations" (Olender, 2009, p. 25), the category of race immobilizes human groups within an essence devoid of history.

Enigmatic transmissions

Direct or veiled racism has undeniable psychic effects. One could say it shapes particular forms of subjectivation, structured by a social context long inherited from slavery and colonization—what Lacan defines as the Symbolic. However, this Symbolic should not be understood as a transcendent, ahistorical, eternal, and immutable structure of signifiers, but rather as a specific organization of power relations and signification, inscribed within the long legacy of race. In Jean Laplanche's terms (2007), it is a "mythosymbolic": a series of circulating codes that guarantee modes of subjectivation within a context of social power relations. According to Laplanche's theory of generalized seduction, the "fundamental anthropological situation" in which an adult cares for a child reactivates the adult's unconscious infantile impulses, thereby compromising—through this unconscious interference—every message sent to the child. The child must translate these messages in order to constitute their ego, to build the preconscious part of their psychic apparatus, and thus to historicize themselves. The untranslated remnants then form the child's unconscious. To carry out this translation-symbolization, the child relies on schemas provided by the cultural environment—what Laplanche calls the "mythosymbolic." These are grand narrative frameworks, transmitted through cultural hegemony, that assist the child in translating the enigmatic message.

Regarding race, these Western-centered myth-symbolic structures operate according to the dualities of dominant-dominated, white-black, colonizer-native, master-slave, Western-subaltern, global North-global South. This is a set of discourses that have circulated for five centuries, establishing differential humanities, transforming diversity into hierarchy, legitimizing an extractivist organization of labor and a particularized access to goods in the context of the emergence and development of capitalism and its current neoliberal vicissitudes.

Thus, multiple and varied racial representations disrupt the messages transmitted from parents to children and blend the transgenerational with new racial experiences. As Guilaine Kinouani (2022) points out, slavery left lasting marks on attachment, the fundamental bond between parents and children, without which children cannot develop trust in intimate relationships. It long posed a constant threat of family separation, due to women's continued work in the fields or the sale of their offspring. This normalization of interrupted attachment is repeated in the history of African or Caribbean migrations away from their children. The memory of these vicissitudes remains alive in transgenerational transmission.

Messages from the adult to the child can also become enigmatic when they carry a series of experiences of racism: the adult may have been rejected due to their racization, suspected of cheating or of not being the true author of their schoolwork, discouraged from pursuing higher education and automatically steered toward a vocational track, witness to police violence against racized men, or informed of the racism endured by family members, among other experiences. The cumulative effect of these experiences can often awaken untranslated remnants of extreme racial aberrations and violence transmitted across generations.

A form of internalized racism can also unconsciously accompany the messages transmitted from adult to child, through an aim of whitening, the establishment of an assimilated color hierarchy, and a high regard for white, Western-centric values and conceptions. This is what Alessandra Devulsky (2021) highlights when she presents colorism as an avatar of racism [2]. But it can also take the form of a particular kind of sadism on the part of racized parents toward their children, intended to prevent the harsh fate society may have in store for them—or to prepare them for it. If the racized child receives the conscious message that they must perform twice as well as a white child to be recognized or succeed, it comes with the unconscious interference of an irredeemable and irrecoverable inferiority.

Racial Fracture

Grada Kilomba (2023) analyzes the constant reactivation, through racism, of a history that remains unresolved. The othering of Blackness—a primary form through which whiteness is constructed—is not the result of a familial trauma, but of repeated contact with the violent barbarity of the white world. This trauma, a reawakening of slavery and colonialism through everyday racism, lacks symbolic elaboration within culture:

> Classical psychoanalysis failed to recognize the influence of social and historical forces on the formation of trauma (Bouson, 2000; Fanon, 1967). However, the painful effects of trauma demonstrate that Africans on the continent and in the diaspora had to deal with individual and familial traumas within the dominant *white culture* , as well as with the collective historical trauma of slavery and colonialism recreated in ordinary racism, where we once again become *the* subordinate and exotic Other of whiteness. (p. 215)

Through violent clashes or microaggressions—a cumulative series of episodes that deprive the subject of social support by severing their bond with a society unconsciously conceived as white—trauma becomes embedded in everyday life. Colonial history invades the present, giving rise to a sense of timelessness: the subject is cast into hallucina-

2. In addition to discrimination between groups, *colorism* refers to discrimination within the same group that favors lighter skin tones closer to whiteness. These distinctions are a direct legacy of the classification system for the children of various mixtures of enslaved African descendants and whites (mulattoes, quadroons, etc.).

tory scenes that make forgetting the past impossible. The function of everyday racism, argues Grada Kilomba, is to reestablish a lost colonial order, revived whenever the Black subject is once again instituted as the other.

Trauma must be understood precisely as a resonance between real, current events and unconscious material resulting from transgenerational transmission. Racial assignment becomes traumatic when a racist event—whether directly or indirectly discriminatory—reactivates untranslated unconscious remnants passed from adult to child. Racist acts are also traumatic insofar as aggression, insult, ostracism, threats, beatings, and the many forms of explicit or implicit discrimination signify a collapse of group support, echoing historically constituted fantasies of abjection.

It is also necessary to recognize that this trauma is ongoing and does not involve the temporality of the post-traumatic; it is never an event that has simply passed. Rather, it is constantly reactivated by external reality, endlessly repeating itself in everyday life. This process gives rise to a melancholization: the body's incorporation, in various forms, of social and psychic processes that have been depsyched.

The melancholic whiteness

"Bleaching or disappearing"

Structural and systemic racism is the correlate of the constitution of a white identity that is rendered invisible as such, because it is defined as universal, and which benefits from greater economic and symbolic capital. It produces «white privilege,» a transgenerational advantage of being perceived and categorized as white in societies permeated by social relations of race. It is an invisible system that confers racial domination on a specific group, offering numerous opportunities to subjects considered white, whether or not they approve of the dominant position they share. This privilege is often ignored: for Pierre Tevanian (2013),

> Being white means not having to ask the question "what does it mean to be white?", not having to question, unlike blacks, Arabs and other non-whites, one's identity and place in society, because this place is in some way self-evident.

Whiteness ultimately becomes performative, in the sense that Judith Butler (1990/2005) attributes to gender performativity. This means that the discourses, acts, gestures, prerogatives, and desires expressed and enacted by those assigned as women and men create the illusion of an internal core of "femininity" or "masculinity," sustained precisely through the constant repetition of normative codes. This singular reiteration produces the idea of an original model of woman or man—one that exists only through repeated imitation and derives from performativity (p. 69). In the same way, whiteness is an imitation without origin, whose constant repetition establishes the racist notion of a natural foundation for white identities.

A fundamental psychic effect of this is, therefore, the imposed, but also internalized, ideology of whitening. Frantz Fanon (1952/2009) summed it up with this resounding statement: "As painful as this observation may seem to us, we are obliged to make it: for the Black person, there is only one destiny. And that is white" (p. 44).

Described by Lélia González (2020), this phenomenon gives rise to the figure of the "jabuticaba" (a fruit that is black on the outside and white on the inside): a socially ascended Black individual who internalizes and reproduces white racist ideological values, leading them to feel ashamed of their community of origin. By introjecting the racial social relations that marginalize them, they strive to be whiter than white, become alienated, and ultimately deny the very existence of racism and racial discrimination.

The Brazilian psychoanalyst Neusa Santos Souza (1983/2020) studied in detail this dilemma faced by many Black individuals in situations of social mobility: many of them choose a white identification model as the only way to «become someone.» But this is achieved at the cost of an incessant effort to construct a white ego ideal, in order to expunge the black stain. Faced with the dramatic realization of the impossibility of achieving this ideal, which constitutes a serious narcissistic wound, the Black subject faces a choice: succumb to the punishment of the superego and melancholy or fight harder to find new solutions to the psychic conflict—whether through a white love object or through political militancy.

Whitening is, then, a paradoxical quest for disembodiment, in which the Black subject is reduced to the body in which they are confined, while the white subject—adopting an illusory, unlocated, universal, and neutral position—presumes to be without a body. The formerly colonized individual, or the racized subject in today's white-dominant context, is subjected to the alternative of either becoming someone else (whitened) or being othered: hypersexualized and fetishized, fixed to biology, genitalized, or—within a "delirious Manichaeism"—cast as Evil.

Guilaine Kinouani (2022) describes this still-present experience of the exclusion of the racized body from white spaces:

> You walk into a room. It's a white space. When you enter, you feel a weight. You look around. Eyes stare at you as if they're about to devour you. You instantly realize you're the only person of color in the room. A feeling of unease washes over you. You feel a little dizzy. The discomfort may even make you lightheaded. Oh, nausea. Perhaps you try to silently impose your presence. Or even take a seat. In any case, your body is reacting to something. Very quickly, something becomes suffocating. Your every movement is made with millimeter precision as you become aware of your body. Your Black attributes are being examined un-

> der a microscope. All you want is to get out of there. You know this place is inhospitable to you.
> [...] What happened in that room? How did your body react?
> Was it just anxiety, or were you kicked out of that place? Whose fantasy were you playing out?

Exclusion, without being specific, is effectively felt in the body by the racialized subject.

Melamine melancholy

As disembodiment, whiteness appears, then, accompanied by what I call "race melancholy," similar to the gender melancholia theorized by Judith Butler. As Freud argues in *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917 [1915]/1992), melancholia arises from the refusal to break the attachment to a lost object or ideal, which is then introjected into the ego and transformed into a critical instance turned against it. Gender melancholia refers to the loss of a multiplicity of genders, internalized and foreclosed: it is the operation by which part of the body's erogenous potential disappears definitively, thus becoming a performative impossibility and creating a gendered body. This loss is disavowed, and the sexed surface of the body emerges as the sign of a naturalized identity and desire. The stabilization of genders in the heteropatriarchal order is, therefore, melancholic: it implies a loss of erogenous and affective possibilities distinct from heterosexual ones, and a loss of this loss. This analysis allows us to consider gender, beyond the logic of identity, not as an affirmation, but as a social and psychic process of deprivation: majority sexuation proceeds from the foreclosure of a psychic multiplicity and a hybridity of genders and sexualities.

Similarly, I would speak of a race melancholia. The affirmation of whiteness is, therefore, an operation by which the multiplicity of racial assignments becomes a performative impossibility and fabricates a hegemonic white identity. As with the loss of part of the body's erogenous power, this active denial of an experiential multiplicity of racialization is disavowed, and the surface of the body perceived as white, «epidermized [3],» emerges as the sign of a naturalized and universal model. Whiteness then appears as a process of deprivation, the foreclosure of a psychic multiplicity of racialization, literally incorporated when the racialized body submits to white norms and models.

Race melancholia shares with gender melancholia an exclusion from the symbolic field of non-conforming, deviant, punishable bodies. However, while the heteronormative order long rendered *queer bodies invisible* in order to produce gendered bodies, racialized bodies were always socially present. They were always necessary for the promotion of whiteness, unlike the abject gender bodies long excluded from the social scene, exceptional and pathological. Race melancholia thus simultaneously operates a psychic foreclosure—similar to the foreclosure of homosexual desire and the erogenous multiplicity characteristic of gender melancholia—and a social assignment. The imperative is paradoxical: racial multiplicity is disavowed on the psychic level and assigned on the social level, through the devaluation of racialized bodies. Psychic foreclosure, race is a social affirmation: that of hegemonic whiteness as the only viable reference.

How, then, do we clinically address these experiences of structural racism, and how do we deal with race melancholia?

De-melancholising the clinic

Breaking the Illusion of Necessity

One of the aims of analytic work is to accompany analysands in the transition from racial and gender melancholia—where loss is disavowed—to mourning, which entails psychic labor and transformation. A key objective would be to foster psychic fluidity in gender and sexual identifications, and to cultivate awareness of the partiality, specificity, and thus contingency of racial identifications.

By contingency, I mean the absence of necessity and the possibility that representations and psychic processes might be articulated differently. To reveal whiteness as a social construction, as an event, is to mark its contingency from a critical distance—one that allows us to rethink, fantasize, elaborate, and reconstruct processes of subjectivation not bound by dominant norms, and more open to change and fluidity.

It seems urgent, then, to deconstruct whiteness where it operates within analytic theory—particularly when it promotes an ontological neutrality of the analyst. The conscious imperative of analytic abstention can only be asymptotically pursued by examining how whiteness shapes the position of neutrality, through a silent primacy granted to a masculine, Eurocentric, bourgeois, heterosexual, and cisgender perspective.

Elaboration within the session requires that the analyst accompany the analysand in discovering the contingency of racializing norms, without exempting themselves from the task of deconstructing those norms in their own position. Moreover, this revelation of contingency cannot be achieved without acknowledging the unequal degrees of vulnerability among subjects, depending on the viability of their bodies and desires (Butler, 2004/2006). Otherwise, the analytic frame risks reproducing the heightened vulnerability experienced by othered and minoritized subjects (racialized, but also trans, gay, lesbian, queer), whose humanity is not recognized to the same extent as that of majority subjects. The challenge here is to recognize without essentializing.

Although the aim is not directly to eliminate social oppression—much less to occupy a morally "laudable" position—the goal remains to liberate, for the analysand, a psychic plasticity blocked by the symptom. It is likely this fluidity, resulting from a denaturalization of whiteness norms, that Frantz Fanon (1952/2009) gestures toward when analyzing the dream of a Black man perceiving himself as white:

3. According to Stuart Hall (2013), this term refers to the moment in which racism materializes in corporality and its visible signifiers are read through the body (p. 89).

> What emerges then is the need for equal action on the individual and the group. As a psychoanalyst, I must help my client become aware of their unconscious, so that they don't attempt hallucinatory lactification, but rather acts toward a change in social structures. Put differently, the Black person should no longer be faced with the dilemma of whitening or disappearing, but should be able to become aware of the possibility of existing. Put yet another way, if society presents obstacles because of their color, and if I observe in their dreams the expression of an unconscious desire to change color, my goal will not be to dissuade them by advising "keep your distance"; my goal, rather, once the motives are clarified, will be to place them in a position to choose action (or passivity) in relation to the true source of conflict—that is, the social structures. (pp. 103–104).
> Put yet another way, if society presents obstacles because of their color, and if I observe in their dreams the expression of an unconscious desire to change color, my goal will not be to dissuade them by advising "keep your distance"; my goal, rather, once the motives are clarified, will be to place them in a position to choose action (or passivity) in relation to the true source of conflict—that is, the social structures. (pp. 103–104)

If this patient is overcome by the desire to be white, it is in a society whose consistency is based on their inferiority complex, affirming white superiority. Therefore, it is through the recognition of social violence that subjective elaboration can occur. Psychic plasticity, the possibility of choosing whether or not to act in relation to social structures, or at least of considering one's role in one's own psychic productions, are precisely the objectives of psychoanalytic elaboration. Assuming a subject position, being able to speak on one's own behalf, and not giving in to one's desire are objectives of psychic elaboration work that mean, on a social level, having agency, a capacity to think and act that is not reduced to pure passivity.

And that implies political resistance from the analysand.

Resist

From the psychic to the political

A common post-Freudian conception of resistance tends to attribute it entirely to the analysands. It seems appropriate, then, to return to the Lacanian reading, which returns resistance to the analyst: it is the analyst who resists the cure and thereby fuels the resistances that unfold within it. Resistance thus appears as an abstract ideal point, created and named by the analyst: "There is only one resistance, and it is the resistance of the analyst" (Lacan, 1978, p. 266). The analyst resists when they believe they are establishing a goal of progress through interpretation, thereby fixing the analysand's desire to a defined object.

Anamaría McCarthy
Untitled (2023), mixed media, 52 x 100 cm

The hegemonic whiteness that denies the dynamics of race within the analytic dyad by instituting a universal norm for the subject, but also the concealment of the analyst's often privileged position within social relations of class, race, gender, or sexuality, are an integral part of the analyst's resistance, arbitrarily referred to the analysand. Working from the analyst's resistance, therefore, means constantly analyzing the way in which the transference is traversed by a power relationship.

For Foucault, resistance is not about denying or repressing, but about creating, transforming, and actively participating in the process of power. Here, I choose to interpret the psychic resistance attributed to the analysand as resistance to power: the power of a violence of interpretation, of the denial of social relations, or of the unquestioned objective of certain clinical devices.

The analysand's goal of psychic plasticity and creativity can only be achieved through their resistance to their own ego certainties and those of the analyst. Here, the analysand is not the passive «victim» of an analyst who, without analyzing, reproduces the effects of social relations of domination within the treatment, but rather an «analysand,» an active participant, through their resistance, in the analytic process.

Speak in your own voice

I argue that the analysand's political resistance produces a desubalternization: it implies a decolonization in which becoming a subject means ceasing to be spoken by the other and becoming the author of one's own story. For Grada Kilomba (2023), who conceives of her writing as a political act, it is about ceasing to exist as the object of a narrative, as the Other of whiteness, and beginning from within oneself (p. 27). Writing from the racialized periphery allows us to reactivate the margin as a space of resistance and possibility, of radical creativity where new critical discourses emerge, where the voices of racialized people can be heard outside of a hegemonic white lexicon and syntax.

Therefore, it seems imperative for the analyst to work on their resistance to hearing accusations of racism. Many analysts accuse racialized patients of constantly talking about racism and attacking each other in repetitive discourse. They deplore their fixation on external reality, whose violence would be perceived disproportionately. The anti-racist attempt to change the social order is imaginary, they maintain; it is the realm of the ideal, and the analysand strays here instead of exploring their own psychic reality. The denunciation of social injustice and racism is thus conceived as a «resistance» that many analysts attribute to the analysand: an inability to elaborate, a psychic immaturity in the face of external reality, an avoidance of psychic conflicts: a subterfuge of the unconscious. And here arises the analyst's ordinary resistance to the political.

To see in the analysand's anti-racist political discourse a "resistance" attributed to the analysand and not to the analyst is then truly racist: it disqualifies any non-white point of view and claims a negationist ignorance. This attitude could be part of a long tradition of pathologizing Black resistance which, as Guilaine Kinouani (2022) recalls, was historically diagnosed as "drapetomania," a supposed mental disorder that drove Africans to flee captivity against their own interests, or roguery (*dysesthesia aethiopica*), a mixture of laziness, defiance of authority, theft, and immorality. The resistance of the analysand, conceived as the locus of their agency, could thus be inscribed within the long history of emancipatory struggles of enslaved Black people against racism and racial domination: uprisings, escapes, sabotage of the master's machines, or the maintenance of traditions, beliefs, rituals, and music. This is what can be seen, for example, in Brazil, in the history of the *quilombos*, communities of fugitive slaves constituted as free and autonomous republics, without any hierarchy, except for the aegis of a few leaders during defensive actions.

While systemic racism, sexism, and homophobia are undeniably real—and while the social assignments that position the subject at the crossroads of domination relations actively shape that subject—being exposed to these forces does not definitively determine the processes of subjectivation: these can follow a different course. Through the analysis and handling of symbolic transference, conceived as a site of repetition of power relations, the analyst accompanies the analysand's resistance in its effects of reversing subordination. The analysand's resistance thus becomes the locus of a demand to repeat the terms and relations that constitute them, in order to resignify and subvert them—beyond the linguistic prohibitions of the moment ("race," "whiteness," etc.). Judith Butler (1997/2002) introduces a perspective of resistance inscribed precisely within the unconscious. If repetition—performative reiteration—is the condition for the constitution of power and law, it is also a potential site of resistance:

"This repetition, or rather, this reiteration, also constitutes the non-sites of subversion; it marks the possibility of a reincarnation of the subjugating norm, capable of redirecting its own normativity" (pp. 156–157).

In this way, resistance enables the repair, recomposition, and reassembly of parts mutilated by social assignment, and the reconstitution of bonds, reciprocities, and social relations capable of transformation—precisely where social relations (of gender, race, class, sexuality) carry rigid assignments.

From melancholia…

In the Freudian conception, melancholia is the process by which an external object or ideal lost by a subject who refuses to break their attachment to that object is introjected into the ego and becomes a critical instance turned against it. In this diversion, where the psyche turns against itself and self-blames, mistaking the recipient, the violence of social regulation is clearly manifested. As Judith Butler points out, in the break from melancholia, this death-oriented movement and this attack on the ego give way to a rage in the service of life: survival implies a diversion of the aggression turned against the ego, a reorientation of the anger against the lost object or ideal, an exteriorization.

Emerging from melancholia, then, entails a reorientation of rage toward power: a revolt no longer directed inward, but outward—a gesture of resistance and defense at once. If the melancholic's critical agency is both a psychic and social instrument, a silenced potential for rebellion turned against oneself, then the work of de-melancholization envisioned by analysis is a way of redirecting that rebellion outward and allowing it to be expressed. It is a movement of returning something to its sender: if power operates psychically through melancholisation, the task here is to accompany the analysand in thematizing the social power relations—of gender and race—at whose crossroads subjectivation takes place.

To resist and defend oneself, for the analysand, means to express rage—a vital condition that lifts them out of melancholia. Here, resistance becomes rage expressed against power, a counter-power to violence from the very place—both social and psychic—where it unfolds.

...to rage

Audre Lorde advocates for the expression of rage in her text *The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism* (1984). Against the fear long held toward one's own anger, she chooses it as an appropriate response to racism. Charged with information and energy, anger emerges as a "liberating and strengthening act of clarification."

Anger generates awareness of power and leads to change, not destruction. However, it remains a stage—one that must be relinquished if "there is something at least equally powerful to replace it on the path toward clarity."

Here, the analysand's anger becomes a form of self-defense: of resisting the power strategies to which they are subjected. Rather than an incitement to overthrow social power relations, it is a matter of paying attention to the psychic effects of these relations and the subjective position they determine. Anger favors a thematization of social relations of race and the norms of submission involved; it becomes a way of recovering an agency alienated by subjugation, reduced to passivity, a way of lifting the melancholia of race. Anger makes it possible to reveal, in their social and contingent construction, the norms of racialization. This de-ontologization of norms liberates the psychic fluidity of the analysand, allowing them to react to psychic and social oppression: modifying it, individually or collectively, conforming to it, inventing other positions of their own—in short, recovering, whatever their choice, a capacity to think and act.

In this sense, the analyst must be able to tolerate the analysand's anger: accept that the patient expresses it, directs it in the transference, and thus manifests a revitalizing hostility. It is then a matter of traversing the imaginary transference without responding from self to self, but rather pointing out, for the analysand, what is repeated and reconfigured in the social relations of domination in the symbolic transference.

Conclusion: defend yourself, get rid of your blues

Anger is thus a form of defense, not in the conventional analytical sense of psychic impediment, but rather as authorization to defend oneself and to react to the psychic effects of violence. Frantz Fanon highlights this emergence of rage in the colonized in the face of colonial violence in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961/2002). The colonized are continually subjected to violence in the restricted and forbidden world of colonization: they suffer daily exploitation, aggression, racism, contempt, insults, humiliation, and the destruction of their social forms, their economic reference systems, their modes of appearance and dress, and their own language. This everyday and irreducible violence is countered by the muscular, rather than ideological, violence of the colonized, which Frantz Fanon identifies in his dreams of action. To a body continually impeded, violated, and subjected to ferocity, the colonized offers this dreamlike escape, these hallucinatory reprisals. However, pure and simple, this violence becomes futile during colonization: it spills over into dreams, dance, possession, fratricidal struggles, and collective suicides. It is a violence always on the verge of erupting but turned against oneself.

But it can be redirected, becoming violence in action, force against force. Violence and counterviolence then respond to each other in a «circle of hatred.» According to Fanon, this «swing of terror» (p. 86), this disastrous reciprocity, is the only way for the colonized to return to life after a long period of crushing, of psychic, ethical, and social death. It is also, according to Fanon, a praxis that allows the colonized to discover and transform reality, a way to recover dignity where their humanity had been denied by colonization. In short, it is a true imaginary confrontation, violence against violence, and aggression occurs within a mirror structure in which the oppressed defend themselves.

In the analytic session, the analysand may also find themselves authorized to defend: to identify the violence they feel as a reaction to the social violences endured—those stemming, in this case, from racialized social relations. Analytic work, however, does not consist in remaining within this imaginary dimension, but rather in identifying the symbolic structure—the system responsible for this confrontation of violences—and in defining, beyond the cycle of necessity and alienated repetition, a psychic position proper to the subject. This violence, no longer turned inward but instead recognized and articulated in words, becomes emancipatory. It dismantles racial melancholisation: it acts as a *conatus*, an intensification of being, a process—not a violent act, but a vital force within a subjectivation that no longer submits to race melancholy.

The aim here is to express rage in order to demystify the system, and the goal is not a passage into action, but a change of psychic position. For the analysand, defending oneself means, therefore, taking note of the historicity of the Symbolic, which articulates the imaginary confrontation of bodies in power relations. This leads to the mobilization of the Real, which emerges as new, previously unsymbolized possibilities. Exceeding what can be produced in the Symbolic, the Real is delimited by the historicized form that this or that Symbolic takes in power relations and in language: by the strategies of power exercised

over bodies. Defending oneself means developing strategies of resistance that redraw the contours of the Symbolic and thus mobilize something unprecedented in the Real; it means summoning an imaginary Real that, beyond representation, offers a figuration of that which cannot be included in the dominant mythosymbolic. It means emerging from melancholy by inventing new psychic positions not determined by the needs of social prescriptions. And recovering one's dignity as a subject.

Abstract

Psychoanalysis often exempts itself from a study of the coloniality that permeates its clinical or theoretical framework: it has rarely considered race, which legitimised the dehumanisation, massacre and exploitation of colonised and enslaved bodies. Although race does not exist, it has undeniable psychic effects, not least of which is the melancholisation of race. What does this process of melancholisation consist of, and what can psychoanalysis listen to from it?

This article first seeks to define race, and to analyse the enigmatic transmissions, the racial effraction and the ideology of whitening that provoke a race melancholy, conceived in a similar way to the gender melancholy theorised by Judith Butler.

The author goes on to study how to clinically address these experiences of structural racism and how to deal with race melancholy, deconstructing the whiteness that can operate in analytical theory when it promotes an ontological neutrality of the analyst. It emphasises the resistance of the analysand conceived as political resistance to power: power expressed through the violence of interpretation, through the denial of social relations or through the unquestioned aim of certain clinical devices. Overcoming melancholia, then, involves speaking in one's own voice and redirecting anger towards power: a revolt no longer against oneself but directed outwards, a form of resistance and self-defense.

Keywords: *Psychoanalysis, Melancholy.* **Candidates to keywords:** *Race, Political resistance, Anger.*

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Constanza Michelson*

A minor story about the irreplaceable

For almost a week—between dentist appointments—I feared losing a tooth. Not just any tooth. One of the main ones. One of the ones that smile. A front tooth. It's funny how something so hard can be so fragile. I dreamed about teeth, like everyone else. Because that's what you dream about, right? That they drop, that they crumble like chalk, that you spit them out one by one into your hand. You dream about losing them, as if your body were warning you: something is going to break.

A tooth is not just a tooth. It is a bone that shows itself, that acts, that denounces. It reveals your age, your hygiene, your class, your vices. There are those who fix their lives, or at least their faces, with orthodontics. Others hide it behind a closed smile.

The story of that tooth is a long one. It died and was resurrected. In its own way.

The thing is, I lost that tooth before. Long before. I was a child. It didn't drop like baby teeth do, with their domestic ritual, the folded piece of paper under the pillow and the illusion of a transaction: loss for promise. The promise that something strong, definitive, will come to chew up the world. To eat like grown-ups (to do grown-up things). No. I lost it in a fight between siblings. That's what they say. I don't remember. They say I got embedded in the coffee table. They say it with that exact word: embedded. Fights between siblings can be tragic. The Greeks called internal war stasis. It was what they feared most.

I'll be clear and direct. This tooth didn't drop out: I lost it.

But I don't remember. I already said that, I know. I'm repeating it because there's something important there: there's no trauma, no scene. Just the starting point of a story. And like any story worth its salt, it began with a hole and glue—which is the most childish and most adult way to deny a loss—; with anesthesia—because the real hurts even when you don't feel it—; with a dental mirror—that tiny device that doesn't reflect the soul but does reflect its ruins—; with an exploratory probe that searches for who knows what, maybe a cavity, maybe a memory; with dental forceps that hold what one cannot. And then: plates, bite down, open your mouth, close it, better not open it so wide at school, open it again, rinse.

There is no image, but I can deduce it. A hole in the mouth. Blood. There must have been blood. Surely. And the horror. I don't know which of the two, which of my parents. It was at the beginning of the eighties. The horror was, in any case, the tone of reality. But it was a tense horror, like a thread—thin, invisible, but always present—and at the same time clean, as if everything had been designed not to leave marks. So that nothing missing would be noticed. As if absence, well concealed, were the most elegant form of violence. Quickly clean up the blood. Cover the hole. To do as if.

Maybe that's why the dentist decided what he decided. That tooth, even though it was a baby tooth and would be lost soon anyway, couldn't be missing. It shouldn't be. It shouldn't be noticeable. And he glued it back in. He fixed it back in place with precision. With urgency. With an almost ceremonial force, as if by gluing it back in he was saying: nothing has occurred here. He glued it so strongly, so decisively, so firmly that it never dropped out again. Never.

And what occurred?

What occurs in ill-fated relationships. That for fear of losing, they don't let go. And they rot. They self-destroy. So, after forcibly removing the glued baby tooth, the permanent tooth, the one that was supposed to accompany me into adulthood, grew atrophied. That lump was the image of a broken promise.

Crooked—like the pigtail of uncertain lineage—they declared that the lump was better off removed. Start from scratch. But between deciding and not deciding, my classmates were changing teeth like someone passing through seasons, and my hole seemed to fulfill four complete lives. Four life sentences in a single mouth.

I knew shame. A pain deeper than years occurring in the dentist's chair. It wasn't a localized pain, it was a pain of the skin, but inside. It was no longer that childish shame that makes you dream that you arrive at school without underwear. It was something else. More like the image of Adam and Eve, red-faced, covering themselves with a fig leaf. Not knowing what to do in front of those who, until recently, were playmates.

I occurred a long time on that vague border between childhood and adolescence, waiting for the tooth next to it to move toward the center, toward the gap. Like a brother who sits in the place of the one who didn't come back and, without saying much, says, "I'm here".

That tooth—the one that was called to the center—is technically called the upper central incisor. Also: tooth number two.

It wasn't a bad strategy, I think.

After all, since we invented God, we said that the only way to start something was from two. From what comes next. Like you and me.

Until now, we come from something before, from a scene we are missing: an original scene impossible to know. But who knows if it will continue to be that way. For now, Genesis continues to begin, as usual, with the letter bet—the letter two—and not with alef. And they say that this insinuates something: that before the beginning, it is impossible to know. That we are born already fallen. That fall is not an event, but a condition.

* Universidad Diego Portales, Santiago de Chile, Chile.

Anamaría McCarthy
Nightwatch (2023), intervened photography, 70 x 89 cm

It is suspected that when the ancients established the laws of humanity, they decided that the first letter—the alef—should be silent. That it should not be pronounced. That it should begin not with sound, but with silence. Like a trauma without an image. A crack prior to any narrative. And that history should begin with the be, from bla bla. But now, there are signs of a reversal: history no longer matters so much, nor does the question of what is wrong with you or where you come from or what you have done. Rather, what matters is asking for papers, assigning you a code, telling you who you are with your mouth shut. Cataloging you without a story. People even took to cataloging themselves.

There is an obsession with starting—as they say—from scratch and designing ourselves. Not being born but being constructed. Not coming later but founding. Editing the genome, choosing eye color, deciding to create the perfect child. Replacing origin with fabrication. Could it be that the alef manifested itself, but no longer as a letter, but as an operation? Not as a sign, but as a program.

What would a world of self-engendering beings be like?

In any case, it does not seem like a new fantasy, but rather the novelty of being able to realize it.

Perhaps it is, in reality, the oldest form of conflict: the illusion of being born of oneself, without debt, without another, without shadow. An illusion that soon leads to its most violent consequence: the desire to be the only one.

Isn't that precisely what happens between siblings? That first form of stasis that the Greeks feared so much: internal strife, within the same lineage. The scene is ancient. It is no coincidence that it is chapter two of the story of Adam and Eve.

The war between brothers is that of One against One. There is no room for two. One will remain embedded somewhere: in the earth, in memory.

If this is one of the most persistent tragedies, it is because of a trademark of subjectivity: no one can become entirely themselves without dragging the other into their definition. Between the I and the you, there is not necessarily room for a conjunction.

The word "and," which seems to bring together, actually demands something more complex: a bond that neither absorbs nor annuls. Being with the other without making them disappear. "And" is not a simple union, it is a risk. A fragile act of coexistence.

"And" is difficult. It implies that both remain separate and together at the same time. "And" demands agreement. Language. Rituals. The recognition that something about the other must tell me who I am. If that fails, the desire for purity appears. And with it, sacrificial logic: the identity of the city is forged by the expulsion of the impure.

The logic is simple and cruel: if there is something to lose, let's lose the intruder; that obstacle between me and myself, between us and ourselves.

Sometimes I think things that tear me apart. I don't seek them out. They come.

I think of children in wars, for example. Kidnapped children. Do their teeth still change? Under the din, under the fear, under the gaze of the man pointing a gun at them, do their baby teeth still drop and new ones grow in?

It is disturbing to think that while everything around them is dropping to pieces, their bodies continue with their agenda. That teeth continue to drop, and others, firmer, more definitive, push from below, promising something. What do they promise? Who can promise anything there?

It is the manifestation of the struggle between life and death—one root loosening, another burying itself—as if within each child something insisted on living, even when the world no longer does. And at the same time, some adults doing their best to lose everything. To die believing that something is gained. As if the damage were a prize. As if causing suffering were justified.

(As if it ever did).

When you lose a tooth, you get a gift. That's the deal. An ugly animal—a mouse—becomes cute for one night and leaves money under your pillow. There is a transaction: a piece of you, of your body, of your childhood, in exchange for a crumpled bill. Dirty money, yes, like the mouse.

Because growing up is dirty. You lose your purity. You learn to negotiate with what drops. That transaction—that one and between the pure and the impure—is precisely what war denies. And also, what identity-based fury denies.

There is something else in the dental transition. You make your debut in definitive things, or at least in hearing that word. If a permanent tooth drops, there is no more deal. No one leaves anything. There is no

magic or promise. Only one word remains that weighs more than the tooth: *definitive*. It is an adult word. Cold and solid. Growing up is that too, I think: discovering that everything has consequences. That there is no turning back. That time waits for no one. That everything that is lost—a tooth, an afternoon, a person—does not return the same or does not return at all.

War denies that too. And the fury of identity.

Growing up is doing something strange: even though death begins to seem less like an idea and more like a possibility, we still brush our teeth. What an absurd gesture, so human. So tender, too. As if we wanted to preserve something. As if we knew—secretly—that resisting is also caring for what is going to be lost.

That's what some people do in the midst of destruction. They don't raise flags, but sing to their children, tell them stories so they can sleep, even without knowing if there will be a dawn. They don't do it out of habit or faith. They do it because they sense—without knowing exactly what—that if they stop telling stories, something more than the night will be lost: humanity will be lost.

Why war? If it is also, deep down, a form of suicide. They kill their children, those of others, those who are not yet born. It is as if they cannot tolerate the truth of the end. As if the act of destruction were a desperate way of postponing the inevitable. Perhaps that is what it is: a rebellion against limits. In war, they drug themselves so as not to feel. So as not to fear. As if fear—that lesser god who still guides us—were a privilege exclusive to the living.

In war, the fantasy of founding an alternative lineage through blood is revealed: a fierce self-engendering, without debt or origin.

Are they afraid of losing their teeth in war? I don't really know. But I wonder if warriors still dream. And if they dream, what falls in those dreams. If they ever wake up with their tongue searching for a hole in their mouth.

Not because of pain, but because of the question: What part of me is no longer there? And who will come—if there is anyone left—to put something under my pillow?

Beings like the Sphinx must be killed, said Lévi-Strauss (1958/1995), in order to live.

He was not just talking about monsters with claws or riddles. He was talking about the enigma in its purest form: that which cannot be answered without something being lost. The origin, the devouring mother, the unsaid that demands a sacrifice. The Sphinx—like all true thresholds—does not allow occurrence without a price.

For life to begin, something must drop. A creature, a certainty, a tooth. Nothing alive is inaugurated without loss. It is an ancient law, prior to all morality. Only in this way can the story begin: with a surrender, a cut, a renunciation. Because the story does not have its starting point in fulfillment, but in the heartbreak that makes it necessary.

There are despicable sacrifices—those that give up another in order to be one—and there are more subtle sacrifices, those that open the way: something is lost so that something else can begin. Even if we don't know exactly what it is that is beginning.

That is what living is: insisting on the blah blah. Inventing the difficult and, that "copulative conjunction" that brings together what is not obvious: me and you, you and me, one and the other. The *and* is not just a word: it is a pact, an alliance, an uncomfortable agreement. It is also a conflict, a detour, a temporary truce.

The opposite of trauma is not peace, but the and. Not me, but history. And another. And another.

All things considered, the most revealing thing about this ridiculous story of dental fear is that neighboring tooth that came to help. Disguised, timid, occupying a place that wasn't its own—yet it stayed. The way some people stay, some gestures, some words. Not as heroes, just so it won't hurt as much. That's what makes human life, with its losses and its fears, a little more bearable.

Side note, or inglorious appendix:

I refuse to end this story like this.

It would be an easy way out. And a lie. Pretending with sweet writing to cover holes, to redeem something. As if pretty words were enough to console oneself.

I propose another ending:

That poor migrant tooth pretended to be something else. It kept up that disguise for years. And now, today, the dentist says it could be lost. As if the lie could no longer hold. As if the body had come to collect an old debt, a mineral imposture. Perhaps that fear, the fear of losing the tooth that was never entirely mine, is a way of fearing something else. Or of beginning to know that there are things that can never be replaced. That there are voids that cannot be filled, but rather learned to be inhabited. Or not.

There is no consolation for everything. Only the "and": that effort to be with what is lost, without pretending to replace it.

Abstract

Starting from an intimate scene—the loss and replacement of a baby tooth—this text unfolds a reflection on loss as a condition of subjectivity. It questions the ways in which certain substitutions attempt to suture the gap, and how psychic growth depends on the ability to inhabit that absence without erasing it. The figure of the "migrant tooth" opens a space to think about hospitality, fraternal conflict (*stasis*), and the difficulty of being with another without erasing them. Beyond consolation, the text suggests that loss—when neither denied nor instrumentalized—can open an ethics of relation.

Keywords: Loss, Subjectivation. **Candidate to keyword:** *Stasis.*

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Néstor Marcelo Toyos*

Losing, after losing

...what happened to the Henrnouilles, what seemed natural to them,
was that they had never spent, in fifty years,
a single penny, neither of them, without regretting it.
With their flesh and spirit they had acquired their house, like the snail.
But the snail does so without realizing it.
Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Journey to the End of the Night

How could the snail lose its house without dying in the attempt? It is not possible; nature has decided so. The snail—"without realizing it," as Céline says—and its house are a sealed unit that travels through its entire existence, from birth to death. To lose it is to lose everything, just as having it means having everything. The operation of its arrival in life is exact, without residue. A peaceful existence, pure snail serenity, without the desiring tensions like those of the Henrouille.

Mammals lose an organ they share with their mother at birth: the placenta[1] . The loss of this organ is a necessary consequence of the separation of the bodies of the offspring and the female. The placenta thus becomes a remnant of the mother-child separation operation, and its elimination is the cause of a new relationship between the two, mediated by breastfeeding. This loss of an "internal" organ is what allows Lacan (1962-1963/2006) to locate the lack of the object in the "inner foreigner," as Freud (1933/1979, p. 53) once called the unconscious domain -, and he expresses it in these words: "one lacks oneself, so to speak... It is not the outside world that one lacks, as is often improperly said, but oneself" (p.108). This, as we know, is the birth of the theory of the object a. And it is also a very special mammal that will emerge from this operation and be able to read these lines.

A human being is the product of a lost placenta and an immediate, intimate, prolonged (often more than is convenient) and foundational relationship with another being of its species, whom we call *mother.* The condition for this relationship to produce a subject, to be "subjectivizing," is that this original loss acquires meaning. This process can also be thought of in reverse: when the conditions are right for a human child to develop its capacity for consciousness using a tool that replaces the thing with its name—this includes the newborn itself by its own name—then a subject of the unconscious emerges. This foundational condition, which Freud called primary repression, is established.

* Asociación Psicoanalítica Argentina, Buenos Aires, Argentina

1. With the exception of a few that do not develop this intrauterine exchange organ, such as marsupials (which are not only kangaroos).

In other words, we are tenants in a house that we imagine to be our own, which houses us only on condition that we can lose a few pounds of flesh (renouncing primal enjoyment, so to speak) and eventually access—thanks to analysis, paradigmatically —the possibility of signing as authors some fragment of the discourse that constitutes us.

We can also put it this way: The house we enter if this initial loss marks us, our home in a world for which we are not as well equipped as the snail is for its own, that house is the language that unites and separates us humans. It unites and separates us in what we call *life*, but for that "human life" to exist, we all had to lose a loved one, a snail-house unity that we will never stop longing for and searching for (a captivating dream that will accompany us forever, which we call narcissism).

Another thing the snail teaches us is to be able to deal better with time, to be slow enough. In this way, we can be satisfied because we had to wait until the middle of the last century for someone to put into words what we are trying to say: "Language is the home of being. Man dwells in its abode. Thinkers and poets are the guardians of that abode" (Heidegger, 1948/2016, p. 1).

Thinkers, poets... and psychoanalysts, I would add. As long as we do not renounce our "responsibility," whatever form our practice may take, we are psychoanalysts when we are sufficiently careful with what Heidegger calls "the manifestation of being," as it is presented to us in analytical treatment, through transference. "Their guardianship consists in carrying out the manifestation of being, insofar as, through their speech, they (thinkers, poets, and... psychoanalysts) bring it into language and guard it there" (p. 8).

Being is not the subject, therefore everything we call "formations of the unconscious" will not be its manifestations. Rather than looking for it in what speaks, we must look for it in what does not speak, in the mute. What is deprived of speech is not outside language, as Lacan, the ultimate authority on the unconscious structured like a language, was quick to point out. After proposing this postulate, Lacan's search was oriented toward its deconstruction. Although contact with Derrida on this point is undeniable, the two developments are separated above all by Lacan's unyielding attachment to clinical practice.

The certainty of delirium soon brought him into contact with the point of radical opacity of a language that seeks no communication, that is beyond the symbolic-imaginary resource of demand. The psychotic is spoken and transmits the discourse of the Other without detours, without ambiguity, without contradiction.

Anxiety also led him to an irreducible point, but there he was able to articulate a subject who enjoys, as best he can, suffering excessively from his lack. In that hole of the unspeakable, he located his object a. Anyone who is not psychotic, then, accepts the loss of being and is rewarded with their object of desire. But when the ways in which that loss of being

is processed in a life take on a traumatic character (that is, always, to a greater or lesser extent, as Freud discovered early on[2]), that original loss is reactivated (the analytical act is in some way always a more careful way of achieving this) and the subject must face the challenge of losing their way of losing.

Everything interesting happens in the shadows. Nothing is known about the true history of men.
Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Viagem ao fim da noite*

We return to our other French author, now to identify two dimensions of loss that we will explore based on two cases. When what Céline (1932/2021) calls "authentic history" (p.84) – *Geschichte*, in Freud – is the history of a basic lack of such magnitude that it does not allow for renunciation, the subject will be compelled to seek what he did not have in that same "authentic reality." The entire spectrum that the term "pathologies of the act" attempts to cover is the domain of this clinic.

On the other hand, when the absence of the object is not unbearable, does not essentially affect self-preservation, when there is room for the play of the erotic and desire, the loss will be located in the field of subjective construction of a history – *Historie,* in Freud). This processing of the lack sometimes takes on a dimension of suffering that gives rise to the symptom that the analyst can accommodate in their device without major inconvenience.

In the first case, there is a step that has not been taken, namely the construction of a subject capable of losing their history, the realization of which will depend on factors beyond the analyst's control that are essential to the exercise of this practice. These factors are sometimes no less violent than the individual's traumatic history itself, as is all too clear in the case we will discuss.

In the second option, the process of "losing a story"—an operation we propose as necessary for psychoanalysis—can be undertaken once the transference setup is sufficiently stable.

I want what's mine

No one could stand their home
César González. *The resentful child*

In a book of tremendous narrative power, where the "authentic story" takes on a reality that is difficult to surpass, César González (2023) is the author and first-person narrator of a plot where all the names seem true. It is a story that takes place between the first death of his birth and his almost second death, which occurred when he was 16 years old. In reality, it is the story of a resurrection in action. In the sublimatory act that makes writing possible.

2. I am referring to Freud's early disappointment with the "sexual trauma" that all his neurotic patients told him about. In my opinion, from then on, Freud did not set out to ignore reality (of sexual abuse), but rather focused his attention on processing the enjoyment of his analysands, beyond the vicissitudes of a biography. What establishes this shift is nothing less than "the Freudian field," his area of clinical expertise. This is a sensitive issue, brought up again today by the debate about psychoanalysis' supposed disregard for context, for the social, for history.

It is about a child born in one of the largest shantytowns in the Buenos Aires suburbs, into a family that was sufficiently present given those conditions of existence. The dedications in his book are to his daughter, his daughter's mother, his mother, his grandmother, an aunt, and his great friend.

We witness the step-by-step process of constructing a criminal identity[3], tracing a chain of causalities in which each link seems to be the only possible one to add to the series.

It is the story of his first sixteen years of life, whose vertigo quickly brings us to what seems like a miracle: his "conversion." This conversion is as mystical as it is artistic. On the one hand, it is a resurrection in action—as I have already written—that is shown to us in the author of the book we are reading. And it is also a miracle because, in the violent universe of the neighborhood, there was no better protection than that of Gauchito Gil, who appears at the very end of the text, closing the list of acknowledgments.

I will get to the point that interests me: this is not a review or literary analysis of a highly recommended book. There are several others with different perspectives. I can mention Miguel Mazzeo's (https://tramas.ar/2024/01/13/a-propósito-del -libro-el niño-resentido-de-cesar-gonzalez).

The point is to verify that the subject does not position himself as the agent of a loss which, being unconscious, can only be enjoyed in its absence. Assumed as a shadow in the darkness of his history, as Céline says. There is no possibility of negating that loss other than through his imprisonment for five years. He has to lose his freedom in order to assume the capacity to sublimate the pain of existence. His entire body has to be removed from his world in order for him to recover his symbolic capacity, which encompasses thinking and loving, intellect and affections.

Shortly before leaving for what would be his last criminal raid, in very poor physical condition due to injuries sustained in a confrontation, a companion tries to dissuade him, and the following dialogue ensues:

> –"Do you have any money?", I asked him.
> –Nothing, I'm broke.
> –Uh, damn it. Let's go to my house, I've got a watch stashed away to sell.
> –No, buddy, keep it. Don't be a jerk, let's wait for the guys to come back.

3. I want to make an effort not to get caught up in a taxonomy of social conflict that I abhor: the cruel simplicity of calling the "pibe chorro" (street kid) a "delinquent." The criminal identity I mention is a way of standing tall with a dignity as imaginary as any other, which breaks the law. "I never shone as brightly as when I was a delinquent. The beauty of stealing lay in the blissful illusion that justice could be savored in an instant," says César in the chapter entitled "Mystical Thieves," in my opinion the most literary (CG, op. cit., pp. 154).

–*I want what's mine.*
–Let's wait and see what the guys bring back.
(González, 2023, p. 171; grifo meu)

César wants money to go on a new (new?) criminal adventure (this time it was going to be the "biggest" one yet, a kidnapping, and it will be the last). His friend tells him to wait, to take a break, to rest a little and recover. César can't, he has an urgent need to go after "his stuff." Something he has been doing and, had he not been stopped by the police or by death, would have continued doing indefinitely[4] . That "mine" as concrete as a watch or a cell phone populates the world of objects to infinity. Without a break, it is impossible to move on to something else, as required in the dynamics of possible psychoanalysis.

The break in this case was five years in prison, and César's resources made an amazing future possible: since his release, in fifteen years he has published four books of poetry, a book of chronicles, and several audiovisual materials, including eight feature films and two documentaries.

He stopped going after what he believed was his and was not. He began another career, one that can enjoy the wide range of substitutes for the lost and deadly object, if its absence remains unbearable.

Do I... want what is mine?

In his heart, that rose that would have at least
taken for himself without hurting anyone in the world, was missing.
It was a major loss.
Clarice Lispector, The Imitation of the Rose

The price Laura—the protagonist of Clarice Lispector's admirable short story "The Imitation of the Rose"—had to pay for possessing the object that was presented as hers was also confinement, leaving the world of frustrations behind. Unlike César, her confinement was in a hospice.

Nothing could be more different than the "true story" of their origins. She is "a young woman from Tijuca," born into a bourgeois family, who lets herself be carried away by all the routines and paths that life has in store for her in these cases. The first parts of the story, which takes place in her life as a woman married to a man from the corporate world and who has not had children, suggest that Laura, prior to her marriage, suffered an episode of madness for which she had to be hospitalized for a long time. Everything suggests that it was a manic episode: at one point on the only day the story takes place, she feels tired and enjoys her tiredness, marveling at her body's response and comparing it to the moment of her crisis with these words:

> "No longer that lack of alertness due to fatigue. No longer that empty, awake, and horribly wonderful place inside her. No longer that terrible independence. No longer the monstrous and simple fatality or of not sleeping—neither day nor night—which, in its discretion, had suddenly made her superhuman in comparison to her tired and perplexed husband" (p. 121).

The "terrible independence" that César had enjoyed (and that had enjoyed him) since childhood was for her only a breath of madness. A moment when the possession of the object, of The Thing itself, was absolute. All gain. When there is room for what psychoanalysis has investigated like no other discipline, when there is room for "neurotic life," the life of "everyday misfortune," the recovery of the enjoyment of the object can be partially achieved thanks to resources or gadgets that our civilization manufactures with increasing perfection. Losing after losing the Object of mythical primordial satisfaction is a personal art that is not indifferent to the resources available and what each person does with those resources.

The work of the analyst in all its dimensions—theoretical, clinical, intersecting with other fields of knowledge—is the art of composing a subject who articulates their experience with the primary loss of the object and their experience of using its remains. If we are faced with a loss without remnants, there is no psychoanalytic subject. If we assume a subject without possible primary trauma—which many theories of "the traumatic" do—which is the same as assuming a Normal Ego or an Autonomous Ego, free of conflicts—we are in the field of robotics[5] .

In other words, the subject's work will always be to make the best of their irremediable conjunction of deficit and conflict. Killingmo's (1989) interesting psychopathological proposal to differentiate between a deficit clinic and an y clinic of conflict very clearly describes the subjective materials that we psychoanalysts encounter in each case. Zukerfeld's (2010) work in relation to this contribution, incorporating the dimensional view of modern psychiatry, allows for greater descriptive depth, with less medicalizing nominalism. Adopting what are called "deficit pathologies" and "conflict pathologies" as closed categories, with differentiated therapeutic resources (interpretative intervention and affirmative intervention), would be to subject psychoanalysis to fixed psychological categories, alien to the constitutive hybridity of the Freudian subject as we understand it.

Laura, in her moment of manic madness, which seems to return at the end of the story in a melancholic reversal, has contact with what is "dangerously lost" at the very moment she believes she possesses it. The title she chooses for her story is a paraphrase of *The Imitation of Christ*

4. In criminal slang, "losing" means being caught by the police.

5. En la jerga delictiva, *perder* significa ser atrapado por la policía.

5. Paradox of human evolution: the robots that are now being proposed to us as perfect prostheses for our "flawed nature" or as attractive companions for conflict-free beings seem like a somewhat sinister return to the Ideal Self that suffocates the subject.

Héctor Solari
Looking at the War, 29 (2015), on paper, 38,5 x 65 cm

(De Kempis, 2009), a manual of Christian devotion written in the 15th century, which instructs young people about a life of perfection close to the human divinity of the one who is proposed as a model.

The problem, or rather the fraudulent nature of the proposal, is that approaching the model confronts the subject with their inconsistency in a "dangerous" way: "lost in the light, but dangerously lost" (Lispector, 1960/2020, p. 120), says Laura when describing her experience of reading the Christian manual as a teenager. We would have to take on "original sin" as a mystery of faith in order to be admitted into the house of God, instead of paying a secular tribute to enter the house of man. What is the advantage of this second option? Having the chance to enjoy the remains of that operation, as we pointed out, the remains of a repressed text that can be recovered, not by Google, but by analysis.

Laura cannot bear the perfection of the roses she has bought for herself, or for her home, which is the same thing. She decides to give them to her friend Carlota, whom she admires and envies, the earthly embodiment of a certain feminine perfection. As Laura is neurotic, she feels that she is giving her object to the Other, so she thinks of taking it back, but she feels that this would be stealing: "Why would it be stealing to take it back now? To steal something that was hers?"(p. 129), she thinks at the very moment she has given them away. And this confrontation with the loss of perfection seems to trigger a depressive breakdown, as I have already said. I say "seems" because everything in Lispector has the subtlety of appearance.

This is very different from César, who steals what he feels belongs to him because it has been denied to him in the first place by that "authentic reality" we talked about. However, following the pattern of the cocaine high he systematically resorts to, it belongs to him in a fleeting and unbearable way. Pure deadly pleasure, with no possible benefit: "The watches we stole didn't last long on our wrists. We feared them, they intimidated us... Everything was ephemeral and perpetual..." *(*González, 2023, pp. 154-55)

The character Laura does not seem to find a way out in Lispector's text. She cannot escape the feeling of impropriety and inadequacy of her desire, the alienation of all her objects. The story is a particularly sensitive example of the way out that the author does find in literature, time and again, in her magnificent work. César, whose entry into "authentic reality"[6] was so ominous, finds it at a very high cost, the cost of losing his "authentic body" almost literally. This allowed him to enter the dimension of a symbolic body, which allows us what we call "culture," a truly amazing (not to say miraculous) transformation, mediated by Gauchito Gil.

I wanted to search the Internet to see who else might have been impacted by Lispector's story, as I was. I was somewhat disappointed with the results that Google always provides when I came across an article by Caetano Velloso (April 26, 2015), in which the Brazilian artist recounts his experience of encountering Clarice Lispector's literature. His first reading was precisely "The Imitation of the Rose".

With his sensitivity—which we have no trouble believing resonated with Clarice's—and with the license of his status as an artist, Caetano can express without restraint and with praise that madness, that "misfortune," is at the same time a contact between the subject and their "grace":

6. My thanks go to Louis-Ferdinand Céline, who allowed me to abuse his term "authentic reality" in order to refer to something as impossible to name as "reality."

> And going mad again was a misfortune for someone who had worked so hard to heal herself and rediscover her everyday happiness: but it was also—and above all—a moment when the woman was irresistibly reconquered by grace, by a greatness that nullified the values of the routine to which she had barely returned (par. 1)

This "subjective grace," which does not necessarily impose such a high cost as the critical "depersonalization" of someone, is what we have been investigating under the name of "style" for several years[7]. It is the work of the analyst, with their tool of resonance with the other that we call transference, that can enable the subject to attempt a "quantum leap" in this life that is losing its grace in a disturbing way, step by step, in this world... ours?

Losing grace, ultimately, is unforgivable.

Abstract

The author begins by distinguishing two categories that "loss" assumes in human experience. On the one hand, the original and mythical loss of the infans' nature of completeness, a universal and instituting trauma of the "being of language" that is man. On the other hand, there is the more or less traumatic loss of objects and/or parts of oneself that the life of each person brings. A contingent trauma where what is lost puts that first original experience under strain.

The lives of two literary characters are used as "clinical material." One of them is César, the minimally fictionalized protagonist of César González's novel *El niño resentido* (The Resentful Child). The other is Laura, a minimally autobiographical character from Clarice Lispector's short story "The Imitation of the Rose."

Descriptors: Trauma, Loss, Deprivation, Madness, Sublimation.

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7. See, for example: Toyos (2024)

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Valeria García Cannock*

The loss of the unnameable: Bonnett, writing and mourning

Otra vez esta casa vacía que es mi cuerpo a donde no has de volver.[1]
B. Varela, 1996

Ahora sé que el dolor del alma se siente primero en el cuerpo.
Que puede nacer de improviso, en forma de un repentino desaliento,
de un aleteo en el estómago, de náusea, de temblor en las rodillas,
de una sensación de ahogo en la garganta, o simplemente
de lágrimas calientes que acuden sin llamarlas[2].
Piedad Bonnett, 2013

This is how Piedad Bonnett brings her novel *Lo que no tiene nombre* (*What Has No Name*, 2013) to a close. A testimonial story, a narrative of the self that recounts, from the deepest recesses of her pain as a mother, the suicide of her son Daniel (a visual artist) due to a psychiatric disorder (schizophrenia).

In this article, we will examine the various moments in the novel and the lived experiences narrated by the author, and then propose some ideas connected to the theme of mourning and writing.

The impact of a loss such as this—visceral and unnameable, as the title of the novel suggests—leads her to question how something that can never be organized through meaning is expressed through language: "In these tragic and unexpected cases, language points us toward a reality the mind cannot comprehend" (p. 18). "Daniel killed himself" (p. 18), her mind repeats incessantly, unable to understand it—two words that deny themselves within her. The first thing she experiences is shock, bodily pain, disbelief. "Life is phisical" (p. 24) (La vida es física), she tells us, recalling a Watanabe's verse, as well as Blanca Varela's: "it is the soul`s yearning / that is the body" (23). (Es la gana del alma / que es el cuerpo).

That body that will no longer feel,

> Daniel's hands, the cheeks over which I ran the back of my hand when I saw him sad, the forehead I kissed so many times when he was a boy… the way he laughed, the way he walked. His scent… never again will the universe produce another Daniel. (p. 23)

Pain begins in the body, she experiences it as an indescribable sensation, a language that unravels, crumbles, and loses all sense; and it is that physical life that is yearned for, that which makes the other unique: "What death takes is an unrepeatable body and face: the soul that is the body" (p. 23).

With these phrases, Bonnett begins her novel in to lead us through four moments of the process in her writing and in the events that allow her to use it to give meaning to the unnamable.

In the first moment, she shows us a pain behind another pain, the pain is revived and embedded in that soul like an infinite kaleidoscope in front of the first questions solicited by doctors: "What shall we do with the body? Organ donation?" At first, she refuses; then she regrets it; finally, she accepts, thinking that in this way she may save others. Yet what embeds itself in the soul does not cease: she (naively) believes that they will take the corneas, the heart perhaps—but the doctors request the skin from his back, the bones from his legs. Harrowing images once again place Piedad Bonnett at the edge of the abyss; her beloved son gets undone with every word of her consent. "Life is physical," (p. 24).

In the second moment of her writing, she faces the relentless search for a deep reading of mental disorders, seeking to understand the incomprehensible through questions: Who truly was her son? What aspects of him did she not know? Who was the one who committed suicide? Was it him or that alien being that took hold of him from time to time? These questions help Bonnett draw closer to Daniel, hold on to him, not lose him. Through her memories she relives those moments when she saw his changes: his gloomy face, his lowered gaze, that silent self or a vital Daniel full of dreams that could reach *hyperbolic emotions*, as she calls them, almost delirious feelings.

She calls the third moment of the novel "The Fourth Wall," a concept that brings to mind the theatrical notion of the fourth wall. Usually, plays do not break the fourth wall, they keep the work and its characters separated from the audience; breaking it means the actor addresses the audience directly, stepping outside the "as if" to say something beyond the black box that is the stage. Here, Bonnett uses the concept to convey that there is something Daniel can't break through- a wall, a space that keeps him trapped, a fourth wall. Perhaps Bonnett is trying to explain to herself what prevents him from breaking that wall: the psychiatric illness, the feeling of incomprehension of the world in front of him, that alien presence living within him?

The final moment of her novel, titled "The End," recounts through

* Sociedad Peruana de Psicoanálisis, Lima, Perú.

1. *Once again, this empty house that is my body, to which you shall not return. B. Varela, 1996*

2. *Now I know that the soul's pain is first felt in the body. That it may spring up without warning, as sudden discouragement,/ As a flutter in the stomach, as nausea, as tremor in the knees,/ As choking in the throat, or simply/ As hot tears arriving unbidden.* Piedad Bonnett, 2013

some dreams in which she reunites with Daniel that difficult mourning process, allowing herself to gratify that wish to see him again. Yet in these scenes, Daniel—part of herself, too—leaves and vanishes. Something divides or separates them. There is great pain, but at this stage, it is possible to dream, to sustain that emotion and little by little work it through. It is an experience rich in images, more psychic, perhaps less embedded in the body? "Dani, don`t die... Mom, I can`t do anything else" (p. 125; fragment of a dream) (Dani, no te mueras... mamá no puedo hacer otra cosa) What part of herself also died forever? Are we in front of a form of accepting the renunciation or the mutilation of an aspect of herself?

Some Theoretical Implications

In 1923, Freud stated that the ego—the organizing agency of our mental apparatus, whose function is to deal with various internal and external aspects (reality)—is, above all, "a bodily ego." That is, its foundation and origin for the development of the human being exist through contact with the body, with the skin, and with sensoriality in relation to the external reality and, as Bion (1957/1996) would add years later, also with the internal reality. Bonnett (2013) tells us: "the soul that is the body" (p. 23) (el alma que es el cuerpo). And in that sense we can say that the ego, its narrative, is rooted there. This contact with reality allows one to experience a displeasurable emotion—perhaps the first: pain.

In 1911, Freud proposed that through this contact of the ego with reality, the discharge processes inherent to the pleasure principle are restricted and restrained, granting access to the reality principle, whose essence lies in the construction of thought as a buffer to the drive seeking gratification. Thought operates by allowing the representation of the object that is absent.

In Daniel's life (Bonnett, 2013), his ego oscillates between the struggle with an inner pain—an alien other experienced as invasive, disturbing, and persecutory—and, on the other hand, an ego capable of representing and buffering the drives, having moments of hope, seeking, and desires for personal fulfillment.

Pain, Bonnett reminds us, draws her close to madness to convey the unreality of this experience and the disturbing challenge of living without him—without his body, his laughter, his warmth. "What happens if I forget him?"- she wonders. That question tears at her, and she feels she must hold on to his memory through some form of remembrance—a remembrance that, perhaps, will be distorted with time:

> photography, what a paradox, retrieves and kills. Very soon those twenty or thirty photographs will swallow the living being. And there will come a day when no one on earth will remember Daniel through a moving, changing image. (p. 36)

As psychoanalysts we know the paradoxical place of memory. On one hand, we recognize it as essential for recovering forgotten and repressed memories; on the other, we know that such memory will never be the same as the lived experience—it will be tinged, and thus, distorted by our drives, by the temporal superimposition of experiences, and so forth. Memory, in a way, allows us to retain our lost love-objects; through it, we can bring them back to life, remember them, and feel the thrill of having them with us once more, even if only for a moment. Yet it can also serve to ruminate on that memory and suffer in a masochistic manner, linking that pain to destructive aspects.

What is the greatest fear when facing the death of a loved one—especially, as in Bonnett's case, the death of a child? She fears forgetting him, fears that the living, authentic, vital images she holds within her "alma que es el cuerpo" ("soul that is the body") will fade. She reminds us that she writes so as not to forget and that this novel is a way of allowing him to live forever:

> Suddenly, however, I feel that Daniel is slipping away, that I have lost him, that for the moment it does not hurt. I panic, I feel guilty—have I perhaps begun to forget him? Is he already entering the past that begins to fade? Then I close my eyes and summon him in desperation—I make him be born from the mist of memory, I make him real, flesh and bone […]. The pain bursts forth again, the images multiply, and my son is alive again. (p. 45)

Two elements resonate in this passage of the novel: on one hand, that apparent "absence of pain" shows us a way of surviving in a life turned gray and unreal; on the other, that urgency to call her son back to "life"—not only to retain him and not forget him, but also to enable her own survival. Her existence becomes fragile, dependent on memory. She wonders if she has forgotten him. We know that her psyche is trying to create a defensive system that protects her temporarily and allows her to reconnect with life, with the living, with herself—thus buffering the pain. However, when she fears forgetting him and evokes the images of a "living" Daniel, that unnameable pain returns.

In his classic text *Mourning and Melancholia*, Freud (1917/1987a) differentiates the two concepts, noting that the first—mourning—is tied to the loss of a loved one, of an ideal, of the homeland, etc. The bereaved's world is darkened, deprived of meaning; yet, after a difficult process of accepting the loss, the ego is strengthened, and its object-libido becomes available for new objects. This process is possible due to a clear differentiation between the ego and its love-object, thereby establishing limits.

Melancholia, by contrast, entails not only the emotions of mourning but also the ego's sense of being undeserving of the lost object's love, experiencing itself as humiliated and incapable of letting go of the object because "the shadow of the object fell upon the ego" (p. 2095). A part of the object settles within the ego, and the reproaches that were previously directed toward the lost object now turn against the ego itself, which now contains the object within. The ego thus becomes divided into two modes of functioning: sadistic on one side—what Freud (1923/1987b) would later call the superego—and masochistic on the other. This inabi-

lity to relinquish the object stems from a narcissistic type of relationship: in melancholia, Freud describes a poorly differentiated bond between the object and the ego.

Through this text, Freud (1917/1987a) reveals the strategies the ego deploys to overcome loss and the pathological effects that arise when this process fails. He places melancholia as a pathological mode of psychic functioning, whereas mourning is framed as a satisfactory way of traversing loss. However, expanding on Freud's ideas, we know that throughout our lives, experiences of loss are constitutive of the subject. We are subjects of lack and incompleteness, and our lives are marked by continuous and necessary losses—losses that enable emotional growth. In this sense, we ask ourselves: How is Bonnett experiencing this loss? What elements are at play? Does parental love have a narcissistic component that endures throughout life? In *On Narcissism: An Introduction*, Freud (1914/1987c) tells us that object-love can be narcissistic or anaclitic.

What kind of experience are we facing here?

At the beginning of the novel, Bonnett shows us a suffering and a tearing that reveal that unconditional love—narcissistic in a certain bodily sense. What do we mean by this? Bonnett does everything possible to rescue her son from the precipice she begins to perceive. She loses sleep, accompanies him, seeks him out, supports him, anticipates as much as possible, her arms metaphorically extend to hold him when he is abroad; she lives attuned to him at every moment. Her love and desperation are tireless—something in her is profoundly tied to him, viscerally tied to him. Is this the love of origins? Is Daniel, perhaps, a kind of extension of herself? Is he her product—flesh born of her flesh— from her own womb? Is he that being who came from her carrying pathological suffering? These are the primitive and corporeal aspects of the bond that emerge at the moment of the rending pain of death – that pain that is experienced in the body and permeates it. "Life is physical", she repeats again and again; so is death.

She intuits this death, a very painful end is approaching: "*we're going to have to start thinking that Dani won't end well,*" (Bonnett, 2013, p. 113). She says, "they ask me how I know what he feels, they will say it is because I am his mother, because I put myself in his place". (p.114).

"I put myself in his place", she tells us. This phrase seems to reveal two dimensions of the bond: the more differentiated objectal aspect (I–not I)—"I have a deep empathy and I put myself in his place" (p.113) —and, at the same time, putting herself in his place also suggests that she inhabits that body from within her own body and soul. To be, at times, her own son? Positioning herself in that place of an object close to death? Is there some of that narcissistic aspect inherent to the original bonds here, which could be amplified if we remember that both were artists: she a writer and a poet, and he a visual artist?

She rejects the idea of feeling *what he feels* due to the nature of being a mother, she rather emphasizes on the affection and intimate and close contact between both of them, which allows her *to feel like and with him.*

Could we imagine that one day that pain will disappear? This idea seems impossible. What's at stake is not the existence of this pain, but the ego's capacity to reclaim its own place, including the pain which it will inhabit like a ghost, but will try not to overshadow other dimensions of his life

These reflections recall Green's (1983/2013) text and his concept of the "dead mother complex," in which there is a mother who is physically alive but unavailable to the infant—a mother who has become depressed due to a significant and traumatic loss (the death of a child, a major separation, an abortion, for example). Green conceives this complex phenomenon not as a founding event, but as a progressive process of affective disengagement. The child struggles to reverse this experience without success, eventually opting for a single solution: to disinvest the maternal object of libido and identify with the dead mother—thus managing not to lose her, but neither to introject her. This phenomenon lies at the edge of psychic emptiness: "psychic holes" (p. 212), "cold core… lack of understanding" (p. 215)—a freezing love that complicates ambivalence, since the emergence of hatred would further destroy that mother who is physically alive yet psychically dead, leading the child to lose her completely. Is this an impossible mourning? It's necessary that the mother remains physically alive, thus the child becoming the guardian of the tomb: if the child restores vitality to her, he loses her; if he keeps her dead, he retains her, but frozen.

> if the mother remains in mourning, dead, she is lost to the subject—but at least, however afflicted she may be, she is there. Dead present, but present nonetheless. The subject can care for her, try to awaken her, to animate her, to heal her. But if, instead, she is healed—she wakes, comes alive, and lives—the subject loses her once again, for she abandons him to devote herself to her occupations and to invest in other objects. Thus, we are faced with a subject caught between two losses: death in presence, or absence in life. Hence the extreme ambivalence regarding the desire to bring the mother back to life. (p. 229)

We can observe how this complex process is located at the center of the psychic hole and on the borders of disinvestment; however, Green encourages us by showing us certain areas that manage to become libidinally invested through, creating

> a sort of applied breast, like a cognitive fabric, meant to mask the hole left by disinvestment, while secondary hatred and erotic excitement bubble at the edge of the empty abyss […]. The compromised unity of the ego, left full of holes, is realized on the plane of the phantasm, thus giving rise openly to artistic creation; or, on the plane of knowledge, it produces a very rich intellectualization. It is clear that we are witnessing an attempt to master the traumatic situation. (p. 218)

This is an essential idea, since despite the pierced ego, artistic creative capacity can emerge as a sort of "prosthesis" or cognitive fabric (in intellectualization); the vital and creative force is drawn from the edges of disinvestment—some kind of suction of residual aggression and eroticism left over from a time before the existence of the dead mother. Could we then suggest that perhaps it is only from deep, traumatic pain—and at its expense—that fruitful artistic creation and intellectual life might arise?

Could something similar have happened to Bonnett?

Let's think about the dead mother complex, but let's imagine this

phenomenon in reverse—that is, from the maternal experience of having a dead child. How can she rescue herself and avoid being left "dead" psychically and emotionally? What kind of object will be introjected? Could we speak of an introjection that ultimately allows acceptance of the loss? In Green's framework, as we have noted, the object cannot be introjected nor completely lost; perhaps in Bonnett's text we find a certain similarity: she cannot fully let him go, nor can she fully introject him. Perhaps that is the place where we might situate the pain of such a loss—in a sort of intermediate between a mourning that never comes to completion and a sort of melancholia (the original body–skin–mother–infant configuration). How can we not stay in that intermediate place when we're talking about the unspeakable pain of losing a child? Facing this pain, she struggles not to be frozen in a kind of "white mourning" (p. 212)

Anamaría McCarthy
The Car (2019), *Empty Rooms* series

What place does her writing occupy? Following our hypothesis on this reverse mode of the dead mother complex, writing can turn into a buffer, a reparative attempt against pain—libidinally investing "those psychic holes," drawing from those edges of eroticism and aggression, in Green's words, to process the experience again and again throughout life, in a sort of embroidery over those psychic holes— without ever being able to conclude.

We believe that in the face of pain of this nature, renouncing and accepting the loss is unthinkable. There is constant reworking, a persistent struggle to escape the ghost of pain, and, at the same time, an unrelentless desire to embrace the same pain and thus retain her son-object of love.

From our encounter with Green's text, some questions arise: wasn't Daniel already dead in life, as Bonnett makes us feel, with a suffering that could not be managed or relieved by his loved ones or by the professionals who accompanied him?

Perhaps writing about him is also linked to this: inventing Daniel again and again to make him reborn or to give him life for the first time. Writing, life drive, emptiness and death:

> Now then, I have tried to give meaning to your life, to your death, to my grief […] I have given birth to you again with the same pain, so that you may live a little longer, so that you do not vanish from memory. (Bonnett, 2013, p. 131)

Writing and Mourning

escribo para no olvidar[3]

Every creative process is born from trembling and fear, from courage and bravery. This is what Bonnett shows us throughout her novel. Her writing emerges from a desire to process a pain originating from an unknown place, which she ventures – fearful- into, trying to do something with that pain and avoid being swept away by the terrible and destructive experience that clouds her life and disarticulates her ego. She tells us: I write so as not to forget. In this sense, writing becomes a form of unifying memory for that ego attempting to rescue her beloved son from the rubble of her own psyche—but at a very high cost. To immerse herself in it, to account for what she has lived, implies placing herself once again in those painful experiences, in that torrent of images, scents, and skin.

A literary writing process brings us language, words, and thought, whose purpose is to restrain the painful drive in the face of the "absence

3. *I write so as not to forget*

of the object" (Bion, 1962/1996), attempting to transform that pain into something creative and shareable. However, from another perspective, it can also mean opening wounds that have been defensively closed and become excessive for the ego.

Writing itself is sustained by the logic of mourning, as language is word and sound, and writing is graph and signifier. Writing occupies the place of something that is no longer there; in that sense, to write is to mourn.

This brief reflection on writing and mourning seems important to us, since in Bonnett's novel (2013) we observe a double dimension of mourning: on one side, writing itself as a way of expressing something that is no longer there; and on the other, showing that the content of what is no longer there is death itself—that traumatic thing that sweeps away language and the capacity for understanding. Language itself shows us its own limits. The complexity of this process is absolute; it attempts to name the unnameable, where language can't reach: Who am I, now, without a son? What name is right for me? There are no words for it. The closest thing to that unthinkable, to that "no-name," is: "My son committed suicide". What worse word than the one no one wants to hear. Bonnett lays herself bare before us, leaving her skin and her entrails.

However, we can see not only these two dimensions of mourning, but also two ways of reviving it: recreating it to achieve temporary calm and showing us—through her artistic creation—perhaps a way of sublimating her own impulses. Could madness have resided within her, the same madness that drove Daniel to jump from that building? Does she feel guilty for being alive while he is not? Is it guilt for feeling relief and rest after so much suffering?

A key point in this story narrated by Bonnett, which shows us a certain acceptance of loss, is when she realizes that he did not commit suicide because of her love, which would not let him go:

> No love is useful to someone who has decided to kill themselves. In the decisive moment, the suicidal person must think only of themselves so as not to lose their resolve. Indeed, one reason to choose that end is that our affection weighs too heavily upon them. (p. 119)

This moment in her writing is crucial, because it allows us to understand her capacity as a human being to become aware of this situation and to try to let go and free that other in a decision so debated in our time: the decision over one's own life and one's own death.

[Writing] Grants the right, yes. But I ask myself why do I do it./Perhaps because a book is written above all to ask questions./ Because narrating is equivalent to distancing, to giving perspective and meaning./ Because by telling my story I may be telling many others./ Because, despite my confusion and discouragement, I still have faith in words./ Because although I envy those who can make literature from others' dramas, I can only feed on my own entrails./ But above all because, as Millás says, "writing opens and cauterizes wounds at the same time." (p. 126)[4]

4. [Escribir] Da el derecho, sí. Pero me pregunto por qué lo hago/Quizás porque un libro se escribe sobre todo para hacerse preguntas/Porque narrar equivale a distanciar, a dar perspectiva y sentido/Porque contando mi historia tal vez cuento muchas otras/Porque a pesar de mi confusión y desaliento todavía tengo fe en las palabras/ Porque aunque envidio a los que pueden hacer literatura con dramas ajenos, yo sólo puedo alimentarme de mis propias entrañas.

Abstract

This text explores *What Has No Name*, a novel written by Piedad Bonnett, a testimony in which the author confronts the suicide of her son Daniel and the impossibility of naming the pain of this loss. Writing becomes an act of resistance, an attempt to hold it and, at the same time, let it go. Bonnett navigates grief through the body, memory, and dreams, while reflecting on the fragility of memory and the impossibility of fully understanding loss, recognizing in language its inability to erase pain, but rather to allow its elaboration and the rediscovery of oneself, in a new subjectivity approaching and giving voice to the unnameable.

Keywords: *Creation, Loss, Writing, Memory, Mourning, Pain, Psychoanalysis, Suicide*. **Candidate to keyword:** *Bonnett, Piedad.*

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Jorge Luyando Hernández*

The Art of Losing: Paths of Mourning

The art of losing isn't hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.
Elizabeth Bishop, "One art"

The patient arrives, on time as always. This is an additional session to the two weekly sessions we have scheduled for her treatment. She requested this session, even though we were already one week into summer vacation. She leans back on the couch, looking thinner. I see her deeply sad, frankly devastated. She begins her account by telling me that while preparing for Christmas Eve dinner, her father left home at ten in the morning to go to the market to get some vegetables they needed to make a salad that is traditional in her family during the season. She tells me that, although he is now 78 years old, her father is completely independent, active, and remains healthy and strong, if anything, he just walks a little slower than before. Around one in the afternoon, she began to worry. She had that strange feeling of not knowing, but she knew something was happening. For my part, I began to retreat into my own thoughts, felt the sudden weight of emotional pain, and, without realizing it, for a moment the memory of my mother's passing, which had occurred more than twenty-five years ago, came to mind. Meanwhile, the patient continued recounting how her mother calmed her and reminded her that around that time of year her father would share Season's greetings and hugs with all the market vendors he interacted with regularly, and that there would always be some friend he'd run into who would have invited him for a coffee. As in previous years, it wouldn't be unusual for him to be seemingly late to make the traditional salad, but, as always, he'd have it ready just in time for dinner. However, about six in the evening, mom and daughters were already worried because their husband and father hadn't returned home. Around eight at night, they began searching hospitals for my patient's father, without success. Finally, just after ten that evening, a family acquaintance informed them that the morgue held the bodies of three unidentified men in their eighties who had died that day in three different road accidents. When they went to the morgue, my patient's mother didn't feel capable of going in to identify the body, so my patient did it herself. On the second corpse she examined, she soon recognized her father's clothing on the lifeless body. Before they discovered the corpse's face, she was certain it was her father. And so it was.

* Asociación Psicoanalítica Mexicana, Mexico City, Mexico

The police report explained that while the father was walking across the street on the pedestrian crossing, a speeding motorcycle lost control a few meters down the street. The motorcyclist skidded, the motorcycle slid along the ground without the rider and hit my patient's father in the heels. Unable to anticipate the collision, he was lifted into the air and fell backward to the ground, receiving a blow to the occipital region as he hit the pavement. This scene was corroborated by a video captured by security cameras installed by the city government, a video the patient regretted having seen, as she told me in her session. Two weeks after these events, the patient developed a migraine headache that was difficult to control due to her poor response to the painkillers commonly used to treat tension-type migraines. She was evaluated by three neurologists seeking differing opinions, but all three agreed on a diagnosis of tension-type migraine, with no apparent neurological justification and one of the neurologists consulted even told her it was a case of idiopathic migraine and advised her to seek psychological support.

For the next four weeks, the patient continued with her two-weekly appointments. During the sessions, the patient tried to remain calm, she still didn't seem to experience anxiety, she did suffer from insomnia and experienced a migraine in the occipital region almost daily, without either of us knowing what to do. At that moment, we were faced with a situation in which the analyst's capacity to dream and think was numbed, a result of the analytic dyad experiencing a traumatic event that overwhelmed their capacity to work through and generate a meaning. Bion (1967/1994) called this state of the analyst's mind *arrogance*, since there is difficulty in distinguishing the *self* from the object and the traumatic life experience is transposed into the analytical field, so the analyst and the patient suffer a fusional relationship: each one feels the other as an extension of their own *self*, without either of them realizing this. The above results in the psychoanalytic process remaining on pause, frozen, in the *area of fusion-confusion*, through crossed identifications between the analyst and the patient, and the mind of the former experiences that numbness that we know as *stupidity* (Cassorla, 2013). In those weeks, during the sessions, I experienced profound sadness. I was deeply moved by my patient's account, even though her father didn't always appear in them. She tried to return to her daily routine; several times she told me she wanted to recapture her "previous life," to have the peace and happiness of other times that were in the immediate past but now seemed so distant. Through our sessions in that period, I initially felt blocked and sad; later, I stopped feeling sad and couldn't connect with the patient the way I had managed to during other periods of our treatment, which was now in its fourth year. Without being able to recognize it, I remained in the *area of fusion-confusion*, in which, according to Bionian theory, in the face of an emotional experience of sufficient intensity that cannot be metabolized due to how traumatic it has been, the sensory and emotional impressions remain in alpha elements

Anamaría McCarthy
Playing, Port Washington, Nueva York, 1958

that cannot be thought or stored (Bion, 1962/2009), thereby establishing a thought disorder in the analyst that makes him oscillate in K and -K links, that is, in active un-knowing (Pistiner, 2011). However, in a session in the fourth week after her father's death, the patient returned to the initial reason for her consultation. She reminded me that she had come to request analysis because at that time her daughter was going through puberty more actively and she had discovered her daughter's exchange of messages with another pubescent boy of the same age, in which they confessed that they liked each other, that they didn't necessarily love each other, but they were sure that they liked each other and were planning how they could have a moment to kiss and try things out together. These messages shocked my patient, and, at the time, she thought that seeking kisses from that boy without affection, just for the sake of it, was a serious moral failing, an offense to her as her mother, and disrespectful to her entire family. The patient recalled that it had been a therapeutic achievement that she was able to "think differently," that she apologized to her daughter for the way she had treated her when she believed she was dishonoring the family. Ultimately, that session ended with a great deal of nostalgia for the lost times and for the absence of her father, who had helped her so much to think of her daughter as a granddaughter, through the eyes of her grandfather. At that moment in that session, all the good that had been achieved suddenly became clouded again. In my countertransference, I once again experienced the numbness that grief produces, but in my mind emerged the image of time ending with death. My own losses, which affect me, particularly the death of my mother, appeared. I was deeply moved by all of this, but time caught up with us, the session ended, and I deeply regretted having to stop and wait to see her until the following week.

Later, the patient texted me telling me that her migraine had been more intense that night. I felt guilty and ashamed for not being able to help her, for not being able to change things so she would feel better. At first, I even thought about how I couldn't turn back time and help my patient's father cross the street faster and avoid being hit by the motorcycle, therefore saving his life, which was obviously impossible: there was nothing I could do, it couldn't be changed. And it was in the midst of that guilt that appeared when reading my patient's message regarding the increase in her pain that I realized that perhaps what had been happening to me with the guilt was a way in which I was trying to change something that one cannot have any influence over, and if so, it seemed more like a desperate attempt to feel that I could control the uncontrollable uncertainty that characterizes life. At that moment, I realized that this experience surely had elements of my own personal experiences with the deaths of loved ones. The memory came back to me that on the day of my mother's death, in the morning rush, I had decided not to say goodbye to her, not knowing I would never see her again. This brought back the guilt I had already experienced, but now it took a deeper form, related to the possible countertransference my patient was making me experience.

In the next appointment, I explored the idea of guilt with her, although I knew I was also partly revisiting my own guilt, even without saying anything to her. This made me wonder for a moment if I was at fault, if I was rupturing the setting by not respecting the analyst's abstinence and being the one to invite the patient to revisit the idea of guilt together. But I went ahead; I felt it was necessary, that we both needed it. I raised the possibility that she might be experiencing guilt over her father's death as an attempt to control the uncontrollable, which is the uncertainty that characterizes life. This interpretation made sense to the patient, and she told me that she could now "*realize* that things" were different from how she had thought about them, adding, "but now I can't think of anything else to say or do." For my part, during that session, I was very surprised by her use of the phrase "realize," because, although I was sure she wasn't associating it with any theory, it made me think of Bion, and the only thing I could answer —even though I wasn't sure why— was that we should increase our sessions from two to three times a week. The patient agreed, and that same week we began a frequency of three analytic sessions per week. The moment I "ruptured" the setting, I unwittingly initiated the possibility that we could escape guilt in the analytic dyad; this allowed me to rehumanize the bond with my patient and, as a consequence, led me to begin to reflect on the stupidity of the analyst that was troubling me (Cassorla, 2013).

In the following weeks, now at a frequency of three times a week, I began to realize my difficulty in thinking the patient: on the one hand, I had experienced guilt and wanted to change the past so that my patient would not suffer, which partially coincided with the guilt she felt, since she reproached herself thinking that it was she who should have gone to the market that morning, and not her father. On the other hand, I didn't realize that I had lost the ability to think my patient. That is, I was in a state of stupidity and arrogance, like those described by Cassorla (2013) when reviewing Bion's ideas, and this made it difficult to move on to a *realization* of what was happening to my patient and me in our sessions. For Bion (1962/2009), the back and forth between the para-

noid-schizoid and depressive positions (PS <-> D), in addition to an adequate container-contained relationship represented by the analyst and the patient respectively, allows for progress in understanding what has happened.

Over the next three months, as we met three sessions a week, it became increasingly clear to me that my patient was in a -K link (Bion, 1962/2009), which could be thought of as a difficulty understanding the world, her life without her father, a new way of being alive without her father in a world completely different in his absence. My patient couldn't imagine a world without her father. In the sessions that were most painful and sad for us, I even experienced headaches both during and after the sessions, which led me to think that I too might be missing her father, despite never having met him. From the experience of guilt we felt over our losses, and even though the patient was unaware of my guilt over my mother's death or the guilt I felt for not being able to help her, this guilt was unconsciously established as the *selected fact*. In other words, shared guilt began to organize a series of experiences that until then had been scattered and seemingly incongruous. In this way, the *selected fact* brings the analytic dyad closer to the transformational system without a specific direction, but which allows for a progress from the -K link state to the K link state (Bion, 1965/2001). Thus, I was finally able to think that my patient's occipital migraine was not a coincidence, but rather a compromise-formation that, perhaps, was a way of maintaining contact with her father, showing solidarity with his death and his possible pain. As a result, thanks to the *selected fact*, various incidents that had been happening began to make sense, and I gradually recovered the ability to think my patient.

In one session, my patient returned to the topic of her migraine and the difficulty in getting rid of it, even with painkillers. I mentioned that her pain was perhaps a way of staying in touch with her father, of sympathizing with the pain he might have felt when he died. The patient burst into tears spontaneously and somewhat intensely. After a few seconds, which I felt like long minutes, she asked me directly: "Do you think my dad didn't feel anything? Do you think, as the police say, he died instantly and didn't suffer?" My patient explained something she hadn't told me, even though at least three months had passed since her father's death: she told me that one of her greatest fears was that he, his "daddy," had taken a long time to die, and then suffered. She added, weeping: "My daddy didn't deserve to suffer when he died; he did't deserve to die as an unknown person, without being identified." I replied that I didn't know, that I didn't have the answer she was looking for, but I told her that what I did know was that there was no need for her to sympathize with him through the migraine, and that I believed her father hadn't died unidentified, that she identified him and he was given the funeral that, in our culture, we give to our loved ones when they die. We both cried; time caught up with us again, and I had to stop the session. Although in my verbal responses I always told her that I didn't know whether or not her father had suffered when he died, because I didn't know, my attitude, and probably my physical disposition, was trying to convey the idea that her father hadn't suffered, motivated by the fantasy that when my mother died, she hadn't suffered either. For a moment, I thought the important thing was to reassure the patient that her father hadn't suffered when he died, but I soon felt uncomfortable having to lie to my patient. I managed to recover and realized that what *the cure* represented had nothing to do with confirming what I didn't know about her father's suffering at the time of his death, but rather was based on my accompaniment of my patient in her grief. *The cure* even lay in the solidarity with the pain of her loss that I accompanied through the pain of my own loss, without intending to. In this kind of complicity, I had felt guilty and at fault for not being able to support her, but now I realized that this was not the case: in reality, this was the experience that rehumanized our therapeutic relationship and allowed us to recover from the *arrogance* and *stupidity* I had suffered in order to carry out the process of accompanying her in her grief, what we know as *the psychoanalytic cure* (Winnicott, 1986/2011).

After this session, which took place about three and a half months after my patient's father's death, and for the next four months, we were able to begin to think what had happened. It became increasingly clear to us that the migraine was a compromise-formation in the form of a psychosomatic symptom where a life experience was deposited that initially couldn't have been thought or dreamed, let alone spoken about. Therefore, that life experience had to be lived in the form of a migraine so that, some time later, we could emerge from the *stupidity* and *arrogance* and slowly begin to think on what had happened. As at another point in this patient's treatment, our *alpha function* and our *capacity for reverie* were gradually recovering. The life experience of her father's sudden death had shocked us, and we were unable to process or work through that loss (Bion, 1967/1977). But this recovery was accompanied by the *catastrophic change* that accompanies the *transformations* that occur in ruptures and qualitative leaps (Pistiner, 2011), such as the one represented in the patient's life: inhabiting a world that was one with her father, and suddenly moving to live in another world without her father's presence.

Over the next four or perhaps six months, the migraines decreased in frequency and intensity: they were experienced at longer intervals, less intensely, and now responded to painkillers commonly used for their treatment, although they continued nonetheless. The patient had recovered considerably but her insomnia persisted, and she had periods of loss of appetite, during which she would force herself to eat. It seemed that the migraine now represented a kind of homage by the patient to the memory of her father, a result of the *nameless terror* represented by her father's tragic and sudden death as an life experience that was impossible to work through. This left the patient, at least in that area of her life, in a -K link that derived in the psychosomatic pathway through headaches to try to dream and think her father's death, which would finally allow for its *significance* (Bion, 1965/2001, 1962/2009). This idea came to me during a session in which she told me she was afraid she would one day forget her father's voice or face, and she asked me, "Do you think I'll ever forget my dad's face or the sound of his voice?" I told her again that I didn't have the answer she was looking for, that I thought she wouldn't forget, and I was close to telling her about my own loss, twenty-six years ago, and that I still remember my mother's face and voice whenever I need to, but I didn't tell her. I also remembered how much it helped me in my case to honor her memory with reading, books, and a passion for learning. I didn't tell her either, because at times I continued to doubt whether sharing this information represented a confession of my privacy, which I should avoid. Even so, with those thoughts of my mother's death in mind, I managed to tell her that now

it appeared to me that with the migraine she seemed to be paying "tribute" to her father, but that I thought there were many more things besides the migraine to honor her father, and I suggested that it be something from his life and not the moment of his death. The patient remained serious and at first tried to see me from the couch where she was lying, but she didn't get up or turn to her left; she couldn't make eye contact with me. Instead, she remained silent for a moment, during which I didn't experience the anguish I had experienced before, I felt calm, and it came to me that she was trying to recover, to remember her father. And then she told me, for the first time, six or eight months after her father's death, in that session:

> It's true, my dad taught me not to lie, to fight for what we want, to work, to be responsible, to be empathetic, to respect and love others, to love cats, he helped me understand my daughter when I needed it. My dad lives on in me, I hadn't realized he wasn't completely dead, that he's still in me, in all the things we continue to do together, just as he taught me.

Then there was a longer silence, she cried for a long time, but calmly, and I couldn't help but feel the need to join her in her crying, which now seemed not desperate and terrifying, but healing and towards a psychic working through. I remained convinced that my patient had begun to accept her loss, that she had been working through her grief, and that now it seemed she was, or *we were*, ready to accept losing as a way of living, as a way of being able to continue. We had managed to create a symbolic network that facilitated the recovery of the ability to dream and think our losses, in which the *alpha elements* that are presented as pictograms are the result of the transformation of the *beta elements* that lack meaning. This transformation is possible thanks to the *dream-work-alpha*, also known as *alpha function* (Bion, 1965/2001; Cassorla, 2013).

In the following weeks, my patient moved from that -K link to a K link, she had gone through a catastrophic change that was neither quick nor easy, which allowed her to *realize*; she had recovered her *alpha function* and *reverie* (Bion, 1962/2009). Now she could begin to imagine a life and a world without the physical presence of her father, she had accepted that she had had to lose her father, but that the love she has for him and the love her father has for her are still present in her life and in this world, even in her father's physical absence. This undoubtedly also allowed me to recover from the *stupidity* that prevented me from thinking my patient, from that situation in the analytic field that Cassorla (2013) calls *non-dreams-for-two* and stops the analytic process. It also made it easier for me to *give another turn to the screw* of the working through and significance of my mother's death and how I have tried to honor her memory. It seems to me that my patient achieved a transition from the -K link caused by the sudden death of her father, to the K link of living in a world without her father, and finally to a transformation of continuing her life with her father more fully introjected (Bion, 1965/2001). Consequently, my patient abandoned the unconscious homage of the occipital migraine; she no longer suffered from those headaches once she learned the art of losing.

Abstract

In this article, the author presents a clinical vignette that displays the work of the psychoanalytic dyad in response to the loss experienced by a female patient. The patient's transference toward the analyst is examined, with special emphasis on the analyst's countertransference. Bion's thought is employed to revise this vignette through the concepts of *alpha function*, *reverie*, *-K link*, *K link*, *arrogance*, *stupidity*, *realization*, *catastrophic change*, and *transformation*.

Keywords: *Arrogance, Alpha function, Catastrophic Change, K link, Reverie, Transformations.*

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Marília Mello de Vilhena* and Fernanda Graneiro Bastos**

The Petra Case. The Disavowal in Petra: Ferenczi and the Child and Adolescent Protection Network in Rio de Janeiro

In *The Ego and the Id* (Freud, 1923/1996a), in the second Freudian drive theory, we find an evaluation of new psychoanalytic discoveries regarding the view of the unconscious, an examination of the relationships between the divisions of the mind and the two types of drive, and the interrelations among the divisions of the mind.

In the new terminology of 1923, with its three instances – *das Es* (id, unconscious), *das Ich* (ego, self), and *das Über-Ich* (superego) – the ego is, initially, a bodily ego, a mental projection of the body's surface and a representative of the surfaces of the mental apparatus. Its functions of motor and perceptual control, reality testing, anticipation, temporal ordering of mental processes, rationalization, compulsive defense against instinctual demands, etc., help it face the dangers of the external world and the reality demands of the libido, the id, and the imperatives of the superego.

As the true seat of anxiety, the ego is, above all, a mediator attempting to mask conflicts between the different instances. Freud highlights the ego's impotence in the face of the demonic forces of the id, as well as the cruelty and violence of the superego.

> The ego is the real seat of anxiety. […] What the ego fears from external and libidinal danger cannot be specified; we know the fear is of being crushed or annihilated, but it cannot be analytically understood. (p. 74)

In one of the final works of the second topography, the text *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926/1996b), Freud addresses the interrelations between mental divisions, a topic previously introduced in *The Ego and the Id*, and emphasizes the theme of anxiety, present since his earliest works. In this important work, Freud notes that several specific dangers, all capable of generating anxiety, may persist side by side, simultaneously active, at different stages of life: birth, the loss of the mother as object (until early childhood), the loss of a penis (the danger of castration, until the phallic phase), the loss of the object's love, and the loss of the superego's love (fear of the superego, until the latency period).

Determinants of anxiety, the birth process and future danger situations imply, in a certain sense, a separation from the mother—initially in a biological sense, then as a direct loss of the object, and finally, as an indirectly incurred loss.

In this writing, anxiety corresponds to a precipitation of something from trauma, revived as a mnemonic symbol. It's worth noting that although Freud emphasizes the disappearance, at certain times, of most dangers, he also asserts the impossibility of complete protection from the return of the original traumatic anxiety: "The traveler caught by night may sing loudly in the dark to deny his own fears; but despite all this, he will not see beyond the hand in front of his nose." (p. 118)

I cannot conceive of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection.
Sigmund Freud

We begin by presenting the Nucleus for Adolescent Health Studies (Nesa), created in 1974 as a division of the State University of Rio de Janeiro (Uerj), responsible for comprehensive healthcare for adolescents aged twelve to eighteen. It functions as a teaching-assistance unit across primary, secondary, and tertiary care levels.

Over the years, Nesa has consolidated a multidisciplinary team composed of doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, speech therapists, physiotherapists, nutritionists, dentists, among others, and maintains a suitable physical infrastructure for welcoming adolescents and training undergraduate and graduate students.

Through its half-century trajectory, Nesa has become a national and international reference center in training, consulting, research, and outreach activities. Created in accordance with Brazil's Unified Health System (SUS), it follows a hierarchical model of healthcare and is a national reference for adolescent health.

Since joining Nesa in 1995 via public service exams, I spent several intense months at the institution's Psychology and Psychoanalysis Clinic with Petra, a thirteen-year-old adolescent. The desire to write about Petra stems from the fact that her care was—and still is—a turning point in my work as a psychoanalyst at Nesa.

In recent years, part of the care focus has shifted to health issues related to violence, particularly affecting females—less likely to result in death, but more silent and often unrecognized. In care settings at Nesa, cases of girls victimized by violence emerge in varied forms: sexual, physical, and psychological violence committed by partners and/or family members; restrictions on school attendance; exploitation in domestic labor, and so forth.

* Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Río de Janeiro, Brasil.
** Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Río de Janeiro, Brasil.

Our multidisciplinary and interinstitutional work took place in the mountainous region of Rio de Janeiro, attending to Petra, who faced school dropout, low family income, and a single-parent household, living only with her father due to abandonment by her mother. The follow-up care involved several institutions from the comprehensive protection network for adolescents, particularly Public Health and the Guardianship Council.

The social vulnerabilities Petra faced went far beyond economic hardship and access to services. Her condition as a young woman subjected to emotional abandonment, machismo, misogyny, and physical and sexual violence led her into multiple brutalities. Despite institutional and interdisciplinary efforts to ensure shelter and protection, the mark of disavowal remained in the situations she endured.

In the psychoanalytic trauma theory of Sándor Ferenczi, which we'll refer to in discussing Petra's case, trauma becomes structurally damaging—a "psychic shock"—only in the moment of disavowal. This involves the abandonment by those called upon to acknowledge and validate the violation by recognizing the pain that took hold of the child/adolescent. In *"Child Analysis with Adults"* (1931/2021a), Ferenczi reveals the worst aspect of disavowal is the claim that nothing happened, that there was no suffering. It is this, above all, that makes trauma pathogenic. In a clarifying passage from *"Confusion of Tongues Between Adults and the Child"* (1933/2021b), he writes:

> "Children feel physically and morally defenseless, their personalities too fragile to protest, even mentally, against the overwhelming force and authority of the adults who silence them, possibly even making them lose consciousness. But this fear, when reaching its peak, forces them into automatic submission to the aggressor's will, to anticipate their slightest desire, to obey, forgetting themselves, and to completely identify with the aggressor." (p. 117)

I consider the collaborative work at Nesa with social worker Fernanda Graneiro essential in handling this highly complex case. This interdisciplinary partnership fostered confrontation, friction, and resonance. Many questions in this clinical case remain open.

When Petra arrived for care at Nesa, her still-developing body bore both visible and invisible marks of the many violations and violences she had endured. In the first session, I found before me a frail, withdrawn, silent thirteen-year-old girl—and beside her, strikingly, stood a robust, almost fifty-year-old woman, flamboyantly blonde, with an overly sweet and insistent tone, repeating how affectionate and responsible she was toward her "heart-born children" and how faithfully she fulfilled the legal obligations assigned to her.

Petra's history includes a chilling sequence of events: at age twelve, her father "gave" her away to settle a gambling debt with the "round's winner," who took her to his home and, with his son, made her the family's sexual slave. Not long after, she became pregnant by one of her abusers, who then returned her to her father—who rejected her due to her pregnancy.

Thus began Petra's entry into the child and adolescent protection system.

The Child and Adolescent Statute, Law No. 8.069 (1990), established shelter as a protective measure for vulnerable children and adolescents, either through institutions or foster families—ideally for no longer than eighteen months. However, in practice, many individuals enter institutional shelter as children and remain until they reach legal adulthood. Foster family care is both preferential and prioritized, and recommended by numerous international studies as it offers a more individualized experience focused on the recipient's needs within a family-like setting.

By the time she was receiving care, Petra was already the mother of a healthy baby girl, whom I occasionally saw in the arms of her "guardian mother" in the waiting room. I still vividly recall the uneasy sensation I felt when Petra—deeply embarrassed, head down, silent— presented her daughter to me. Awkward and shy, she seemed like a girl herself—thrust abruptly and trapped, without understanding, into a premature "adulthood". There was a silent adherence to suffering—a traumatic pain that was invisible, inaudible, inscrutable—an irreparable loss.

For months, I listened to my patient's accounts of her daily routine, the many instances of bullying she endured at school while pregnant, when she began hiding from classmates during recess. Also prominent were the distressing transformations in her body, the constant scrutinizing gazes that judged and isolated her, the loneliness of childbirth, which made her feel truly naked and helpless.

With a certain formality and distance, Petra spoke in sessions without major difficulty. Curiously, when the topic turned to her home life—how she and her daughter lived, how they were treated in their new family—Petra significantly held back her words. She was brief when discussing breastfeeding, caring for her daughter, interacting with her guardian mother and siblings, and household chores. Her short and sparse narratives suggested that, in that intimate terrain, her daily life unfolded without major complaints or details.

Petra, concise, said she was grateful to her guardian mother; about her siblings, she replied in monosyllables. Rather mechanical in sessions, she seemed to signal a veiled suffering in her closest world. As psychoanalysis has long observed, even when someone tries to hide something, their body language and gestures may reveal more than words[1].

Petra and her baby continued pediatric follow-ups in Petrópolis. During one consultation, without her guardian mother present, the pediatrician—who had already noticed Petra's weight loss and signs of neglect—conducted a physical exam that revealed bruises on her body, suggesting ongoing abuse.

As she had previously observed a certain hostility from Petra's caretaker, the doctor asked the adolescent about the injuries. Petra remained embarrassed and silent. In a phone call to me, the pediatrician shared the consultation and emphasized the urgency of reporting the case to the Guardianship Council.

Immediately after the call, my first step was to share the case with social worker Fernanda Graneiro and inform Petra about the conversation with her daughter's doctor. In a shared consultation, Fernanda and I gently asked Petra how she felt knowing we were going to report her case.

1. Freud is said to have stated: "No human being is capable of keeping a secret. If the mouth is silent, the fingertips speak" – although there is no source that confirms this claim.

If Petra had previously tried to hide her suffering, she then began recounting with anger and indignation the atrocities she underwent—relentless days caring for her daughter, enslaved in household labor, missing school, enduring abuse, and lacking affection. What had once been concealed and silenced now surfaced intensely.

Héctor Solari
Landscapes after the battle, 3 (2019),
pastel on paper, 50 x 64 cm

Ferenczi, a guiding light in this account, considers it essential that the analyst be open, affected, and ready to bear witness to the other's pain. He invites the psychoanalyst to be courageously present, further implicating himself in the analytic process.

Welcoming Petra with warmth, respecting her rhythm, and "feeling with" her in a space of mutual affectivity meant relying on Ferenczi's approach to guide this especially traumatic case. In that empathic context, Petra was able to trust: "The victim identifies with the aggressor and repeats the act of the aggressor." (Ferenczi, 1933/2021b, p. 117)

In constant phone contact with the pediatrician, we informed her that we would notify the Child Protection Council[2] (Conselho Tutelar) about the violence experienced by the adolescent in her placement with the foster family. After receiving the report, a counselor contacted the institution for further clarification. We held a multidisciplinary and intersectoral meeting, with the presence of the pediatrician from Petrópolis, and presented the various elements that made up the history of multiple instances of violence experienced by the adolescent — including within the home of the foster family that was supposed to care for and protect Petra.

2. One of the responsibilities of the Child Protection Council (Conselho Tutelar), and therefore of its members, is to assist children and adolescents whose rights have been violated or are under threat. In addition, the child protection counselor is responsible for referring such situations to the parents or legal guardians, through a signed statement of responsibility

The Council's procedure was to summon the guardian mother and Petra for an official meeting. At that moment, Petra denied all experiences of abuse and mistreatment in the foster home. Despite these denials, the councilor, recognizing the severity of the violence and relying on the information provided by the healthcare team, requested that the Juvenile Court place Petra and her baby with a qualified family or in a shelter.

If psychic trauma can be thought of as the focal point of Ferenczian attention, Eugênio Canesin Dal Molin, in his presentation at the Preparatory Course for the 14th International Sándor Ferenczi Conference (personal communication, September 2, 2023), introduces the concept of trauma as constellations. Today, one might say: to speak of Ferenczi is to speak of trauma.

In Ferenczi's development of his theory of traumatogenesis, he sees the role of the external environment as decisive in shaping traumatic experiences. Traumas are not welded to a single event; they are not inherently traumatic, nor do they possess an ontological reality. The traumatic process is dynamic and unfolds within a context involving multiple actors capable of mutually affecting one another.

In Ferenczian traumatogenesis, trauma cannot be reduced to an isolated moment. We can think in two phases: first, the unbearable intensity of the experience; then, the disqualification—the disavowal—of what was lived. In Petra's case, the initial act—her father selling her—triggered a disintegration of her sense of self, an inability to act, think, or resist.

In the second phase, the most acute point, her experience was invalidated by a figure of trust—her foster mother.

Viewed through Ferenczi's lens, we can say that the second adult—not the aggressor, but the caregiver—negated Petra's reality and failed to recognize the pain generated by the first shock. As a consequence of this denial, Petra adapted to the abusive experience, becoming docile, obedient, and identifying with her caregiver-aggressor. Unable to narrate her pain and transform it, she had no alternative but to play dead. "We think of fruits that ripen and sweeten too quickly when pierced by a bird's beak, and the accelerated maturity of a worm-infested fruit." (Ferenczi, 1933/2021b, p. 119)

In his theoretical-clinical expansion of psychic trauma, Ferenczi emphasizes the denial of the other's suffering as fundamental in the formation of trauma. Dal Molin (2016) highlights the necessity of someone validating our experiences—especially in early life—so that we may believe in their truth.

Even after the trauma formation process concludes, the clinician can help the patient give meaning to trauma, symbolize it, and validate something from the realm of terror. In Petra's case, we worked to create conditions for her to speak and reclaim subjectivity in the face of trauma.

The opposition between individual and social psychology—or the psychology of the masses—while seemingly significant at first glance, loses much of its sharpness and clarity under closer examination.

In today's paradigm shift, which approaches Ferenczi as a living text, we are led to consider disavowal at a social level. We know that the feeling of having undergone a negative experience can imprint a group's memory, even shaping its collective identity.

Through Ferenczi, the task now is to call attention to violent and toxic dynamics that may be present—especially within asymmetrical relationships. In light of the many forms of illnesses stemming from such realities, it is urgent to explore the subjective implications of all contemporary forms of trauma and oppression.

Psychoanalyst Daniel Kupermann (2019) regards Ferenczi—our *enfant terrible*—as one of the key figures in the history of twentieth-century psychoanalysis. His ethic of clinical care is more elastic, inclusive, and horizontal, welcoming both individual and collective pain, while prompting us to rethink our place in the world.

Violence, as a multicausal phenomenon, impacts all social groups, institutions, and age ranges. In Brazil, it has reached significant mortality rates and, alongside external causes, is one of the leading contributors. Regarding mistreatment of children and adolescents— particularly sexual violence—it has become a priority on the public agenda.

Historically, Brazil has treated "destitute," "abandoned," and "irregular" children and adolescents through institutional confinement in orphanages and reformatories, starting in the colonial era.

Beginning in 1999, Brazil began building a comprehensive Child and Adolescent Rights Guarantee System, aimed at securing protection across all dimensions. In this context, initiatives for foster family care began to emerge, gaining momentum only in the mid-2000s.

It's important to remember that at the time Petra was "cared for" by a foster family, this policy was still under development and lacked the consolidated structure of today's model, where caregivers receive multidisciplinary support.

In losing trust in herself, Petra sadly conformed to a narrative in which she could no longer recognize herself—a narrative in which disavowal of a vulnerable subject's account of suffering results in the invalidation of their experience and testimony. After retracting what she previously stated—her singular traumatic history—Petra was transferred to another foster family in the mountainous region of Rio de Janeiro. And thus, we lost sight of her. We never had further contact with the adolescent girl who left us with so many vital questions unanswered.

Through Petra's case, we must now ask: How can we speak of citizenship in relation to a population so stigmatized—adolescents and youth from society's impoverished layers?

From early childhood marked by severe loss, extreme poverty, violent socialization, parental drug use and abuse, limited access to education, early sexual initiation, and exploitation through domestic labor, Petra suffered deeply—especially as she began to identify with her aggressor. In her case, the normalization of violence contributed to its repetition by the adolescent herself in the future.

Due to their vulnerable condition, fear, shame, or the belief that

overcoming obstacles to access help and protection is nearly impossible, many adolescents—Petra included—remain silent. We know that lack of understanding about the protection network and the sense of loneliness and powerlessness in violent environments represent a real risk of abandoning treatment and mistrusting institutional and professional efforts.

It is impossible to speak of subjectivity—which we consider essential—without acknowledging the individual as a protagonist. In Petra's case, the adolescent ultimately adopted behaviors rooted in violence and submission. We must affirm that, even at a crossroads, choosing a path is a responsibility that belongs to the subject.

We must continue to stress the importance of healthcare professionals in working collaboratively with the social protection network and government sectors to develop strategies for confronting violence and promoting health. Multidisciplinary and intersectoral care is essential in cases of violence.

Recognizing the adolescent as a responsible subject with rights means refraining from pedagogizing treatment, medicalizing suffering, or institutionalizing care. It is about giving voice and listening space to young people—the foundation of any transformative action in our social relationships, crucial to building an effective therapeutic project. Though we may still be far from that goal, we know the path exists. Despite the long history of marginalizing exclusion, today we see individual and collective initiatives—both personal and institutional— centered on an ethics of human well-being.

Abstract

Through the lens of psychoanalysis—particularly the concept of disavowal developed by Sándor Ferenczi—the author examines the case of Petra, an adolescent treated at the Nucleus for Adolescent Health Studies (Rio de Janeiro). Her traumatic history is marked by social vulnerability, successive psychic and physical violence, abandonment, abuse, and severe, unsupported losses. Confronted with overwhelming intensity and the young girl's oscillation between subjectivation and annihilation of self, the author seeks to interrogate—through an interdisciplinary approach—the impasses and limitations revealed in Petra's case.

Keywords: Psychoanalysis; Trauma; Ferenczi, Sándor; Denial; Interdisciplinarity.

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María Laura Trotta*

Losses and reinventions in the history of psychoanalysis

Losing certainties

In recent decades, we analysts have been losing certainties that the framework, standards and the theory of orthodoxy dictated. Those were impositions, but their voices gave us the security of sustaining a practice that had been tested over the years and was beyond discussion. It was a loss that resulted from successive confrontations with contemporaneity´s rhythm. Turns in the history of society, such as that which Lacanism attributes to a "declination of the Name of the Father" or to the social sciences to an eclipse of the patriarchy. Mutations that confuse psychoanalysis and opponents to psychoanalysis alike, tempting them at times to conclude exaggeratedly disproportionate losses such as that of an irreversibly expiration of the Oedipus complex.

The decline of paternal authority had already begun to be hinted at during Freud´s time; it is not difficult to recognize it in certain scenes of everyday life in his case´s stories. And it was not necessary to enter the 21st century for psychoanalysis, from different latitudes and from the voices of different representatives, to begin to study it explicitly, without neglecting what its involved in the classic picture of the Oedipus complex.

Gradually, it was accepted to leave aside the binary perspective that the most didactic and conservative readings of Freudian discourse had established. The revision of this orthodoxy gave way to various contributions, such as those of some female psychoanalysts that Lacan was able to consider, as it will be explained later. This made it possible to give in to what until then was considered psychopathological and to agree with the demands of feminisms, gender and queer discourses. In the analytic approach, patients previously diagnosed as psychotic or perverse came to be considered as neurotic of sexual diversity.

While not everything is lost, it is true that the inadequacy of classical psychoanalytic manuals has become increasingly evident over the years. For example, consider this memory from the late 1990s. At that time, I was beginning my professional career on a psychoanalytically oriented psychopathology team at an infectious disease hospital. AIDS was still a deadly epidemic. This situation forced me to interact with patients who are now commonly referred to as individuals with "gender identity" issues. Among the inpatients, I often encountered people who are now included under the LGBTIQ+ umbrella. At the time, their issues were as marginalised by society as by the bibliography which I was training under as a psychoanalyst.

In the room where clinical conferences were held, there was a "map" showing how the patient population was distributed. The priests were in the center, surrounded by the secular homosexual sector. I was told that these two groups were in decline because they had learned to take care of themselves, which distinguished them from the ever-increasing third sector. This third sector came from the more marginal regions of the suburbs.

In extreme poverty were the transgender population, most of whom were prostitutes or delinquents because it was the only kind of work they could find. Some of them had blue-ish bodies from old tattoos, at a time when the mass use of them was still a long way off.

I was soon approached insistently by one of them, who liked to call herself Claudia. She was twenty-five years old; her ease, cordiality and sense of humour disabused me of any reflex to confirm the diagnoses in which, because of my training, I expected to typecast her. Despite her claims to be a woman caged in a man's body, she showed no signs of mental automatism or other obvious manifestations of psychosis with delusional certainties. Nor did she easily fit the clinical profile of perverse structures manifested through acting out.

When dealing with this and other similar cases, the knowledge of my senior colleagues and the supervisor became unfocused, and their response took the shortcut of privileging the urgencies of the social. The subjective was overshadowed and this was, I came to understand years later, due to the theoretical and technical vacuum that such cases revealed. The bibliography had just been written and was beginning to circulate. It began to gain authority, though not without resistance from several of our teachers and our own incredulity.

The truth is that at that time we were struggling, these were not patients who presented themselves in clinical athenaeums or supervisions in psychoanalytic institutions. They were an invisible, untreatable population, the classification of "unanalysable" was the response that was heard; of course, they were cases that the analyst in training understood that they should not choose for their didactic supervisions.

Just as in 1909, when Freud went to the United States for the only time with Jung and upon seeing the Statue of Liberty remarked "You don't know that we brought you the plague", contemporaneity brought two plagues that shook psychoanalysis: AIDS, which imposed the agenda of gender studies, and Covid-19, which dramatically introduced virtual sessions in psychoanalysis.

Due to these and other unexpected encounters with the twists and turns of the present era, the course of analysis has lost its compass more than once. Epochal changes have transformed how and through what relationships with others are established, whether due

* Asociación Psicoanalítica Argentina, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

to the new tolerance of sexual diversity, the progressive horizontality of treatment in hierarchical relationships or the new means of virtual communication.

Nowadays, we approach the diagnosis of perversion with more caution; the analytic contract has become less demanding in terms of frequency, formality and the use of the couch; virtual platforms are gaining ground, and analysts must not be digitally illiterate to keep up with the times. It is not a matter of pure loss, but of mutation of practices. Changes which, at times, at the beginning may have seemed imprudent, and then turned out to be harmless; for instance, in these latitudes, colloquial speaking was not allowed in an analysis, and now it is not questioned and is of no concern. Likewise, there is already enough evidence that transference is also generated and sustained in virtuality, and that neutrality and abstinence are not obsolete, but are staged in other ways. The analyst today is there, on that screen, sometimes as the most intimate and stable thing that the subject can find around them..

On the other hand, life today often implies suffering from a lack of place, being left behind in the scenes of the world, be they face-to-face or virtual. We analysts are not exempt from this either, and this calls for frameworks, standards and bibliography that are in the process of being produced. *It is not so much that orthodoxy has been lost as that the new times show faults that it must and can deal with.*

However, we did not have to wait for our times to find this dialectic of loss and lack in psychoanalytic practice and theory. If we look back, the novelties of the time have often shaken psychoanalysis, but it is no less true that they have also helped to produce it.

Psychoanalysis has never been one and the same, nor has it always been there

Freud, Melanie Klein, Karen Horney, Lacan and Bion, among others, understood and felt encouraged by the fact that psychoanalysis was traversed by contingencies, and knew how not to retreat in the face of the progress and tragedies of their times, but to dialogue with the emerging discourses and cultural movements.

It is worth examining how some of the contingencies they went through made them lose their initial certainties and gain new foundations for the doctrine, raising what today we consider to be solid pillars. For example, around 1880 there was a great debate about railway accidents in certain cases in which it was not possible to find the injury that justified the symptoms or to be sure that it was a simulation. This eventually led to a new conceptualization of hysteria that was no longer solely associated with femininity. Psychoanalysis, in its infancy, was encouraged to establish a new status for hysteria and articulate the notion of trauma alongside distress (Sanfelippo, 2018, pp. 35-88).

Three decades later, Freud's thought was shaken by the epidemic the First World War had brought: the traumatic neuroses of war; needless to say, this served to introduce *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (Freud, 1920/1990d) and to upend metapsychology in the 1920s. The first topic, a child of the *belle époque*, was limited to eliminating the trauma of seduction by returning its repressed memory to consciousness. The war brought traumatized people with extremely clear memories to the consulting rooms.

It is within this context that we see Freud rethinking or thinking for the first time about the centrality of human aggression: how was it so easy to convince people to go to the front lines to kill their fellow men? On the one hand, one could think of the effects on the subjectivity of the time, of the ideal and the superego, but at the same time it was the irrefutable proof of the expression of the death drive. Freud wrote *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death* in 1915, just after the war had begun; he undertook his sociological works such as *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929), and corresponded with Einstein on *Why War?* (1932), which was promoted by the League of Nations. To the question of whether there is any way to spare mankind the ravages of war, he replies:

> You are astonished that it is so easy to make men so enthusiastic about war and, you conjecture, something must move them, a drive to hate and annihilate [...]. We believe in the existence of such a drive, and in recent years we have been engaged in the study of its externalisation (Freud, 1933 [1932], p. 183).

The changes in Melanie Klein's theory and practice were similarly impelled by the outbreak of war. In 1939, at the beginning of World War Two, the shelling and bombing echoes in her records and in her reports of clinical materials, such as the well-known case of Richard, a patient who begins his analysis at the age of ten and whose anxiety in the context of the war had made it impossible for him to attend school; one can see how the technique became tinged with interventions in which scenes of war ended up being linked in some way to his interpretations:

> The war in general had reactivated early anxieties, and he was particularly frightened by bombing and shelling. She followed the news about the war very closely and took a great interest in the changes that were taking place; this preoccupation appeared constantly in the analysis. (Klein, 1961/s. f., p. 7)

She continues, speaking of it in the third person in the transcript of her notes of the sessions:

> [During a session] Richard starts to look at some of the earlier drawings [...] M.K. then asks him what he thinks it means, and as Richard does not want to answer, she interprets the British planes as the family. Richard then becomes interested and eager to cooperate and says that the crossed-out German bomber on the right-hand side also represents him. Suddenly becoming restless, he stands up and (after an

> obvious inner struggle) says that he has a secret he cannot tell M.K., but almost immediately relates it: last night he soiled his trousers, and the cook had to wash them for him. He adds with embarrassment that this does not happen often, but that sometimes he thinks he can hold back "the big stuff" and then it turns out that in the end he can't do it. M.K. interprets that he has remembered his "secret" at the moment when he recognised that in the drawing, he was the bad German bomber, and that this is because he feels that "the big thing" is bombs. (p. 23)

Then, she follows with this remark where we can see how she intertwines it with her theoretical developments:

> Perhaps the cause of him soiling his trousers last night was the fear he had of bombing his family with faecal matter; in this way, he can now confess his fear, test whether in fact "the big" is dangerous and besides, he has managed to get rid of this secret faecal matter he thinks is inside him. (p. 23)

Lacanian aggressiveness: Another theoretical outcome of the Second World War

If the spectacle of the First World War had pushed Freud to write *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920/1990d), the events of the Second World War led Lacan to present in Brussels, at the XIth Congress of French-speaking Psychoanalysts in 1948, the report "Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis". In that occasion, he affirms that the constitution of the ego emerges from the imaginary rivalry with the similar. A year earlier, had published "English psychiatry and the war" (Lacan, 1947/2014a), about the group practices with the troops led by Bion and conversations he had with Turquet, who had participated in the English intelligence service, all of which contrasted with what he had seen as a psychiatrist assimilated into the army, of the subjective state of the French officer corps. Let's see how he articulated this play of differences with his referred impressions of the eclipse of patriarchy:

> My rank only allowed me hearsay access to the signs we had of the ineptitude for war of the senior cadres. I will only point out that I found here on the collective scale the effect of the degradation of the virile type which I had referred to the social decadence of the paternal *imago* in a publication on the family in 1938. (pp. 123-124)

The report also attempts to conceptualise how war propaganda had employed the new mass media, particularly in the editing of images for film and television. The first live television broadcast took place at the opening of the Berlin Olympics in 1936:

> The increasing development in this century of the means of acting on the psyche, a concerted manipulation of images and passions, which have already been successfully used against our judgement, our firmness, our moral unity, will give rise to new abuses of power. (pp. 131-132)

Women's access to the world of work and the rise of divorce

During World War Two, there were other decisive developments. One was due to women in the belligerent countries successfully taking on roles previously reserved for men, who were on the front lines. With the return of peace, this movement was only partially reversed, setting a precedent that would eventually transform the place of women in Western culture.

A consequence of women's access to work and wages was the liberation from the constraints that prevented most women from questioning their husbands and thinking about divorce. The fall of the nineteenth-century paternal *imago* found its *coup de grâce* in these circumstances.

Freud died at the outbreak of World War Two, but the practice of psychoanalysis by women did not have to wait for its consequences. Freud encouraged them to do so very early on. Among others, Helene Deutsch, Margarethe Hilferding, Hermine von Hug-Hellmuth, Jeanne Lampl-de Groot, Lou Andreas-Salomé, Erzsébet Révész, Beata Rank, Marianne Kris, Edita Sterba (Mühlleitner, 2000, pp. 642-668) and Marie Bonaparte. Of his six children, Anna, the youngest, succeeded him as leader of the movement.

The decline of patriarchy and the metamorphosis of the Oedipus in the second half of the 20th century

It was not necessary to wait until the 21st century for psychoanalysis, from different latitudes and through the voices of different representatives, to begin to notice the crisis of patriarchy and to reflect on how it compromised the staging of the Oedipus complex. The decline of paternal authority was already beginning to be hinted at in Freud's time; we can recognise it between the lines in the case histories of the *Studies on Hysteria* (Freud and Breuer, 1893-1895/1992a), "The Dora Case" (Freud, 1905 [1901]/1992b), or in *Analysis of the Phobia of a Five-Year-Old Child* (Freud, 1909/1998). The rigidity of the nineteenth-century family was running into trouble, more so in multicultural and multi-ethnic cities like Vienna, which, as Lacan observed, was a melting pot of diverse family structures.

Melanie Klein would lead the way in questioning Freud's classical account, taking it back to its origins, by postulating an early Oedipus in

which the mother figure was dominant. The Oedipal triangle lost its primordial solidity; it was preceded by the enigmatic and terrifying duality of the pre-oedipal.

As Hanna Segal (1979/1985) points out, for Klein both the boy and the girl have a history of pregenital attachment to the mother. She decompletes the Freudian description of the phallic stage by postulating that the figure of a mother with a penis 'is part of the fantasies in relation to the mother's body which contains the father's penis incorporated in it' (p. 64). Klein does not consider that there is a phase of 'sexual latency' (p. 64) until the Freudian phallic phase is reached, but that, as soon as weaning has occurred, 'the mother's body and the father's penis' (pp. 64-65) become of immediate interest, entering into 'active oedipal conflict' (p. 65) pre-genital. The Oedipus complex will develop 'by degrees' (p. 65) into a more genital form. By 1932 Klein infers a very early superego, which she considers 'a precursor rather than an heir' (p. 65) to the Oedipus complex.

Building on this, Lacan was able to reconsider the Freudian castration complex. By taking note of Klein's early experiences of the fragmented, dismembered and unsexed body, Lacan was able to move forward, in 1936, to his first formulation of the mirror stage. That is, to an origin well before the trauma of the discovery of anatomical sexual difference and a prominent role of the father.[1]

In parallel with Melanie Klein's work, Freud encouraged his direct disciples, Helen Deutsch and Karen Horney, to investigate the mystery of female sexuality, a topic he had pondered in the 1920s. And their breakthroughs, which led to heated debates, also called into question the time-honoured account of the Oedipus complex and its relation to specific social frameworks, its universality challenged by appeals to anthropological documents and nascent sociology.

In 1925, Helene Deutsch published the first psychoanalytic book devoted expressly to femininity, *Psychoanalysis of the sexual functions of women.* Following Freudian lines, she expanded on the different stages a woman goes through in her sexual life, from infantile sexuality to the menopause, that is, dealing with what in her view was "the under-appreciated female libido" (p. 16).

The book was, at the time, very well received, and it will be Karen Horney who will be responsible for reviewing it praiseworthily in 1926 *in The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*; although already hinting at what would be for her, two decades later, the fierce target of her criticisms. Without wishing to be confrontational, she would include this paragraph which anticipates the culturalist turn that Horney would eventually adopt:

> Moreover, there is the question whether the social circumstances of our time are not responsible for its [the fall of the Oedipus complex in the girl] frequent occurrence in this distorted form [...]. It would be a difficult matter to decide, but in any case, we are dealing with a problem [of certain societies], and not with a [universal] fact. (p. 100)

This objection stems from her first attempts to think, apart from Freud, of an alternative way to access femininity, without going through the castration complex. In her understanding, this goal would be reached, instead, by means of a direct identification of the daughter with the mother. She not only disregarded penis envy, but went so far as to propose, in 1926, "male envy of motherhood". And she would attribute the Freudian blindness to her approach to patriarchal culture. To support it, she would base herself on the sociology of Georg Simmel, who argued that

1. For more on this topic, see: Trotta (2024, pp. 103-111).

"our entire civilisation is a masculine civilisation" (Horney, 1926/1970), and when she emigrated to the United States, she would add recent anthropological approaches. In 1937, in her work *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, she completely set aside the presumed universality of the Oedipus complex.

As Helen Deutsch had remained essentially faithful to Freud, the confrontation with Horney was inevitable and became ostensible in vociferous debates between 1944 and 1945.

Horney's responses to Deutsch's less innovative position found echoes in mid- to late 20th century feminism. Betty Friedan, author of *The Mystique of Femininity* (1963/2009), co-founder and president of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in the United States, initiated a critique of classical Freudianism that would branch out into the 21st century. Thus, an opposing front emerged, deconstructing the more orthodox program from both outside and within psychoanalysis.

Special mention should be made of the mutual influence between social movements and psychoanalysis on the French scene, the most outstanding moment of which was Lacan's 1972-1973 seminar *Encore* (*Still*). Its novelty was the invention of resorting to a non-Aristotelian logic to account for sexual difference. Its product was "sexuation", which sought to account for the human complexity in which biological sex, cultural gender and sexual jouissance are distinguished. Unlike the animal model, in which for the male the partner is a female[2], in the speaking being this is not the case, there can be a mismatch between psychic and anatomical sex: for human beings, "sexuation" is a fact of discourse, and here anatomy will not be the destiny, as Freud argued[3].

Thus, his formulation coexisted tensely with the so-called feminism of difference, which accuses Freudianism of being androcentric, since its conception of the Oedipus complex in women is subordinated to an envious comparison with the male, as if the girl did not have her own. Representatives of this current are Luce Irigaray and the Milan Bookshop collective, with Luisa Muraro and Alessandra Bochetti, inspired by the philosophy of Carla Lonzi.

Towards the end of the 20th century, Julia Kristeva (1998), who was closely acquainted with Lacan's teaching, will propose a fluid and multiple femininity, which can be present in any subject. She questions the existence of "a phallic monism, the recognition of a single sex (the penis), of a single symbol for the activity of thought (the phallus)" (p. 31) and of a single libido: "masculine". She assumes that every subject, regardless of their anatomy, is formed by what she calls "phallic Kairos": "a subtle and mysterious encounter between thought and sexuality" (p.

2. In any case, consider what Maleval (2022) says in this respect:" recent work in ethology leads to nuance sexual fitness in the animal kingdom and shows that processes of 'proximity-distance' and 'similarity-similarity' are involved in the choice of the partner" (p. 112).

3. For more on this topic, see: Trotta (2024, pp. 222-226).

32), which takes place in the phallic phase and shapes the destiny of the human being into a speaking and desiring being. For Kristeva, Lacan's lesson is not entirely foreign to her approach: Lacanian phallic primacy attributes to the phallus the values of "appearance" and "evanescence" that position it as a place of lack, and it is for this reason that it would function in the process of sexual identification.

Furthermore, in a polemical dialogue with psychoanalysis, Luce Irigaray argues that women are sexed subjects different from men, rather than taking positions in a presumably neutral world. Irigaray believes that the masculine order, which psychoanalysis would have privileged, has left no room for this to be expressed. She will refer to sexual difference as a difference in being, not a difference in biology: it would be a "matter of experience". To her understanding, it is necessary to develop a centrality in the subject "woman", to think her body, her being, from herself (Piedra Guillén, 2004). In her book *Yo, tú, nosotras (I, You, We)* (Irigaray, 1992), she proposes to bring about a "change of epoch" (pp. 16-17), in the Heideggerian sense, marked by the advent of a change in *the ways of inhabiting places and the envelopes of identity*.

Lacan´s response to the feminism of his time nuanced his critique of Freud. From his point of view, the new feminism had not taken into account that the crossing of the Oedipus does not ignore, but rather retroactively marks all previously privileged objects with castration: the demand for the breast is regulated, "castrated" by the whim of the maternal Other; faeces, which are the object requested by the demand of the Other, are to a certain extent an object governed, "castrated" by the child´s voluntary control of his sphincters (retention or early expulsion); in turn, the gaze and the voice are objects "castrated" by the contingencies of the encounter with the Other. These interventions on the past are part of the Lacanian revision of Freudian drives. It is a novelty that subverts and renews the chronology, the so-called "development" of human sexuality and the function of the characters and the repertoire of the classical Oedipus.

Along these lines, a way that is aware of the feminist criticism at the time and almost prophetically of those to come, which the reader will find in a very extensive bibliography that takes as its starting point the seminars given from the 1970s formulas of sexuation[4] are it´s point of greatest interest and complexity.

The enigmatic phrase "there is no sexual relation" is a syntagm with which Lacan names the absence of sexual complementarity. The obstacle to this encounter already begins to be outlined in 1958, in his writing *The Signification of the Phallus*. There, the Freudian castration complex is not left aside, but it does receive a new treatment: underlining the case recounted by Freud in the article *Fetishism* (1927/1990c), of a man in whom the presence of the fetish becomes indispensable to make the sexual relation concrete. The function of the fetish is to dissimulate castration, thus acquiring, Lacan specifies, the "significance of the phallus". The fetish object functions as a kind of landmark marking an absence; similarly, where the child expects to find a penis in the mother, he invents the phallus as a veil to disprove (*Verleugnung*) the presence of an emptiness that is unbearable to him.

Lacan will especially stress how the fetish can be anything. By no means need it be penniform, it can be "a shine in the nose": it reigns there with the same arbitrariness as that of any signifier: neither the rose of botany is in the name of the rose, nor in the fetish the penis of the anatomist. That is to say, in speaking beings, sexuality passes through language or, more precisely, through the paths of the signifier in the unconscious. Thus, Lacan moves away from the canonical account that emphasizes the anecdote of the vision of anatomical difference.

The phallic signifier was questioned by certain feminist critics who understood this invention as if it were equivalent to the enthronement of patriarchy, disregarding what Lacan postulated in 1938 in his text *The family complexes in the formation of the individual*, and later rescuing the contributions of Claude Lévi-Strauss about the elementary structures of kinship[5]. This enabled Lacan to conceive of the oedipal organization based on places and functions that do not necessarily depend on the biological progenitors. Those who criticize the phallic signifier as if it were just more of the same fail to recognize the inventive value that the formulas of sexuation will ultimately attain—formulas that far surpass any presumed binarism. For psychoanalysts trained in a simplified version of Freud's convolutions around sexuality, this theoretical aggiornamento was experienced as an unwelcome loss of the convictions previously upheld—and as an irritating confrontation with the manifest complexity of Lacan's framework.

Conclusions

The loss that historical and cultural contingencies produced in psychoanalysis, in all its fields, in the past, continues today, as Sara Cohen (2025) says: "contingencies are that which intervene in thought -without them, perhaps this would not be generated – as long as they are given room" (p. 127); psychoanalytic thought is a product of them, its interventions start from there. For example, the pandemic of 2020-2021 forced the inclusion of virtual sessions in clinical practice, generating a mutation. If at first it seemed like an emergency arrangement, today, in 2025, we know that it was a blow to the dogma of the presentiality that largely has no return. Another example that did not occur so suddenly is the nosographic shift regarding what constitutes psychopathology, which was influenced by *queer* studies and legislative changes regarding gender identities over the past two decades. Cases that used to shock and seem impossible to accommodate in our clinics are now coming in. Surgeries, hormone therapies and name changes are the current demands for which we receive consultations that challenge our knowledge. This does not mean that the malaise or the instance of the law have disappeared, but that they are present with other contents.

Psychoanalysis has never been just one and has always been there; the changes produced by culture will continue to have an impact on our doctrine and praxis, which is why training of the analyst must be installed in this dialectic of loss and invention if psychoanalysis is not to remain in the past.

4. For more on this topic, see: Lacan (1972-1973/2008).

5. For more on this topic, see: Lacan (1938/2014b).

Abstract

The current state of psychoanalysis is marked by crises of uncertainty: the validity of theoretical references is questioned, nosographic classifications which were believed to be perennial are called into question and devices which were considered undisputed have been largely replaced. What was called orthodoxy seems to be dying out. Waters are being shaken by the deliberation of Lacan's concepts, of gender studies, of the depathologization of the "perverts" and of analyses and virtual supervision, among other novelties. However, it would be an illusion to believe that the history of psychoanalysis should have waited for this century to find itself in the wheel of loss and innovation.

Keywords: *Oedipus complex, Feminism, Theory.*

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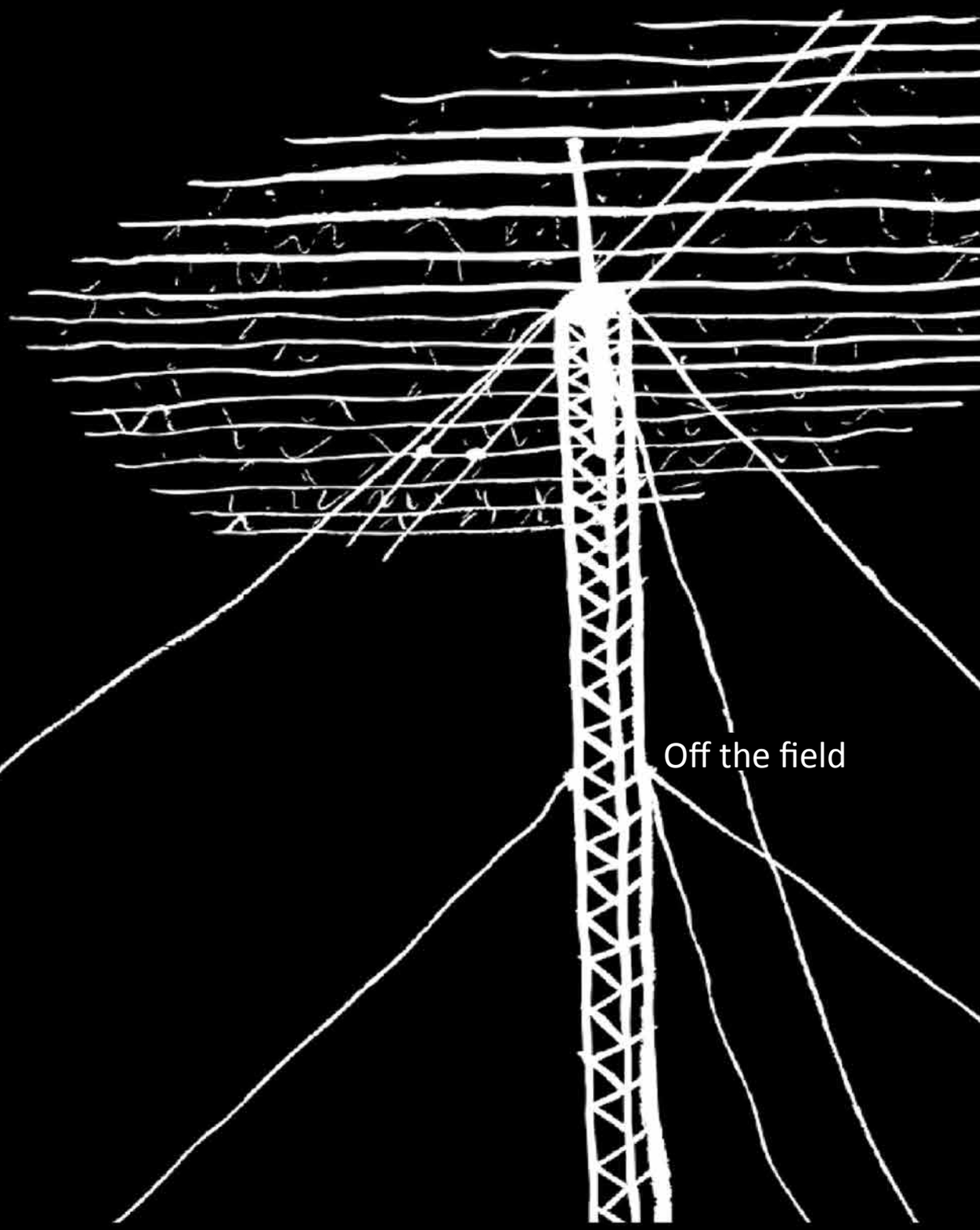
Off the field

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Míriam Cristiane Alves*

The Death of the Mother and Upbringing by the Father: Psychic and Social Inscription since Colonial Mal-être**

The problematic field on stage: Joaquim and the traces of the Totemic Mother

Joaquim was born in 1871, the year of the Law of Free Birth.[1] He was born amidst the promise of living free as a bird through the grasslands of Minas Gerais — only he wasn't! In practice, he could only enjoy freedom when he reached adulthood, at 21 years of age. From a very early age, he accompanied his mother on the plantation,[2] in the coffee fields. Hard, enslaved labor, carried out for hours on end under scorching heat or intermittent rain. Beside his mother, Joaquim feels the pain of her lament for the lost uterus of creation. A lament recited in sung words that echoed throughout the plantation. A memory inscribed in his existence that, at 50 years old, overflowed into a glass of liquor that accompanied him every late afternoon, after the heavy work on the railroad.

Joaquim started a family, and the five children who survived were born after the Golden Law,[3] but this doesn't mean they did not experience the harshness of enslaved labor, the so-called modern enslavement. One of Joaquim's boys, Jair, migrated to Rio Grande do Sul, seeking better living conditions. Ele seguiu os passos do pai e foi trabalhar como ferroviário. He followed his father's footsteps and went to work on the railroad. Of his mother, all that remained was the memory of a Black woman the color of night skies, whose almond-shaped eyes were inhabited by the salty sea, which daily touched her face. He always wanted to ask: "Why does so much water flow down from your eyes, Mom?". But he never had the courage. With the process of extinction of the railway network in Rio Grande do Sul, Jair became unemployed, and what was initially an affectionate memory of his meetings in the bar with his father, became his own routine.

Jair's son, Ronaldo, took care of his mother and younger siblings after his father's tragic death — he committed suicide in the family's water well. Ronaldo began working very early on the construction site (canteiro de obras)… That's right: canteiro (site) as the place of the canto (song) of the lament inscribed in the affective memory, in the psyche of Black people, which crosses generations since the plantation. As his father and grandfather, he had in alcohol the possibility of traveling overseas or simply not thinking, just feeling what he could not name. Ronaldo did not live past sixty and left to his son, João, a sea of questions about the stories of pain, lament, and excessive alcohol use that ran and still runs through generations. João questioned himself about Mother Africa, the uterus of origin. Born in the 1960s, João surpassed the life expectancy of all the men in his family. He follows his father's footsteps... the construction site is where the family's sustenance comes from. But he also inherited the habit of drinking a little bit of *cachaça* (Brazilian liquor. The alcohol by volume of this spirit ranges from 30 to 50%.) after work... This essay aims to problematize the transatlantic violence that inscribes the death of Mother Africa, the great uterus of origin of humanity, in the psychic life of Black people, and inaugurates the creation of the colonizing Totemic Father. As a theme for this conversation, I will start from the psychoanalytic listening to Black men about the excessive use of alcohol, as a symptom of the colonial *mal-être* transmitted transgenerationally, based on memories of the plantation. My reflections are based on *Totem and Taboo* (1912-1913/2012), in which Freud asserts the importance of the Father as the transmitter of the law and emphasizes his crucial function in the constitution of neurosis. I challenge myself to the twisting of Freudian thought, bringing to the theoretical-epistemological 'roundabout' the presence of the Totemic Mother from Amefrican experiences (Gonzalez, 1988/2018a) and Nigerian experiences (Oyěwùmí, 2021b).

In discussing Amefricanity, Lélia Gonzalez (1988/2018a) arrives softly and begins to mark, highlight, and write the Africanization of the languages (Spanish, English, French, and Portuguese) and cultures of the white colonizer, which will produce effects on the historical-cultural formation of Latin America and the Caribbean, that is, of Améfrica Ladina. In sharp-tongued dexterious fashion, Lélia makes it clear that the Ladino-Amefricans are not just Black and *pardo (*a person of mixed African, European, and/or Indigenous ancestry.) people, but rather all those body-subjects that constitute this territory. Can you feel, listen, taste your Ladino-Amefricanity? How about thinking-feeling psychoanalysis from this experience? It is along this line that I assume an ethical-aesthetic-poetic-political commitment to experience psychoanalysis from an Amefrican cosmoperception.

* Brazilian Psychoanalysis Society of Porto Alegre, Porto Alegre, Brazil.

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1. Law No. 2,040, of September 28, 1871, which declared free the children of enslaved women born from the date of that law. However, in its Article 1, it determined that the children were to remain in the custody or under the authority of the "masters of their mothers," who were obliged to "raise and care for them" until the age of eight. Upon reaching that age, the "master of the mother" had the option either to receive monetary compensation from the State or to make use of the child's services until the age of twenty-one. What kind of freedom was this? A legal provision that legislated for whom?

2. Inspired by a work by Grada Kilomba, *Plantation Memories* (2019), I use the term *plantation* to highlight the effects of the "system of colonial exploitation used between the 15th and 19th centuries, mainly in the European colonies in the Americas, which consisted of four main characteristics: large estates, monoculture, enslaved labor, and exploitation for the benefit of the metropole," as noted by the translator of that work, Jess Oliveira, who also points out that the plantation "also created a social structure of domination centered on the figure of the landowner, the master, who controlled everything and everyone around him" (p. 29, footnote).

3. Law No. 3,353, of May 13, 1888, which declared slavery abolished in Brazil. Nevertheless, this law established the end of slavery only from a formal standpoint, given that the Black population remains bound by the shackles of racial, social, economic, and political exclusion and violence.

Regarding the Nigerian experiences, discussed here following Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí (2021a, 2021b), they help me to think-feel what we were, what they made of us, and whatwe can become, as Jayro Pereira de Jesus teaches us.[4] We were not Blacks! They made us Blacks. We were not gendered women-females-mothers! They made us women-mothers from the category of gender. Let's listen to Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí. She tells us that Westernized societies are based on the sexual dimorphism of the human body, and gender is introduced as the way human anatomy should be understood in the social world - and, I add, in the psychic world.

Thinking of Mother Africa as the mythical uterus of the creation of the world and humanity requires displacement, decentering, and transmogrification from the gendered worldview to the non-gendered worldview (Oyěwùmí, 2021b). In Westernized societies, the term *worldview* (*cosmovisão*), when trying to "summarize the cultural logic of a society, captures the privilege of the visual" (Oyěwùmí, 2021a, p. 29). The term *cosmoperception,* on the other hand, is understood as a more complex and inclusive way of describing the world conception of different cultural groups, which in their relations "may privilege senses other than the visual, or even a combination of senses" (p. 29).

Therefore, feeling-thinking-perceiving the non-gendered Mother is fundamental to the reflections and questions presented here, among which I highlight: how can the "psychology of nature's peoples," as Freud says in Totem and Taboo (1912-1913/2012, p. 18), contribute to contemporary psychoanalysis, from counter-hegemonic epistemologies? What are the effects of the death of the Totemic Mother on the psychic construction of Black men, considering the transatlantic violence? To what extent can the listening and (re)creation of the uterus of the world, of the founding Totemic Mother, (re)establish psychic inscriptions of a memorable time in the present?

These are some questions that call, pivot, and mobilize me towards an essayistic writing. However, I do not intend to answer them in their entirety in these brief lines. Perhaps to produce new ones or refute them.

As a tributary path of a previous experience in social psychology research, I dare to transmute my gaze-feeling towards psychoanalysis research, based on a conception of "science that starts from a non-linear rationality, forged in the complementarity between reason and emotion" (Alves *et al.*, 2023, p. 4) , in the permeability between reality and fiction, poetics and empiricism. Therefore, I could say that many elements addressed in this manuscript, "although of a psychological nature," engender "effects related to other sciences" (Fanon, 1952/2008, p. 58). I assume the task of tensioning and twisting the hegemonic notions of science and scientific method through the embodied, living, implicated, sensitive, poetic-political experience in psychoanalysis research, starting from unpredictability.

In all sciences, research-doing is permeated, trespassed, penetrated by a share of art. In the case of psychoanalysis, "the art involved is predominantly literature, which, long before us, knew how to apprehend and reveal the contradictory meaning of human existence" (Herrmann, 2004, p. 25). Edson Sousa (2021) points out that "Freud sought shelter in literary and artistic production for his conceptual hypotheses" (p. 318).

4. Afro-theologian of African-matrix traditions in Brazil, activist, and militant of the social movement of the Povo de Terreiro.

In the words of Freud (1908/2021c), in the poetic world "many things that could not cause enjoyment as real can do so in the play of fantasy, and many motions that are themselves unpleasant can become a source of pleasure for the poet's listener or spectator" (p. 54). Would this be a possible and pleasurable way to think about research in psychoanalysis? Thus, to give blood, flesh, bone, viscera, and psychic existence to the characters in this essay, I make use of fiction as a way to highlight the *escrevivência* (Evaristo, 2016a; TV PUC-Rio, 2017), which marks textures of voices and weavings of singular stories, of Black men, that can be collectively agencied.

Fiction enables us to create narratives that, when woven, spun, entangled, help us to reflect and twist concepts that croon a psychoanalysis from Amefrican experiences. Following Freud, who in The Interpretation of Dreams (1900/1996a) qualifies psychoanalysis as "theoretical fiction," I use the fictionalization of heard, felt, lived, tasted stories as an important strategy for the production of knowledge, from the psychoanalytic clinic.

I bet, therefore, on a theoretical essay, supported by the psychoanalytic clinic based on Amefrican experiences of four generations of black men from the same family, who have in the excessive use of alcohol inscriptions of transatlantic violence. I speak of psychoanalysis research that has the clinic, research, and theory as its premise. In the words of Luiz Carlos Nogueira (2004), "these three aspects are always together, that is, I cannot think of psychoanalytic research except in the analytic relationship" (p. 87).

The Totemic Mother and the Colonial *Mal-être*: João's Journey

João is restless; he dreamed of his great-grandmother. He woke up early, sat in his old rocking chair, worn-out by time... He started to remember the dream. In it, he was talking to his great-grandmother. João knew nothing about her, but he remembered a story that crossed time: she had beautiful almond-shaped eyes filled with sea, which daily flooded her face. And it was this story that emerged in the dream. He was running through grasslands never before seen or felt. A light breeze touched his face. He was a child and was playing hide-and-seek with a Black woman the color of night skies. At the end of the hill, south of a plantation-house, there was a river with many other women washing clothes, which were so white they hurt the eyes due to the sun's reflection. At the end of the afternoon, João and his great-grandmother returned to a simple little house whose details he couldn't quite distinguish. But something caught his attention: when the immensity of the night arrived, his great-grandmother's eyes began to flood. And, sometimes, after the visit of the *Senhor* (Lord) - with skin as pale as the clothes spread on the stones by the riverbank - the salty ocean flowed from her eyes, crossing her cheeks. João asked her: "Great-grandma, where does this sea come from?"

He woke up startled, and in the background Dona Ivone Lara[5] (1981) replied:

5. Translator's notes: *This is a song written and performed by Black Brazilian singer, composer, and samba singer (sambista) Dona Ivone Lara. She is regarded in Brazil as the Queen of Samba. The song begins with a person warning the protagonist that came from far away as a child to 'step lightly' on 'this' floor, meaning not to be rowdy and to be obedient.*

Eu vim de lá, eu vim de lá pequenininho
Mas eu vim de lá pequenininho
Alguém me avisou
Pra pisar neste chão devagarinho
Alguém me avisou
Pra pisar neste chão devagarinho

To the sound of his favorite *sambista*, João also remembered that he no longer sang on the construction site. He drowned what he didn't know in the glass of liquor.

To think about the transatlantic violence that inscribes the death of Mother Africa in the psychic life of Black people and inaugurates the creation of the colonizing Totemic Father, I start from the founding mythical uterus, the Totemic Mother, as a structural element of Amefrican experiences in Brazil. But from what place do I propose the Totemic Mother?

To begin some reflections, I call Oyèrónkẹ Oyěwùmí (2021b) to the theoretical 'roundabout', who states: "All humans have a/an Ìyá [Mother], we are all born of an Ìyá, no one is greater, older, or older than Ìyá. Whoever procreates is the founder of human society" (p. 25). Based on this statement, I take the metaphor of the uterus of the world, Mother Earth, and the metaphor of the uterus of human creation, Mother Africa - considering the cosmoperception of the African cultural matrix - as original, founding elements of existences, which build and inscribe in our psyche the archaic of a primordial making of our humanity. An 'archaic' amidst the colonial *mal-être* that will transform into a totem: the founding Totemic Mother as the principle of antiquity, of seniority, of whoever came first.

Seniority, for the Yoruba peoples, refers to civility, to social organization that ensures obedience to authority. . It is not about privilege in daily life, but about responsibility with relationships among the collective. It is relational and situational, given that "no one is permanently in a position of a greater or lesser age," that is, "everything depends on who is present in any situation" (Oyěwùmí, 2021a, p. 83). Oyěwùmí emphasizes that, unlike gender, seniority is understood as part of relationships, not being fixed on the body, nor in binaries. It structures the hierarchy within a lineage, which in turn is not linked to biological references, but associated with the collectivity. Seniority "is best understood as an organization operating under the principle that whoever is the first to arrive will be the first to be served" (p. 87). It is important to note that, in Yoruba cultures, the oldest people of a lineage "were generally the Ìyá - the mothers of the lineage" (p. 92).

This discussion is more nuanced than is being presented here. However, the intention is to bring some elements that contribute to the reflection and perception about the place of the founding, non-gendered Totemic Mother, that is, one that has no gender and is not socially and psychically inscribed, from the biological, in a direct line: mother-woman-female. The intention is to think-feel the implications of the mythical uterus as a structural element of the ontogeny of the being and its psychic inscriptions, as well as the "sociogeny" (Fanon, 1952/2008) and its social inscriptions in contemporaneity.

Frantz Fanon, in discussing Freud and his production, observes that, through psychoanalysis, in reacting "against the constitutionalist tendency in psychology of the late nineteenth century" (p. 28), he puts individuality on stage as a fundamental element for thinking about subjectivation processes. In his theoretical eloquence rooted in experience, Fanon makes us dive into the statement that Freud "replaced the phylogenetic thesis for the ontogenetic perspective", understanding the latter as a great making. However, he emphasizes that "the alienation of the Black is not only an individual matter. Beside phylogeny and ontogeny, there is sociogeny" (p. 28). Had Freud forgotten, neglected, or disregarded sociogeny?

In several historical moments of his work, Freud will theorize about the social, producing understandings about society. *Totem and Taboo* (1912-1913/2012) is considered the milestone in this Freudian path around psychoanalytic conversations about the social, and produces effects on later texts that present a greater metapsychological incidence. In his analytic paths imbued with the social, Freud wrote *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920/2021a), *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921/2023c) , *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930/2023b) , and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939/2018). In this last text, he invites us to savor the idea of the survival of mnemonic traces in archaic heritage, putting an end to the abyss produced between individual psychology and group psychology.

I invite you to think, from ontogeny and sociogeny, about the authority of the founding Totemic Mother, whose seniority produced mnemonic marks and psychic effects on the collectivity. Considering the Totemic Mother in relation to the Totemic Father, whose authority "introduced into the Ego forms there the core of the Superego, which borrows its severity from the father, perpetuates his prohibition of incest and thus secures the Ego against the return of libidinal object investments" (Freud, 1924/2023a, p. 251) , I ask: to what extent does the founding, original Totemic Mother contribute to the constitution of the psyche? Is she inscribed in the unconscious memory of the lived and transmitted between generations? Freud (1915/1996b), already in the early years of his work, when problematizing Western culture and civilization, states that "the human being is subject not only to the pressure of his immediate cultural environment, but also to the influence of the cultural history of his ancestors" (p. 292).

Ancestors? What and who is considered an ancestor? Upon hearing the word ancestor from Freud's analytic mouth, I ran to 'have a conversation' with Nei Lopes (2004), Marco Aurélio Luz (1983), and Flávio Pessoa de Barros (2003), and I began to feel that it refers to the founder of a family, a territory, a nation, whose doings stood out within their clan, their community, their social group, and who, after returning to the mass of origin, death, continues to influence and produce interference in the collectivity, and must, therefore, be remembered and worshiped throughout future generations.

Roger Bastide (1968), while investigating Black-African civilizations in his studies, teaches us that the ancestor can return to the world of the living by reincarnating in a person of a younger generation of the family group - for example, in a great-grandchild. He refers to the idea of symbolic civilizations, in which the dead and the living constitute the same community. In my thesis (Alves, 2012), based on the narrative of one of my interlocutors - the young Tomiwa, who lives in a traditional *terreiro* community - I refer to the influence of the ancestor, directly or indirectly, through transgenerationality, on the subjectivity of their descendants. In Tomiwa's words:

> When one's mother dies, we become a whole being, we are no longer tied to someone else. She forced me to think about myself. First, I forced myself not to see that as a loss, but rather as a gain. I think that this effort to say that I gained her for myself is the great insight of the story, and I think she still guides me to this day. Every time I want to work something out, she comes through very strongly. […] I see this as guidance from ancestry. She became my ancestor. From that point on, she tells me things. (p. 147)

What does this mother of the present, who becomes an ancestor for Tomiwa, have to do with the Totemic Mother of primordial time? I invite you to think about the resumption of the founding mythical uterus in the civilizing construction of humanity, especially of Westernized cultures, as archaic heritage, ensuring the entry of the third and the production of difference, but also the entry of seniority as a non-gendered experience of the Totemic Mother, that is, the psychic representation of the original experience of the creation of the world and humanity - the seminary of the earth, of the uterus. For Freud (1939/2018), towards the end of his work, the "archaic heritage of the human being comprises not only predispositions, but also contents, mnemonic traces of experiences of ancient generations" (p. 76). Thus, from his reflections, I listen to the music of the archaic heritage and feel-perceive that it is not forged only by phylogeny, but also by ontogeny and sociogeny. Considering this triad, would the Id be in relation to the Totemic Mother, just as the Superego is in relation to the Totemic Father? Or, considering that the Superego comes from the Id and is the heir of the Oedipus complex, could we think that the Totemic Mother and Totemic Father would come from the Id in conjunction with the Superego?

In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905/2016) - texts that are tributary to psychoanalytic theory - Freud refers to the mother's function as the primordial object of sexual satisfaction, from the breast, and of the baby's investment:

> For the child, interacting with the person who cares for him or her is a continuous source of sexual excitement and satisfaction of the erogenous zones, even more so because this person – who is usually the mother – dedicates feelings to the child that originate from her own sexual life: she caresses, kisses and rocks the child, clearly taking him or her as a substitute for a complete sexual object. (p. 144)

In this relationship between caregiver and cared for – mother-baby - Freud warns of the fact that excessive affection can be harmful to the child, "by accelerating sexual maturation and also by 'spoiling' the child, making them incapable of temporarily renouncing love or being satisfied with a smaller measure of it in future life" (p. 145). In this vein, he enunciates the possibility of the caregiver transferring their neuroses to the child, "through more direct paths than that of heredity" (p. 145).

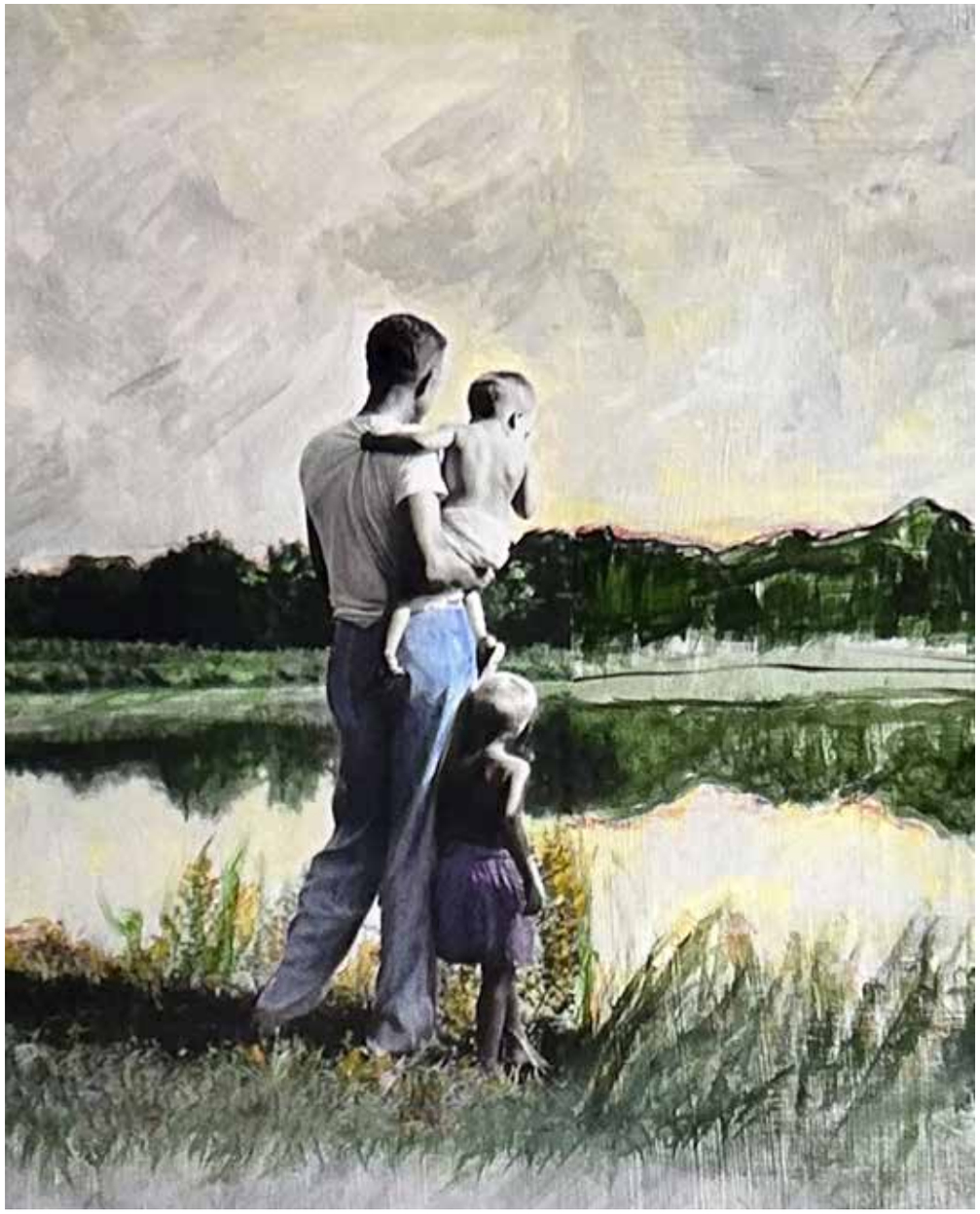
Still regarding the mother's place in the psychic formation of the human, Melanie Klein (1935/1996), in her psychoanalytic propositions, highlights the first stages of the object relation with the mother and the questioning of the mother's place in the baby's world. The baby's object relation is produced by a privileged partial object: the mother's breast. In Kleinian psychoanalysis, the concepts of introjection and projection mechanisms - present since psychic life in babies - are fundamental, given that it is through the primordial mechanism of introjection of the object that the subject-object relation is built. It is worth noting that the relationship between introjection and projection will enable the creation of the concept of projective identification, according to which the analytic dyad repeats the primitive relationship of the baby with the mother. O mecanismo de introjeção criará condições de possibilidade para a projeção do objeto frente às fantasias inconscientes de destruição e aniquilamento vivenciadas pelo sujeito. The introjection mechanism will create conditions of possibility for the projection of the object in the face of unconscious fantasies of destruction and annihilation experienced by the subject. Klein will inaugurate the idea of good and bad in the same object: good breast, bad breast, while one satisfies and gives pleasure, the other frustrates; the first related to the introjection mechanism, and the second to the projection mechanism.

Can Klein help us to think-feel the original seniority principle, which forges the Totemic Mother, as a structural element of psychic and social constructions? Thinking, feeling, savoring the relationship between a good and a bad object? In calling Melanie Klein to the epistemological 'roundabout', she tells us that the mother is also part of the Superego, when discussing the good/overprotective mother and the bad/persecutory mother. In calling Melanie Klein to the epistemological 'roundabout', she tells us that the mother is also part of the Superego, when discussing the good/overprotective mother and the bad/persecutory mother. As a white woman of her time, I keep listening to how much Klein can help us, to some extent, to problematize the contemporary fabulation of the gendered mother present in Western-centric societies – woman-female-mother. A fabulation constructed, in these societies, based on the idea that the mother must procreate, love, and be unconditionally loved by her offspring.

Is it possible to accompany me in these psychoanalytic musings? Am I wandering or perhaps adrift through uncharted seas in proposing the Totemic Mother?

I once again invite Freud (1939/2018), to draw an anchor, a shield, a boat, and perhaps touch my feet on the ground. In his wisdom, Freud warns us, saying that when we talk about archaic heritage, we usually think only of the Id, so that "we seem to assume that an Ego is not yet present at the beginning of individual life" (p. 178). Immediately afterwards, he reminds us that Id and Ego are originally one and the same, so he considers it plausible "that it is already established, for the yet non-existent Ego" (p. 178), what directions regarding development, tendencies, and reactions it will exhibit later.

> The psychological peculiarities of families, races, and nations admit no other explanation, including in their attitude toward psychoanalysis. Moreover, analytic experience has imposed on us the conviction that even certain psychic contents, such as symbolism, have no sources other than hereditary transmission, and several ethnopsychological investigations make it plausible to suppose that within archaic inheritance there are still other equally specific residues left by ancient human evolution. (p. 178)



Anamaría McCarthy
Lake Detail, 2021

To what extent can we assume that primordial inscriptions of the uterus of origin of humanity remain alive from the original seniority principle as a structural element of psychic and social constructions?

Perhaps it is plausible to think-feel that, for Black people who daily experience the colonial *mal-être* and the marks of transatlantic violence, the archaic heritage of the mythical founding uterus, of the Totemic Mother, presents itself through traces, mnemonic residues of a memorable time, which in the relationship between Id and Ego can overflow or remain unconscious - for life or for death. Let's listen to the lament inscribed in the affective memory of João - a fictionalized character in this essay - which echoes from the violence of the plantation and is updated in the construction site. Can this lament find refuge in the traces of the archaic heritage of the Totemic Mother? Would this primordial matripotence be at the service of the possibilities of elaboration of the colonial *mal-être*?

As for white people, the racism by denial described by Lélia Gonzalez (1980/2018b) leaves the archaic heritage of the Totemic Mother buried, making the mnemonic traces of the colonizing Totemic Father emerge, above all. Aimé Césaire, in Discourse on Colonialism (1950/2020), vociferates in all senses a criticism of Western civilization presented here in three times: in the first one, he states that "a civilization that proves incapable of solving the problems caused by its functioning is a decadent civilization", in the second one, he warns that "a civilization that chooses to close its eyes to its most crucial problems is a sick civilization", and in the third one, he denounces that "a civilization that evades its principles is a dying civilization" (p. 9). Amidst a context of experiencing the effects of the Second World War, Césaire problematizes "Christian pedantism, for having elaborated the dishonest equations: Christianity = civilization, paganism = savagery, from which only the abominable colonialist and racist consequences could result" (p. 11), whose victims would be Black, Indigenous, and Asian people. Colonial *mal-être* that insists and lingers in the entrails of patriarchal Westernized societies since the great plantation project - used between the 15th and 19th centuries and updated in the contemporary, whether in the construction site or in the *quarto de despejo* (the trash room).[6]

In patriarchal Westernized societies, the mythical uterus of the world, the potency of life in community, gives way to the phallus, to the instrumentalization and objectification of existence. In discussing "the horror of incest," Freud (1912-1913/2012), based on the experience of native peoples in Australia and different regions of the African continent, was intrigued by the prohibition of incest beyond what the white Western-centric world understands as blood family. Among the observed native peoples, the prohibition of incest extends to the community relationship, so that the idea of mother, father, brothers, and sisters is not restricted to consanguinity. In Freud's words:

> A man calls "father" not only his biological parent, but also any other man who, according to the statutes of the tribe, could have married his mother and become his father; he calls "mother" any other woman who, without violating the laws of the tribe, could have been his mother; he calls "brothers" and "sisters" not only the children of his actual parents, but also the children of all those persons who stand in a kinship relation to him within the group, and so on. (p. 36)

6. Alluding to the work of Carolina Maria de Jesus (1960/2014).

Regarding the African-matrix traditions in Brazil, the prohibition of incest is also present in the community sphere. That is, the Father or Mother of the *terreiro* (Afro-Brazilian religious temples) community (Bàbálórìṣà or Ìyálórìṣà) are forbidden to have sexual relations with their mythical daughters/sons initiated into the tradition. This is an interdiction that, when transgressed, causes important ruptures in the collectivity. Likewise, biological Father and Mother cannot initiate consanguineous daughters/sons into the African-matrix tradition, that is, they cannot mythically gestate their biological offspring. Before the Father or Mother of the *terreiro* community, all the people who constitute it are daughters/sons and sisters/brothers. Let us consider what Baba Diba de Iyemonjá says:[7]

> Regarding the affective relationships that take place within the *terreiro* community, I have always learned that this is the space of our social relations; it is the space where we live alongside others, where interests, affections, and bonds are awakened. And when the ọmọ-òrísà [Daughters and Sons of *Santo*] are single, there is no prohibition, they can freely be in a relationship. […] As for affective and carnal relationships between a Bàbálórìsà or Ìyálórìsà and their ọmọ-òrísà, this is indeed a prohibition, since affections must not be mixed. Either you are a guide of the community, taking on the role of Father or Mother of the terreiro, or you are a partner, a lover. The Orí[8] must remain whole, transparent, in order to conduct all the rites, the entire process of care throughout the life and existence of the *ọmọ-òrísà*. Another matter is when a Father or Mother initiates their biological child into the African-matrix tradition. This, too, is not permitted. […] It is important that the *ọmọ-òrísà* be able to choose the mythical womb in which they will be gestated, according to the cosmology of the African-matrix, through which they will be reborn as a child of Africa. By choosing this mythical womb, the *ọmọ-òrísà* will have their Orí cared for without interference from maternal or paternal affections, since the voice of command of a biological mother or father is not the same as the voice of command of the Bàbálórìsà or *Ìyálórìsà*.

It is important to emphasize that the idea of Father and Mother present in Westernized societies, including in black and traditional Amefrican communities that resisted and still resist colonial violence, is based on gendered constructs. Even if the matriarchal experience is alive in many Black communities in the Brazilian context, the patriarchal experience cohabits these territories. Cheikh Anta Diop (1982/2014), based on a study of classical Antiquity, discusses the idea of the "meridional cradle confined to the African continent," leading to the characterization of the matriarchal family and the territorial State and the "northern cradle confined to Greece and Rome," characterized by the patriarchal family and the city-state (p. 173)

When we analyse contemporaneity, the challenge is to think of the founding non-gendered Totemic Mother, from her seniority, in order to reflect on the effects of her death or her existence on the psychic production of humanity. After all, the matriarchal experience found loopholes, lines of flight for new compositions and existences, from the archaic memory and the liveliness of African cultures in Brazil.

In this perspective, I bet on the unpredictable creations, on the entanglements forged and (re)composed from the powers of archaic memory, of psychic inscriptions, of the "thoughts of traces/residues," which Édouard Glissant (2005) names as the creolization of the world. The author points out that creolization presupposes the obligatory equivalence in value of the cultural elements placed in the presence of each other, that is, creolization refutes hierarchization in the encounter between cultures. Creations, therefore, that have in the matriarchal experience traces/residues of a way of existing in community. As Leda Martins (2021) states, "Africa impregnates the Americas" (p. 45).

Mother Africa was invaded, colonized, expropriated, kidnapped, raped, and killed by the white colonizer. However, her matripotence, as the uterus of origin of humanity, remained alive, giving rise to the founding Totemic Mother - one that has in its original principles seniority as a structural element of psychic and social constructions. Her inscriptions are kept alive in the traces of phylogeny, in the sparks of imaginaries of ontogeny, and in the residues that agency sociogeny, constituting our Ladino-Amefrican existence and, above all, our humanity. The Totemic Mother is what escapes in the "cosmopoetics of refuge," that is, what escapes in the "ecology of senses and imagine-action" (Bona, 2020, p. 11), (re)establishing psychic inscriptions from primordial memories.

Final Elucubrations: Founding Mythical Womb, Ideal Ego and Ego Ideal

João arrives at the Centro de Atenção Psicossocial Álcool e Drogas (Caps AD) (Psychosocial Care Center for Alcohol and Drugs) to participate in the therapeutic workshop with a physical educator and a session with a psychologist. A Black man, with gray hair and beard, a downcast look, a hunched body, who at 61 years old appears to be almost 80. I clearly remember the day he arrived at Caps AD in a wheelchair, as his legs could no longer support that frail body. At the time of arrival, he went straight to detoxification.

After an intense period of clinical care, he began to attend workshops, groups, and other services offered by the service in the intensive modality. In our psychotherapeutic sessions, in a group or individually, he told stories of his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and, above all, his great-grandmother. In these moments of storytelling memories, he immersed himself in a lament that sounded like music, based on the *sambas* he composed with the Carnival group. A high-skilled *sambista*, it was common for his great-grandmother's Watered Eyes (Olhos d'Água)[9]to be entangled in his compositions. Through this ancestral figure, his great-grandmother, whom he knew through the power of the orality of those who came before, João searched for a reason to stay alive, to beco-

7. Interview conducted in September 2023. The interviewee is a national leader of the African-matrix Batuque tradition, originally from Rio Grande do Sul.

8. In the Yoruba language, the word Orí, in a literal translation, means "head" (Beniste, 2019, p. 591). However, it carries a complexity within the civilizational dynamics of the African matrix, being associated with birth, where each Orí existing in the Ayé (the visible world) is shaped in the Ọ̀run (the invisible world), constituting "the double of each person's individualized existence" (Santos, 2012, p. 234).

9. A reference to the book *Olhos d'água* (2016b), by Conceição Evaristo.

me, defying statistics. He would say: "The power of a Black man is to stay alive! I learned this from the matriarchs of the family, those who are the foundation, the summit, the basis of any Black family".

When he spoke about himself, his great-grandmother's watered eyes took over him to the point of experiencing drops of the sea running down his face. João began to allow himself to shed tears. But, frequently, he questioned himself: can an old black man shed tears? What would my great-grandmother say? She who was violated, raped by the Lord of the *plantation* and his white-skinned heirs. She who was always the target of colonial violence and who, even so, taught us that our power lies in the maintenance of our life, our existence. And, as contradictory as it may seem, alcohol keeps me alive. When I talk about this, I remember a song, popularized by Clementina de Jesus (1982), that my grandfather taught me, and he learned it from his grandfather. It's a beautiful chant, a *vissungo*, sung by enslaved people during the work imposed by the white colonizer, in the mining regions of Minas Gerais. The chant narrates the escape of a boy, a *muriquinho piquinino* (little dude), to the Quilombo do Dumbá (settlement of enslaved people who had escaped). With his courage and the desire to stay alive, he escapes from the enslaved labor with the blessings and the lament of the matriarch, carrying only a bundle of clothes on his back. Sometimes I feel like this boy, sometimes I feel that I am not, but I must be, especially in my mother's voice... Feel, listen to muriquinho in Clementina's voice!

> Muriquinho piquinino, muriquinho piquinino,
> Parente de quiçamba na cacunda.
>
> Purugunta aonde vai, purugunta aonde vai,
> Ô parente, pro Quilombo do Dumbá.
>
> Ê, chora, chora gongo, ê devera, chora gongo chora,
> Ê, chora, chora gongo, ê cambada, chora gongo chora.

Thinking of the excessive use of alcohol as a symptom of colonial mal-être is to give visibility and vociferate loudly the suffering experienced by Black men who find in the glass of distilled spirit the possible escape route to face the hostility of being Black in a colonized society. Listening to Fanon (1952/2008) and João - a character fictionalized here - I understand that the possibility of becoming lies in the zone of non-being, and here I highlight the importance of the original mnemonic inscriptions of the mythical founding uterus, of the Totemic Mother.

Frantz Fanon enunciates that the zone of non-being constitutes itself as "an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, an essentially stripped ramp, where an authentic resurgence can happen" (p. 26). Thinking-feeling the founding Totemic Mother as ancestral memory that lives in those who came before, in a present time, is understood here as the possibility of giving other meanings, producing new realities from the colonial *mal-être*. It is to build other identificatory processes, which distance themselves and break with the duality of dimensions that, in Fanon's words, constitute the black subject: "One with his fellow man and another with the white man. A Black man behaves differently with the white man and with another Black man. There is no doubt that this splitting is a direct consequence of the colonial adventure" (p. 33).

I bet, from the founding Totemic Mother, on identifications (re)created, (re)invented, daring in a time that moves in the past-present - Leda Martins' (2021) spiral time - announcing, in João's case, the need for the black man to speak of himself, look at himself, (re)invent himself, feeling his psychic inscriptions of memorable times, often misunderstood by the white Other and by himself. After all, "to speak is to exist absolutely for the other" (Fanon, 1952/2008, p. 33).

The production of new realities from the identification with the founding Totemic Mother makes me think of primary narcissism that will constitute the Ideal Ego—the result of parental investment—as well as secondary narcissism and the emergence of the Ego Ideal—influenced by cultural values (Freud, 1914/1996c). I think of the Totemic Mother as an object of psychic (re)structuring through the path of the identificatory process, contributing to the formation of the Ideal Ego and the Ego Ideal from a past-present time. I take the Totemic Mother as the archaic and original form of the libidinal relationship, of the non-gendered mother, with the Ego and with the Other.

I speak of an original identification with the mythical uterus of humanity, which will produce investments in a African-matrix civilizational universe, composing the Ideal Ego and the Ego Ideal. An identificatory process that has the power to produce psychic elaborations on the colonial *mal-être*, which historically transformed non-white body-subjects into the strange, the unfamiliar, the terrifying, referring to Freud's text "*Das Unheimliche*" (1919/2021b).

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The Foreigner

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Ariana Harwicz*

Losing judgment while writing**

I am sure that that silence of hands suspended over the keys—is writing.

Every novel is a process against oneself. 'Writing is always self-judgement,' said Ibsen, 'an exercise in demolition' 'A self-examination,' said Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Writing is to break away from self-deceit, trying and failing, making peace with oneself. You have to accept being dead in order to write.

Writing is being able to catch that which, while it is, is no more. When I am ready to write again, I am like a soldier in firing position, my index finger on the trigger. Writing appears first, like an antidote, like morphine before it is ingested. So-called style is nothing more than preventing the gun from shooting at the wrong time..

Ariana Harwicz, *El ruido de una época* [The noise of an era], 2023, pp. 148, 70 y 50

The misunderstanding

In fact, there is a misunderstanding, a sort of superstition or erroneous thinking that involves the thought that writing is about adding up something to the world, it is a sort of surplus value, an adding up... I see a hill, I see a landscape, I see a child, I see a mother, I see a scene of violence, and then I write it down, I add something to the world, I describe something, and I think that is the first mistake of writing. Writing is in itself a loss, first of all because you have to withdraw from life to write.

Writing for me is always about burying something, mourning, saying farewell. Life rushing towards writing, writing rushing away from life.
Ariana Harwicz, *Desertar* [Deserting], 2020, p. 36

I always say that there is a kind of pendulum, a dialectic, a polar circle between life and writing. This idea is as old as the hills, but you have to withdraw from life to write, and to write, you must also go back into life. So, go out into life to write, but withdraw from life to write, like fleeing from writing to go out into life and fleeing from life to go out into writing. In that running from life there is a certain loss, if I withdraw from life, I don't experience a sunny afternoon, that sunset, I don't play ping-pong, I don't go out on the road, I don't go walking with people, I withdraw, I am absent, I flee, it's a kind of erasure of life to go to the life of writing, which is like some other way of being, like another existence. But then you have to flee from writing to go to that kind of field of sunflowers, that kind of huge field which is life. And there is a certain loss there too. But then you have to flee from writing to go to that kind of field of sunflowers, that kind of huge field which is life. And there is a certain loss there too.

Then I think there is a loss because writing always had to do with stealing, plundering, stealing a substrate, stealing something from life in order to appropriate it. I have to find a relationship between writing and life that is not a copy, a mimesis, exact representation, that is not a kind of poor copy. I think of those painters who sit at any easel in those tourist spots and scam tourists by making a poor copy of reality, and they call that painting.

I don't paint the body in front of me, I don't paint that anatomy, I paint something else, and there is a loss there. I have to find a relationship between writing and life that is always one of loss, like translation; to translate is to lose. And then, to write is also to lose, and also the connection that is established with life...

This era reads badly because it reads from identity. (...) If ambiguity is eliminated in an artist, they are destroyed.
Ariana Harwicz, *El ruido de una época* [The noise of an era], 2023, p. 14

There is also a misunderstanding today because there is a tendency to read from the point of view of documentary novels, as if the characters were alter egos of the narrator and the narrator of the author, as if what a character says is what the author thinks about life, politics, feminism, the war in the Middle East, and in reality the relationship between that which is written and life is much more complex, that is, there is no representation, there is no direct indicator, it is all a detour, it is all an evasion, and that evasion is also one of loss.

I recently went to give a lecture, a discussion, at a high school and a university. And when I came in, the kids asked me if I had killed my children, if my parents had abandoned me, if I was mentally ill, if I was schizophrenic, if I was bipolar... We have to see why the time produces this misunderstanding, if it is something structural in human beings, which I don't think it is, or if there is something about how it is understood, how it is read, how art is conceived, and something about the relationship with the referent, with the real, with today's reality, that allows fifteen- to twenty-year-olds to ask an author whose novel they have read if she is mentally ill, if she is schizophrenic, if she is bipolar... And this despite the fact that I tried to explain to them what I always say when they ask me if I'm a bad mother, if I'm afraid of retaliation from my children in the future, if I'm panicked about when they read it. I always say the same thing: because I wrote that mother, I can be a different mother. It's related to destruction and construction.

* Argentine writer, Pougny, Francia.
** This text is the result of a dialogue with the author (Ed. Note).

It's because I can invent, compose, write about that mother who abandons her child, or that perverse mother, or that mother who wonders if it was worth having a child or who kidnaps him, as in Perder el Juicio [Losing judgment] (Harwicz, 2024), that I can be someone else... Because I write it, I can be someone else.

This century is once again renewing the discussion about the rapport between reality and art, about the relation between the morals of life and the morals of art. There is a kind of hole, a lack, an impossibility of understanding the enactment of art without thinking of it as enactment of life. All those old times discussions, the political ones, are renewed in the current century.

I feel that writing is a game of compensation. Compensation for the real, for the imaginary, phantasmatic compensation. Now, if that operation of writing that mother doesn't exist, well, then I'm going to be that mother. The act of destruction is crucial. You have got to have a strong desire for destruction, as well as a certain amount of hatred and violence for the operation of writing, and that's why I compensate for the violence in life. As if neither sublimation nor the phantasmatic were understood.

Losing language

> *There will be a writing of the unwritten. Someday it will come. A writing brief, without grammar, a writing made only of words. Words with no grammar. Lost words. There, written. And immediately abandoned.*
> Ariana Harwicz, *El ruido de una época* [The noise of an era] 2023, p. 122

Writing is destruction and loss, as we said, because language must be destroyed. Many writers and poets have said this in different ways; Clarice Lispector says that writing is making the word say what the word is not, not what the word is, but what the word is not. And there again is the destruction of the conventional, canonized language we use for communication.

> *Before I start writing, for me everything is destruction, every word seems obsolete, words melt away "on my tongue like rotten mushrooms". Words outside of writing are lobotomized. But when writing, language is remade, reconfigured, reborn. Writing a novel is writing the story of shame. That is why writing is always so paradoxical, because you write about shame but you need to be shameless. Writing is being an outcast. I am never as afraid to look at myself as when I write.*
> Ariana Harwicz, *El ruido de una época* [The noise of an era] 2023, p. 15

Destruction and loss, that is, one must accept that destruction and that loss. Picasso said, when he painted a tree that was there, why am I going to paint the denotated tree? The denotative tree is already there; if I paint, I paint the connotative tree, that is, I paint the tree that does not exist, that is not, that is not there. And again, destruction of the original model, of the tree model we are seeing in front of us, and loss, loss in order to gain,

Vivíamos en los bajos de una casa pequeña, así que, en los días de lluvia, deambulábamos como tres niños aburridos. Mi madre tenía que ingeniárselas con juegos entretenidos como, por ejemplo, pintar caras sobre bolsas de papel para convertirnos en pequeños monstruos.

Anamaría McCarthy
Masks, Port Washington, Nueva York, *1958*

to gain that other tree that did not exist and that, thanks to painting, now exists. It is also the destruction of language because we have to try to listen to another language that does not exist and invent it. That is why Bakhtin said: we have to re-semanticize everything; or, in a romantic version, Rimbaud said: we have to reinvent love. Well, love, language... That re-semantization, that reinvention, that re-semanticization... You cannot re-semanticize something if you don't kill it first. Much more academically, but our Cortázar said: learning grammar in order to break it, to destroy it, is the basic, primary act, without which there is no art, which is to break, which is to destroy... And whenever I sit down to write, I feel that I have the spirit of destruction, that is, I write to destroy, and obviously in destruction there is a kind of birth.

Writing and listening without judgment

About the characters: You must have the same respect for the victim and the perpetrator. You mustn't take sides, or it would be malpractice. Like a couples' psychoanalyst, establishing transferences with one of the two. We never know everything about the characters. Knowing everything about someone is a perverse and lunatic idea that only megalomaniacs like Nicolae Ceausescu or Muammar Gaddafi could have, if they were to devote themselves to writing. The character always keeps something mysterious to themselves, because he doesn't know what they are capable of either.

Characters are capable of doing things outside their moral and conscience. No one, not even characters, are capable of truly knowing what they are capable of. Those who believe they are not capable of killing have not yet been in a situation where they would kill. A character who has killed is not reduced to being a criminal. A character who is a victim of violence is not reduced to being a victim. Characters must be thought of as being against themselves, denying themselves as characters, except for one.

Reducing the contradictions of characters is not only impossible, but anti-literary. Of course, literature is full of anti-literature, that goes without saying.

Ariana Harwicz, *El ruido de una época* [The noise of an era], 2023, p. 27

Writing is without judgment. I always believe that there is a misunderstanding, as if suspending morality (as Rimbaud demanded: to make a kind of suspension of morality in the act of writing) were an attribute, a kind of courage, a contemporary gesture, a kind of bravado, a brave gesture against the establishment or the political correctness of the ideologies of the time. I don't see it that way; I see it simply as the sine qua non of the act of writing. It is as if we thought that a surgeon, when he first does blood tests and studies prior to surgery, or when the anesthetist administers the anesthesia, is performing a heroic gesture; it is simply the condition for being able to operate and open up a body. Well, this is the condition for accessing writing, for (speaking of the surgeon's operation) being able to enter into the operation of art.

The operation of art requires the suspension of morality, but I insist, not as an attribute of the author, who is brave or who manages to confront the doxa of the time, so I cannot even imagine a character, a dramatic situation, I cannot think of a generative image, that is, I cannot enter into the perceptual process of art if I do not suspend morality; what the characters are... they are.

I really like the parallel with the space of suspension of judgment in analysis. Both are governed by desire, by enjoyment. Also in these two fields, psychoanalysis and writing, the word has another value beyond the mundane or communicational value of reality. A word spoken in a session is obviously a falling stone and has other meanings, other noises, other associations than a falling stone/word in a text. But in both fields, I think the dictionary is different; there is a conversion of the classic dictionary.

So earlier I spoke of the two horizons, the two beacons that guided us in thinking about writing: the necessary destruction of language and loss, which are somewhat the same, one condition of the other. But now we have to suspend moral judgment. When the psychoanalyst listens to a patient express themselves, they are not judging them, it would be malpractice, it would be impossible, it would be against the nature of psychoanalysis, which is governed by something else... Well, this is the same when writing. It doesn't even occur to me to judge a character, I think it would be sentencing them to death. If the omnipresent and omniscient writer, the narrator, judges the characters, she actually intimidates them into not being, that is, she intimidates them into not being what the characters are, as if she were taking away their being, de-ontologizing them. What the character is... is ontologically, and they act according to what they are; then they can kill a cow, rescue an injured kitten from the field, climb a tree and kill themselves, run away from the police, work in an orphanage. They are governed by their impulses, their desires, their voices, their fears, their nature, their history, their traumas, their brains, not by what you tell them. What I try to do is without morality, without judgment; the writer is never the judge. What I do is listen to the parties, there is no judgment.

When I write, I accept everything that is, I see everything, I am open to everything. I don't avoid certain adjectives, I don't censor certain twists, basically because I am not a judge, I am not in a criminal court. A novel is not a court hearing. It is not a sentence. Thinking morally about the characters is like Beethoven censoring a note in his sonata for being too sensual.

Ariana Harwicz, *El ruido de una época* [The noise of an era], 2023, back cover

I am an anthropologist and a documentary filmmaker who observes, and in that sense, that is also the condition for accessing perception, because beyond the characters, whether they kill, rape, torture, kidnap, leave with their children, are bad or good parents, beyond that, I would like to talk about the perception of simply a cherry tree, like Chekhov, or a sown field; that must also be observed, and in order to observe it, one must also enter a zone of perception that is different from the conventional one.

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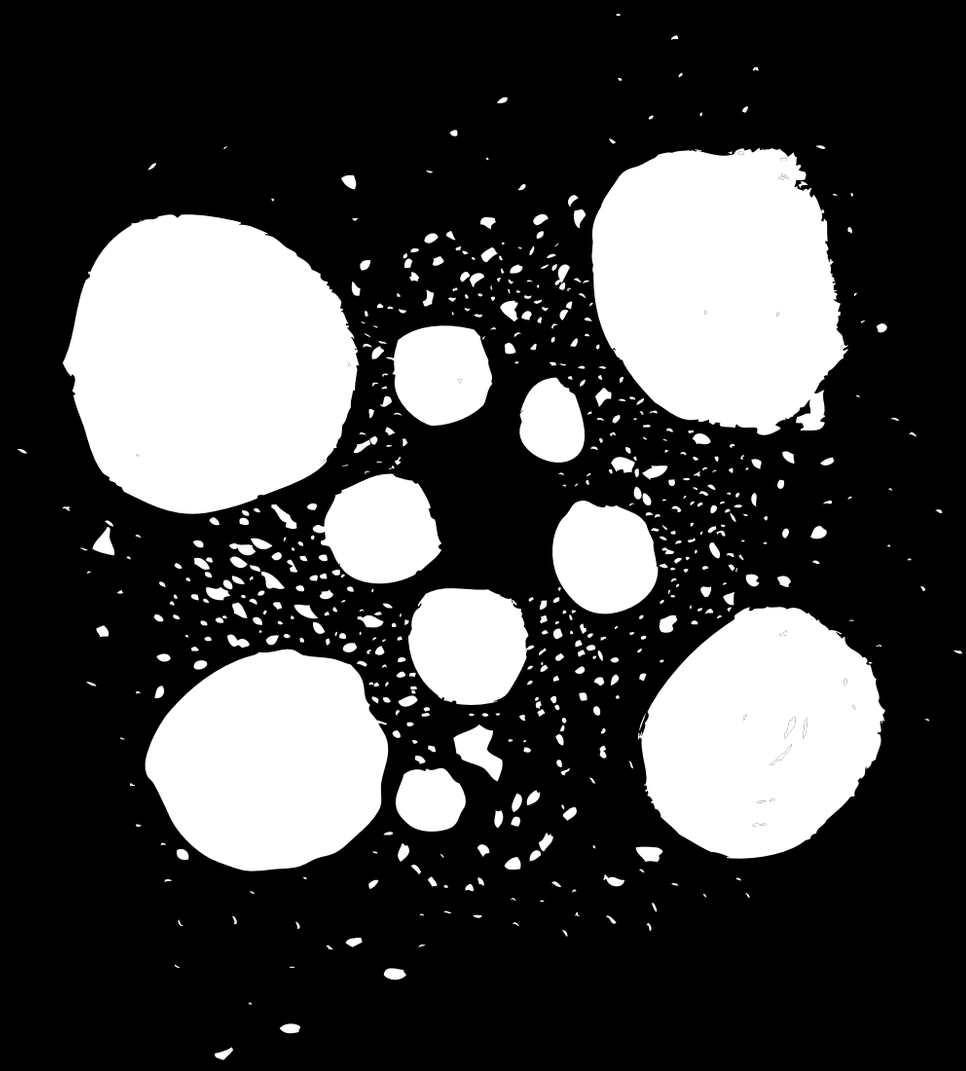

Vortex:

To be able/To lose: The place of the Analyst

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Adriana Pontelli* and Gabriela Levy**

To be able/To lose: The Place of the Analyst

¿What passions remain on the solids of
the skin and what
do we lose in the act of naming them?
Jorge Frisancho, "Metapoética 1"

You were a cliff, open sea.
Today I say goodbye. I leave space.
for another open sea.
For another cliff.
For another dream.
Elina Wechsler, "Final de análisis"

What place of the analyst fosters a transformative analytical process? For this Vortex, we propose the title "To be able/To lose" to consider a possible place for that impossible task of analysing. A special place, indeed, that oscillates between a position of power, granted by those who assume that the analyst possesses knowledge, and a position of loss in that irrevocable end of the artificial bond of transference.

As analysts, we engage in the transferential game and hold it. We know that transference is indispensable for carrying out analysis; we know the power of this very particular love as a gateway of access to the unconscious rejected by the patient. However, we also know that this demand for love is destined to fail. "He must take care not to steer away from the transference-love, or to repulse it or to make it distasteful to the patient; but he must just as resolutely withhold any response to it," Freud points out (1915 [1914]/1993, p. 169). As analysts, we frustrate the analysand's demand for love because we have neither the knowledge nor the object that they seek in us; in our practice, we are constantly confronted with our own castration, and in the face of this we have to mourn (Horenstein, 2014). On the other hand, we must refrain from loving, and in this way offer the analysand a listening experience free from all purpose and expectation, which enables them to embark on their own path. In this sense, the rule of abstinence is based on that greater desire, which is the desire of the analyst, a desire that is indispensable for maintaining their position in the face of the obstacles of analysis and the onslaughts of transference.

Certainly, the unrequited demand for love favours the emergence of drives and the rise of intense passions (Nasio, 2009). At this most painful moment of analysis – but also the most fruitful – we are induced to abandon the role of interpreter to assume the place of object assigned to us by the patient. Lacan (1960-1961/2021) points out: "the analyst must absent himself from any ideal of the analyst" (p. 428); in this sense, we must renounce idealization and narcissistic temptations in order to serve as a support for the object we have been summoned to incarnate. However, the evanescent and inconsistent nature of this object will subsequently favour desire being located beyond it.

* Asociación Psicoanalítica de Córdoba, Córdoba, Argentina.
** Asociación Psicoanalítica del Uruguay, Montevideo, Uruguay.

The ability to lose paradoxically enhances the effectiveness of the analyst's action. The renunciation of his place at the end of analysis leaves a vacancy open to the analysand's desire. Casting off the transferential moorings, the subject embarks on a journey to new seas, wherever the winds of their own desire may push them.

Along these lines, we open the section **Vortex** "To be able/To lose: The Place of the Analyst" with the essay "Losing better," in which Mariano Horenstein, amid literary and psychoanalytic references, reminds us that loss is "at the heart of all analysis, and therefore at the core of our profession." Transiting through notions such as lack, castration, or "void," the author invites us to think of analysis as an "art of losing," which, far from being confused with melancholy, enables us to live.

Celso Gutfreind, in turn, in his poetic text "Losing the analyst or a comb," narrates his experience of the loss/death of his analyst (didact?) and discuss how this loss comes to re-signify other losses – such as the death of a father, and more broadly, castration – while at the same time it enables other openings, such as art and writing, as happened to him.

And what happens when the analyst encounters the limits imposed by life itself and faces multiple losses, such as illness, ageing, and the proximity of death? Maria Alice T. Baptista, a member of the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA) Committee on Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Ageing, in her work "When Old Age Knocks on Our Door: Considerations on the Aging of the Psychoanalyst," shares and analyses data from a survey of psychoanalysts over 75 years of age (from different IPA regions), and makes us reflect on an often-silenced topic: the impact of the ageing of psychoanalysts on clinical practice and institutional life.

Another important aspect of "To be able/To lose: the place of the analyst" concerns to issues related to the uses and abuses of power, alienation in psychoanalytic training and institutional endogamy.

In this direction, Cecilia Rodríguez, in "Being able to lose, losing power, losing in order to be able," begins her text by playing with the signifiers that give title to this **Vortex** in order to, from there, she considers the issues linked to the use and abuse of power in the different axes of the tripod of analytical transmission.

Serapio Marcano, in turn, in his article "Institutional Endogamy and Alienation in Psychoanalytic Institutions" investigates the impact of power on analytic training and shows how alienating power structures limit the diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives, affecting the vitality of the analytic field.

Finally, we conclude this **Vortex** with the text "A Question of (New) Limits?", by Cristiane Mota Takata, who invites us to think about the limits of the psychoanalytic field and, in particular, of training models, discussing the everyday expressions of (re)production of implicit social codes that construct and reinforce institutional identities and alienating practices.

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Mariano Horenstein*

Losing better

That which we know nothing about is often what we need to find, and finding it is a matter of getting lost.
R. Solnit, 2005

Only one thing matters: learning to be a loser.
E. M. Cioran, 1973

I don't like to hide in what I write. So, if I am going to begin by quoting the person who was – we'll see whether that tense is appropriate – my second analyst, I must be honest in admitting that, by choosing one of his phrases to anchor this text, I am still grappling with his loss. A predictable, inevitable loss, necessary to regain a margin of transferential freedom or, why not, a new analytical impulse towards something that one never quite knows whether to call it a necessity or a vice.

That analyst, whom I never read or listened to outside the analytical space, said something outside of it that sounded so foreign to the pretentious jargon and clichés of the profession that still stays with me. He said simply, with the candour that comes with many years of practice, that analysts are used to being left.

It was a way of alluding to loss, which is at stake at the heart of every analysis and therefore constitutes the very marrow of our craft. Beyond the absurd idea of "discharge", or *the* endless *quantum* of analyses that come to an end, or debates over whether an end to analysis should exist at all – both in a logical and empirical sense – or the *impasses* visible both in the loss of identification with the analyst and in the unlikely effectiveness of a "pass" turned into an identificatory emblem, we analysts are the champions of loss.

In general, every relationship—romantic, professional, familial—is a promise of continuity, and the more demanding and complex its construction, the greater the future promise. We, on the other hand, lend ourselves daily to relationships in which, at the end of the journey , we will be abandoned like waste. And so we do it again and again, professionally. It is the analysand who capitalises on the analytical act, not the analyst, who becomes merely a remnant of the analytical operation, of that adventure in which the life of a subject which is an analysis is at stake.

Of course, it is the fault, the flaw (tectonic, structural) that appears after what is lost... believing that we lose objects, agonising over them, we actually find reminders of a loss that precedes us, that has awaited us in the Other – making us exist as living beings – and that at the same time has thrown us into the world, making us exist as subjects more or less detached from that Other whom we have been – fortunately – unable to satisfy. This original dynamic is potentially repeated in each generation, in each loving relationship (and, therefore, in each analytical relationship, which is merely a caste variant). And this repetition trains us analysts in the daily practice of loss.

It is not a question of learning to lose like someone who, longing for sporting triumph, is able to accept the victory of the other, knowing that victories and defeats are always circumstantial. It is about something else, about learning that deep down we always face defeat. Defeat because we will ultimately be defeated by time, by death, but also defeat because the way in which life is able to sustain the game is through movement, and it is not for nothing that the voyages of a ship, in Spanish, are also called "*derrotas*", that is: defeats. Defeat as destiny, but also as a journey.

Beyond contemporary questions about Oedipus, which are really questions about its hard core, the *Kerncomplex*, Castration, this name has long since ceased to reflect what we intend to show. Its original resonance – imagine how it must have sounded to the contemporary ears of Freud or Lacan to appeal to that image, which seems to have been taken from a *body horror* film and turned into a fundamental operator in psychoanalysis. Today, something of that tremor that I imagine it produced in those listeners may have faded, even become trivialised or diminished in its imaginary significance. Of course, its symbolic and real implications can also be restored, but I prefer to rescue here the way in which Pontalis, author of a dictionary in which he dissects Castration as a complex, chooses to name it better, more simply, as *a hole*.

When we speak of losing, we speak of a hole, a hole that preceded us in the Other, thanks to whose hospitable absence we were able to come into the world of language. We speak of a hole that inhabits us if we had the good fortune to become neurotic subjects, and which no transitory illusion of filling it can completely dispel. More than a century of analytical theorising has striven, and failed at some point, to define the edges of that hole that resists all names and is at the same time the driving force behind everything we do, inside and outside of analysis. The edges of what Pierre Legendre called the abyss.

When we talk about losing, we talk about a necessary mourning process. When I listened to that analyst – coincidentally, my own – talk about the habit of losing, I thought about my analysands, those who had left me, those who would leave me. I thought of the figure of the analyst as an anachronistic antihero, resistant to the stereotypes of success that culture dictates, someone who, having lost so much, is no longer flinching. And thinking of the profession in this way, more detached at this stage of the game from any analytical ideal, gave me clues as to how to bear that loss with some dignity.

An analyst must embody different semblances daily, in a daily exercise of loss. A double loss, at first lending our bodies to the illusion of supposed knowledge – we are not there – and finally, being left as a remnant, where we are not there either. And that's not counting the losses in the meantime, when we lend ourselves several hours a day to being mere objects of other people's fantasies.

From one mourning to another. This is how a well-conducted analysis could be defined, one that contributes to letting go of primary objects, of incestuous obscenity, in order to then be able to let go of the illusion of filling oneself with anyone else or of becoming something that fills any Other. From one mourning to another, where the imaginary dispute, the armed confrontation that the word in Spanish –"duelo", is at the same time mourning and also duel– also evokes, gives way to a peaceful encounter with that which, when lost, enables.

Now I think of myself, dealing with that loss I spoke of initially, rather than that of the analysands who abandon us. If I can move forward, it is because I had the opportunity for someone to have gone through that mourning before, for that analyst who listened to me for years to be able to lose me. It is the possibility of the Other losing us that enables

* Asociación Psicoanalítica de Córdoba, Córdoba, Argentina.

us to live, and allows others in turn to lose us. Loss, castration, holes -Pontalis dixit- are genealogically linked.

An analysis is close to ending when someone is able to renounce the secret jouissance of being the object that fulfils the Other. This automatically refers back to what preceded the agalmatic identification, to having become the "jewel" of the other – original or transferential, it does not matter – a void, a lack, a flaw: the hole.

It is worth remembering a craft technique used to produce jewellery, called "lost wax": a model is created in wax and wrapped in a mould made of refractory material. The wax is then melted, and precious metal is poured into the void produced inside the mould to reproduce the lost object in detail. The analysis operates in reverse, undoing precious objects by restoring the original void from which they were moulded. And that is why it privileges the lack rather than the object that fills it, the gift of what one does not have – noticeable both in collective practices identified by anthropologists and in love – and in that sense it becomes an art of losing.

An art of losing which is not to be confused with melancholy, for it is quite the opposite. While it avoids deadly identification with what has been lost, it takes refuge in the enthusiasm of a horizon less limited by ideals and illusions, less "believer".

Beckett (1983) coined a legendary phrase when speaking of failure: *Fail, fail again. Fail better*. In an excess that I hope is justified, I could paraphrase it. If psychoanalysis, as an impossible profession, undoubtedly has a certain affinity with failure, it should not be romanticised, because if someone embarks on that adventure, that journey into the unexpected that a good analysis should be, it is not to sink into the mud, but to get out of it. Since the unconscious is a moving target, we always fail in our interpretation, even though we strive to fail better each time. But if there is a way to write the *dictum* of an analysis, written between the lines after the analyst's invitation to speak, in his confident hospitality that something will emerge there, even without knowing exactly what, it is an opaque and perhaps not entirely confessable proposal: *Lose. Lose again. Lose better.*

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Celso Gutfreind*

Losing the analyst or a comb

Five years ago, I lost my training analyst. I say it as if loss could be measured in numbers, and I know it can't. Or as if an analyst could be a "training" analyst. My non-training training analyst would laugh at this opening line, and I don't think it's my superego reincarnating him now. I believe he'd truly laugh—from the depths of the most authentic part of his own ego.

When I sought out Julio Campos, I said I wanted to undergo a training analysis. I had just returned from a doctorate in psychoanalysis in France. I had already been analyzed and was a psychiatrist with an analytic orientation. All that was missing was the "training." That's why I sought him out. He listened attentively and said he couldn't take me on.

I found it strange, even surprising, and he explained to me that he couldn't, because he wasn't capable of, let's put it this way (he said "let's put it this way"), conducting didactic analyses. He only performed analyses, and only with those who really wanted to be analyzed, regardless of whether they were tied to a training program (and therefore not didactic) or whether, after the first week of analysis, it was necessary to struggle with an overwhelming and inevitable desire in the opposite direction, that of not analyzing. He himself agreed that this was strange, as he knew his name was among the training analysts at the institution where I was applying.

* Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise de Porto Alegre, Porto Alegre, Brasil.

I left feeling quite upset, because I really liked Júlio. I admired his research on creativity and had loved being with him at a recent event we had attended together. I was presenting my doctoral thesis, defended in France, on the therapeutic use of storytelling with children separated from their parents and living in shelters in the Paris region, and he was trying to decipher Van Gogh.

That night, I dreamed about him, something I could never remember, but I woke up the next day with the distinct feeling that I was already experiencing a strong transference, that is, I had one foot in analysis. But analysis wasn't meant to be done on one foot alone, and the other was missing: the desire to analyze oneself/me (at least before beginning) beyond something "didactic," linked to training. Analyzing oneself disconnected. Playfully, in its psychic contents. Precisely to reconnect. Deeply. Ardent. True selves.

The experience resonated, and I observed myself for a week, almost as if in a Freudian self-analysis. The result of that observation was that I had discovered at least six fundamental questions that I had been asking myself daily for a long time. One of them involved my own identity as an analyst, and the others were no less important. I went back and told Júlio, who Socratically considered it feasible to conduct a non-didactic analysis simply as a way of delving into each question.

That's what we did for fifteen years, with much emotion and little response, and it only

ended with the worsening of his illness. And, since the topic of the text is precisely the loss of an analyst, I'll skip over the decade and a half in which we asked and re-asked together half a dozen questions and many others that arose from those.

Losing the analyst, beyond the suffering, makes me think, particularly (I know there's no universality here), about Freud's (1899/1996b) notion of screening memory, and everything in it that refers to displacement, mediation, metaphor, representation—which is no small feat in a work that proposes a method that thrives on the afterthought. Losing the analyst was pure *a posteriori*, as if all the losses converged there, both direct and indirect. If not all, then the most important ones in a person's life—or, according to Freud himself, in a man's life. And now it was no longer possible to postpone the pain of losing my father, lost just a few years before. The burning pain of losing. Castration. With a first and last name, a (psychic) address. On the other hand, losing the analyst meant being authorized to lose him, since he himself had once said, when I complained about his smoking, that it was my turn to decide whether I wanted to be analyzed by someone who could be shortening his life with cigarettes. Someone I would inevitably lose. Because he smoked and, humorously (Freudian, 1927/1996a), drank Coca-Cola. Okay, death can't be represented. Okay, death is always new (Canetti, 2018). But here was an analyst capable of offering himself as replaceable, transcending the unshakable parental narcissism of the early years (Freud, 1914/2004).

Unlike my father, he never praised eternity. There was a father in the transference, so that the father himself could be lost—outside of it. Since the loss, five vast years ago, the struggle between the harshness of the transient (Freud, 1915/1996d) and the introjection of the object (Freud, 1917/1996b) has grown increasingly steadfast, with results that may be sufficient. The maxims of Julio Campos that held meaning for me—along with certain silences and glances between them—wander within me, propelling me and granting me permission to live outwardly without a father.

Among them, the one that inaugurated transference twenty years ago, about the imperative need to know creativity. And to live from it. If writing kills death, as that writer, friend of Freud, said, losing an analyst would be impervious even to writing. The death of the analyst is the death of the *a posteriori.* The death of the analyst is the death of the metaphor, of the second and almost definitive sun at the end of the crossroads with a minimum of movement to move forward, there where, representing or not, we are presented with the castration of a living, breathing death. Without subterfuge. Without symbol.

But the death of an analyst, on the other hand, resignifies the death of a father, because, between his life and his death, there was art. The art of recovered gazes. Of rediscovered presences, before love is completed with the lack that an analysis also addresses. This art does not avoid castration, on the one hand, but, on the other, it does not exhaust the subject and its breath. She breathes again, death in life, with the right to the contradiction of her absolute. As an example, I evoke a poem I wrote a couple of years ago, when I went to visit my daughter in the United States.

I know it involves a lot of covering memory and mediation and displacements in the search for a metaphor—thus, in the struggle for a poem or in the day-to-day of a non-didactic didactic analysis. I was writing precisely about loss, and for that, I drew on the much more bearable recent experience of having lost my comb. I walked, disheveled, down that immense Berkeley Avenue toward the nearest supermarket to buy a new comb, while taking notes for a future poem about a lost comb: I didn't know where that poem would go, crazy as a life and an analysis before art and its meanings, although I suspected the comb represented a displacement of the analyst.

Anamaría McCarthy
The Wait (1991), black and white photography

And, as the poem ended, imagining the lost comb being found by someone, whom I would continue combing in the continuity of an uninterrupted life, I felt the illusion of a certain relief, the kind that only good art or a new encounter can provide. Deep down, I knew that, as long as I lived, there would be within me an analyst doing metaphorically what my father had done, concretely, for much, if not most, of the first years of my life, leaving a glass of water beside my bed, after bidding me a resounding and melodic goodnight and stroking my still thick, tousled hair.

A father like a comb in full form, before the transience. A comb like an analyst in the fullness of his craft, before the transience. Like the enduring art of a poem reborn in some mysterious place, learning to defend itself against deaths, amid them all.

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Maria Alice T. Baptista*

When Old Age Knocks at Our Door: Considerations on the Aging of the Psychoanalyst

The experience of old age involves how the elderly perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others. In this interplay of gazes, each subject builds a concept of old age—both inside and outside the analytic setting, on the couch or behind it (Altman, 2011). In traditional societies, old age was seen as a symbol of wisdom and a bearer of collective memory. With the social transformations of the eighteenth century, particularly the rise of individualism and capitalism, the elderly came to be regarded as unproductive, and their social value began to be associated with decline and uselessness. In Western society, youth becomes an ideal, as it turns into a value rather than merely an age category (Adduci, 2007; Barros, 1998). In this context, old age carries the threatening notion of loss and finitude.

The way old age is represented in our culture impacts fears, fantasies, and personal anxieties, producing uneasiness in the face of aging. As a painful narcissistic wound, speaking about old age is disturbing because it exposes the limit to which we are all subjected (Mucida, 2014). Denial often seems to be the tool most resorted to, so that the old is always the other; the real and strange image is often in contrast with the subjective and ideal one. Yet the real image imposes itself in the mirror or in the gaze of the other, denouncing just how old one is (Goldfarb, 1998). In *The Uncanny* (1919/1976), Freud, then 63 years old, brilliantly depicts the feeling of strangeness upon confronting his own image, his own old age. This strangeness erupts if we consider that our unconscious does not know what it means to be old, as Simone de Beauvoir (1970/1976) rightly asserted; it emerges from the incongruence between physical and cognitive limitations and subjective desires and projects (Baptista & Leal, 2024).

We psychoanalysts, being human, also grow old. However, there is a noticeable scarcity not only of studies but also of spaces within our institutions to address the issue of analysts' aging. According to Fainguelernt and Amendoeira (2002), data point to a large number of psychoanalysts over sixty still active in psychoanalytic societies affiliated with the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA), reflecting population aging itself.

Yet, contrary to the contemporary logic of privileging youth, older psychoanalysts embody experience and wisdom, and are indispensable for the transmission of knowledge and the history of psychoanalysis within our institutions (Baptista & Leal, 2024). Moreover, a particular aspect of our profession is that we tend to reach the peak of our careers, our full potential, later in life (Fainguelernt & Amendoeira, 2002). On the one hand, this recognition and place of respect and potency is valuable and could serve as an inspiration for other sectors of society; on the other, it can make it more difficult to think about retirement and the passing of the baton to younger generations. Holding a place of recognition within our societies may render farewell even more complex, given the depreciated status of old age in our culture (Baptista & Leal, 2024). Furthermore, the fear of physical and mental decline, as a harbinger of death, may put into question one's sense of identity, injuring the most sensitive point of the narcissistic system—the immortality of the self—and generating resistance to the subject (Baptista & Leal, 2024).

The question gains weight: how do we, as psychoanalysts, deal with our own aging, particularly regarding our practice and institutional life? This was the starting point of a pilot study conducted by IPA Committee on Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Aging. With the aim of listening to senior analysts about how they perceive their own aging, we interviewed analysts over 75 years of age who are still working and active in institutional life. To date, we have interviewed six analysts from North America, Latin America, and Europe. Three central topics were addressed: How does aging influence clinical work? How does aging interfere with professional life beyond the clinic (seminars, supervision…)? How is the issue of age experienced within psychoanalytic societies?

All interviewees perceived themselves as more flexible with age, more grounded in their identity as psychoanalysts:

> Over time, there are more human situations that I can understand more deeply than when I was younger. When I work with a patient my age and he talks about death, I now feel I can attune to that… I know what he is talking about. (TP, 80 years old)

Another interviewee highlighted the challenge of thinking about retirement in light of improved clinical skills:

> You get better. I would say: that's the reason why it is difficult to quit when you reach a certain stage. (A, 75 years old)

The concern about leaving patients unassisted, given the possibility of illness or the analyst's death, emerged in another account:

> I am no longer taking patients for analysis because I grew old and decided at a certain point that it is not ethical to take patients in analysis when you are very old, because you can never be sure of what will happen. I know many people who don't believe this and see patients until they drop dead. I don't think that's ethical. (D, 79 years old)

Others spoke of how the body or circumstances such as losses, separations, and illnesses affect their lives and clinical practice:

> I had a second analysis not long after my parents' death and my partner became very ill for a while. Those losses led me to seek analysis… If you work through that, does it deepen your listening? Yes, it deepens your listening. (SB, 76 years old)

> I have a patient for whom hearing is becoming a problem. And listening is essential. (TH, 79 years old)

All the interviewees are reducing their patient load. None are taking new training analysts. However, they continue participa-

* Sociedade Psicanalítica do Rio de Janeiro, Río de Janeiro, Brazil.

ting in supervisions, congresses, and other activities, —among other reasons, as a way of supporting a generational transition. All are considering retirement, and some are gradually investing in new interests:

> I have very few patients left! I am thinking very seriously about retiring from clinical work, continuing only with supervision and teaching. I have other interests. For me, it is not very difficult to retire, because I have other interests: I make music, I am a photographer… (TP, 80 years old)

> I stopped working with small children some time ago because it was exhausting. I usually refer more serious adolescents to younger colleagues. I remain very active in teaching. This is an activity I will always pursue because I feel it is important to avoid the risk of a generational gap between what has been done and what younger generations want to do or discover, their challenges. Sometimes I see the danger of such a gap. (SB, 76 years old)

In most of the interviewees' societies, there are no regulations regarding age. The idea of colleagues appointed by each member to monitor and provide support emerged as a possibility, along with expanding spaces for discussion on the subject:

> I fully agree that shared guidelines should be applied at the institutional level to help all of us face critical issues without too many narcissistic wounds, overcoming hypocrisy or the concern of not hurting colleagues. Appointing a colleague who advises you to stop if you are not doing well could be a solution. I would include that figure, but I would also promote more opportunities for shared reflection and exchange. (SB, 76 years old)

The relations between younger and older members seem to vary greatly depending on the dynamics of each society. Accounts ranged from disqualification of the new generation—"*Well, this may sound like an old man saying that the institute has significantly deteriorated: the quality of students, of those applying for training, has dropped considerably. There were years in which the institute had no applicants*" (TP, 80 years old)—to a perception of division—"*I feel as if the society is splitting. There is a small, older group. And there is a relatively large, younger group. I regret this somewhat. I think it would be better if we could do more things together*" (TH, 79 years old)—to accounts of integration and intergenerational bonds:

> There is much exchange with the young, as well as with the older. We have a responsibility toward the younger generations. Because if we remain active within the institution, we have a responsibility that can be well utilized. An important function of the senior analyst is to transmit knowledge that will be transformed. *(SB, 79 years old)*

For Fainguelernt and Amendoeira (2002), it is desirable to find balance between what has been and what continues to be, viewing old age as a process of growth. The aim of this paper is to raise questions and deconstruct taboos. Its relevance also involves future generations, for observing how senior analysts deal with their own aging and institutional roles provides a way of learning. Reflecting on this stage of life means welcoming within each of us the old age that, with luck, will come.

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Cecilia Rodríguez*

Power to lose, losing power, losing to gain power.[1]

Using this semantic play as a starting point, I propose a reflection on the interrelation between the signifiers *power* and *loss*, with particular emphasis on the analyst's position across the different axes of the psychoanalytic transmission tripod.

Losing—in this context—operates as a signifier that metaphorizes castration, lack[1], and incompleteness. Following this line of thought, occupying a position of power while accepting castration—which sets the limits of its exercise—enables the analyst, in any of their functions, to relinquish the excess of narcissistic gratification that may otherwise give rise to abuses of power

Properly circumscribed power sustains legitimate authority. By contrast, the abuse of power tends toward forms of authoritarianism that do not allow for the possibility of loss: *losing* the position of power one holds within a group, so that it can eventually circulate among its members. *Losing* the idealizations to which, as analysts, we are often subjected, rather than fostering them for our own narcissistic gratification. *Losing* the certainty of our knowledge in order to open it up to questioning and ongoing discovery. *Losing*[2] the attribution of the "subject supposed to know,[3]" a position in which we are placed as analysts, so as to allow the analysand to elaborate their own drive-related motions, thereby giving way to the subversion of desire without imposing any normative framework.

Unfortunately, the abuse of power is not foreign to our field, hence the need to recognize its effects—not only on the transmission of psychoanalysis, but also within the very course of an analytic process where power is misused.

Freud (1937/1976), shortly before his death, had already warned: "If a man is given power, he will find it difficult not to abuse that power" (p. 250).

Given that analysis is the cornerstone of our practice, it is appropriate to focus, within the clinical issues related to the use or abuse of power, those that stem from narcissistic configurations, being aware of the challenge they pose for psychoanalytic work.

"Narcissism offers one of the fiercest resistances to analysis," wrote Green (1983/1986, p. 10), among many other authors who have studied the topic. It is therefore necessary to consider how narcissistic crystallizations—resistant to analysis—impact the analytic field, even in those who come to occupy the position of analyst

It is evident that, in every analytic dyad, the unconscious is at play, rooted in drive and desire, unfolding in accordance with the subjectivity of both the analysand and the analyst. Yet, it is necessary—and part of every analyst's responsibility—to recognize the narcissistic temptations by positions of power invite particularly given that, within the analytic field, these can result in iatrogenic effects that obstruct the process itself.[4]

Figures of the impossible: The phallic analyst

At this point, I would like to introduce the unsettling notion of what I call the 'phallic analyst[5]' to refer to situations in which the analyst's position is assumed in a way that, paradoxically, renders the function itself impossible.

"Power does not corrupt—it unveils," wrote Fabio Herrmann (2005/2014). I agree, and building on this idea. I consider that it is in the exercise of power that what I call its *phallic use* is revealed—referring to the position in which power is wielded without restraint. Metaphorically, it would be "without accepting castration." Conversely, in this line of reflection, "acknowledging castration[6]" implies delimiting power—declining the excessive narcissistic gratification it confers when abused.

I consider that, in the clinical field, the phallic use of power by one occupying the analyst's position carries the risk of enabling situations of alienation. In his book" *The Alienation of the Analyst*, (La alienación del analista) Daniel Waisbrot (2002) explores these clinical formations and their dialectical interplay within the institutional field.

Previously, Piera Aulagnier (1994) related alienation to the ravages of transferential passion, which, , as she points out, is induced by the one who occupies the position of analyst. I find in this narcissistic and abusive inclinations that render impossible to relinquish the master's position[7].

Rómulo Lander (2009) asserts: "His very nature as master, as possessor of knowledge, precludes him from fully and authentically occupying the place and position of the analyst" (p. 56) I would add: it renders analysis impossible, even if one occupies the analyst's position and conducts a process that runs counter to the subversion of the analysand's desire—who remains captive to the desire of the analyst. Not the Desire of the Analyst (to analyze), but the desire of that analyst directed toward his or her analysand.

I know I am raising some deeply troubling situations, but this serves to highlight the necessary ethical dimension, which not only guides analytical practice but also defines the very conditions of its transmission.

However, the problem lies in the frequent gap between what some analysts say about power—and even ethics—and what they actually do.

Freud wrote in Analysis Terminable and Interminable (1937/1976):

* Asociación Psicoanalítica de Guadalajara, Guadalajara, Mexico.

1. The original Spanish title "Poder perder, perder poder, perder para poder" features a linguistic play that does not fully carry over into English." An alternative title would be: To be able to lose, to lose power, to lose in order to be able.1. Support of desire. Desire that can also be of power

2. Relinquish

3. To acknowledge the attribution of this position, which sustains the transference field, and to put it to work is very different from attempting to occupy, in advance and without mediation, the place of absolute knowledge

4. On another note, I find it intriguing that Freud, in developing the theory of the drives, gave a place to the drive of appropriation (*Bemächtigung*; Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967/1996). Revisiting and updating these ideas, I invite reflection on the notion of *a-power-a-tion*. In Spanish, we could make a semantic slip, difficult to translate into English, and, instead of 'ation' (*miento*), write 'disavowal' (*des-miento*)? Through this wordplay, I focus on the effects of the disavowal of castration, evoking the metaphor of the phallic mother.

5. The one who disavows their own lack

6. Colette Soler (2007) refers to the Omnipotent Other and the Castrated Other.

7. Lacan (1969–1970/2024) refers to the Castrated Master; this is not the line I follow here, yet it remains in the background. My reflection is situated rather on the imaginary plane

> It seems, then, that many analysts have learned to employ defense mechanisms that allow them to divert certain consequences and demands of their own analysis away from themselves—likely directing them toward others—so that they remain as they are, eluding the critical and corrective influence inherent in that very analysis. (p. 250)

Hence the importance of the various paths of re-analysis, in addition to supervision, throughout the exercise of our function[8].

Perversion or per-*worse*-sion

Convinced that the study of problems in the field of psychoanalytic transmission must include the effects of the abuse of power in any of its fields, I propose the neologism "*worse*-version" to denote the ravages of the abuse of power in any of the axes of the training tripod. Undoubtedly, the clinical axis is the most delicate and complex, as the transmission of ethics rests fundamentally on the act.

Awareness of how we position ourselves in relation to power—both our own and that of others—is fundamental to the transmission of psychoanalysis. especially because, as we know, the interplay between power and knowledge makes the issue all the more complex.

I would add another turn to the semantic play with which I opened this brief reflection: the *power to lose* the fear of confronting the abuse of power—abuse that, all too unfortunately, wreaks havoc in our field and calls for spaces of reflection and ethical action.

Certainly, this sits at the very vortex of countless controversies.

8. Not always with the same analyst, since narcissistic bastions perpetuate crystallizations that remain inaccessible to some analytic dyads

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Serapio Marcano*

Institutional Endogamy and Alienation in Psychoanalytic Institutions

Introduction

Psychoanalytic training institutions have played a crucial role in transmitting knowledge and preserving the discipline. Yet, their internal structures—often characterized by endogamic dynamics—raise questions about their impact on the evolution of psychoanalysis. Institutional endogamy can be understood as the tendency toward closed reproduction of its members, which limits diversity of perspectives and reinforces hierarchies of power. Such dynamics risk undermining theoretical richness and methodological plurality. In this context, I explore the relationship between endogamy, power, and loss, and how these dynamics affect the transmission of knowledge and the vitality of the psychoanalytic field. By favoring the continuity of certain paradigms over others, psychoanalytic thought is restricted, running the risk of becoming a dogmatic system rather than a space for questioning and transformation.

Bourdieu (1989) argued that academic and professional institutions may operate as fields of power in which specific groups consolidate authority by controlling access to knowledge and the criteria for legitimacy. In psychoanalysis, this translates into the reproduction of dominant narratives and the marginalization of innovative or critical approaches.

* Caracas Psychoanalytical Society, Caracas, Venezuela. Panamanian Pscychoanalytical Society, Panama, Panama.

Institutional Endogamy, Maintenance of Power, and Alienation

Endogamy in psychoanalytic training often manifests in the selection of candidates, the appointment of training analysts, the designation of teachers and supervisors, and the exclusivity of theoretical and methodological validation, often tied to affiliations with specific schools or currents of thought.

In many institutions, access to positions of greater responsibility depends not only on merit but also on loyalty to particular orientations or adherence to established dogmas. This produces a closed circuit in which those in power ensure their continuity through their own disciples, thereby reducing opportunities for renewal. Freud himself was aware of the problem of authority in the early years of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA). His conflict with Carl Jung, as well as the distancing of Otto Rank, Sándor Ferenczi, and Wilhelm Reich, illustrate the difficulties that arise when the institutional power structure is challenged. Many psychoanalytic societies have since replicated this pattern, generating exclusionary mechanisms that reinforce ideological and methodological uniformity.

In "Contamination in Training Analyses and Official Supervisions" (Marcano, 2002), I reflected on the history of psychoanalytic institutionalization, as other authors have done (Bernfeld, 1952/1962; Balint, 1948; Grinberg,

1981), and on its consequences for the institutions themselves. The very act of designating the analysis of a candidate as a "training analysis" risks creating a caste of power: a closed group of analysts whose authority contaminates their relationships with candidates and supervisees, leading to alienation.

In some institutions, authoritarian leaders have imposed rigid models of teaching, dictating what must be taught and learned by candidates. These patterns tend to become institutionalized in subsequent generations, establishing rules not only about what is to be presented about psychoanalysis, but also how, when, where, and with whom. An illustration of this dynamic can be found in Natalia Mudarra's (2024) paper "Thinking Endogamy in Psychoanalytic Institutions", presented at the 35th Fepal Congress in Rio de Janeiro.

Loss and the Consequences of Endogamy

From a psychoanalytic perspective, the exclusion of new ideas can be understood in terms of loss. Freud (1917 [1915]/1992) examined the relationship between melancholia and the difficulty of mourning. At the institutional level, resistance to change may be seen as an inability to mourn theoretical models that have lost relevance. Instead of enabling transformation, repetition is perpetuated, resulting in theoretical and methodological stagnation. As Freud wrote to Ferenczi in a 1928 letter: "The docile psychoanalysts failed to understand the elasticity of the rules I laid down. They submitted to them as if they were taboos. This will have to be revised someday" (Freud, 2000, p. 332).

Institutional endogamy also generates loss in terms of community. Professionals who do not conform to established norms may be excluded, forced to practice in peripheral contexts, or even abandon psychoanalysis altogether. This fragmentation weakens the field, limits its potential for interdisciplinary and social dialogue, and fosters alienation.

Alienation may manifest at several levels:

1. Alienation of thought: Members may feel compelled to adhere to a specific theoretical framework without the possibility of questioning or enriching it through other perspectives.

2. Alienation of subjectivity: Candidates are often expected to adopt certain subjective and identity positions that reinforce the institution's hierarchical structure.

3. Alienation of practice: Institutional rigidity may distance psychoanalysts from the lived realities of analysands, privileging doctrinal fidelity over clinical effectiveness. In this way, psychoanalytic training risks privileging theory over the development of intuition needed to access psychic reality—what Bion (1970/1977) referred to as negative capability, the capacity to tolerate uncertainties, mysteries, and doubts.

These dynamics can produce self-referential structures that inhibit creativity, hinder the updating of knowledge, and generate environments of exclusion for those unwilling to conform to the dominant orthodoxy.

Alternatives and Openness: Is a Non-Alienating, Non-Endogamic Psychoanalysis Possible?

Some initiatives have attempted to challenge endogamic tendencies in psychoanalytic training. The proliferation of independent schools, interdisciplinary approaches, and online platforms have created opportunities for psychoanalysis to engage in dialogue with other disciplines and open itself to critical perspectives. However, institutional recognition remains a challenge for those who choose alternatives to the traditional model.

A possible shift would involve revising admission and evaluation criteria, promoting greater theoretical and methodological plurality. It would also require the creation of spaces for debate in which critique and difference are valued rather than suppressed. In this sense, new generations of psychoanalysts have a crucial role to play in building a more open and dynamic field.

Conclusion

Alienating endogamy in psychoanalytic training institutions has profound implications for the consolidation of power and the loss of diversity within the field. While these dynamics have ensured the continuity of psychoanalysis, they have also limited its evolution and transformative capacity. Overcoming them requires critical reflection on institutional structures and openness to new ways of thinking and practicing psychoanalysis. Only through such processes can the field be revitalized and its future relevance ensured.

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Cristiane Mota Takata*

A Question of (New) Boundaries?

In one of those conversations steeped in the broth of political-institutional participation, I was cautioned about the importance of meeting a requirement for minimal intelligibility if I wanted to be heard. Even without knowing the exact criteria for such intelligibility, I managed to understand that I was being advised to operate using the cohesion codes of that social group.

I am interested in these everyday expressions of the (re)production of social codes because, more than determining content or forms of expression, they sustain shared identities.

Seeking social recognition for these identities, groups articulate ideas and practices and organize them under a certain model. In doing so, they set in motion a process we call institutionality. It is in this sense that we can understand that all institutionality has a political purpose – that is, it seeks a social place in the world for a shared identity.

Since its foundation, the basis of psychoanalytic institutionality has been an organizational model in which "training" is presented as the central axis and the "analysis of the analyst" is its common denominator.

Through this model, it has been possible for the psychoanalytic community to define its institutional (political) purpose: to maintain its place in the world as a clinical and investigative method (Beer, 2017) and not to be taken as a panacea or a philosophy for each and every social phenomenon.

For many, it is the best possible model we have achieved so far, due to its character of a double guarantee: in the realm of institutional relations among peers, we are guided to form a function capable of reproducing our clinical/investigative method; in the realm of institutional relations with the material world, we are guided solely by the indirect effects that this subversive and emancipatory method produces on our analysands.

With this delimitation, the portion of contribution that our field can give to the social collective is established: it is up to us to perform the analytic function and, from then on, as in a domino effect, let its resonances infiltrate society. A question of boundaries.

Faced with the historical stability of this organizational model, it is stimulating to engage with the ideas of Gabriel Tupinambá in his book *The Desire for Psychoanalysis O desejo de psicanálise* [The Desire for Psychoanalysis] (2024), where he questions the supposed naturally subversive, emancipatory, and ethical potential of the psychoanalytic method and invites us to think about the "absolutely ordinary status that psychoanalysis acquires when considered in political terms" (p. 36).

The author demonstrates that, delimited only by its own clinical, theoretical, and institutional parameters, psychoanalysis is not naturally political[1]. That is, it is not capable of guaranteeing the reproduction of an invariably political praxis[2], being subject to the same ideological, economic, and sociocultural constraints as any other procedures (jobs, trades).

Through other paths, in defense of a "minor psychoanalysis," Thamy Ayouch (Psychoanalytic Training Department – Sedes, 2022) speaks about a process of historicizing our tools, indicating possible epistemic and institutional gains from a psychoanalysis capable of recognizing its hybridity with other fields.

By problematizing the boundaries of the psychoanalytic field, both authors draw attention to a disarticulation between clinic and politics, which can occur: 1) through the denial of the boundary between fields, that is, by assuming that psychoanalysis is invariably political and therefore can explain, psychoanalytically, various and complex human phenomena in the world; 2) through a rupture between fields, meaning, by assuming that other fields lack the legitimacy to explain phenomena that psychoanalysis produces in the world.

There is no space for a detailed development of these proposals here, but it is possible to grasp that both are interested in investigating the psychoanalytic identities (re)produced socially and their effects.

They also reveal the unease felt by many analysts, not only as citizens but in the very exercise of their craft, who are called upon to deal with subjectivities that, although historically exploited and minoritized, no longer silence the denunciation of the violence that occurs in the encounter with subjectivities identified with hegemonic power.

The attempt to confront such unease indicates the social and epistemic importance of critically investigating what lies behind the couches.

Behind the couches are not individuals. That would be a moralizing reading of the analyst's place, where the quality of the socially (re)produced effects is restricted to the good or bad quality of their personal analyses – or, even more innocuous, to the good or bad reputation of the institutions that train analysts.

Behind the couches lies the entire institutional (political) apparatus that, through a shared social identity, establishes the basis of the analysts' commitment – codes – for the social reproduction of psychoanalysis, codes whose reproduction is not immune to their historical places and times.

By privileging institutional organization around the training of the analyst, abstracted from the relations of transmission and the "didactic" function, a social identity is created based on selecting, translating, and interpreting what emerges in the restricted field of analysis, where one can symbolically deal with the data from the reality of the shared, concrete world.

But is this still sufficient in a particularly cynical contemporaneity?

Herein lies a challenge peculiar to our time: the historical cynicism that, according to Vladimir Safatle (2008), appears as an expression of a political disarticulation, that is, a disarticulation between critique and praxis, marked not by amoralism, "but a kind of hyper-moralism that recognizes its impossibility of realizing itself in the field of social coexistence and which, as a result, can turn" (p. 66) towards the hyper-moralization of other fields and themes, abandoning any commitment to its own effectiveness. The author relates this abandonment to the process of operating a reduction of choice that transforms movement into the limited circuit of a

* Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise de São Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

1. "Politics" as the effect of applying sets of actions, guided by critique, deliberately collective, and used for the organization of a social group in mediation with other groups.

2. "Praxis" as the concretization/realization of the products of intersections between theory and practice.

pendulum that necessarily goes from one pole to another. And, like any pendulum, moving is just a way of conserving the same center. "Going from one pole to another is just a more complicated way of not moving." (p. 202, author's emphasis).

Safatle recognizes the risk of evoking the term "cynicism" to develop his critique. Therefore, he insists on situating it not in moralizing/normative terms, but as a regime of contradiction between the functioning of power and the capacity for social effective-action.

Thus, he marks the cynical paradox: the enunciation of values and criteria without the force to reorient praxis. Roughly speaking, empty critiques, innocuous practices.

If cynicism is, in fact, the mark of our historical time, we can ask: 1) Do the organizational models of psychoanalytic training – or at least the way we create obstacles to dialogue about them – distance us from the field of investigation and action concerning the place and institutional (political) effects of the clinical function? 2) Could such distancing be peculiarly fostered by anchoring this model limited to the training-analysis of the analyst axis?

In the daily life of psychoanalytic training, perhaps an example of this disarticulation lies in the effects of choosing certain ideas over others: 1) we speak much about *training* and less about *transmission*, observing the quality of the use the analyst in training makes of the transmission devices and engaging less openly in dialogues about the devices themselves (curriculum grids, seminar and supervision dynamics, selection of coordinators/instructors, etc.); 2) we speak more about the *analysis of the analyst* and less openly about the *didactic function*, causing a serious blurring of this function, which participates directly in the processes of social (re)production of psychoanalytic identities and which is impossible to manage solely within the limits of the intimacy of the analyst's analysis, especially when analyses occur between members of the same institution.

Anamaría McCarthy
The Grid (2023), mixed media, 70 x 55 cm

Considering these contributions, we can think that a named and explicit (re)articulation between transmission-didactic function and training-analysis of the analyst could (re) constitute a field of observation that aligns better with the proposals of Tupinambá and Ayouch, in the sense of investigating the political effects of psychoanalysis within its own organizational limits.

The value of this re-delimitation of the investigative field would lie in overcoming the idea, now almost mythical, of individual emancipation as a path to a more dignified social life. This is because, in cynical times, individual emancipation would no longer have strength against social alienation, it would no longer disrupt our social contract with hegemonic power.

The unquestionably intimate and private character of the analytic setting can only be secured if, *outside of it*, we assume the task of constructing ways to subvert the cynical juxtaposition between individual freedom and emancipation.

Or, rather, to undo the association between the absolutely singular experience of personal analysis and the questionable attempt to restrict to it the function of finding ways of elaborating the moralizing and normative demands that reflect the cynicism of our historical time.

In the specific case of the analysis of the analyst, to question the psychoanalytic identities based on social codes imposed by segments of hegemonic power – a hegemony that normalizes the reduction of socio-historical markers and their concrete effects on non-hegemonic groups to mere symbolic elements amenable to interpretation.

The violence, endured and witnessed, could help us recover the power to be appalled by cynicism and not to lose the disturbing feeling that we are in the world, our clinical functions are within us, and none of this fits entirely within the shelter of our personal analyses. A question of (new) boundaries.

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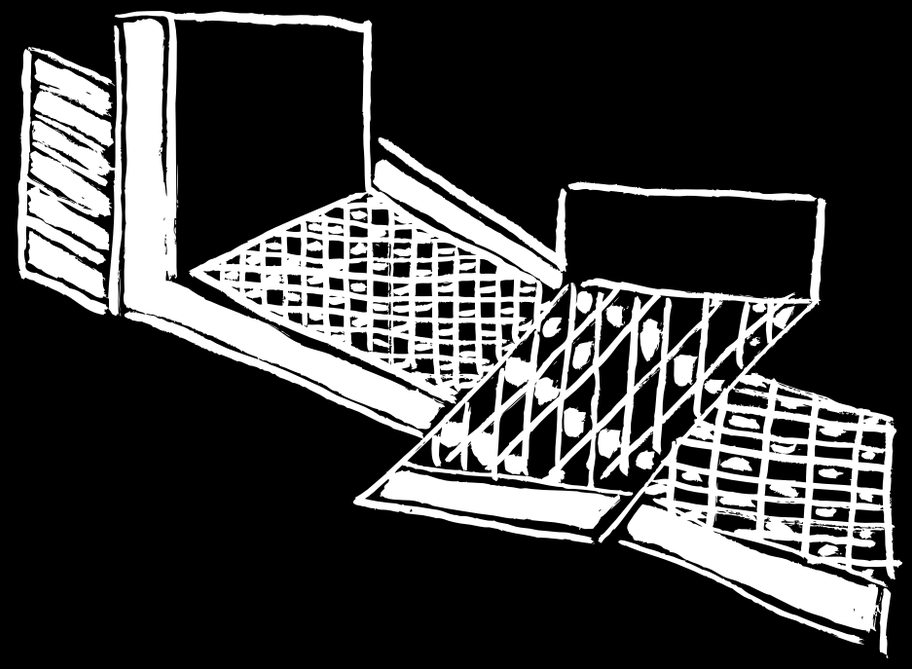

Incident:

Losing by winning. Winning by losing

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Abigail Betbedé* and José Galeano**

Shameless

In Morocco, two American women forcibly seize an old blind man and make him cross the street. But what that Oedipus would have preferred was money: money, money, not help.
Barthes, 1987

What constitutes the specificity and the difficulty of the *haikai*, the *epiphany* (as in James Joyce), or the *incident* (such as the one just cited) is the discomfort of *non-commentary*. The extreme difficulty or courage lies in withholding meaning, any meaning; stripped of commentary, the futility of the *incident* is exposed. To assume that futility, Roland Barthes says, is almost heroic.

While we were working on *Perder [Losing]*, Donald Trump was re-elected President of the United States of America. The cost of his return was immediately felt—not only in the markets' reactions to his omnipotent measures, but also in the discontent, in the Freudian sense, that such omnipotence inscribed upon the world.

That newly unfolding context astonished us and, inevitably, began to infiltrate our team meetings as quickly as it did our lives. *Donald Trump, once again, was the most powerful man in the world*. The futility of that *incident* was lay stark before us, and thus we adopted it for this section.

In his book *Além do princípio do pudor [Beyond the Principle of Modesty]*, Jurandir Freire Costa (2023), intertwines the ideas of infamy, the obscene, and modesty in an attempt to account for what so deeply unsettles us about today's sociopolitical degradation. The renowned Brazilian psychoanalyst affirms that, just as fame represents the recognition bestowed to people, events, and ways of life assumed deemed edifying, infamy- its antonym- -encompasses all that is repudiated, dishonorable, unworthy, and therefore proscribed from the public sphere. Infamous sayings and deeds constitute the remainder of the drive, the abject stratum of the human psyche that escapes the action of repression, interdictions, and the norms of modesty.

The shameless propagation of prejudices, lies, and *fake news* has taken over the public sphere with the decidedly non-innocent aim of exploiting a dark aspect of our mental life: *jouissance* (enjoyment) of the obscene. Manipulating that unconscious passion has become a trivial tactic of ideological propaganda. Everything that civilizational norms prohibit, disapprove and condemn has, under the sway of extremism, come to be displayed without decorum and incited as "normal." If the leader does it, then nothing is forbidden (Costa Freire, 2023).

Starting from that scenario and recalling that for Freud the first sign of stupidity is the complete lack of shame, we invited Julio Hirschhorn Gheller to help us think, from a psychoanalytic perspective, about certain sociopolitical phenomena of contemporaneity in which credulity and a certain degree of human stupidity seem to prevail. This condition, as Bion suggests, neither fosters knowledge nor allows learning from experience; on the contrary, it encourages denial and disavowal.

How are we to understand the resurgence of leaders with fascist and authoritarian traits, concomitant with uncritical, unquestioning attitudes coming, paradoxically, from the very social groups that will suffer most under them? What responses do we have in the face of the rise of figures such as Trump, Bolsonaro, and Milei?

In "Notes on Thorny Times", our guest addresses these issues, offering valuable theoretical contributions that emphasize the impossibility of dissociating the collective from the individual, along with numerous reasons why psychoanalysis—and psychoanalysts—must not remain on the margins of context. He positions mourning as a turning point that connects the reader umbilically to the autobiographical text that serves as its counterpart in this diptych.

In difficult times, testimonies such as the one offered by Florencia Romero in "Losing Everything" are rare jewels, difficult to find. We invited her to tell us about her experience of living and working as a physician in remote places in the world where she encountered and cared for people—primarily children and youth—who had lost everything, as victims and exiles of war. To our pleasant surprise, in her reflection and elaboration she went much further: as she intertwined the marks left by those experiences with her own story, she gradually found the courage to narrate her life.

In contrast to the previous text, where the notion of shamelessness prevails, here the inhibitions remain, as do fear and doubt, and she tells us, with great courage, that it is possible to confront them. To be able to lose everything, in these cases, becomes the counterpart to not being able to lose anything; just as emancipating oneself from a certain shame is a desirable conquest, very different from the status of never having attained it.

In 1916, Freud published an article that dealt with certain character types elucidated by analytic work. In the second chapter, he described "those who fail when they succeed," recounting several cases of subjects who became neurotically ill upon realizing (or in order to avoid realizing) their most intimate desires. In 2025, sliding the signifiers with a touch of humor, we might invent a chapter on "those who lose when they win," whose case history would contemplate shameless subjects, seemingly happy, immune to sadness and illness , so absorbed in their own glory that they have not yet realized how much—or what—they are losing.

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* Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise de São Paulo, San Pablo, Brasil.

** Asociación Psicoanalítica de Asunción, Asunción, Paraguay.

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Julio Hirschhorn Gheller*

Notes on pointed times

People respond to situations involving the breaking of emotional bonds—whether through separation or death—by experiencing several characteristic stages. The initial reaction is anxiety and denial of the reality of the facts underlying the loss. This is followed by anger, with expressions of revolt and a search for blame. These feelings need to be vented and exhausted so that a sense of relative peace can emerge, allowing the individual to mobilize to find another object—person or activity—to fill the void left behind. This sequence of stages characterizes a grieving process that resolves satisfactorily. However, when the individual cannot come to terms with the loss, the mourning continues indefinitely, developing into a melancholic state. In this case, the tendency to dwell on ideas of ruin and worthlessness predominates, resulting in constant self-recrimination. The individual becomes mortified and sees no chance of rebuilding their life, believing that nothing else will be worthwhile. In "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917/1974a), Freud already stated that the shadow of the object falls upon the self. This is the path in which Thanatos supplants Eros.

I think of melancholia in the face of threats unimaginable until recently, observing a worrying scenario with the prospect of serious global conflicts. In this sense, it is necessary to be mentally alert to avoid falling into depression and states of discouragement that compromise our ability to think. We are all affected by what happens in the city, the country, and the world. The consulting room is not an isolated island. We must not focus only on what is happening within, forgetting the surroundings. It is essential not to surrender to helplessness, despite the seriousness of the external situation.

The new American president seeks to impose his most outlandish ideas, taking advantage of his position at the helm of the world's foremost economic and military power. Trump proclaims the slogan "Make America great again" and behaves as if all other countries must bow to his demands. His expansionist impulses—whether mere bluster or not (and he seems to take them seriously)—reveal the audacity and arrogance of someone who sees himself as wielding unlimited power. He aims to assert his interests through threats, blackmail, and even brute force. He shamelessly states that he intends to annex Canada as an American state. The most bizarre and cruel move is his intention to prevent Palestinians from returning to the Gaza Strip, forcing Egypt and Jordan to receive them. All this so he can seize that area and build a sort of Riviera, a massive real estate development in the region. His behavior reveals the predominance of what Bion called the psychotic part of his personality (Zimerman, 2004), with a set of elements such as stupidity, arrogance, omnipotence, omniscience, aggressiveness, and voracity. His example highlights how certain personalities, even when democratically elected, begin to erode the foundations of democracy from within, adopting despotic measures. In this case, there is a distinct imperialist bias in Trump's arrogant attitude.

I've been reminded of a film by renowned Swedish director Ingmar Bergman, *The Serpent's Egg* (1978), set in Germany in 1923. It describes the environment that fostered the rise of Nazism, emphasizing the country's economic collapse following its defeat in World War I. The economic crisis caused intense resentment, which hit the German people hard. The population yearned for some kind of belief to restore hope for the future. Anti-Semitic manifestations arose as a result of the search for culprits. Electing a specific group as responsible for the country's ills served to assuage resentment. This was followed by manipulative maneuvers by the Nazis, with the subsequent establishment of the Third Reich, led by Hitler. The terrible consequences of the Holocaust should never be forgotten. One notion implied by the film and historical facts is the danger of hatching the egg instead of destroying it before it's too late—that is, before the serpent can unleash its full malignant potential.

Readers might ask, "But why talk about Trump?" Since we don't inhabit a distant and remote territory, we will inevitably feel the effects of external events. I feel a growing unease about the increasingly widespread violence and brutality, symbolized by the figure of a tyrant who cares little for human rights.

I attended university in the 1970s, a time of the height of the repression practiced by the military dictatorship, which lasted from 1964 to 1985. After that, we saw the return of democratic rule. In 2018, Brazil elected a retired captain as president, supported by and identified with the far right. The victory of an individual with an authoritarian bent served as a license for extremists to emerge from obscurity, "coming out of the closet." Since then, they have disseminated simplistic economic theories and retrograde customs, dictating moralizing norms. They demonstrate relative indifference to social inequality, a disinterest in diversity issues and safety nets for the less fortunate, and a complete denial of the climate emergency plaguing the planet. They promote radical views without any embarrassment, even using fake news to deceive and co-opt the naivest with their biased narratives. This radicalism has exacerbated an already existing process of polarization in society, so much so that friendships have been broken and family ties have been shaken.

The 2022 election brought a politician with a democratic profile back to the presidency. Nonetheless, a climate of unease endures, fueled by the presence of a sizable contingent of adherents to radicalized ideologies. Through a discourse that blends conservatism, individualism, and extremism, these individuals aim to attract new followers who share their worldview.

Freud's seminal text, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930/1974b) explores facets of human destructiveness, which he links to the death drive. The tone of the work is skeptical and, arguably, pessimistic. Freud acknowledges that "man is a

* Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise de São Paulo, San Pablo, Brasil.

wolf to his fellow man," and observes that human beings are capable of exploiting another's labor without compensation. Under certain conditions, they may also dispossess others and commit acts of sexual violence.

The lesson of the not-so-distant past—I harken back to the period of Nazism and Fascism—teaches us not to abandon rational thought, lest we lose hope in the face of today's threats. I refer again to the intense social polarization in which more radical politicians and influencers openly express ideas previously concealed out of shame. Now they enjoy a sense of security to propagate biased rhetoric, encompassing absurd concepts that underpin their authoritarianism. They operate according to a paranoid and manichean dynamic of the "all or nothing," "god or devil," "saint or sinner" type. There is no room for balance, middle ground, dialogue, or conciliation.

Disagreements are challenging the mental capacity to process conflicts and emotions. We observe many tense situations, including in the institutional environment of psychoanalysts. These, human beings that they are, also engage in behaviors of competition, rivalry, and envy. As a result, we can observe some more irascible attitudes. In the global context of our institutions, we are not immune to arbitrary tendencies, usually linked to the claim of safeguarding the purity of psychoanalysis, carrying the risk of transforming it into a kind of religion to be followed. The consequence of this would be, ultimately, a type of fundamentalism, with the separation between faithful analysts, those who defend the traditional method, and—on the other side—the heretics who dare to propose some kind of update to its practice. Purists not only defend their way of working but also seek to impose it on those who think differently, as if there was only one correct way to psychoanalyze. In terms of training analyses, the questioning of the combined use of online tools, widespread during the pandemic, is an example of these controversies. Similarly, the defense of a minimum weekly frequency of four sessions is also a matter of controversy, despite the International Psychoanalytic Association having already approved a frequency of three to five sessions for training analyses that follow the Eitingon model. In this way, divisions deepen, and we regrettably end up losing old friendships.

In later life, veteran analysts would be expected to gain common sense and good judgment. The fundamental aspect of the psychoanalytic method presupposes freedom of thought, which opposes dogma, rigidity, and inflexibility.

The notion of limits and the acceptance of finiteness must be properly internalized by the analyst as they gain experience and wisdom. Defeats are inevitable on our journey, but we can learn from them. Losing is a part of life, as we are not predestined to invincibility. To accept limits means always striving to do the utmost within what is possible—without settling for anything less.

Anamaría McCarthy
The Car (2024), intervened photography, 61 x 80 cm, serie *Empty Rooms*

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Florencia Romero*

Losing everything

I was born in Argentina; I am 51 years old. Like most Argentinians of my generation, I am the great-grandchild of immigrants.

At various points in my life, I had the possibility of choosing to leave everything behind: first, it was leaving the family home, my friends, the comforts of my hometown to go to university in Buenos Aires; later, it was venturing to live abroad for a year. Then, I left the country and, perhaps, a promising career as a pediatrician, to work for an international humanitarian aid organization.

I never felt that leaving everything behind was difficult, even though I did so several times to settle in places where I had almost no belongings—far from everything and everyone, and where living conditions were entirely different from those at home. A strong vocation for service, a desire to help others, blended with an inexplicable curiosity to discover the world without being a tourist, to speak other languages, and a deep conviction that this was what I was meant to do—these were the forces that moved me. The family and friendship bonds I have always had were, and still are, very solid, despite the geographical distance and my limited presence. Perhaps that is why I never felt a true sense of loss.

But obviously, leaving everything is very different from losing everything.

Through my professional experiences, both during the few years I worked in Argentina and in different countries in Africa, in the Middle East, and also in Latin and Central America, I encountered people who, more or less brutally and with almost no options, had experienced enormous losses. People who had lost everything during a horrible civil war; an almost entire generation of children and adolescents who lost their parents to HIV; children and adolescents forced to leave their countries because of gang violence, who lost their families, their childhood, their adolescence, were forced to leave everything behind, and found themselves stranded, unable to cross the borders necessary to start that better life they so longed for. Children and adolescents who were forced to join and fight with a terrorist group. Girls and young women who were humiliated, forced into marriage and into constant domestic violence to survive. Young and adult women who, upon being widowed or becoming pregnant after rape, in addition to the suffering they endured, lose all possible dignity, lose the few options they had in life, and many end up dying "honour" deaths. I also met women who, having lost all possible fear, risked crossing a ruined city, full of checkpoints, to seek a safe abortion, and thus survive. Mothers who, having

Anamaría McCarthy
The circle (2023), intervened photography, 74 x 61 cm

* Head of Staff Health and Wellbeing, Terre des hommes Lausanne, Switzerland.

lost part of their families during the war, risked taking their teenage daughters to a health centre, seeking a safe abortion, and thus preventing their own brother from killing them for honour.

All these people moved forward, always moved forward. And there they were, looking for the next step that would allow them to continue despite their losses. To continue for themselves, to continue to take advantage of even the smallest opportunities to survive a little better, to just dream of being able to contribute something, even a little better, to their families.

All these experiences marked me and remained deeply embedded within me. All of them, in a way, illustrate the story of my family and of my ancestors. And therefore, my own story.

I had a great-grandfather who left Syria as a child and who, along with his brother, just a little older than himself, arrived in the north of Argentina, and after surviving as street vendors, each was able to start their own family and settle far from each other. I had a grandfather who, from a very young age, had to work to help his mother, who was a single mother. I also had a grandmother whose mother sent her from the countryside to the city, giving her to a family to provide work and food. They all probably suffered losses very similar to those suffered by the many people I have met and continue to meet through my work in different countries around the world.

Having witnessed and accompanied so many people who suffered immense losses, plus my own family history, forged in me the understanding that losses are much more than the horrible pain they cause when they happen. Losses demand a grieving process that, when it is possible to go through it, is transformative. Grieving allows the transition to an opening, to growth, and it establishes a new level of resilience.

In many cases, the need and urgency to survive, do not leave time for grieving and simply push people to move on. Loss then becomes the engine of survival.

A few years ago, already with a large part of the experiences mentioned above, I had to go through a new and very different loss in my own life. It wasn't a material loss, nor was it an unexpected loss of a loved one. It was the loss of what I believed my identity to be until that moment. The woman so committed, so determined in her choices, so clearly motivated by what she always chose or believed she had chosen to do with her life. The identity of the woman who, without realising it, had chosen to be alone and not have children, had chosen not to take care of her health and well-being, had also chosen not to enjoy life.

Due to certain external events, my life stopped for a few moments, for a few months. The natural flow of my existence, until that moment almost unconsciously, came to a halt. A total void invaded me, and I felt infinite pain.

By allowing myself to feel the void and the pain, everything began to move within me. Only then could I see very clearly that my identity had been shaped by a series of labels I had received since I was very young, and that those labels were first integrated into a very strong family narrative. This partially unspoken, even involuntary narrative had not been specifically thought out by anyone in particular, but it turned out to be very convincing. So convincing that at a certain point, it stopped being the family narrative and became my own narrative, the one that defined my identity. I had adopted it completely, and unconsciously, without ever having been able to question it.

Losing that identity was the most difficult thing I have gone through in life so far. Losing that identity meant asking myself "Who am I, then?". I had to face very painful truths from my own childhood and youth that, like my ancestors and the people I met in my life, I also had simply avoided, buried in the oblivion of the subconscious, in order to move forward. I had to name the losses one by one for what they were: loss of childhood, loss of innocence, loss of self-love and self-esteem, loss of connection to my essence, to my true self.

Going through the loss of my identity and the search for my essence, for a new identity, required equally painful tasks. I was able to share certain truths with my sisters and brother, create distance from my parents, and risk new loses out of the need to rediscover myself and survive.

It will not come as a surprise to read that, through this process, a profound transformation began to occur in my life. The loss of that old identity was liberating and healing. The conscious acceptance of my family and personal history, the integration of the experiences and lessons I had lived began to give rise to my new identity. This new identity is basically much lighter and more cherished, valued above all by myself, and I am forging and choosing it with a full awareness, day by day.

What does it mean to lose everything? What do we lose when we lose everything? Or perhaps more importantly …, who are we, after the loss and the grieving?

Material losses, with more or less difficulty, we get through. The unexpected, accidental, or early deaths of loved ones can be devastating. And, surprisingly, we also get through them. It is our nature to survive. That is how we grow, we evolve. But forgetting or disconnecting from our true identity makes us lose, above all, the ability to live life fully. And if we manage to dare to lose everything and then discover our essence, perhaps that is the most important loss we can ever face.

Héctor Solari
Landscapes after the battle, , 3 (2019), pastel on paper, 50 x 64 cm

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Silvana Rea*

Saudade[1]

The verses of the poem "Presence of Absence" by Elisa Lucinda (2016) say:

> Great saudade for your company
> Drummond taught that longing is an excess of presence.
> So that's it: Your absence is with me in me,
> Your lack still walks with me Back and forth.
> As if you hadn't left.
> As if you were still coming back.[2] (p. 441)

Yes, saudade sharply marks a void that occupies completely ; the presence of absence. Not only that of the object of love, desire, place, moment; it also marks the pleasure of its memory, as longing simultaneously concentrates the pain of the absent with the nostalgia of happy moments that have already been lived. The restlessness of the lack soothes, provisionally. An ambiguous feeling, therefore.

Its etymological origin is uncertain. It comes from the Arabic *saudah*, meaning "suffering" or "heartache" (Tobias, 2005), or from the Latin *solidad, solitatem* (Vasconcellos, 1914/2020), reaching the archaic *soidade* and *soudade* until reaching its current form.

Although it is a quality of human sensitivity, it is permanently discussed whether the word "saudade" is unique in its meaning in the Portuguese language.

Was Fernando Pessoa (1973) right?

> Saudade, only the Portuguese
> Can feel it well
> Because they have this word
> To say they have it.[3] (p. 110)

We know that the ways of feeling are determined by historical-cultural conditions, which spread and maintain the specificities of relating and experiencing the world. Therefore, we are talking about a feeling that affects man in his historical concreteness, but which is universal as an experience of being. But even so, Piñeiro (2009) states, saudadeis not lived the same way everywhere.

The feeling that the word *saudade* signifies does not have an exact equivalent in other languages, in which it is translated as "loneliness," "solitude," "nostalgia," "melancholy," or "lament." It encompasses these modalities of feeling, but refers to something more complex. Functioning as a synthesis word, it implies not only the relationship of otherness, with the lost object, with what I lack. It also implies the relationship of time and space. On the one hand, the temporal movement of before and after, in which the memory of a past returns to the present, updating itself by the desire to regain possession of what was previously lived, an effort of memory that projects hopefully into the future. On the other hand, the spatial dimension, marked by distance, by the oscillation between here and there, or beyond (Carvalho, 2006).

This is what we see when Fernando Pessoa (1995) talks about his homeland in "The Bell of My Village":

> With each of your strokes
> Vibrant in the open sky,
> I feel the past farther away,
> I feel saudade closer.[4] (p. 93)

And more recently, in "Subject Object" by Leminski (2013):

> You will never know
> how much saudade costs
> the sharp weight in the chest
> of carrying a city
> inside out
> how to make a verse
> a subject object
> how to move from the present
> to the perfect past
> never knowing for sure[5] (p. 187)

With the mark of ambiguity, saudade is not for beginners. It is no wonder that poets are the ones who most dedicate themselves to describing it more accurately, poets who accompanied us in writing this editorial.

Accepting the challenge of dedicating themselves to the theme, Inês Oseki-Dépré offers a historical journey on the term, and Lilia Moritz Schwarcz discusses the meaning of *banzo* for the enslaved, dubbed "the disease of saudade" by their masters. Next, it is about the very ambiguity of this feeling that Samuel Gilbert de Jesus writes, followed by Jorge Castro Ribeiro, who talks about the expression of saudade in fado in Portugal, in morna in Cape Verde, and in *bossa nova* in Brazil. In an autobiographical tone, Christopher Paul Valender Ulacia considers the experience of exile, the pain of saudade in its transgenerational configuration. And concluding our ***Dossier,*** Alberto Díaz and Tiziana Palmiero present the "cacharpaya," music from certain Andean communities that marks a farewell ritual in a performative way.

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* Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise de São Paulo, San Pablo, Brasil.

1. T.N: The word saudade does not have an exact equivalent in English: it can be translated as longing, loneliness, solitude, nostalgia, melancholy, or lament.

2. T.N: *Saudade imensa de tua companhia/ Drummond ensinou que a saudade é excesso de presença./ Então é isso:/ Tua ausência está comigo em mim,/ Tua falta ainda anda comigo/ Pra lá e para cá./ Como se você não tivesse partido./ Como se ainda fosse voltar.*

3 T.N: *Saudades, só portugueses/ Conseguem sentilas bem/ Porque têm essa palavra/ Para dizer que as têm.*

4. *A cada pancada tua/ Vibrante no céu aberto,/ Sinto mais longe o passado,/ Sinto a saudade mais perto.*

5. T.N. *Você nunca vai saber/ quanto custa uma saudade/ o peso agudo no peito/ de carregar uma cidade/ pelo lado dentro/ como fazer de um verso/ um objeto sujeito/ como passar do presente/ para o pretérito perfeito/ nunca saber direito*

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Inês Oseki-Dépré*

Saudade

Regarding *saudade*, alongside the vast Portuguese bibliography, there are now several international encyclopedic publications that highlight the word's dual origin.[1] It would be interesting to delve deeper into this dichotomy as the foundation of a distinctly Lusitanian mythology, in contrast to its Brazilian variant.

Indeed, this Lusism -attested prior to 1200 in the work of the troubadour Dom Sancho, the Elder, in a ballad addressed to the gracious Ribeirinha- already suggests that the word *saudade* stems from two sources, which makes it unique: from the Latin *solitate (solis, solitatis: solitude*), which gave rise to the Portuguese *soledade* and from *salus* and *solidão, salutatis* (health) (Vasconcelos, 1904/1966).

In this sense, the Portuguese philologist Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcelos (1914/1992) explains the commonly accepted etymological derivation: the transition from *solitate* to saudade does not conform to the usual morphological transformations in Portuguese. The intervention of the word *sa(l) udade*, from the Latin *salutat*e, was necessary for the definitive form to be fixed in this way, saudade, which shifted from proparoxytone (*saUdade*) to paroxytone *(sauDAde*), as seen in the quadrisyllabic words of Galician-Portuguese poetry (*su-i-da-de*).

Now, if, according to our *Aurélio* (Holanda, 1986), saudade is "the nostalgic and gentle memory of distant or disappeared people or things, accompanied by the desire to see or possess them again," equivalent to nostalgia, to the feeling of lack, the word has a long history in Portuguese culture. Thus, the first definition of *saudade* dates to Dom Duarte (1391-1438), son of Dom João I and Dona Filipa de Lencastre, knight in 1415 and king of Portugal in 1433, author of *the Livro de ensinança de bem cavalgar toda sela* (1434/2004). His work *Leal conselheiro* (1438/1842) was only discovered in 1820 in Paris.

Like Fernando Pessoa in *Livro do desassossego* (1982) later, Dom Duarte tries to define human feelings by differentiating them among themselves (disgust, sadness, sorrow, displeasure, "boredom"). These definitions approach the notions of mourning and melancholy in Freud (1917/2004). As for "suidade," it is "a feeling of the heart that comes from sensuality and not from reason and that can bring sadness and a feeling of mourning," "which arises from separation, certainly, but evokes delight" (Dom Duarte, 1438/1842, p. 150).

Freud's definition differs from Fernando Pessoa's, but is close to Dom Duarte's, excluding a relationship between s*pleen* (melancholy) and saudade, which is, *a priori*, the feeling of the absence of something, despite this thing (or person) being idealized by distance and memory, and all this causing sadness. Duarte Nunes de Leão (1606), however, insists on the Lusitanian specificity of the word and distinguishes it from the Latin desiderium, as saudade is a feeling that includes desire. "It is the memory of something along with the desire for that something" (p. 125).

For Francisco Manuel de Melo, in *Epanáphoras da vária história portuguesa* (1660/1977), it is a passion. As for Teixeira de Pascoaes (1912/1986), founder of *saudosismo* and editor of the magazine *A Águia*, saudade is a feeling whose contradictory aspect deserves to be highlighted: "Desire for the loved thing or creature made painful by absence" (p. 25). Leonardo Coimbra (1923/1986) attributes a mystical aura to it: "Saudade in beings will also be, in the smallest divine presence, the feeling of going towards the greater presence" (p. 207). This mystical meaning is also found in Luís Tobio: "Desire to return to the land, to the home or to the mother, as the mystic aspires to retreat into God" (quoted by Melo, 1660/1977, p. 67). The famous writer Eduardo Lourenço (1978), addressing the issue of Portuguese literature as a cycle that begins with Camões and ends with Fernando Pessoa, allows us to grasp the historical literary and cultural breadth of the phenomenon of *saudade*. And, for Almeida Garrett (1858/2001), a romantic poet, saudade is the feeling of lack, of absence of Homeland, glorified by Teixeira de Pascoaes (1998) in the expression "Homeland-saudade": "Saudade, shadow-body of Portuguese existence" (p. 113), but a creative principle. He quotes Fernando Pessoa, who, when announcing the Super-Camões, indicates that the vision of *saudosismo* will surpass "patriotism" towards a "truly universal and fraternal era of impersonality" (p. 110). On certain occasions, the word can be used as a greeting: "Saudades," when seeing a loved one again.

We see that the definitions of saudade have followed one another over the centuries, each time adding a particular trait, but the limits of this text do not allow for an exhaustive development.

In Brazil, finally, the word is used constantly and daily, mainly in popular songs, and after its literary use during the romantic period, the connotations seem to differ from those in Portugal or the colonies (like "Sodade," by

Héctor Solari
Landscapes after the battle, 4 (2019), pastel on paper, 50 x 64 cm

* Aix-Marseille Université. Marseille and Aix-en-Provence, France.

1. See definition on *Dictionnaire international des termes littéraires* (Grassin, 1998) – article from Inês Oseki-Dépré e Jean-Marie Grassin – and *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies* (Cassin, 2004). See also "La 'saudade'" (Oseki-Dépré, 2008).

Cesária Évora, which is a Cape Verdean exile song). The meaning of saudade is synchronous in Brazil: between Casimiro de Abreu (1959/2003) ("saudades da infância querida"), Vinicius de Moraes and Antônio Carlos Jobim (1959) ("Chega de saudade") and Chico Buarque (1989), it is a feeling that ranges from well-being to absolute suffering, which is only resolved by "killing saudade."

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Lilia Moritz Schwarcz*

Banzo: About Active and Insurgent Saudade

Saudade is a bit like hunger.
It only goes away when you consume
the presence.
Clarice Lispector, 1968

Brazil represents an unavoidable case when analyzing the history of mercantile slavery, which prevailed relentlessly from the early 16th century until the late 19th century. Of the more than 10 million African people who arrived alive in the Americas, Brazil received 48% of this forced immigration (Slave Voyages, n.d.). It also relied on enslaved labor throughout its territory and was the last country to end this regime of forced labor. It only did so in May 1888 – after the United States, Puerto Rico, and Cuba – and with a very conservative law that did not foresee the insertion and inclusion of this immense social contingent exposed to such unequal laws – and for so long. The consequence was the subtraction and erasure of this history and the attempt to naturalize and subordinate black people.

But this has always been a narrative told halfway. For most of the enslaved, this condition was understood as a transitional moment [1]. Therefore, it is impossible to address slavery without its binary and inseparable counterpart: the struggle for freedom presents in the horizon of possibilities for the captives. Due to this perspective, present throughout the Afro-Atlantic context since the 16th century, with the arrival of the first Africans in Brazil, there were reports of collective and individual revolts, daily escapes (called "tirar um cipó"), insurrections, murders, suicides, as well as the formation of quilombos throughout the territory, which, contrary to what is usually told, created more egalitarian communities that established lasting commercial relationships with their neighbors (Reis & Gomes, 2021).

The fact is that rebellion was the norm among Africans and their descendants, never the exception. In fact, the mutinies began already during the voyage, with reports of a series of enslaved people rebelling at sea. Between the captivity created to be eternal and the "uncertain" destiny, the "certainty" of death in the ocean was preferable.

1. I use the term enslaved (and not slave) because, while the second denotes a naturalized situation, the first highlights forced, imposed and non-voluntary labor.

The struggle for freedom could also occur in daily life and almost silently, without much fanfare. The use of an herb popularly called "amansa-senhor" became known, which was administered by enslaved people in the form of teas and infusions. Theoretically, it served to calm the masters, but in reality, it had the property of driving those who drank it to delirium, madness, and even death. Many masters and mistresses, in search of peace, met a death marked by suffering.

The herb, therefore, represents a symbol of the relationship established in slave-holding countries: the famous "tit for tat" (Schwarcz & Starling, 2016). In this regime, based on the possession of one person by another, violence, ambiguity, and presumption formed social languages that were established in countries with a tradition of slavery. This is also the case with capoeira (Pires & Figueiredo, 2020), which was both a dance and a form of fight, with newspapers of the time reporting how Brazilian authorities always repressed "bands of *capoeiristas*" who used to disrupt the colonial order.

Reading practices conformed to another type of rebellion, as they allowed the acquisition of social vocabulary and the ability to fight for freedom in court. The most famous case is that of Luiz Gama, the black bookworm who taught himself to read, studied law, obtained his own manumission, and subsequently that of other enslaved people (Ferreira, 2011). But he was not an isolated case. Many captives learned to read to learn more about other rebellions around the world, to educate themselves about the abolitions happening in other countries, and to fight for the right to freedom within the law (Wissenbach, 2018).

This same struggle for freedom produced even more extreme acts. There were many examples of enslaved women who decided, in a certainly radical gesture, to kill their own children (Machado, 2012) – thus preventing them from living under this regime of forced labor – or of enslaved people who committed all sorts of suicides, the most well-known method being death by ingesting soil due to its regularity.

The act of eating soil was not always associated with suicide. In medical literature, for example, there are reports of people who understand the practice as an act of nutrition. According to geophagy, the practice of eating earthly substances (such as clay) is often associated with an attempt to improve a mineral-deficient diet. In this sense, human geophagy would be a consequence of the eating disorder known as pica – when a person is compelled to ingest non-food substances such as charcoal, paint chips, chalk, fabrics, and soil.

In the case of people of African origin, these seem to be very old and ingrained customs. Research shows that geophagy was prevalent among Africans and their descendants in the United States. A study in the state of Mississippi, conducted in 1942, concluded that

> at least 25% of school-age children habitually ate soil. Adults, although not observed as systematically, also exhibited soil consumption. A number of reasons were then given: the soil is good for you; it helps pregnant women; it tastes good; it is sour like a lemon; it tastes better if smoked in the chimney; and so on. (Hunter, 1973, p. 192)

However, it is known that when ingested in excess, these nutrients can lead to incidental death – or, in the case that interests us more closely, consciously and intentionally. In other words, when practiced frequently, the practice can constitute a form of slow and intentional suicide – an attitude that the masters romantically called the disease of saudade, or, borrowing the African term, simply *banzo* (Haag, 2010).

The word *banzo* originates from the Kimbundu language, *mbanza,* which means "village." It is interesting to consider this collective sense – of collectivity – and its adjectivation: a person afflicted by immense sadness, astonished, pensive. Thought of these terms, the concept would indeed refer to a certain melancholy linked to a past that is definitively left behind: the land of ancestors, family, the group, the village.

Moreover, the experience was indeed recurrent. According to Renato Pinto Venâncio and Mary Del Priore (2018), suicide among enslaved people was two or three times higher than among free men and always attributed to banzo. On the other hand, despite not denying the evidence of banzo, historians correctly indicate that the record of suicides could very well conceal frequent murders carried out by slave owners, who thus remained outside the law's jurisdiction.

According to Oda (2007),

> the disgust for life and the desire to die are attributed by narrators to nostalgic reactions resulting from the loss of freedom and ties with the land and social group of origin, and also to the excessive punishments imposed by the masters. (p. 348)

This may be the current version, defended by a series of analysts with a more Eurocentric background, who accommodate the notion of "disgust" for forced exile with that of the violence inflicted by slavery, not giving due importance to the subjectivities present in the lives of these people of African origin.

However, *banzo* was not only linked to a, let's say, "passive" attitude: a philosophical reaction to an unbearable lack. In fact, if it often appeared related, more frequently, to the "active" attitude of suicide, it was also used to explain the numerous abortions caused by enslaved women or the recurrent individual and collective escapes.

Therefore, the term longing was not limited, in this case, to an existential or nostalgic conception of returning to the past. It indicated a purposeful way of putting an end to an unsustainable situation experienced in the present.

As far as we know, the first written record of the use of the word *banzo* occurred in the work entitled *Memoir on Slaves and the Slave Trade between the Coast of Africa and Brazil*, presented by lawyer Luiz António de Oliveira Mendes at the Royal Academy of Sciences of Lisbon in 1793. He wrote:

> Of chronic diseases... one of the main chronic ailments suffered by slaves, which over time leads them to the grave, is banzo. Banzo is a deep-seated resentment for any reason, such as: longing (saudade) for their own, and their homeland; love for someone; ingratitude, and betrayal by another; deep contemplation of the loss of freedom; continued meditation on the harshness with which they are treated; the same mistreatment they endure; and everything that can cause melancholy. It is a passion of the soul, to which they surrender, which is only extinguished with death: that is why I said that African blacks were extreme, faithful, resolute, constant, and susceptible to the ultimate extreme of love and hatred. [...] This same banzo I sometimes observed in Brazil, which killed many slaves; however, always as a result of the resentment of the rigor with which their masters treated them. (Mendes, 1793/1977, pp. 61-62)

"Resentment" and "passion of the soul" that leads to death are expressions that show, first of all, that this was a collective attitude, not just an individual decision; secondly, that this attitude, more than a mere "reaction" to captivity, implied "agency": a clear intention to put an end to a compulsory situation. Thus,

longing here unfolds into the idea of suicide, agency, and autonomous struggle for one's own destiny, purpose, and desire. Instead of a platonic attitude, it presents itself as a last resort, for death was well worth a life.

Saudade is, therefore, a complex and ambivalent theme for dealing with the lives of people subjected to slavery. If banzo, death by longing caused by the excessive and daily ingestion of soil, was a common behavior among enslaved people subjected to daily work in sugarcane or coffee fields, or subjected to the mining regime and other compulsory services, its practice was not understood or respected as if it were a legitimate personal decision. After all, from the perspective of the masters, captives were considered "things," "movable property," and thus described in the wills of the time. Therefore, there were no specific devices to prevent the act of ingesting soil and thus ending life.

From the masters' and mistresses' perspective, the behavior was not understood, as one might imagine, with any hint of affection or condescension. In other words, no matter how much they spread the idea of "longing for the land," owners never treated or respected such a desire of their workers. So much so that they created techniques to combat the practice – which for them implied, ultimately, the loss of their "merchandise."

Specific devices were invented, true instruments of oppression, which became symbols in themselves of the violence of slavery. I am referring to the flanders mask, which represented the violence itself: made of solid iron and fastened with a padlock at the back of the neck, it was primarily intended to prevent the ingestion of soil by the enslaved. However, due to its ostentatious and intimidating appearance, its weight, and the scars it left on the face and neck, this instrument ended up gaining the symbolic place of lordly domination and the pain of the enslaved.

However, at the same time, the mask became an icon of slave resistance: of daily rebellion and insurrection against this system. The acts of removing and breaking the mask became metaphors that reminded of the insubordination of these populations who fought for their destiny. On the other hand, the insistence on ingesting soil or not eating became allegories of individual and collective revolt in the dissident language they displayed.

Jean-Baptiste Debret, *Mask used on blacks who have the habit of eating soil*, c. 1820-1830, watercolor, 18.7 × 12.5 cm. Castro Maya Museums, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The engraving by Jean-Baptiste Debret (c. 1820-1830) is well known, depicting an enslaved person in tattered clothes, carrying a heavy ceramic pot on their head, walking lightly – on tiptoe – and with a flanders mask covering their face. There is something wrong with the engraving, as the weight the worker carries does not match this type of body posture[2].

Debret arrived in Brazil in 1815, along with the so-called French Mission, in the context of the vice-royalty of Dom João. He remained in the country for seven long years and, in the meantime, sought to engrave the "nature and the natives" of the country. However, while the tropics were understood as Edenic, humanity was considered more degraded due to the unscathed presence of slavery.

Formed in the principles of the French Revolution, it must have been difficult for Debret – who lived at the expense of the Portuguese court, which resided in this context in its Brazilian colony – to simply denounce this system of compulsory labor. Therefore, in much of his paintings, slavery appears naturalized, softened, as in the case of the mentioned engraving. But it also appears ambivalent. After all, it is difficult to find anything "picturesque" in this plate, which is part of a more comprehensive book by the artist, precisely called Picturesque and Historical Journey to Brazil – a three-volume book published in France between 1834 and 1841.

Although the artist tries to give a "distanced" and supposedly ethnographic treatment (which it certainly was not) to the engravings he made in Brazil, the result reveals a clear contradiction and even a dissociation between the peace he announces and the war he presents[3].

Let's first look at the title of the engraving: *Mask used on blacks who have the habit of eating soil* (Debret, c. 1820-1830). It is interesting that Debret does not directly refer to slavery, perhaps avoiding mentioning the labor regime – already condemned in many other countries. Moreover, the artist refers to a "habit," not a diligence that led to suicide.

Thus, title and image collaborate for a more softened representation of what was a practice of torture and humiliation by the masters, who not only sought to forcibly prevent the suppression of life by Africans and their descendants but also imposed the use of this heavy and ostentatious mask, which was employed daily and was widespread throughout the Afro-Atlantic space created by the slave trade.

By the way, slave traders, aware of the "danger" that this type of agency – which led to death by starvation – represented, had the habit of giving captives, who participated in the sale and exhibition of their bodies in the odious slave markets, stimulants such as ginger and tobacco, to disguise what was considered a "more decayed," "discouraged and lifeless" appearance of the "pieces" then negotiated (Karash, 1987/2000).

In short, as can be seen, we are dealing with a special way of dealing with – and managing – longing. Or rather, what is the specificity of this feeling when thought of as a reaction to the reality of being forcibly far from home, experiencing a violent and restless daily life in this land of forced labor? The fact is that the feeling of sadness did not lead to any existential torpor but to the active principle of ending a life of martyrdom and without immediate expectations of liberation. In this sense, taking one's life was a supreme form of struggle for freedom.

It also instilled a desire to eat. As Didi-Huberman (2021) explains, for another context and situation:

2. In the book *Histórias afro-atlânticas* (Pedrosa and Toledo, 2018), Hélio Menezes and I discuss Debret's image in more depth.

3. I don't have the space to expand on Debret's biography and the impasses present in his work. In this regard, I suggest seeing Naves (2011) and two books of my own authorship (Schwarcz, 2018, 2024).

> There is something of the other in ourselves, something from other worlds or times coming to us. Then we "eat" it, we absorb it "devoured" by the very thing we had welcomed, to which we had opened our doors. The outside passes inside; the inside becomes its own outside. (p. 25)

I argue, then, that banzo was a type of technology of insubordination, taught and socialized in the African diaspora as a form of insurrection and rebellion, among many others that were part of the perverse daily life of slavery.

As the poet Conceição Evaristo (January 5, 2010) says:

> Despite the occurrences of banzo
> there must remain the belief
> in the precision of living and the wise reading
> of the gaps in the life-line.
>
> Despite...
> a faith must assure us that,
> even being among rocks,
> there will be no stone to block our path.
>
> From the occurrences of banzo
> we will draw the courage.
> Punches on the edge of the knife (are worth it)
> sharpen our desires
> neutralizing the blade's cut.
>
> From the occurrences of banzo
> will sprout in us the embrace of life
> and we will follow our routes of salt and
> honey among psalms,
> Axés[4], and hallelujahs.[5]

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4. T.N: The word axé, present in the Candomblé religion, comes from the Yoruba term *àṣẹ*: "soul, light, spirit, good vibrations"

5. T.N: *Apesar das acontecências do banzo/ há de nos restar a crença/ na precisão de viver/ e a sapiente leitura/ das entre-falhas da linha-vida.// Apesar de…/ uma fé há de nos afiançar/ de que, mesmo estando nós/ entre rochas, não haverá pedra/ a nos entupir o caminho.// Das acontecências do banzo/ a pesar sobre nós,/ há de nos aprumar a coragem./ Murros em ponta de faca (valem)/ afiam os nossos desejos/ neutralizando o corte da lâmina.// Das acontecências do banzo/ brotará em nós o abraço a vida/ e seguiremos nossas rotas/ de sal e mel/ por entre salmos, Axés e aleluias.*

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Samuel Gilbert de Jesus*

Essay on an Ambiguous Feeling

The following text proposes a reflection on the feeling of saudade. This unique word, whose current linguistic and etymological forms result from multiple transformations, attests to the diverse cultural relations that Portugal and Lusophone countries have been able to consolidate over time. To better understand them, we will now consider the formation of this term and its historical use.

The current name *saudade* is a form that derives from various modifications that occurred mainly between the 13th and 16th centuries and stabilized during the classical period. In Brazil, the formulation of the term saudade – and the very idea of saudade – appears in the use of the adjective *saudoso*, indicating the state or phenomenon associated with it, and whose form has been used since the 17th century. Its meaning and effects have been subject to numerous mutations due to the many cultural confluences that intervened until the mid-20th century, strongly linked to major migratory movements of economic, political, or artistic order.

In the 15th century, in the treatise titled *Leal conselheiro* (1438/1942), Dom Duarte, King of Portugal, analyzes saudade as a set composed of sadness, displeasure, and pleasure. Dom Duarte thus conducts a meticulous examination of his individual consciousness and the feelings that develop within it, and his treatise remains crucial not only for mentioning the term *saudade*, still written in its archaic form, *suydade*, but also because this term takes on a meaning that will serve as a "substrate" for numerous subsequent uses.

The commonly attributed etymological basis of the name saudade is the Latin plural *solitates,* which gave the plural name solitudes, from the root *solu,* found in the Portuguese language notably in the adjective só. Consequently, these two etymological bases produced the primitive forms of the words suidade, soedade, and soidade, crystallized in a way in the modern form saudade. These three forms directly refer to the term solitude but also, according to José Antonio Tobias (1966), to greeting: "More melodious and also more expressive for having unconsciously fused with the idea of sa(l)dade or salvation and redemption of the soul" (p. 8).

This state of solitude, whose main characteristic results from a feeling of abandonment and sadness, quickly emerged in medieval literature, mainly from the 13th century, and consolidated under the terminology of *soidão* and later solitude. Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcelos (1914/1996) also attributes Provençal roots to it, considering that "some troubadours had already linked *soïdade* to the meaning of the sensation of solitude or abandonment inspired by love and absence" (pp. 35-36).

A second phase intervenes in Portuguese literature during the classical era. This phase is of particular importance as it engenders the premises of a diffusion not only internal, limited to the European continent, but external, accompanying the great discoveries, allowing us to introduce here the question of Brazilian saudade. In the 16th century, with the work Os lusíadas (1572/2018) by Luís de Camões, saudade becomes a vector of national consciousness but surpasses this single characteristic. The diffusion of Os lusíadas in the 18th century owes its fortune essentially to the dramatic episode of Inês de Castro, despite a somewhat approximate translation of this epic poem.

However, it is necessary to wait until the mid-19th century to see this feeling reemerge, then tinged with a certain vagueness in the soul. One of the most famous poets of the time, Viscount Almeida Garrett (1858/2001), expressed it in one of his most beautiful verses, describing it as the sensation of a "delicious prick of a sharp thorn," whose effect can only end in tears:

> Saudade! Bitter taste of the unfortunate, Saudade!
> Delicious prick of a sharp thorn,
> That pierces my innermost chest
> With a pain that tears the soul, –
> But a pain that has pleasures – Saudade!
> Mysterious numen that revives
> Hearts that have burst and drip
> Not blood of life, but thin Serum of stagnant tears – Saudade![1]
> (pp. 41-42)

Saudade acquires a contemplative dimension, whose form tends to approach the sublime, insisting on the seduction of memories, good or bad. Almeida Garrett's work thus produces, from the second half of the 19th century, an impulse that favors the emergence of numerous publications of poetry works in Portugal and Brazil. Their authors will no longer abandon a long quest that will continue throughout the 20th century, exploring all the linguistic, semantic, and, above all, phenomenological riches of this feeling. This philosophical approach also emanates in poetry, from its most academic form to a deconstruction of the verse, whose perfect mastery will find its culmination in the work of Fernando Pessoa.

This enthusiasm will also be followed by numerous literary critics. A first phase will reach its peak in Portugal with the publication of the magazine A Águia in 1912, thus marking the specific question of saudade and its heritage, both cultural and political, by positions often judged conservative and nationalist. What can be considered the second golden age of Portuguese literature will also be the place of a profound mutation, operated in the semantic register, thanks to Fernando Pessoa, who will update the ontological, phenomenological, and dialectical content of saudade, especially surpassing the only relationship that united man to God – or at least to his being, sensitive and creative.

The literary development of the feeling of saudade, whether manifested in a novelistic, poetic, or musical form, will itself experience an increase in interest in Brazil from the end of the 19th century, revealing itself all the more present especially by the influence of the symbolist movement, brought to its zenith by the writer João da Cruz e Sousa – to whom its introduction in Brazil is usually attributed. Many of its authors thus participate in a literary pro-

* Universidade Federal de Goiás, Goiânia, Brasil.

1. T.N: *Saudade! Gosto amargo de infelizes, Saudade!/ Delicioso pungir de acerbo espinho,/ Que me estás repassando o íntimo peito/ Com dor que os seios d'alma dilacera,/ – Mas dor que tem prazeres – Saudade!/ Mysterioso numen que aviventas/ Corações que estalaram, e gottejam/ Não ja sangue de vida, mas delgado/ Soro de estanques lagrymas – Saudade!*

duction situated at a crossroads, divided between adherence to the influences of realist and naturalist works and the growing desire to orient themselves more and more towards experiences whose structural and thematic transformations seem to announce the future stylistic upheavals of the modernist movement.

We can note that these authors tend to modify, without abandoning their traditional conception, the poetic and imaginary value of saudade, perceived then more or less intuitively, towards a future becoming, without cutting ties with the past. This is the case, for example, of the poems titled "Old Sorrows" and "Sorrow of the Infinite," in which Cruz e Souza does not explicitly mention saudade, preferring to describe its manifestation in the manner of a metaphor that appears in the first of the following verses:

> Dilutions of light, old sorrows
> of souls that died for the fight!
> You are the beloved shadows of beauties
> Today colder than raw stone. [2]
> (1861, cited by Moisés, 2001, pp. 312-313)

It is a sadness whose origin remains indefinable. Strange and melancholic, it does not seem to express any lament for a world already left behind. Sublimated and infinite, it leads the contemplative being to its uncertain becoming.

This search for an identity renewal, promoted by both the visual arts and literature, does not come to be expressed in other terms concerning Brazil. It is necessary to wait for the mutations that occur with the industrial era to see a change in its approach, both by its adaptation to the new formal regimes triggered and concerning specific altered themes. International relations consolidate in this interval, through various stays that result in a greater advent, which takes place in Brazil during the 1920s: the famous São Paulo Modern Art Week of 1922.

Now, if the aesthetic revolution preached by these artists will rely on the stylistic formulas defined by the French, German, and Russian avant-gardes, their posture and, above all, their reflection will also question their own imaginary space of creation and the "validity" of the Brazilian artistic heritage. The aesthetic consequences of this exhibition will constitute the foundation of the modernist movement. This connection will apply to activating new forms of action but also to establishing a new theoretical reflection, rejecting all realistic tradition and bringing back "to the order of the day" the question of saudade, fixed in somewhat obsolete academicism, without ceasing to question its heritage.

If the etymological approach used earlier began to reveal to us, little by little, all its complexity and poetic richness, it must be noted that its semantic (via its meaning) and philosophical (via its phenomenological approach) values remain mysterious. A new difficulty then arises, born of its untranslatable character: if we consider the fact that there is, indeed, in other languages, a specific term whose equivalence in meaning accounts for, or at least partially clarifies, this specific term, it remains, nevertheless, comprehensible only approximately, by equivalence or by kinship with neighboring terms. First of all, melancholy.

Therefore, if the term saudade is compared to certain equivalents such as melancholy, sometimes interpreted as the French regret, the English spleen, the German Sehnsucht, or even the Spanish *añoranza*, it is necessary to note a lack, and even a real incompleteness. Let us avoid, therefore, the tempting trap of considering saudade an element, a priori, exclusive to Lusophone culture – Luso-Brazilian, in the case that interests us – where it finds its linguistic substrate. A temptation that represents, in this sense, an error that would consist in denying and even refuting its profoundly universal character. It seems, nevertheless, that the question of saudade remains inseparable from the Lusophone imaginary, enriched in Portugal and Brazil, passing through Cape Verde, Angola, and Mozambique, and nourished over the centuries by an experience whose human, philosophical, and artistic history confirms its uniqueness. However, considering the uniqueness of the language, this does not exclude its own expression, as Adelino Braz (2005) reminds us, in Brazil:

> The term saudade exists as such in Brazilian culture, considering the fact that Brazil and Portugal share the same language. This does not imply, however, that Brazilian saudade is not, in turn, the singular expression of a cultural fact that is its own. (p. 67)

What can, therefore, evoke for us the feeling of saudade? To account for the complexity of this term in the most just and precise way, let us delve into its semantic "ore," isolating each of the elements that compose its meaning, taking into account its particular and universal dimension. Thus, as Christian Auscher (1992) observes, referring to the famous aphorism of Dom Francisco de Mello, this word, although difficult to define,

> mixes in itself solitude and greeting, the solitude and greeting of those who leave or meet again, less introspective and somber than spleen, less definitive than regret, nostalgia that would also be "nostalgia of the future," it is "an evil, that one likes, and a good, that one suffers." (p. 68)

To better perceive the ontological value of saudade – an exercise all the more important and delicate since it involves raising and analyzing some predominant figures that can be transposed to the field of contemporary photographic iconography – we can orient its study according to two types of approach. The first, analytical, refers mainly to its ontology as such, referring to theorists who sought to define it. The second, poetic, brings together authors and artists who tried to represent it, through the plurality of its registers, thus constituting a true art of making, or at least an art of expressing this feeling.

In general, saudade designates a feeling that simultaneously expresses joy, solitude, and sadness, although, according to João Ferreira (1961), we cannot "affirm that we have a definition of saudade. There are allegories, made up of useful elements that help us understand the saudade phenomenon" (p. 921).

Whether one feels saudade for a loved one or a beloved place, only the awareness of its absence can reveal the value from which the being can then experience this feeling. But equally the possibility of awakening and giving meaning to the psychological experience of solitude, physically (by the distance from a place we like) and emotionally (being away from the loved one, or a group of people). These two feelings remain animated by the desire for love that the being manages to satisfy or not.

Whether the feeling of saudade arises from absence or solitude, the reason for its phenomenon starts from a common point, which Manuel Alves Pardinhas identifies as "awareness of loss." In this perspective, he clarifies:

> Saudade is, in more concrete terms, the awareness of the loss of what we wanted present and ours, but, because it is being transformed into awareness, it continues

2. T.N.: *Diluências de luz, velhas tristezas/ das almas que morreram para a luta!/ Sois as sombras amadas de belezas/ Hoje mais frias do que a pedra bruta.*

> to be known. […] It is the desire for "super-action" in our consciousness, the love for people and the affections for things and places that belonged to us and that continue, by psychological miracle, to be ours in the memory and the revival of saudade. (Pardinhas, cited by Costa & Gomes, 1976, pp. 29-30)

This super-action, therefore, equates to a struggle aiming to mourn what we lost, inviting us to leave a kind of "lethargy of memory," a territory reserved for melancholy. Sigmund Freud was interested in the problem of melancholy, which he opposes to mourning – mourning for the lost object – in a series of essays gathered in the collection Metapsychology, from 1915. In the essay titled "Mourning and Melancholy" (1917/2013), Freud explains:

> Deep mourning, the reaction to the loss of a loved one, contains the same painful state of mind, the loss of interest in the outside world – insofar as it does not remind one of the deceased – the loss of the ability to choose a new love object – in substitution for the mourned one – and the withdrawal from any activity that is not related to the memory of the deceased. (p. 47)

The importance attributed to mourning for the lost object is also emphasized by Joaquim de Carvalho (1952). Saudade can only manifest itself within a conscious mind, according to an indeterminate duration. It is, moreover, unique to the human being, not concerning the divine being – an entity by essence "pure and realized," which is beyond this feeling, since nothing can be lacking – nor animals – restricted solely to the sensible real. It appears as "an untransferable psychological state and as a correlate to presences that transcend consciousness" (p. 250).

Its transcendental character also deserves to be evoked, as it constitutes for many authors of the first half of the 20th century one of its prerogatives and one of its constitutive ends, defended as one of its particular elements. Carvalho distinguishes between a feeling of saudade that manifests itself through an object (clarifying that this form usually predominates among poets) and that which emanates from the object. However, its advent always remains dependent on an intimate consciousness that cannot be transferred to others.

This distinction is important because the fact of feeling saudade for an object can only occur through the transmission of a desire or an affection such as sadness or solitude. Feeling saudade for an object, a rarer effect, supposes, on the contrary, a higher abstraction ability, only made possible through some of our intuitions, from what is the source of saudade, such as absence, and which remains present and alive in our consciousness. Joaquim de Carvalho, therefore, defines three constitutive cases of saudade: that of the subjective, particular being; that of beings linked to already lived situations; and, finally, that of the correlation of our singular self with these beings or situations.

Now, from this correlation arises a temporal contradiction in relation to the state and object of saudade:

> Being s*audoso* psychologically expresses a state in which consciousness opposes to what is given in the patent experience the preference for something already lived and absent. The past is represented in connection with something current and present, whose affective dimension is inferior to the affective dimension of the represented past. (p. 252)

The feeling of saudade generates a state that seems to be verified in the very heart of this contradiction and results, according to the author, from the encounter of two intersecting realities: one, originating from an updated "perception"; the other, produced from a simple "evocation." The evocation of a reality (or an experience) already lived is then projected as an updated reality by our consciousness, as the feeling of loss suffered is compensated by the desire to recover its object.

Just as saudade is linked to a singular object (material or affective), the projection of this absent or lost object – situated in a past time, left behind – only paradoxically occurs in a present and subjective time of our conscious being and cannot then be altered by any external emotional factor, such as fear. On the contrary, the representation of this object endowed with particular qualities is only possible by the lack that the subject feels and their desire to update it or relive its experience.

If the pain that saudade can cause to the soul originates from the fact that "saudade is the gracious passion of the soul, and therefore so futile, because it is experienced equivocally and, by leaving an indistinct pain, brings us satisfaction" (Mello, 1660, cited by Costa & Gomes, 1976, p. 20), it is perhaps because it finally incarnates in what Almeida Garrett described in one of his most famous aphorisms: "An evil, that one likes, and a good, that one suffers" (cited by Massaud-Moisés, 2001, p. 179).

Héctor Solari
Looking at the War, 19 (2015), pastel on paper, 38,5 x 65 cm

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Jorge Castro Ribeiro*

Musical Cartographies of Saudade: Encounters and Stories in the Space of Lusophony

Introduction

Saudade is a topic of great importance in Portuguese poetic and musical production. It is also a privileged descriptor of the nostalgia of loss, the feeling of absence, and the possibilities of desire in everyday life.

Although saudade is widely explored in poetry (and consequently in songs in Portuguese), it is in the fields of literature, philology, and philosophy that it has been most addressed, theorized, and studied. Music, being one of the most powerful forms of creating sensory and emotional experiences, as widely reported in various testimonies, seems to have received little theoretical reflection, especially in the case of instrumental music, which, being polysemic in its discourse, does not depend on sung text. However, we know that musical production related to saudade is immense, spans various genres, and is anchored much more in creative sensitivity than in reflective thought. Therefore, there seems to be a theoretical gap regarding the expressive potential of music associated with saudade, which can simultaneously provide emotional relief and transform this feeling into something that can be contemplated and/or appreciated.

The greatest difficulty in mapping saudade in sung music lies mainly in the selection of examples, given the vast existing musical production, and in the interpretation of the multifaceted conceptions, feelings, and emotions that the songs convey. In the case of the expression of *saudade* through instrumental music (or abstract music), which we will see later, the great challenge is to interpret the hermeneutics of constructing the concept of *saudade*, which needs to operate with individual subjectivity.

This work aims to contribute to the identification and analysis of different approaches to *saudade* in musical genres related to Lusophone contexts. The examples used in this analysis are related to my scientific specialization and some of my research works in the fields of musicology and ethnomusicology. These examples re-

* Universidade de Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal.

fer to music in Portugal, Cape Verde, and Brazil.[1]

In this text, a theoretical framework on saudade will initially be established. Then, some musical encounters in which saudade is configured as a central axis will be observed and commented on. Among these examples, the fundamental connotation processes will be analyzed, such as the case of fado in Portugal, the identity affirmation of morna in Cape Verde, and the social tension and lyrical expression of bossa nova in Brazil. Finally, a case of musical interpretation of saudade through the important Sonata saudade for piano and violin by the Portuguese composer Óscar da Silva will be discussed.

Saudade and Lusophony

The word s*audade*, with a strong emotional charge, acquired a symbolic status in authors linked to the literary and philosophical movement of *saudosismo*, conceived in the early 20th century by Teixeira de Pascoaes (Botelho & Teixeira, 1986). The philologist Carolina Michaëlis de Vasconcelos (1914/1990), for example, investigated the etymology of the word *saudade* in 16th-century Portuguese literature and its definition as a poetic and identity-related concept linked to Portuguese culture. The poet and philosopher Pascoaes (1915/1991) developed the idea that *saudade* is intrinsic to Portuguese psychology, associating it with mysticism, nostalgia, and a spiritual view of life. For him, *saudosismo* represents the philosophical and aesthetic foundation of Portuguese thought. Thus, it provides arguments for authors like Afonso Botelho and Leonardo Coimbra, who argue that the word s*audade* has no translation in other languages, as they do not have similar emotional equivalents. In fact, this idea seems to be an effort to valorize the Portuguese language, with a purpose in the international context, seeking to affirm identity through culture.

The anthropologist João Leal (2000) interprets s*audosismo* as follows: "*Saudosismo,* established in 1912, was precisely one of the most important nationalist cultural movements, which ended in 1926 with the establishment of the Estado Novo, the dictatorial and conservative regime of Salazar" (p. 273).

In Brazil, poets and writers like Manuel Bandeira and Cecília Meireles, for example, reflected on the feeling of saudade and its implications in their works. The Portuguese propagandist António Ferro (1949), certainly aligned with Gilberto Freyre and Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, when thinking about the ties between Portugal and Brazil, used the idea of saudade as a key symbol of the common cultural construction between the two nations, which he called "United States of Saudade." The poet Fernando Pessoa, in turn, explored saudade as an aesthetic and metaphysical feeling throughout his work.

More recently, the philosopher Eduardo Lourenço (1999), drawing on the ideas of Pascoaes and Fernando Pessoa's vision of Portugal, explored saudade from a philosophical perspective, proposing a definition that links it to notions of melancholy and nostalgia:

> Melancholy targets the past as definitively past [...]. Nostalgia is fixed on a determined past [...], but still real or imaginatively recoverable. Saudade participates in both, but in such a paradoxical, strange way – as strange and paradoxical as the Portuguese relationship with "their" time – that, rightly, it has become a labyrinth and an enigma for those who experience it, as the most mysterious and precious of feelings. (p. 92)

The philosopher Agostinho da Silva (1994), who divided his life between Portugal and Brazil, emphasized the connection of saudade to a state of openness to the transcendent, relating it to the desire for spiritual fulfillment and the idea of the future representing a new form of humanity. In some of his texts, Agostinho da Silva transformed the idea of saudade into a dynamic and positive concept, linked to creative potential and the realization of a greater destiny. For him, saudade is not just the memory of the past but an anticipation of the future; it does not refer to what was, but to what is to come.

In the Cabo Verde islands, emigration and destiny are the main ingredients of narrative production and poetry. Born on the island of Brava, Eugénio Tavares (1867-1930), journalist and poet, is the author of the oldest known mornas. *Saudade* appears alongside love among the themes of his poetry, as in the following excerpt, written in 1900 during his exile in Fairhaven, United States, in a letter to his beloved in Cabo Verde:

> You will see that years of pain, that moment
> Passed, in saudade and suffering,
> Far from the vital sun of your gaze!
> (Tavares, 1900/2013, vv. 12-14)

The group of intellectuals linked to the magazine *Claridade*, founded in 1936, also debates and explores the theme of *saudade*, inseparable from Cape Verdean culture. For them, saudade is linked to "the saudade of what was left behind, of what was not lived, and of what one would have liked to have lived [...]: love, nostalgia, and suffering" (Ferreira, 1985, p. 174).

Despite its ancient origin, the concept of *saudade* has consolidated as an identity pillar in Lusophone cultures, partly due to the symbolic status built around it by philologists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Thus, saudade emerges as a multifaceted concept that transcends the simple feeling of nostalgia, being fundamental for the construction of the identity of Lusophone peoples and for the expression of the emotional and philosophical language that unites the various Portuguese-speaking cultures.

Symbolic Moments and Encounters of Saudade with Music

Encounter 1. In 1957, the composer Antônio Carlos «Tom» Jobim and the poet Vinicius de Moraes wrote «Chega de Saudade,» a new song. In 1958, João Gilberto recorded this song with a wise intimate intonation, accompanying himself on the guitar, amid the adventures that Ruy Castro (1990/2016) details. This is the crucial moment for the birth of a new style, «a bossa nova,» as Severiano (2009) explains. It seems to be the crucial moment for the birth of this musical genre, which would greatly influence the

1. For methodological and analytical reasons, music is referred to through territory (Portugal, Cabo Verde, Brazil), and not through culture (Portuguese, Cape Verdean or Brazilian), since the boundaries of these cultures are quite critical, especially because they operate with the same Portuguese language and the Portuguese-based Creole language, both very close from a lexical and semantic point of view.

2. Por una cuestión metodológica y analítica, la música será referida por el territorio (Portugal, Cabo Verde, Brasil), y no por la cultura (portuguesa, caboverdiana o brasileña), puesto que los límites entre esas culturas son bastante críticos, especialmente porque operan con la misma lengua portuguesa y con la lengua criolla de base portuguesa, ambas muy próximas desde el punto de vista lexical y semántico.

future of music. «Chega de Saudade» would be a huge success, becoming an emotional and aesthetic reference for millions of Brazilians. Other Portuguese-speaking people and admirers of Brazilian music also surrendered to the ingenious melody and the perfect fit of the love poem, which describes the longing for the return of the beloved and the end of sadness and saudade. The title of the song, «Chega de Saudade,» refers to a new musical approach that was then happening in Brazilian popular music, while representing a break with the dominant tradition of the time, represented by the old popular *samba-canção*, with its sonorous voices and conventional romantic themes. "Chega de Saudade," coming from the elitist youth of Rio de Janeiro, proposed something new, direct, modern, and forward-looking. Over more than sixty years, the song has been interpreted by various artists, showing great cultural dynamism, which transcended the borders of Lusophony, being revisited in jazz and other styles. The creative encounter of the musician and the poet in 1957 was fruitful and resulted in a work that deeply touched millions of people.

Encounter 2. In April 2018, the Canadian singer and pianist Diana Krall performed in São Paulo, playing, in addition to American jazz standards, an instrumental version of «Chega de Saudade.» After the first chords, she was surprised to see the audience unexpectedly start singing the lyrics in chorus, from beginning to end, filling the poetic space of the spoken word that the trio›s melody only suggested to each person›s auditory imagination. The audience not only sang this fifty-year-old composition from memory but did so softly, in the same bossa nova style that João Gilberto popularized. «Chega de Saudade» thus proved to be an identity heritage, deeply appropriated by the present audience (Krempel, 2018).

Other encounters in other times and geographies. In 1998, the famous Cape Verdean singer Cesária Évora, known as the «barefoot diva,» joined the Brazilian Marisa Monte and the Portuguese fado singer Dulce Pontes to sing the Cape Verdean morna «Sodade," which speaks "of this long road to my land, S. Nicolau." This artistic encounter of great emotional impact took place at Expo '98, the World Exposition in Lisbon. From a historical and sociological perspective, this great show – Expo '98 – can be seen as a staging of Portugal's role in the international modernity of the late 20th century, as well as a promotion of dialogue between cultures and nations around the world. A few years later, Cesária Évora would share the stage and this same morna, "Sodade," with the important Angolan singer Bonga, and later with Mariza, a notable Portuguese fado singer, prominent since the first decade of this century. These happy moments illustrate the ease with which saudade, carried by music, traverses the paths of the Lusophone labyrinth, providing emotional encounters.

Another encounter. In 2022, Maro, a young Portuguese singer, represented the country at the Eurovision Song Contest with «Saudade, saudade.» The song, in which the only word in Portuguese is precisely saudade, reflects the absence of a friend (in this case, the composer›s grandfather) and finds in the word s*audade* its only form of expression. Although Portugal, like many other European countries, chose a song with English lyrics (the dominant language in the music industry) for the competition, the most important concept of this song, which gives it a unique character, is the use of the word s*audade*, which expresses an absence that cannot be translated or replaced.

Héctor Solari
Landscapes after the battle, 1 (2019), pastel on paper, 50 x 64 cm

A Walk-Through History

Music is undoubtedly a fantastic place of encounter and resolution, ingredients that relate to saudade in an umbilical way. Between the artists who create it and the audience who appreciate it, a feeling of communion and emotional belonging is established that transcends the differences in meaning between the *me* and *we*.

In Portugal, music has established a strong connection with saudade, both in the so-called Coimbra song (or Coimbra fado) and in fado, often associated with Lisbon, although it is, in reality, a practice spread throughout the country. It can be said that fado, in its most lyrical aspect, almost appropriated saudade in the Portuguese imagination. And Maro's song, mentioned earlier, is a rich exception to this trend.

However, this connection is much older and has its roots in Brazil. In the 18th century, the modinha became a powerful vehicle for feelings and a privileged pretext for the sociability of the elites in both Portugal and Brazil (Nery, 2000). It is a vocal musical genre, essentially for domestic use and performed by amateur musicians, based on love poetry. One or two voices are accompanied by a harmonic instrument, such as the piano-forte, the Portuguese guitar, or the viola, and show several examples of expression related to the word *saudad*e, such as the following:

> Ah Nerina
> I cannot bear this absence anymore
> My saudades are renewed

When the sabiá sings
(Anonymous, quoted by Nery, 2000, p. 63)

Cruel saudade
Of my loves
That makes me live in bitterness
It would be better for me to die before
(Vidigal, quoted by Nery, 2000, p. 117)

It is very likely that these two lyrics, belonging to modinhas published between 1820 and 1830, were also heard in the wealthy houses of Praia, Cape Verde, at the same time.

In the 19th century, central Europe witnessed an aesthetic and compositional controversy led by philosophers, fueled by critics (such as Hanslick) and composers, about instrumental music, which opposed two divergent approaches. On the one hand, "absolute music" (or "pure" or "abstract"), which seeks to have no extramusical relationship or representational capacity beyond the notes; on the other hand, "programmatic music," which, being instrumental, intends to describe or evoke extramusical ideas or images in the listener's mind. In the first category are works with abstract titles, directly related to the musical forms that originate them, such as sonata, quartet, or symphony. "Programmatic music," on the other hand, uses poetic, historical, or descriptive titles. The case we will see, of a work by a Portuguese composer who spent much of his life in Brazil, is a kind of hybrid.

In research on the presence of the word saudade in the titles of works, the musical catalog of the National Library of Lisbon reveals more than forty scores, mostly for piano. These results cover the period from 1756 to 1960, with most of the scores from the decades of 1820 to 1900. A wide variety of instrumental musical genres (without voice) is represented, *including mazurkas, waltzes, fados, concert caprices, intermezzos*, among others. One of these works is the Sonata saudade for piano and violin, premiered in 1915, by the Portuguese composer Óscar da Silva (1870-1958). This extensive work, organized in four movements – *Allegro com duolo; Andante malincolico; Scherzo; Quasi presto ed appassionato* – constitutes a great romantic sonata, which had a strong impact at the time it was written and presented. Óscar da Silva was a composer and pianist with an international career in Europe and the Americas. In his youth, he studied with the influential pianist Clara Schumann (widow of the composer Robert Schumann, in Germany) and became a brilliant interpreter, especially of the music of Chopin and Schumann. It is very interesting to think about the musical work of these two composers who influenced our composer: Chopin's music, despite being loaded with expressive sensitivity, fits into "absolute music," while Schumann's is immersed in an emotional, literary, and philosophical context, and therefore full of extramusical meanings.

Óscar da Silva seems to have remained, apparently, in the middle ground between these two options. His success was resounding and reported in various newspapers and magazines of the time, in Portugal and other countries[2]. After the premiere of the work, which is inspired by a passage from "Song X" by Luís de Camões – "Now the saudade of the past/ pure torment, sweet and sorrowful/ that would turn furies/ into sorrowful tears of love" – the musicographer Alfredo Pinto (1915) was deeply moved and published the following impression in a book:

> Choosing the theme Saudade for the sonata is a logical consequence of his temperament. Óscar da Silva, being an impassioned person in the vibrations of his self, in the ornamentation of the notes, in the designs of the phrases, paints through sounds the range of his highly ideal and passionate feelings. Where there is passion, there is saudade; that is why he sought in the verses of the great Poet the genesis of his work. (p. 11)

In the same work, Pinto, amazed, proposes an interpretation of each of the movements, based on the confused "impressions" that the music suggests to him: fragments of romanticized images, involving, for example, a "beloved woman," the "ghost of death," among other subjectivities of difficult understanding. Many years later, the composer Filipe Pires (1995), in his biography of Óscar da Silva, classifies the work "by the elaboration of form, solidity of construction, and depth of the animic feeling," highlighting that "this allusion cannot, in any way, be identified with the pejorative connotation that the adjectivation of the term presupposes" (pp. 43-44) and showing, subsequently, that the analysis of rigorous musical composition techniques does not deny, but secondary, the poetic dimension of the work in relation to the mature compositional technique.

The 19th-century romanticism brings in the poetics of instrumental music language the suggestion of saudade, associated with intimate, lyrical, and suffering musical atmospheres, in which the sweetness of the musical phrase is even more powerful and polysemic than the word with meaning.

In Portugal, in the past, saudade was theorized, took root, and manifested itself in erudite forms such as the *Sonata saudade* for piano and violin (among others), circulating in intellectual circles. Gradually, however, it was appropriated by the Portuguese musical genre par excellence – fado – which, nevertheless, does not hold the emotional monopoly of this feeling. In Cape Verde, the Creole *sodade* became an identity element related to the migratory experience, also being a symbol of the country's independence and the cultural history of morna, the emblematic genre that sings it, and through which it asserted itself internationally. In Brazil, saudade has long flirted with various musical genres and, symbolically, contributed to the musical and social controversies related to the emergence of bossa nova from samba.

In the Lusophone context, saudade is more than an emotion; it is a place of cultural thought and reflection, a symbol that encapsulates experiences of diaspora, colonization, and relationship with the past. As a topic, it presents itself as a starting point for narratives that transcend the individual, dialoguing with collective memory and hope for the future.

2. Strangely, the only recordings of this important musical work, whose score has been edited and is available, are completely out of print.

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Christopher Paul Valender Ulacia*

A storm in a teacup: melancholy and mourning in exile

A man, his eyes vibrant with fear, walks forward, pulled by the arms of his two daughters. His wife, Edith, has stayed behind. They are fleeing the cataclysm. A blinding ball of fire consumes everything. Their home, like the entire city, is devoured by the flaming mouth of an irate God. This man is Lot. He walks with his eyes fixed ahead, obeying the divine command not to look back. But Edith, unable to resist, turns her head. Instantly, her fate is sealed: her flesh turns to salt, and her expression is forever frozen in a cry of solitude.

The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (1852), by English painter John Martin, depicts this biblical passage with a dramatic intensity that evokes the anguish of exile. In this canvas, he captures the exact moment when the surviving family is torn apart: some already moving forward in mourning; others, prostrate in melancholy. We can imagine, like Lot, the silhouette of the ship Sinaia in 1939, crossing the ocean with around two thousand Spanish exiles bound for Mexico. On its deck, carpeted with bodies overcome by unfathomable sadness, some already fixed their gaze on the shores of Veracruz, while others, with their souls anchored in the Spain they were leaving behind, sighed in the opposite direction.

I don't think my grandmother ever looked forward.

Nearly a hundred years later, the myth of exile remains the cornerstone of my family's narrative. It lingers like a ghost, moaning invisibly through the corners. What's most remarkable about this circumstance is that my grandmother, Paloma Altolaguirre—however implausible it may seem—never actually lived in Spain (or, to be precise, she left her country at the age of two). And yet, she longs to return to a land where she never set foot. She fled the fascists while still in her mother's womb, was born during the Civil War, though on English soil, and spent her childhood in Cuba before settling

* Film director and editor. Mexico City, Mexico.

permanently in Mexico. She arrived with her parents, with whom she lived until marrying as a teenager. She had four children, who were raised under the care of a woman with frayed nerves and a weary spirit. The children grew up and eventually had children of their own, who were, in turn, swept up in the feverish dream of broken voices and fragmented narratives, oppressed by the same diffuse sorrow. Four generations later, in Freud's words (1917[1915]/1992a), "the shadow of the object fell upon the ego" (p. 246).

Although cherished by broad sectors of the population, the dream of the Second Republic winning the war was crushed by the military force of a ruthless dictator. The three years of conflict were years of hardship, violence, and disillusionment, in which brothers took up arms against one another. But it's as if the pain that consumed the exiles wasn't directed at the homeland, at relatives and friends, but at something more remote, an entity that dissolves among lamenting words. As Freud points out in *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917[1915]/1992a), often when someone falls into a melancholic reverie, they don't even know for sure what it is they've lost. The lost object hides in the shadows of an unconscious passed down from generation to generation, persisting even nearly a century later:

> The object has not perhaps actually died, but has been lost as an object of love (e.g. in the case of a betrothed girl who has been jilted). In yet other cases one feels justified in maintaining the belief that a loss of this kind has occurred, but one cannot see clearly what it is that has been lost, and it is all the more reasonable to suppose that the patient cannot consciously see what he have lost either. This in deed, might be so even if the patient is aware of the loss which have given rise to his melancholia, but only in the sense that he knows whom he has lost but not what he has lost in him. (p. 245)

After many afternoons spent ruminating on the subject, it's clear to me that my entire family is still prostrate, exhausting their strength in mourning that loss. But what exactly was lost? It wasn't Spain, for it remains there, untouched, unaware of our absence. It wasn't the Republic, since any trace of political fervor my grandmother may have had in her youth quickly faded. To which nation did we belong? We were neither from here nor from there. One could say we were suspended in a limbo, with no flag to revere and no soil to stand on. Our identity was isolated, expelled from history and language, anchored in a faded portrait of bygone times. To be honest, no one in Spain uses the words (the proverbs and sayings buried by the years) that my grandmother still utters. And as for history, Franco died, yes, but his death did not bring about a new republic—it led to the return of the monarchy. Thus, in each of us, the label exile was imprinted, a word whose prefix, paradoxically, implies being outside of—a state that, following Moritz Heimann's logic, will be eternal: "A man who dies at thirty-five is, in every moment of his life, a man who dies at thirty-five" (quoted by Benjamin, 1936/2008a, p. 14).

The truth is that Spanish exiles never truly put down roots in Mexican soil. Freud (1917[1915]/1992a) urges us to be patient, "this withdrawal of libido is not a process that can be accomplished in a moment, but must certainly, as in mourning, be one in which progress is long-drawn out and gradual" (p. 256). Others would say it's better to get it over with quickly[1]. However, it's a difficult endeavor when we consider the landscape of insurmountable contradictions the exiles encountered. On the one hand, they were indeed welcomed with open arms by the generous Lázaro Cárdenas; on the other, they felt the raised eyebrows of the Mexicans—those ironic glances that carried more than a hint of resentment over the colonial past. In their deep republican conviction, they extended a hand to the Mexican revolutionary project, distinguishing themselves from the typical Spaniards of savage legacy. *Plus ultra!* But therein lies the problem. This only isolated them further, as they were then scorned by the so-called "gachupines", the economic exiles who came to seek fortune in the Americas. Many of them did not share the republican sentiment and, even in the tropics, celebrated the victory of Generalissimo Francisco Franco. All of this merely fed the same nostalgia that prevented them from integrating into a new culture. Integration was nearly impossible! As arduous as squeezing milk from a stone [plantar una pica en Flandes!].

The truth is that, despite everything, time erodes every structure, creating cracks, fissures, and porous surfaces through which certain facets of Mexican culture slowly seeped into my family's life. Folk objects, books, and forms that, rather than implying identification with the new, merely served to disguise the estrangement from the old. My grandmother's house could be draped in a mantle of golden roses, filled with the songs of Juan Gabriel echoing through its lonely corridors, and pierced by the ecstatic shouts of the neighbor celebrating Pumas' recent victory. And yet, the moment my grandmother opens her lips to release those noises we call words, the Pleiades reappear in the sky, and that flaming, agonizing, and bruised Spain emerges once more. She glimpses it even in the stillness of night, with her eyelids lowered, triumphant and nostalgic, through the words that continue to pour from her throat, crystallized [*tan anquilosadas en jamón y un par de judías*]: "vosotros," "bombilla," "ser un poco Quijote," "mesilla de noche," "salir de Málaga y meterse en Malagón," "sois," "pajita," "no me fastidiéis," "coger," "bollería," "entre la guerra y la siesta," "aparcamiento," "carné," "tengo los nervios de punta," "piscina," "chándal," "le salió el tiro por la culata"… Phrases whose content matters little, but which speak volumes. As Benjamin explains in *The Storyteller* (1936/2008a):

> Narrative is not interested in transmitting the "pure in itself" of the thing narrated, like information or a report. It immerses the thing in the life of the storyteller only to extract it again. Thus, the narrative bears the mark of the storyteller, like the potter's hand on the clay of the vessel. (p. 164)

These words reveal the falsehood of her arrival on Mexican soil. They suggest, perhaps, a shipwreck, a stalling, as if she had never disembarked from the Sinai. The Spain she lived, the one she suckled from, was the Spain found in the names of things, in the linguistic expression of the internal and external world. These names allowed her to imprint her own Spain onto Mexico—a country both invented and profoundly real. And among the many Spains she recreated, this poem stands out, capturing better than any other her attachment to the air:

Let me look at you closely
with both eyes wide open,
Madrid of ruined houses
and of whole hearts.
Let me look at you closely
with a long and slow gaze
that travels your skin
and penetrates your bones.
May every wound in your flesh
open a wound in my chest.
May every tear of yours
run down my blind eyes,
city open to death
by land and by sky.

1. T.N.: *A mal paso darle prisa*

Let me look at you closely
for I want to carry within me
for a thousand eternities
your memory.
(Garfias, 1937, p. 61)

What is the Spain of her memories? Why seventy years of incessant lisping? And, even more enigmatic, how is it possible that this patriotic feeling toward a nation never set foot upon has remained intact—like a dream-like Ithaca—guiding the familial compass for more than four generations of Mexicans born and raised on the American continent?

To use Freud's technical language (if I've understood it correctly), these four generations never reached the necessary degree of mania to reinvest libidinal energy into another love object—that is, Mexico. But the formula would only be appropriate if Spain had been the original loss, which it wasn't. Nor do I believe childhood or retro-utopian fantasies of "better times" are to blame, since this story originated after the catastrophe. There was no childhood in Spain, nor are there memories anchored in that land. All the memories, as my grandmother repeats with almost obsessive insistence, are not lived memories, but told ones… borrowed. And perhaps in that statement lies a trace of the answer, the faint stench of that unburied corpse, lifeless in a common grave. In this story, there is no 'I' who lived and therefore long. There is an 'I' who lives on behalf of another, with the constant sensation of having lost something, without knowing exactly what.

Freud (1917[1915]/1992a) points out:

> In mourning, it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia, it is the ego itself. The patient represents his ego to us as worthless, incapable, of any achievement and morally despicable; he reproaches himself, velifies himself and expects to be cast out and punished (p. 246)

Everything is lost. That's the tone I perceive in the tired eyes, the stiffness of bodies, the clumsy movements and the hunchbacks [joroba] of those who speak of the Spanish Civil War. Defeat is read between their teeth. One must not forget that to live in exile is to breathe failure. Don't mess with me![2] It's true they fled the violence of a dictator, but what their bodies reveal is the muted lament of a futile endeavor that bore no fruit. They have nothing but sweet praise and passionate glances toward Spain and its citizens. But when they confront themselves, they find only the inevitable sensation of impending disaster. It's an introjected sadism: all the insults that should have been directed at Spain fall back upon them. "It was my fault," they silently murmur to themselves. They proclaim themselves defeated, weary, deranged… epithets that are nothing more than expressions of a symptomatic hara-kiri. Max Aub, José Gaos, Luis Buñuel, León Felipe, Remedios Varo, Luis Cernuda, and countless other exiles who could be said to have triumphed—many of them resoundingly. Yet, if we delve into their lives and works, we find—sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly—a constant trace of that open wound. Even in triumph, they remained burdened by failure until the end of their days. As Freud (1916/1992b) notes: "All the greater is the surprise, even the confusion, when the physician discovers that sometimes people fall ill precisely when a deeply rooted and long-nurtured wish has come true. It is as if they cannot bear their happiness". (p. 323). For many of them, life in exile was a story of success, and yet the bitterness of banishment prevailed over the abundant joys they found in their new lives. One could conclude that the exiles' stay in Mexico, in the end, was not so bad—but deeply mourned.

2. T.N: ¡No me jorobes!

Indeed, much of the exiles' success stemmed from the artistic and creative expression that blossomed when they internalized the vast myth of diaspora. This was how a fortunate group of individuals managed to sublimate the guilt that suffocated them. The exiles also formed a strong and supportive community, which served, among other things, as resistance to mourning. Within it, an unshakable obsession with the themes at the center of their inspiration was nurtured. Themes they insisted upon, poking at the wound again and again. If the introjection of the lost object engenders a reluctance to look outward, the only way out is the tautology of endlessly reproducing what has already been said. To merge with something different would imply a second death, a definitive forgetting, and paradoxically, a resolution of mourning—painful yet appropriate. Generations succeed one another, and we appropriate the memories of those who came before us, in a kind of narrative incest, condemned to repetition. It's no coincidence that the parable of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah culminates in the incestuous act as the only and final safeguard:

> So they made their father drink wine that night also, and the younger one went in and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. Thus both daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father."
> (*La Santa Biblia, Reina-Valera*, 1569/2020, Genesis 19:35–36).

They played a very serrano game with him!

Thus, my grandmother and then her children repeat the same phrases and words, falling into constant insistence—not in the mere succession of signifiers, but in the fervent embrace of the same emotion that speech evokes. It is not reality or concrete past that the surface words refer to, but the hidden emotion they signal.

Paul Ricœur (1984/2000) puts it more clearly: "The world in which we think we live is not the world as it is, but the world as it is given to us through our symbols, stories, and traditions." (p. 142)

Even I, a marginal witness to this story, sometimes catch myself saying "Again with the straw," and I'm overcome by a melancholic smile, as if reciting a spell meant to summon the return of a lost world. But it is not literal Spain that unfolds before my eyes, but a lost world in the deepest aesthetic sense of the word. Benjamin (1923/2008b) explains: "But if this, though hidden or fragmented, is present in life in the form of the symbolized itself, in the creations of language it dwells only in the form of the symbolizing." (p. 127)

Thus, those condemned to tautology, in their final destiny, can only aspire to the noble craft of translation. Not to keep alive what has perished, but to preserve it, igniting the flame of its lost form. For this, I turn to Benjamin and his reflections on the translator's task:

> *It is evident that a translation, however good, can never mean anything to the original. Nevertheless, it enters into an intimate connection with it, due to its translatability. And this connection is even more intimate because it no longer means anything to the original. We may call it a natural connection, more precisely a vital connection. Just as manifestations of life relate most intimately to the living without meaning anything to it, so too does the translation arise from the original—not so much from its life, but from its "afterlife." Indeed, the translation comes after the original.* (p. 117)

Benjamin clarifies that good translations do not seek to be faithful, exact copies of the original. Quite the opposite: for a translation to be truly good, the meaning of the work must be completely blurred, so that the world of forms constituting its central emotion—or,

at best, pure language—can be revealed. The exile's task is that of the translator, one who always seeks to manifest the lost work, making it survive through the sounds they emit and keeping their ear alert, hoping to summon an echo of the original.

In the same vein, the answer to Freud's question emerges: "He knows whom he lost, but not what he lost in them." He lost a world. He lost a form, which he now tries to recover among the ruins of speech. The great novelist Sándor Márai (1934), also an exile, reflects: "The homeland is not the place where you were born, but the language in which you dream." (p. 294). The mourner's state of mind persists as an open wound, forming the cultural inheritance of a group of families that exist in a linguistic parenthesis, without permission to produce something new, but immersed in a perpetual labor of translating their original self. Trapped in that poetic and untranslatable something… where Christ gave the three voices, and they did not hear him.

I still seem to hear my grandmother at night, lying in bed, clutching the blankets like a child, counting aloud, like a miser, her Spains as if they were coins. Yet I hold a fervent hope in Freud's words (1917[1915]/1992a): "We rely on its being overcome after a certain lapse of time, and we look upon any interference with it as useless or even harmful." (p. 244)

No evil lasts forever! Let's go! Let's go! [3]

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3. TN.: ¡*No hay mal que cien años dure! ¡Aire! ¡Aire!*

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Alberto Díaz* e Tiziana Palmiero*

Saying Goodbye by Singing: The Andean Cacharpaya in a Tone of Saudade **

Introduction

The *cacharpaya* corresponds to a ritual farewell practice present in various Andean communities in southern Peru, Bolivia, northern Chile, and northwestern Argentina. It is vocal or instrumental music whose performance usually marks the end of celebrations such as Carnival, the Cross of May, the feasts of patron saints, and even the dead, thus structuring the transition between the extraordinary moment of the ritual and the return to everyday life. Far from being a simple closing song, the *cacharpaya* is a symbolic expression of great emotional density, where singing, dancing, devotion, memory, and hope for return converge.

From an ethno-historical perspective, *cacharpaya*a comes from the Quechua verb *kacharpariy*, "to say goodbye to someone" (González Holguín, 1608/1952, p. 58), and the Aymara *jach'arpayaña,* "to say goodbye to someone crying, with regret that they are leaving" (Bertonio, 1612, p. 182). These initial definitions, collected by the first colonial lexicographers, already reveal the emotional and affective charge that characterized this social action in pre-Hispanic times. The term describes, in short, a collective event imbued with emotion and rituality.

Based on a previously discussed musicological, historical, and ethnographic analysis corpus (Palmiero & Díaz Araya, 2024), we present in this text a synthesis that examines how an apparently simple practice – a farewell song – manages to condense religious, musical, emotional, and community elements, becoming a structuring form of Andean rituality. How do these musical forms, performed collectively, convey complex emotions such as sadness, gratitude, and hope, and what do they tell us about the symbolic organization of time in the Andes?

We understand the *cacharpaya* as a ritual act of closure, considering its structure, its musical forms, its uses in the festive calendar, and the affective weight it carries.

We will analyze its formal variants (vocal and instrumental), its modes of musical transmission, and the way it expresses a community feeling that can be linked to the notion of *saudade*, with the promise of return during farewells at Andean festivities.

* Universidad de Tarapacá, Tarapacá, Chile.

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The *Cacharpaya*: Farewell and Community

The *cacharpay*a cannot be understood outside the Andean ritual cycle. It is situated at the end of celebrations when people have shared dances, meals, processions, offerings, and vigils, and it is necessary to symbolically close the sacred time (Palmiero & Díaz Araya, 2024). In this context, the *cacharpay*a emerges as a performative form of farewell, activating an emotional and cosmic passage: the return from the extraordinary to the everyday. Its function is not only to signal the end of an event but also to order time, channel emotions, and reinforce collective bonds.

Nineteenth-century descriptions mention the *cacharpaya* as an intense and prolonged ritual. Paul Marcoy (1869/2001) recounts how, at the end of the festivities in the Peruvian highlands, farewell songs were performed accompanied by collective weeping: "Men cry and raise their fists to the sky, women scream and pull their hair" (pp. 197-198). At the same time, Marcoy describes an instrumental intervention that was 'zapateado'—stomped rhythmically—by the participants. This ritual structure has not changed substantially. Today, in communities such as Huasquiña, Belén, and Mamiña (Tarapacá region, northern Chile), the cacharpaya remains a moment of deep concentration, in which songs are offered to the Christ Child, to patron saints, or even to deceased musicians, in a solemn tone and with restrained gaze. Here, singing and music are not mere accompaniments; they may also be understood as sonic catalysts that enable emotional and cosmic transition.

In social terms, the *cacharpaya* also reaffirms local structures. It is common for the farewell song to be led by ritual authorities (such as standard-bearers or members of religious brotherhoods) or by specific groups of devoted singers. Traditionally, the lead singer was a soloist, accompanied by a women's chorus; the soloist used a notebook containing the lyrics of the songs. Today, these notebooks are used by all participants in the ceremony (Palmiero & Díaz Araya 2024, pp. 32–33).

Thus, the music of the *cacharpaya* fulfills a dual function: it closes the festive period and keeps the bond with the sacred open. It is not a definitive farewell, but a gesture that leaves open the possibility of return. As expressed in the verses of a *cacharpaya* sung in Belén (Arica and Parinacota region): "You are leaving, blessed Lord, but your house remains here." The departure, therefore, is not a loss, but part of the cycle.

This cyclical sense is fundamental to understanding the experience of the rite. The cacharpaya does not mark the end of the festive cycle; rather, its ritual function weaves together an affective, temporal, and communal experience. Through song, it conveys sorrow over parting, gratitude for what was shared, and hope for continuity.

Héctor Solari
Looking at the War, 40 (2015), pastel on paper, 38,5 x 65 cm

The Musical Dimension of the *Cacharpaya*

The music of the *cacharpaya* does not fit into a rigid mold nor does it correspond to a single genre. Instead, it is a musicalized ritual function that assumes various sound forms, depending on the community context, the type of festivity, and the emotional moment within the festive cycle. This quality makes it a structurally hybrid expressive category, although with strong roots in the Andean sound tradition.

We know that the two main genres that feed the *cacharpayas* are the *huayno* and the *yaraví*, although there are also versions that adopt elements of the *haraw*i or the *pasacalle* (Palmiero & Díaz Araya, 2024). The huayno, characterized by its binary rhythm in 2/4, its syncopated patterns, and its festive character, frequently appears in *cacharpayas* that mark the end of processions or dances. These versions are performed with brass bands or wind ensembles, as can be seen in the festive farewells in Belén and Parinacota, where the bands of musicians for the patron saint festivities play *cacharpayas* with repetitive structures, four-bar phrases, and descending endings, inviting applause or the last round around the temple.

On the other hand, the *yaraví*, a vocal genre of melancholic tone, slow meters, and irregular phrasing, defines the more introspective dimension of the *cacharpaya*. This style is usually performed at the end of the devotional cycle – as happens in Pica and Huasquiña, during Christmas night or the farewell of the Cross of May – when it is sung in front of the altar by a solo voice and a small female choir. The yar*aví*, as Vega (2019) points out, «was a sentimental song whose objective was to move and awaken self-examination and introjection, exactly the type of effect sought by certain songs intended for spiritual exercise» (p. 239), and in the context of the *cacharpaya*, it acts as an expression of expected and resigned separation.

In many cases, the two styles coexist on the same day. In Belén, for example, after the last mass, an instrumental *cacharpaya* in huayno rhythm is performed to accompany the exit of the banner, followed by a song in a minor tone, almost a collective whisper, that ends the ceremony. This musical duality responds to a cyclical ritual logic: first,there is dancing and celebration to mark the closure, then comes the mourning of farewell, as noted in the previously cited testimony by Marcoy.

Vocal and Instrumental Performance

The vocal execution of cacharpayas follows traditional patterns of Andean singing. In the case of the *cacharpaya* in *yaraví* mode, singers display highly expressive techniques, employing portamenti, breaths that seem to suspend time, among other resources. In religious versions, the singing is 'low,' almost whispered, to honor the tone of solemnity; women sing in a 'high pitch and with delicate voices' (Dionel Oxa, personal communication, 2014). The texture is monodic and follows an antiphonal style, in which a lead singer intones the verse and the chorus responds.

Instrumentally, harmonically, the bands that play *cacharpayas* use chord sequences typical of the huayno and the *yaraví*, with passages to the third and sixth degrees and oscillations between relative modes (minor and major). It is interesting to note that, often, in instrumental versions, the same melody that interpreted by singers has a *yaraví* tone is modified in tempo and rhythm to acquire the huayno tone; this is the case of the "Cacharpayita" from Pica and Matilla (Palmiero & Díaz Araya, 2024). In Parinacota, the farewells of Our Lady of the Assumption are accompanied by slow pieces, in 3/4, in which the band plays descending motifs, with bass drum accompaniment in sixteenth notes. The harmonic simplicity and melodic repetition create a hypnotic atmosphere that sustains the emotion of the ritual.

In rural or family contexts, *quenas,* pan flutes, violins, or *charangos* are used. In Belén, for example, the *cacharpay*a for deceased musicians is performed with a single violin, which repeats the same phrase in D minor for more than five minutes, while women sing slowly over this base. This prolonged form of interpretation resembles the logic of the *harawi*: a ritual song of the high altitudes that accompanies funerals or symbolic farewells, and which shares with the *cacharpaya* its melancholic and free form.

Resonances with Gregorian Chant

The music of the c*acharpaya* is not an autonomous genre with fixed rules, but operates as a functional ritual form: its definition is based on the context and the expressive purpose it fulfills, rather than its formal structure. This flexibility, as we have already pointed out, allows it to incorporate elements of the h*uayno*, the *yaraví*, and even local religious melodies, depending on the community environment. In this sense, following Romero's classification (2002), the c*acharpaya* "does not necessarily have a fixed musical form, and its common characteristic is the fact that it belongs to an extramusical context" (pp. 38-39).

Two major variants can be identified in this repertoire: the festive and instrumental *cacharpay*a, with an agile rhythm and dance character, and the slow and devotional *cacharpay*a, sung or played in a grave tone, marked by introspection and prayer. The main difference lies in the regular tempo and the use of rhythmic formulas typical of the huayno in the first case, while the second is characterized by free and slow meters and irregular rhythms.

Other fundamental characteristics in both forms and shared by various traditional music of the Andean region, are the use of the pentatonic or hexatonic scale of Cusco (minor scale with the altered sixth degree) and the descending melodic profile towards the tonic, especially in the final phrase and often in minor third intervals. This characteristic appears in many transcriptions compiled by Uhle (1893-1896), R. d'Harcourt and M. d'Harcourt (1925/1990), Urrutia Blondel (1962, cited by Uribe Echevarría, 1973), Grebe (Etnomedia, 2012/2020), and Vega (1965/2016), and can be observed in both vocal melodies and band versions. This "melodic fall," in addition to corresponding to traditional musical structures, symbolizes the gesture of leaving, of abandoning the festive space, and produces a clear emotional effect on the listeners.

One of the most suggestive observations is the structural affinity between certain religious *cacharpayas* and the European modal tradition, especially the ecclesiastical one. This is the case of the hymn "Cacharpayita" from Pica and Matilla, with which they say goodbye to the Baby Jesus and the Holy Cross. Here, in addition to the *yaraví* style, we can identify a song that "presents typical characteristics of Catholic religious chant: it is strophic, monodic, syllabic, and responsorial; moreover, in its melodic profile, modal patterns emerge, certainly a heritage of ancient evangelizing practices" (Palmiero & Díaz Araya, 2024, p. 22). A detailed analysis of this *cacharpaya* reveals a Dorian mode, with elements of the second and sixth. The semantic characteristics attributed to the first, second, and sixth modes, by the tradition of musical treatises, are of contained joy and tears of devotion (Asensio, 2003; León Tello, 1991; Nassarre, 1724/1980).

Certainly, the expressive strength of the "Cacharpayita" lies in its ability to accompany the emotional and collective moment of closure. The repetition of phrases, the absence of harmony, the use of medium registers, and the descending cadence are tools that structure an aesthetic of farewell sonorities. Another distinctive characteristic of some *cacharpayas* is their antiphonal or responsorial structure, especially in versions performed by singers. A

voice intones the first verse, and the group responds with repetition or variation, producing a dialogue effect between the individual and the collective.

Instrumentally, *cacharpaya*s may be performed by brass bands, ensembles of lakas (sikus), quenas, or violins, depending on availability and the nature of the festivity. What matters is not the instrument itself, but its ability to convey the emotion of farewell. In Mamiña, for instance, the band plays a cacharpaya in ternary meter, with syncopated passages and a gradually diminishing dynamic, accompanying the retreat of the patronal banner amid the tears of participants (field observation, 2023). Equally important is the relationship between melody and text. The lyrics typically follow a copla structure (four octosyllabic lines), with themes evoking sorrow, the passage of time, prayer, or the longing to return. A traditional example sung in many villages across the Tarapacá region goes:

Sad are your children
Today we part,
Allow, Baby Jesus,
That we all return.

Here, the musical form (descending melody, free rhythm) aligns with the verbal content, producing a cumulative emotional effect. The song doesn't merely say it's leaving—it makes you feel it

In short, the musical dimension of the *cacharpaya* reveals its own aesthetic, in which the rite becomes a sound form. Through modal scales, responsorial forms, descending profiles, and simple harmonies, the music expresses the collective transition from joy to recollection. t is not a derivative form nor an adopted external product; it is a genuine expression of the Andean way of experiencing time, emotion, and community.

Final Reflections

The Andean *cacharpay*a is not just a closing song nor a vestige of past times. It is, in fact, a form of symbolic organization of time, a ritual technology that transforms farewell into a collective act of memory, prayer, and projection. From its name – derived from Quechua and Aymara roots that allude to the act of "saying goodbye while crying" – to its musical performance in descending coplas and slow melodies, the *cacharpaya* condenses a complex emotional, social, and sound structure.

The analysis reveals that this practice has undergone centuries of transformation without losing its symbolic core. It appears documented in colonial vocabularies, nineteenth-century descriptions, and contemporary records, demonstrating its vitality as an adaptive ritual form. Its persistence is not due to a crystallization of the past, but to Indigenous agency, continually adapting to each festive context and to each community that sings it.

On the musical plane, the *cacharpaya* embodies an Andean logic of collective emotional expression. Whether in the form of huayno or a slow song akin to yaraví, its technical features—descending melodic contour, modal harmony, antiphonal structure—create a language that requires no academic translation to be understood by those who partake in the rite. Here, music is emotion made audible, a body that withdraws while singing, a farewell spoken aloud so that it does not ache in silence

In this context, the notion of *saudade* can be productive if understood as a catalytic category in relation to the community emotion of farewell in the Andes. Andean *saudade* is not nostalgic; it is active, circular, hopeful. As the verses of a *cacharpay*a sung in the highlands say: "You are leaving, but not completely".

This kind of singing—also a prayer, a remembrance, a promise—does not merely bring the festivity to a close. It keeps it alive in memory, projects it toward the coming year, and plants it in the communal space like an emotional seed. In that gesture, the cacharpaya becomes much more than a musical form: it is a living expression of what it means to be together, to part, and to reunite within the cyclical time of Andean life.

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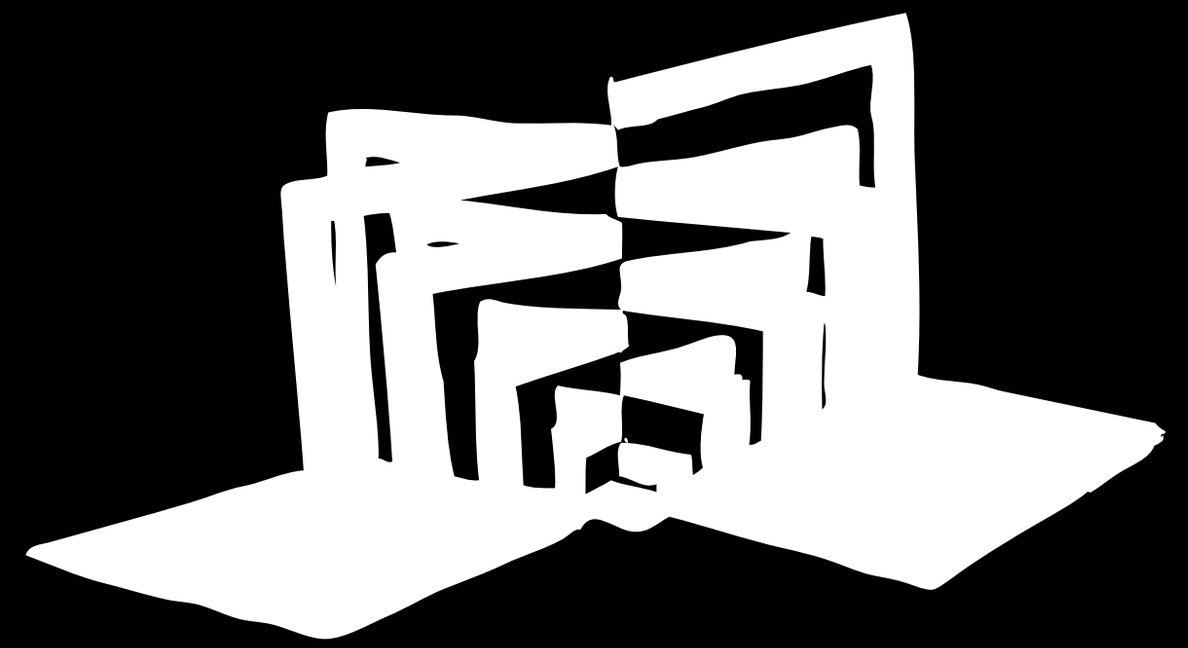

Textual

It is a Lima morning and a Madrid afternoon in March. When the camera turns on, Zoom shortens the Atlantic and allows Carlos Granés and me to embark on a long, passionate conversation between two old friends. Carlos and I share a deep friendship of many years: we have shared almost everything in life—trips, the raising of our children, the bloodless brotherhood between our wives, settling into our professions, great laughter, many wines and, of course, endless conversations.

Time has allowed me to be a close witness to Carlos's growth as one of the most lucid and erudite essayists in the Spanish-speaking world. Granés belongs to that ever smaller and lonelier lineage of intellectuals able to move naturally among anthropology, politics, literature, and art. But what many don't know is that his true superpower is a psychoanalytic lens (the product of a family and intellectual inheritance) that guides many of his cultural and political observations—sometimes consciously, sometimes without intending it.

Delirio americano: una historia cultural y política de América Latina [American Delirium: A Cultural and Political History of Latin America], that ambitious essay published in 2022, is a good example: a deep inquiry into Latin America's self-destructive impulses, its tireless search for redemptive leaders, and that collective drive to repeat—on both ends of the ideological spectrum—the same failed experiments that have kept us trapped between underdevelopment, disenchantment, and social rancor.

In this conversation, Carlos is once again generous with his time and ideas. We talk about his bond with psychoanalysis, the malaise of contemporary culture, the uncertain world we inhabit, the rise of authoritarianism… and, united by the need for a measure of solace, we try to glimpse some hope amid this global bewilderment that worries and frightens us, but also challenges us to build bridges and find ways forward.

Stefan Reich

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"In the depths there are no roots, only what has been torn out"

Interview with Carlos Granés*

Literally, you are the child of a psychoanalytic womb. Your mother, Clara, was a renowned Colombian analyst. What were your first encounters with psychoanalysis like?

Well, I think I've lived with psychoanalysis my whole life because my mother had her office at home. I knew that in that space patients were talking about their lives and my mother was practicing as a psychoanalyst. So from a very young age I felt curiosity, interest, fascination—to the point that my first, well not my first but my second professional option, and the one I eventually chose, was psychology, imagining I would become a psychoanalyst. I thought that would be my clearest vocation. That's why, as soon as I entered university, I started reading Freud; my mother encouraged me to do it. So my contact with psychoanalysis—its books, my interest in the discipline—was very natural, which for various life reasons I ended up betraying a bit. It wasn't a major infidelity, because it remains a love that's repressed, furtive, hidden—but it didn't end up being my main vocation or dedication.

* Conducted by Stefan Reich, Saturday, March 8, 2024, via Zoom.

And what was it that seduced you about psychoanalysis?

I think the fascination with interpretive work—with understanding the world as a series of veils or layers that don't present themselves pristinely, so you have to use imagination, intuition, cultural resources, ideas to go a little further. The notion that there's something hidden at the bottom is supremely seductive; it's a magnet for curious minds, and perhaps for young people who have questions about things—about life, feelings, emotions, creation, imagination, the human mind. It's very compelling. The possibility of developing interpretive tools that let you, as if with shovels, remove layers of earth to get deeper and see further—this fascinated me. And I think that's what drew me in. In the end I didn't devote myself to psychoanalytic interpretation, but certainly to cultural interpretation. So the psychoanalytic way of understanding things is still very present in what I do and in how I approach cultural phenomena.

In American Delirium, whether consciously or not, your interpretation of Latin American history is filtered through a psychoanalytic lens.

It is, because the history of Latin America—at least in the twentieth century, perhaps since independence—is a permanent search for identity: What on earth are we? Who are we? And that question implies looking at oneself, looking inward, starting to search in different layers for something that truly makes us who we are. There's an Argentine poet, Hugo Mujica, who has a fantastic verse: "In the depths there are no roots, only what has been torn out." That is, at bottom the only thing we find is loss. In Latin America the only thing we find is loss, absence of identity, and that's why we rush out desperately to try to find it in the Indigenous, or in the Spanish, or in the Yankee, or wherever. Of course, that exercise of exploring and analyzing Latin America's quests has something psychoanalytic about it, without a doubt.

Your book begins with Martí and Rodó's Ariel as initial vectors, where there is a direct opposition to the Yankee. Are we condemned to define ourselves in opposition to the United States?

That's a very timely question. In fact, today I was writing an article about that—the return of Caliban. What happened to us can happen to any people, any nation, any region. External threats tend to unify; they are a bonding agent, and that's what happened at the start of the twentieth century—more precisely in 1898—when the United States attacked Spain's last colonial possessions in the Caribbean, Cuba and Puerto Rico, and finally took them, expelling Spain and fulfilling Martí's terrifying prophecy about U.S. imperial intentions in Latin America. Overnight, geopolitics changed completely. It's more or less what we're seeing now with J.D. Vance's threat that Greenland will be American. That completely changes the geopolitical situation of Latin America. And our neighbor, whom until then we had admired and attempted to emulate by importing positivist ideas, turned into an atrabilious barbarian who aggressed and despised us—and therefore we had to reject him and try to construct an identity as far removed from the Yankee as possible. As far as possible from that despotism, that contempt, that technical and utilitarian mindset in which the strong can do whatever they want. And so, in Latin America, a series of values linked to Greco-Roman culture or to Catholicism began to be rescued. That is, the noble ideal began to be valued—the noble creation of the spirit, disinterested intellectual activity, that which could in one way or another found a civilization, though not necessarily make it rich or militarily powerful.

So Rodó, Rubén Darío, Rufino Blanco Fombona, Paul Groussac, José María Vargas Vila—a number of Latin American authors—began to forge the idea that we were ontologically distinct from the Yankees because we were traversed by what they called the Latin race, with those kinds of virtues. It was a soul or race inclined toward ideals—neither utilitarian nor pragmatic—more poetic, more mystical, attuned to the mysteries of eroticism and to a politics of ideas. A culture or civilization that engendered Galileos, not Thomas Edisons—no technicians, no builders of bridges or lightbulbs or pistols. That seemed crude and vulgar. We were above that (American perpective)…

Very puritan… Very Protestant.

Exactly. Ultimately it was that—an antagonism between Catholic values and Puritan values. And although for a time this was important in restoring self-esteem badly lacerated by the humiliation the United States dealt to Latin America and Spain in the Caribbean—although it was a tonic, a Viagra for the ego ("We may be weaker," we said, "but deep down we're much better than the Yankees—more sophisticated, cultured, poetic")—that identitarian chauvinism also has serious problems. For example, it makes us resistant to learning from abroad; it makes us believe we are self-sufficient and that all the answers will be found in our own territory, our own history, our own traditions, our own soul. And going down that path, Latin America veered away from the modern, democratic, liberal horizon. It entrenched itself in caudillismo and authoritarianism.

Thinking about the leaders we've had—figures like Castro, Perón, Trujillo, Árbenz—they have a halo of Christian redemption. Do you see something in them tied to this Catholic image of a Christ the Savior?

Without a doubt. All of these figures share two traits. First, they are purifiers: more than interpreters, they are physicians of their societies, and what they find is a multitude of vices and corrupting elements. In Castro it's crystal clear: if you look at his speeches, he emphasized the prostitution brought by the Yankees, gambling, mercantilism, monetary values. That is, he identified a series of sins established in Cuba because of the Yankees, and he elevated himself as a purifier, someone who would cleanse all of that. Second, they are shepherds of peoples who will lead them to an Arcadian, paradisiacal place where egalitarian promises—of a good life, of purity—will become reality. In some cases, this verges on nostalgia for the Jesuit missions, because they try to return their nations to those places without contamination, with homogeneity, without individuation, where only the leader thinks—that is, the fathers—and they indicate what is good, what is bad, and what to think about life and things.

What is Cuba today if not that? An island closed to the world where others think for the people—before, Castro; now, the Communist Party. In some way they always replicate that model: to close themselves off, not to trade with the world—which is frowned upon—not to take loans from abroad, not to allow international capitalists and bankers to establish dependencies through lending. There's a phobia of loans. They tend to value autarky: the people must shut themselves in, be homogeneous, have clear authority, be divided not as individuals but as estates, as organs of the same body, and produce everything they consume. That's why the Jesuit missions have been a reference point in the fantasies of both the right and the left. Those models of fully closed, authoritarian societies have fascinated both the left and the right on the continent. And there is, without doubt, a very Catholic element there, deeply rooted in our tradition, which ultimately supposes that while Europe has been corrupted, the reserve of true faith, of true Catholicism, will always be somewhere in America. They may sell it to you as communism or as Peronism, but in the end it's that: here, Catholic values will remain alive and uncorrupted.

I was also thinking about repressed violence. Where do you see that subterranean violence coming out in our societies—in art, in politics?

Well, something very curious has happened in the last ten years…but earlier; before Freud, I think of Schopenhauer, who is a Freudian reference. Schopenhauer was a great aesthete; he loved art, tragedy, because he found in it a way to exorcise the worst in human beings. Through art all of our violence and our most antisocial, dangerous passions could emerge and be seen without risk. Art was a way of unveiling those dark zones that we could domesticate. In that sense, it was not only a valve for repressed impulses but a rich instrument for knowing the human soul. This is also a Freudian idea: sublimation. He says it himself—sublimation is converting the worst part of the soul or of human nature into something socially acceptable that, instead of doing harm, does good. Many thinkers in the art world have believed that art does this and therefore must have total freedom. Art feeds on the worst and does us the favor of showing us the worst of humanity. But what has happened lately? Political correctness has placed narrow limits on creation, and certain things can no longer be done. Creation cannot be obscene because it could be a bad influence; it cannot be violent because someone might feel offended or attacked. A host of walls have been put up around creation, turning it into the opposite of what it should be. Art is not a private preserve where only angels can enter to tell angelic things. So—and here's what's interesting—where is that fury, that hatred coming out? Those contained elements that are no longer released through culture are coming out…

A thanatic drive that comes out in politics. Politicians have become administrators of hatred…

Politicians have become performers of hatred—performers of the faction, the tribe—people who attack their adversary viscerally, who is no longer an adversary but an enemy, whom they annihilate morally, and who are binding electorates together around the worst feelings and emotions human beings can harbor: phobia, hatred, the corrupting threat, the contaminating threat.

We're in a crazy world and, in large part, I think it's because it's no longer culture but politics that has become the space where this passionate and violent human side is ventilated. We therefore have the worst possible combination: a goody-goody culture—silly, banal, predictable—that says nothing to anyone, that tries to turn human beings into angels; and an incorrect politics—extremely corrupt, polarizing, jarring—that feeds on the worst of human beings and is driving society mad, doing us no good at all.

Before, the struggle against authoritarianism was frontal. And from there comes Bolaño and the start of a literature you call Gothic, where vampires, healers, haunted houses appear—and it made me think of Freud's uncanny. Does repressed violence also find an outlet in these Gothic figures?

I suppose so. This literature has done something very interesting, which is to revisit the Latin American history we don't understand. There's a point at which evil escapes us—where we don't understand why the Argentine military violated, murdered, tortured as they did. There is a point where evil breaks all the limits of rationality and understanding and becomes a Gothic mystery—the unfathomable mystery of evil. And this literature has taken up those themes, those wounds in Latin American history, and has treated them precisely as something that cannot be understood rationally. To grasp it, one must use those kinds of metaphors of the uncanny, the Gothic, the haunted house. The house devours you; the house is half alive and carnivorous, and whoever enters is eaten by the rooms, never to return…

And in this world, where do you see psychoanalysis fitting? I'm thinking of other therapies, pills, coaching, self-help.

That's a hard question, because on the one hand I think we've never lived in a culture more therapeutic than ours. Today everyone is a coach, does yoga, goes to alternative therapies. It's a moment of absolute uncertainty: the geopolitical order is changing, as are the certainties that previous generations lived with. The idea that we would always live better than our parents, that the welfare state was solid and would guarantee stability, that we'd have a job for life—this has all disappeared, at least here in Europe.

A great deal of responsibility has been placed on the "I": be an individual, have an identity, succeed, prosper, be someone in society, be recognized, and so on. But that burden begins to be excessive and to break it. The "I" has become very fragile. We are living in a world where these selves feel supremely fragile and are seeking some kind of spiritual, emotional support everywhere.

That's what I sense, at least from Spain, which has never been a very psychoanalytic place. Spain is not very inclined to psychoanalytic therapy; psychoanalysts are not part of public debate. That happens more in Latin America. Psychoanalysis, I think, has not found a way to enter this fair of therapies. And I think it should be there, because what we are seeing is an immense demand be-

ing satisfied by therapeutic trash—charlatanism, amateurism, cheap New Age. There is a need for guidance, reflection, references, learning to think for oneself that is being supplied by absolute charlatans. So of course there's a field for psychoanalysis. The problem is how to get there. In this society everything has to be agile and immediate, everything at the speed of a tweet or TikTok. And psychoanalytic therapy—and I know this because I saw patients who accompanied my mother for decades—is a different process. It has rhythms that don't fit the contemporary world. I think that's one of psychoanalysis' challenges.

Did you undergo psychoanalysis yourself?

Yes. I underwent analysis for a year, just when I was studying psychology and about to start my practicum as a therapist. On the one hand, to have some experience lying on the couch, to know how to treat my own patients, to have some tools. I was very concerned with understanding technique; for me that was essential because I would have to put it into practice. But it's also possible this is a denial: I say I'm going for that, but in reality I was going for something else—and yes, in effect, we worked on other things in my life, and it was fascinating and a privilege. That is, to have a space for yourself, where you reflect on your life and you are the topic—it's an enormous privilege, because it rarely happens. We rarely have spaces where all the attention and protagonism belong to us: the patient.

One of the most important elements of psychoanalysis is the possibility of mourning the losses we all experience in life. Is that why it stands at the antipodes of a society that seeks never to be depressed—that wants us all to be winners?

It may be, because psychoanalysis, I think, helps you live better with yourself, with who you are. Coaches invent an artificial identity. It's different, because after psychoanalysis, I think you gain much more lucidity. You become someone who understands not only yourself much better, but also the world you live in. You become more realistic, in some sense, and you learn to live with that—to live with your conflicts, traumas, weaknesses, strengths—and you are emotionally calmer and more solid. You gain structure.

But will that guarantee success? Possibly not. Your life may be calmer, more manageable, but not "successful." And what these new therapies sell is success; it's wealth—success measured as wealth. They tell you, "Follow my method and you'll be rich." Many people—especially young people—want to hear that. That's the cohort that's most worrisome, because it's more vulnerable. On the other hand, the far right that's on the rise in Europe is dragging these young people toward traditionalism. In a chaotic world, the solution, they say, is to return to traditional values, to traditional roles, to a traditional—even religious—way of life. There, they say, are certainties and a solid floor we can share. We know who is who, who is a man and who is a woman, and what I should do as a man. It's a generation in need of this—tools to understand the world and their lives—and hopefully they can access decent therapies.

The theme of this issue of Calibán is "Losing." What was your experience as a migrant—stripping yourself and leaving Colombia to live in Madrid?

Yes. Well, my family is a family of migrants; part of my family had migrated. Both of my paternal grandparents came from Spain. And my father, as the son of migrants, always felt somewhat uprooted in Colombia. He was very Colombian—he clearly cared deeply about Colombia—but he didn't belong to the Colombian social nuclei; he was always somewhat uprooted. So, for me, from very early on, the idea of travel was obvious. I grew up with the notion that at some point I had to leave Colombia simply to learn, to see the world, to learn new things. Moreover, at that time Colombia was an absolutely closed country. You couldn't get a Rolling Stones album; imports of cultural products were heavily restricted. You could only buy national products. Your cultural world depended on friends who traveled, on secondhand references, the echo of an echo—and that generated a lot of anxiety and a strong desire to leave to see what you were missing. No music groups came to Colombia. None. Air Supply came around 2000, when they were already grandfathers.

We were very far, very isolated from the world. So of course there was a lot of desire to travel. I very quickly knew I had to leave Colombia, and the pretext was the doctorate. I came to Spain at twenty-four; I was relatively young; I came on an adventure to do a PhD. And, well, what had to happen happened: I met people, lived things, learned a lot. And I started to stay, until all of a sudden, I was married and had a son. My goal wasn't to stay in Spain; it was something that happened spontaneously, very naturally—and I don't regret it.

Seeing from European experience gives you some analytical distance… You see the similarities more than the differences.

Exactly. I would never have become interested in Latin America as a continent had I not passed through Spain and married a Peruvian—had I not met other Latin Americans. Because in Colombia I didn't know a single Venezuelan in the flesh. There were no Venezuelans in Colombia at that time. They were on telenovelas but not in the streets—complete strangers. And from Colombia, Venezuelans, Ecuadorians, and Peruvians seemed utterly different and far apart. Coming here, getting to know them, you realize we are absolutely the same—that the narcissism of small differences, as Freud would say, divides us, but the differences are tiny, tiny. And it's supremely stimulating to see Latin America as a region—as a unit that has lived practically the same cultural and political processes without knowing it. From here you see we've gone through the same things. It's very stimulating.

This capacity to observe Latin America makes me think of your book as an observation of Latin America as a bloc. But we've also talked about Pan-Hispanism, which is beginning to involve Spain. Will this movement really burst into our lives in the near future?

I am among those who defend the union of Latin America and Spain. Anti-Hispanism must end; the colonial period must be seen as a period of light more than of shadow, because wonderful things were accomplished in Latin America. There were horrors during the conquest, of course—it was barbaric like all conquests—but the colonial period left cities that are world heritage sites in Mexico, Peru, everywhere. So that anti-Spanish sentiment—that distrust, that notion that they were only exploitative colonizers—must be disproved by history and in common sense so that we can have a much more natural, solid relationship with Spain. And yes, we should feel like part of a unit, because we clearly are. Living here and coming from there, it's evident.

Now, what happens with Pan-Hispanism? Pan-Hispanism as a movement is an attempt to unite Spain and Latin America but not through modern values—rather, through Catholicism. It's practically a religious project that tries to rescue certain traditional values. It seeks a civilizational unity akin to what Putin is attempting in Eurasia—a new pole detached from the West and destined to resist or confront the Anglo world.

In that sense, Pan-Hispanism is very reactionary and very pre-modern. The union between Latin America and Spain must happen another way, as in the European Union: nation-states that decide to hand over part of their sovereignty to supranational entities in order to unite and coordinate efforts. Pan-Hispanism is a utopia—believing that we are suddenly going to re-establish a kind of religious vassalage to a Roman Madrid. That's not going to happen. It's absolutely impossible. Moreover, something surprising is happening: the standard-bearers of Pan-Hispanism in Spain—the Vox party—who should, by their roots, their rhetoric, their values, be the most anti-Yankee, have become Trumpist, that is, allied with their supposed enemy; same with Milei. That completely ruins the Pan-Hispanic equation, because if the loudest defenders of it are now pro-Trump and pro-Putin, what on earth is Pan-Hispanism? What the devil is it? What they are rescuing is nationalist traditionalism.

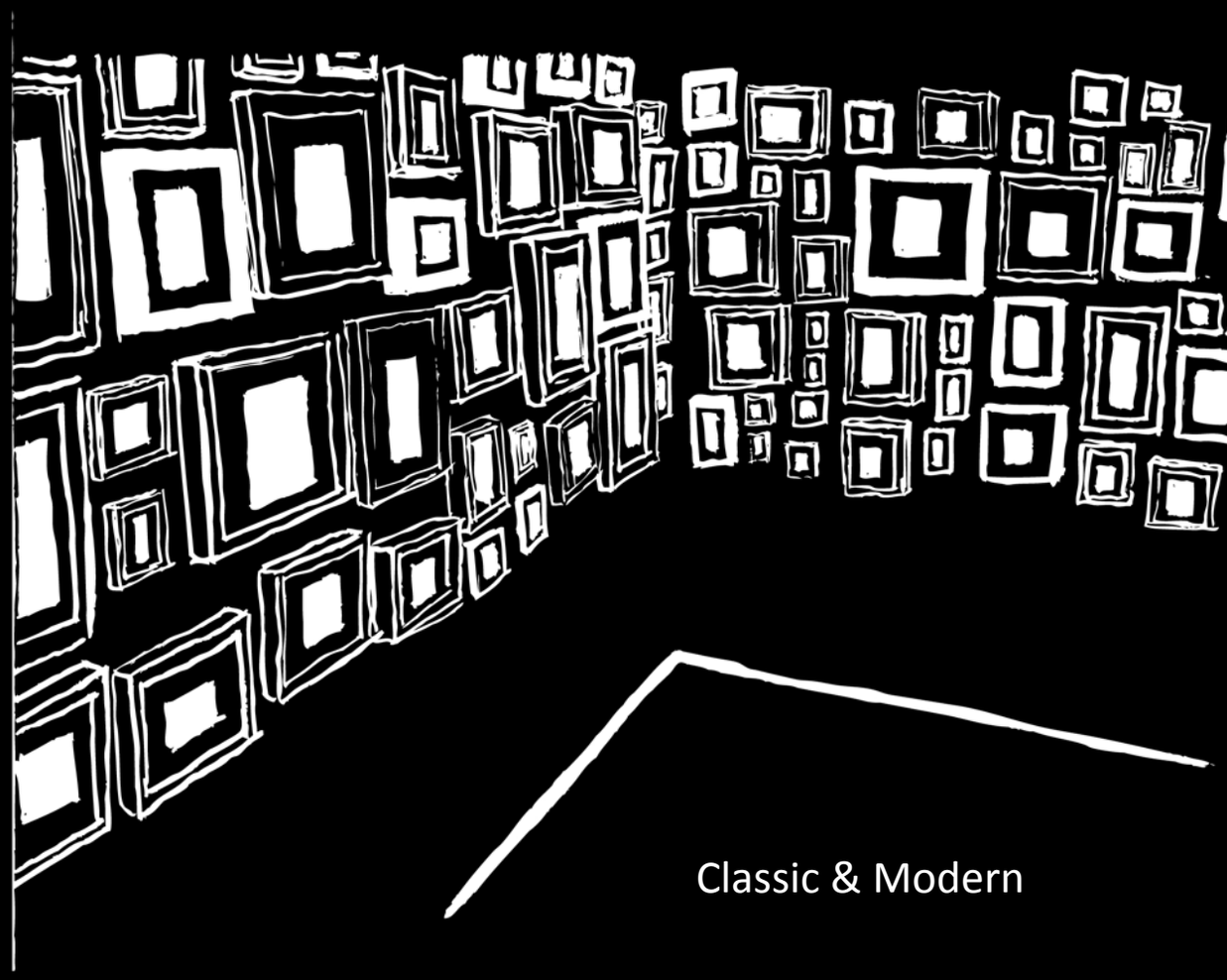
Given everything we've covered in this conversation, it feels like we are entering dark times—returning to the ghosts of the past, to formulas we know have never worked. How do we find hope, a sense of possibility?

Look, I think the world is becoming disordered at a tremendous speed. Even the very idea of "the West," which was a safe space because individual rights were respected and guaranteed, is dissolving. In the West you could be gay, you could be a woman, you could make your own life choices, and that was guaranteed. But now this idea of the West is starting to come undone, and already in Argentina there is tremendous hostility toward gay people. In the United States there is tremendous hostility toward Muslims, toward Latinos. That is, you can no longer live your life with the spontaneity and calm you once had.

And that's what is most worrying in the immediate present. How do we recover hope? Well, I think this is the time to remember what the hope of a liberal society was—paradoxically a Yankee idea or the idea of Yankee philosophers such as Richard Rorty—who showed the virtues of that style of coexistence where we are guided by laws, not by men. What Trump said is horrifying: "He who saves his country does not violate the law." That is the most barbaric Latin American caudillismo there is.

That is precisely what cannot be allowed to prevail. We have to recover faith in the law, which is what saves us—what protects us from the providential man. And we must remember what it was to live in societies where each person can develop their life project as best they can, as they wish, as they please—in freedom. When people discovered that, it was an orgy of happiness. That's why, when the former Soviet Union discovered it, it was an orgy of happiness. When East Berlin discovered it, it was an orgy of happiness. It was being able to live as yourself, with yourself as your own reference point—your desires, your ambitions, your possibilities—not what a party, a man, a government says. That has been forgotten, and I think the way back to hope is to remember what that is.

Carlos Granés (Bogotá, 1975) is a Colombian essayist and anthropologist based in Madrid. He has published *El puño invisible: Arte, revolución y un siglo de cambios culturales* [The Invisible Fist: Art, Revolution, and a Century of Cultural Change and American] and *Delirio americano: Una historia cultural y política de América Latina* [American Delirium: A Cultural and Political History of Latin America], among other books. He has received the Isabel Polanco International Essay Prize and the Simón Bolívar Journalism Prize on two occasions. He is a columnist for *ABC* and *The Objective*, and a member of the Colombian Academy of Language



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Marta Lewin*

Mourning in Childhood: Contributions by Marilú Pelento

María Lucila Pelento, a prominent Argentine psychoanalyst of the 20th and part of the 21st century (1932–2014), worked intensely in the field of child psychoanalysis, pursuing a path that remains valuable, relevant, and updated to this day.

She had a particular interest in reflecting on the social sphere, social violence, human rights, and the restitution of appropriated children who were victims of the Argentine dictatorship (which took place between 1976 and 1983). As early as the 1990s, she paid special attention to migratory processes, which she described as among the most important in history. She also addressed the issue of tattoos and the analyzability of the children she treated and supervised.

The characteristics of mourning in early childhood represent one of the most significant contributions to psychoanalysis that Marilú Pelento left to us. This paper seeks to give an account of this important contribution.

Losing the title to which *Caliban* summons us, is closely related to what Freud conceptualized as the work of mourning. If we consider that the possibility of loss is one of the forces that drives the functioning of the psychic apparatus and that constitutes part of human subjectivity, we may ask ourselves whether a small child, in the face of the loss of significant figures, is capable of going through this process.

Mourning in Freud

Mourning is described by Freud in his work *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917/1915) as a "reaction to the real loss of a loved object (p. 248). He asks why this compromise by which the command of reality is carried out piecemeal should be so painful". (p. 243)[1]

He states that

> although mourning involves grave departures from the normal attitude to life, it never occurs to us to regard it as a pathological condition and to refer it to medical treatment. We rely on it being overcome after a certain lapse of time, and we look upon any interference with it as useless or even harmful. (p. 243)[2]

Freud posits a kind of work, the work of mourning, which is indispensable and nearly obligatory for the subject's well-being. It is a challenge, involving pain and uncertainty arising from the death of a person, an object, or a significant event. He also relates it to the loss of ideals or core ideas held by the subject. Freud explains that each subject projects their narcissism onto the lost libidinal object and confronts it with the fantasy of its recovery. He observes that this process can be accompanied, at times, by overwhelming rage and guilt; he refers to states of anxiety and hallucinations. It is a passage that undergoes castration, taking place as the subject, at that moment, withdraws from many of their interests under circumstances of inhibition. It involves a love that one does not wish to relinquish, that is resigned to losing it through identification, and that connects the subject to aspects of the lost object.

Freud (2015/2017) characterizes normal mourning as that which

> undoubtedly overcomes the loss of the object... Reality passes its verdict — that the object no longer exists — upon each single one of the memories and hopes through which the libido was attached to the lost object; and the ego is persuaded by the sum of its narcissistic satisfactions in being alive to sever its attachment to the abolished object. (p. 252).

However, mourning is not considered a pathological process; it can be a strengthening experience. He states that in the work of mourning, the ego, struck by the real loss of the object, sets in motion a process of working-through that will, over time, allow it to preserve that lost object in reality, but with a renewed libidinal cathexis.

Marilu Pelento, mourning in childhood

In her article "Duelos en la infancia" (Mourning in Childhood) (1988), Marilú observes that

> losses occurring in early infancy… … cannot be recovered through memory, which demands an additional psychic effort… the child is psychically worked through by mourning. This work involves removing functional dissociations that at times transform into structural dissociations of the ego: fantasies of destiny, pathological identifications… traces in character formation, traces that make some individuals feel special; the transmission of dissociations or crypts in the descendants; and an exacerbation of the epistemophilic drive (p.8).

In addressing the topic that brings us together, mourning in early childhood, Pelento engages in dialogue with various authors, among whom Winnicott stands out as a privileged interlocutor. Winnicott examines the terrain of mother-infant

* Asociación Psicoanalítica de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

1. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (English), Volume XIV, pp 244–245

2. Standard Edition of Freud's Works, Volume XIV, p. 243.

Anamaría McCarthy
The river (2024), intervened photography, 100 x 80 cm, *Empty Rooms* series

exchange prior to the first five or six months of life, . This author enables the study of more primitive relationships, of the initial moments of life, and underscores the phase surrounding birth as crucial for the development of life. He proposes that psychic structuring cannot be conceived without reference to the maternal function.

Marilú emphasizes Winnicott's conception of the mother as a guiding compass and as the bearer of paradoxes, an interpretation that departs from more classical readings of the author. She notes that in early psychic structuring, the basic category of presence/absence retains the paradoxical character that Winnicott highlights throughout his work. She explains that this presence/absence category can occur in the interstices between illusion and disillusion, in the gap between the found and the created that enables subjectivity. For the object to be created, it must first be found, without inquiry into its origin. Illusion encompasses the idea of creation of the maternal breast. The transitional-the transitional psychic space that gives rise to the object and to transitional phenomena- is born out of disillusion. She highlights that the transitional is not shaped in early childhood through mourning, but rather through what she calls t*he mother's movements*, beginning with a first fusion through identification, leading toward a possible separation that involves "a form of passage of the child through an experience of psychic pain" (Pelento, 1998, p. 8).

In cases involving the death of significant figures, mother, father, siblings, in very young children, a process of signification or re-signification is required, which the child must carry out. Often, the epistemophilic drive is intensified, pushing the child toward a reality-testing process, partly illusory, aimed at filling a void of image and knowledge, which implies *additional psychic work* (Pelento,1998). This also entails work on the level of affects. In a 2010 interview, Pelento states that young children employ the mechanism of disavowal , "because along with that relative, they lose the function that was anchored in the deceased person" (Pelento, in Heker, 2010, p. 813). "To disavow is to affirm that it does not exist" (Pelento, in Heker, 2010, p. 812), with varying degrees and duration, which in most cases lasts for a limited period of time.

Marilú adds that within the concept of illusion, we encounter mechanisms of disavowal (1998). She believed that the developing psyche of a young child is not in a position to withstand traumatic experiences with a high degree of psychic pain. Disavowal presents itself as a defensive mechanism that has its origins in the young child's efforts to free themselves from distressing perceptions of the external world. For the child, disavowal is appropriate and adaptive. The young child does not yet have the psychic space to undergo the mourning process; the condition of illusion/disillusion dominates the psychic field. Since it involves the untying of bonds, the work of mourning is a very painful process. The young child needs to disavow Later, over the course of childhood and into puberty or adolescence, the child may become able to engage in such a complex process. This process may *remain on a waiting list,* to also wonder if, at a later point, it will lead to a signification or re-signification of what was lost (Pelento, 1998).

Marilú clarifies that in every experience of mourning, something of what has been lost is preserved as real; the trace of the object exceeds the realm of fantasy. She highlights a Winnicott who says more than he intended to say (1993), who moves away from a developmentalist dimension (1993). In this sense, based on Winnicott's theorization, we can clarify that the impact of the loss will be particular to each child. She

affirms that Winnicott creates another topology, which includes the invention of the transitional dimension that he describes as a dimension of rest. In doing so, he departs from and enriches the binary duality of internal/external. She highlights the unprecedented positioning of this author who asks the reader to personally create what he develops; he gives the reader participation. She believes that Winnicott is an author who generously conveys what he thinks.

Marilú reflects that when a child asks about a loss, or when expressions such as "no" or "no, it's not true that...", or when others are forbidden from speaking about the deceased , it is because the mechanism of disavowal has begun to give way. She clinically highlights the value of questions: children want to know how they are being thought of by those who remain alive. For the mechanism of disavowal to shift and make room for other psychic processes, including denial, Marilú adds that it is beneficial for the child to be able to move through categories such as presence/absence, animate/inanimate, temporary absence/permanent absence. In this way, the child may begin to endure a certain degree of psychic pain.

It is essential that children be supported by adults. Only then can the grieving process begin, and reality testing find its way. The adults in charge bear the responsibility to inform the child, although this does not guarantee that the mourning process will start. The prohibition against knowing, she says, is toxic. "At the same time, the child compares current family practices with those from before, noticing changes, and through this comparative work, begins to register the reality of the definitive absence" (Pelento, in Heker, 2010, p. 812).

She highlights the value of the way in which the parents, those particular parents, process their own grief, as this journey will inevitably affect the child. She adds that in clinical practice, it is possible to encounter parents who frequently engage in disavowal.

My experience with Marilu Pelento

In my notes from the study group I participated in[3] Marilú draws a parallel between the moment of hostility or anger in grief , as described by Melanie Klein and the Winnicottian description of the mother who survives the baby's voracious attacks. This is a stage of pre-concern that describes the earliest type of the mother–baby relationship, without guilt. The first object relationship is ruthless; therefore, the child needs a mother who is uniquely capable of tolerating this cruelty. Otherwise, the child will hide their cruelty and pass through states of dissociation.

As one of my most significant teachers, Marilú continues to have a great influence on my training, my psychoanalytic journey, and my daily work with patients. Through the aforementioned study group (1992–1999), I had the opportunity to approach her, learn her style, engage in dialogue, disagree, and share her teachings and viewpoints. Many years later, I found myself drawn to engage more deeply with what she was trying to convey, revealing her passion for child psychoanalysis.

My notes from her remained untouched for years, on a shelf in my library; they were an "unfinished task" among my readings. The invitation to write about Pelento's contribution to mourning in early childhood, and the course on children traumatized by early loss, allowed me to reconnect with her, with my notes, and with her thinking, in a way that, in tune with the theme of this issue of *Calibán- Losing-* allowed me to lose and find myself again in her company.

Today, I value her rigor, her psychoanalytic stance, and her openness to new ideas. I also appreciate her refusal to conform to what should or was supposed to be, and her attention especially directed toward suffering in childhood.

Thus, by revisiting and re-examining part of her work, I renew and reawaken the impact her transmission had and continues to have on me. If Winnicott allows us to read *his* Winnicott, I believe I allowed myself to be carried along by Marilú, who also embraced and emphasized the theme of life's beginnings. She turned to creation, to the importance of creativity as equivalent to the initial illusion that inaugurates the psyche (Winnicott, 1971). She also turned to art, to literature, to the psychoanalytic reading of authors from diverse schools of thought: Arendt, Klein, Marion Milner, Bion, Piera Aulagnier, Anzieu, Lacan, Aguinis, Tabak de Bianchedi, Rousillon, Pontalis, Lewkowicz, Beckett.

She studied in depth and exhaustively. She fully committed herself to the ideas that interested her. She used to say that each of her readings compensated for what others did not include. She was an intelligent reader. She was inquisitive and she was dedicated to her clinical work and to those of us who listened to her. She placed significant importance on the context of social reality; nothing was indifferent to her.

I then wondered, in this renewed reading of Marilú, why, toward the end of what had been our study group, she brought us closer to Beckett, to Rousillon, and continued always with the transmission of texts by Pontalis and Winnicott.

I believe that in relation to mourning in young children, Pontalis accompanied her. Pontalis accompanies. As he often does, he takes us on pathways that are difficult to name, to say. He approaches loss, the cruelty of pain, *boarded-up windows* (Pontalis, 2005), and his beautiful expression of the "internal hemorrhage when the pain is too intense" (Pontalis, 2000/2005, p. 45). Through his patients, he brings us close to his clinical work, his vital experience, his poetry. So does Marilú. Both are able to connect with suffering, with a *beyond…* uniquely in the realm of childhood.

I now reflect, in line with readings of Rousillon and Beckett, that the idea Marilú tried to convey emphasizes beginnings, highlights creation that, in her reading, acts as another psychic operator. She then asks whether a young child, in a state of creation, of illusion, is able to undergo a complex process of mourning.

Her influences on my clinical work

At this point in the text, I would like to share with readers some reflections that may illustrate aspects of my clinical experience.

A father consults me about his 6-year-old son. He describes him as distracted, with unstable interactions with peers, interested in the world of screens, and unwilling to accept boundaries set by any adult. He is unable to detach himself from his father. He

3. Psychic Structuring Study Group, 1992-1999, made up of Claudia Levin, Clara Schejtman, Jorge Mirochnik, Tencha de Sagastizabal, Ines Bardi and Marta Lewin.

constantly turns to him, messages and calls him. He needs to hold on and cling to him.

At the beginning of his analysis, he appears attentive to my words. As our first interaction, he draws a black, dense, dark frame, inside of which there is a child. He says it is a boy who is trapped. "Trapped?" I ask him. He looks at me with an expression I recognize as both defiant and hurt. I propose that we meet, play, talk. He doesn't respond. He says he is only interested in talking on the cellphone.

Félix functions within a persistent state of complaint in what is intended to be his analytic space. He doesn't want to see me, he doesn't want to come to the office- "without video games, I don't like it", he says. I then propose playing video games on the computer. He doesn't want to. Something impenetrable plays out in the transference. A child who is difficult to access; I am unable to break through the hermetic frame through which he presents himself. "I'm bored," he says. I am unable to connect with him because he is resistant to any intervention I might make. Is he only interested in withdrawal? He complains: "This is useless. Why do I come?" Countertransferentially, I perceive him as barricaded. Eventually, he abandons his analysis.

I would like to clarify now that this is a child who is going through the early loss of his mother. She died from an illness when he was two years old. Félix was left in the care of his father, who informs him of his mother's death a few months after it happened. Félix disavows; his mourning is detained, impossible to process. He asks no questions. He remains locked within his own enigma.

Julieta lost her father at an early age. In session, the disappearance of the father of a family is played insistently. During one of these sessions, distressed, she asks me, "Do you think this dad is not here anymore?" I respond that it seems he died. "Why?" she asks. "I don't want that, I miss my dad."

How might Marilú think about these children? Félix interrupts his analysis—is this a case of disavowal of his mother's death? A child who no longer asks questions, but who, through a drawing, allows himself to reveal something of his pain? Does that suffering obstruct his possibilities to know, to understand, to symbolize his loss?

As early as 2003, Marilú suggested that screens connect children with death. She then asks whether this connection is a real encounter or rather a spectacle through which, "ultimately, death is disavowed" (Pelento, in Heker, 2010, p. 814). It is important to clarify that today, screens also function as toys for children, a reason that would lead me to ask her whether she believes they might act as an impediment or a facilitator to the circulation of transference. How does she think they would operate in a young child? Given that screens have become just another cultural object, could they obstruct the process of mourning?

Julieta begins to ask questions, the mourning process is set in motion, and pain begins to occupy psychic space. Reality testing starts to take effect. How would Marilú make a prognosis of this girl's future development? Would she allow herself to do so?

From another theoretical perspective, Allouch (2024) describes mourning through the lens of his personal experience. After attempting to recover a succession of dreams and nightmares following the early loss of a daughter and a father, he brings us closer to what he considers a misreading. He argues that what Freud conceived as the work of mourning is equated with a norm, insofar as it was presented as medical evidence. He considers that in his article Mourning and Melancholia (Freud 1915/1917), Freud was primarily devoted to the study of melancholia, and this approach was based on an uncritical version of mourning (Allouch, 2024, p. 19). He asserts that "the clinic is the mourning" (Allouch, 2024, p. 18). He even notes that, in the name of this supposed necessity of mourning work, it has been prescribed that grieving children should be made to cry (p. 46).

How would Marilú read this excerpt? What would she take from it? What would she analyze? What would she criticize?

Marilú, in keeping with Allouch, focuses her gaze on the clinical setting. Her ability and interest in engaging with young children affected by early losses allowed her to understand their psychic possibilities and limitations. Far from imposing herself on children, she observes, shares, and intervenes.

Unlike Allouch, she values what Freud calls the work of mourning. Based on her clinical work and also on Freud's arguments in Mourning and Melancholia (1917/1915), she notes that a young child is not capable of carrying out the work Freud describes. Thus, Allouch's sharp formulation, "the clinic is the mourning" (op. cit.), could be a point of exchange between them. Marilú would possibly give the word mourning greater depth; she would include the process that young children go through in relation to it. Perhaps she wouldn't stray far from the idea that "the clinic is the mourning," but she would likely give herself the freedom to play with it.

The importance of reclaiming personal life, the experience of recovering dreams and nightmares, could open the way for a fruitful dialogue between them. Marilú shared aspects of her personal background. She said that each particular, familial, or intrafamilial experience could either facilitate or obstruct access to certain material.

She gave the example that a psychoanalyst with more personal or familial contact with their own mourning, with their own loss, especially early loss, or with major historical catastrophes such as the Holocaust or the military dictatorship in Argentina, might be able to delve more deeply and engage more intensely with a patient's material shaped by those experiences.

I now find myself at the end of this writing;, we always return to endings, to losses, *to Losing*. Inevitably, something is lost in writing,- this piece included. The inherent constraint of writing leads me to ask how to conclude this work. Does it have an ending? How does one close it? Is closure even possible?

I could state, argue hypotheses, return to some of the questions I posed along the way, focus on the clinical, the theoretical, on complexity, but I prefer not to confine it. I choose to let it circulate, to give it play, and in so doing, summon what I believe Marilú sought to share.

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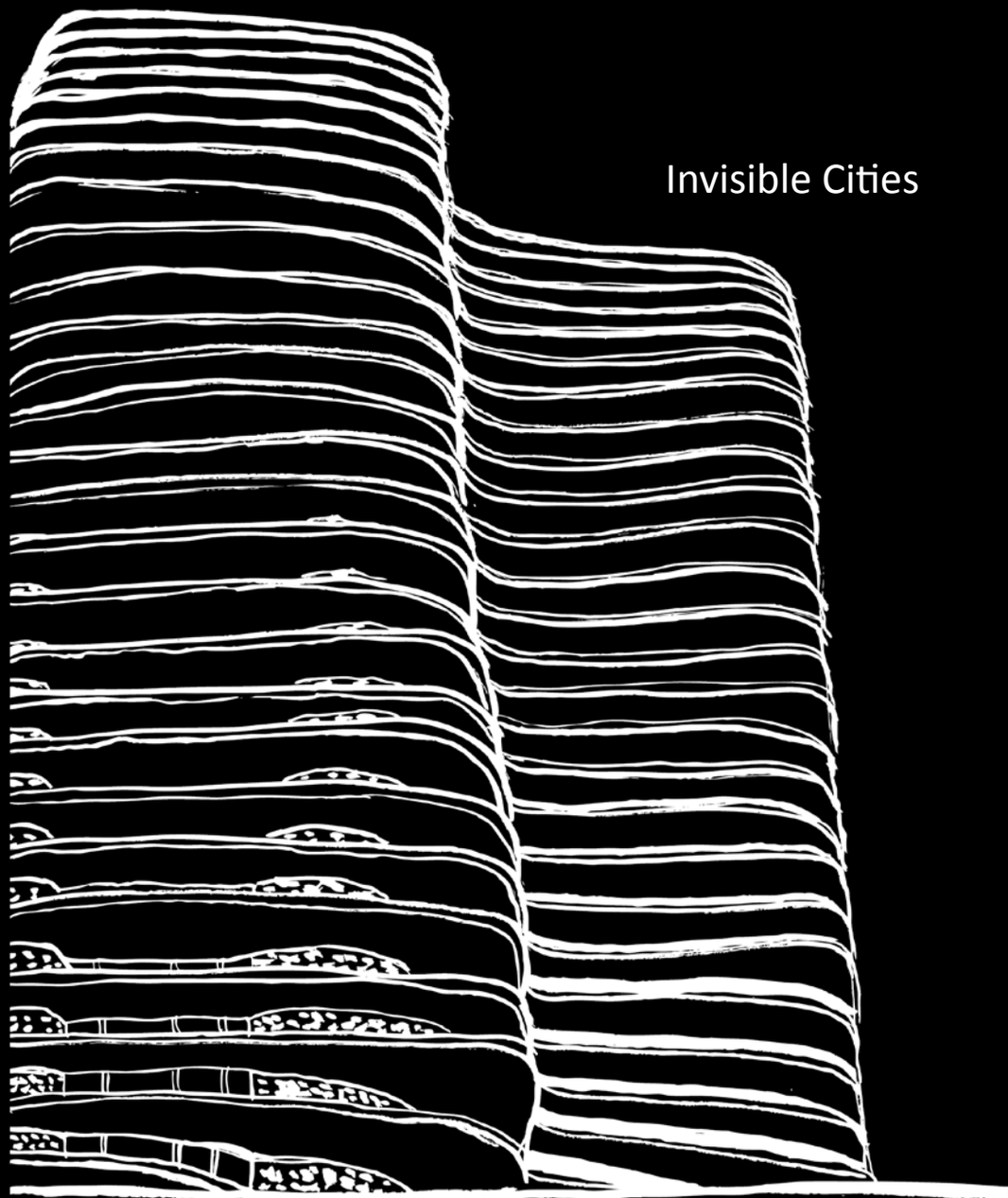
Invisible Cities



Calibán - RLP, 22(1), 218-223 2024

Liza M. Zachrisson*

Guatemala, between disasters and reconstructions

Guatemala, the country of eternal spring, is a hidden gem. Unknown to many, but with a special charm that captivates those who discover it. Originally called Quauhtemallan, it means "place of forests" or "place of many trees" in Nahuatl. It possesses an immense diversity of flora, fauna, and culture. A jungle that hides temples of ancient Mayan civilizations that are imperceptible from the skies, but when you enter the jungle, their imposing presence amazes you. A land of volcanoes that surprise with their explosive awakening. A territory where you can find black sand beaches on the Pacific, white sand beaches on the Caribbean Sea, arid deserts, tropical jungles, and cloud forests.

This small territory located in Central America has been unrepresented for many and, at the same time, an important point of encounter and disagreement between the Old and New Worlds in past centuries, and between the North and South during the last century. A distant land where Europeans who migrated four generations ago settled in search of a new beginning. A place of escape for Jews and Germans during World War II. A population made up of diverse ethnic groups: indigenous peoples, Xinjas, Garifunas, and Ladinos. In every corner, the blending of indigenous customs and beliefs is alive, as is the imposing invasion of Christianity that continues today. From the indigenous to the Ladino population, the predominance of animistic and religious thinking that Freud discusses in *Totem and Taboo* (1913 [1912-1913]/2003c) still prevails among most Guatemalans.

As I describe this multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic Guatemala, full of stories and yet unknown to many, I cannot help but think how similar the description of this territory is to the realm of the unconscious. Unknown to many who are unaware of its existence, but possessing immense complexity and richness for those who dare to explore it.

After a long history of battles and wars, Guatemala has been marked with wounds that still bleed, revealing the impact of transgenerational trauma, from ancient Mayan times to more modern times of Spanish conquest and current subjugation to world powers. These wounds persist, repeating themselves in the unconscious of those of us who inhabit the consulting rooms, on and behind the couch.

A group under construction

Like the history of our country and its capital, Guatemala City, the first group of psychoanalysts in training in Guatemala was founded with effort and hard work, affected by natural disasters that bring loss, movement, desire, and the possibility of reconstruction. Our group has grown every year. Colleagues who have passed through the different spaces of psychoanalytic thought that already existed in the country have joined the training group. We train at the Latin American Institute of Psychoanalysis (ILaP) and continue to build spaces for the development and dissemination of psychoanalysis in this country, sharing the desire to build the first psychoanalytic institution in Guatemala affiliated with the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA), without denying or disregarding the particularities and needs of our region, shaped by our culture, context, and history. An institution that allows and facilitates the formation of a community.

In 1976, Guatemala experienced its last earthquake, which left 20% of Guatemalans at that time injured or dead. Then-President Kjell Laugerud said, "Guatemala is wounded, but not mortally." This phrase timelessly describes our country, always wounded by transgenerational traumas, perpetual natural disasters, and the lacerations of corruption. Guatemala is always wounded, but never mortally. And it is that among the rubble of loss, there is always the possibility of reconstruction. We are betting that psychoanalysis is a powerful and necessary tool in that work.

Arq. Daniel Villani

The psychoanalytic foundations

The path of psychoanalysis in Guatemala has faced various challenges. As in many parts of Latin America, psychoanalysis was promoted by two Argentine psychoanalysts who migrated to Guatemala: one founded the New Lacanian School (NEL) and the other the Center for Freudian Studies (CEF), where they disseminated the ideas of post-Freudian authors. Each center held conferences and academic activities. I frequented both spaces during my time in college, which undoubtedly influenced my passion and curiosity for psychoanalysis.

After traveling to an IPA conference in 2011, I was surprised to recognize the solid foundation we had been building in Guatemala. Inspired with two colleagues, Claudia Melville and Claudia Castro, we set out to build something that would showcase the psychoanalytic knowledge that existed in Guatemala and, at the same time, introduce new and different ideas from psychoanalysts from around the world. In a café at the Sophos bookstore, which imports the widest variety of books on psychoanalysis, we founded *Revista Lúdica*. For six years, we published twenty-two digital

* Instituto Latinoamericano de Psicoanálisis. Guatemala City, Guatemala.

editions in which we invited colleagues from Guatemala and foreign psychoanalysts to play with psychoanalytic ideas and write their proposals. We opened a section for Guatemalan artistic expressions and another for analyzing films and books, an exercise we encouraged our university students to do.

In 2013, *Lúdica* joined forces with CEF to organize the first Psychoanalytic Meeting in Guatemala, inviting foreign psychoanalysts to give lectures and supervision, and Guatemalan colleagues to present papers over three days. This project brought many minds together to work on various outreach activities at different universities and associations throughout the country over several months. Members of the organizing group, CEF, Lúdica, guests from NEL, psychiatrists, psychologists, and students participated in the meeting. This involved important and necessary outreach work, considering that in Guatemala, Freud, like psychoanalysis, "is considered a museum piece, not to be exhibited, but hidden among old volumes of books that no one reads anymore" (Salgado David, 2024, p. 220). Dusting off ideas, conveying their relevance and importance, and generating questions has been a necessary task with professionals and students who are unfamiliar with psychoanalysis.

After the meeting, another tragedy of fate led to the closure of CEF, leaving a void for those of us interested in psychoanalysis. As absence breeds movement, at Lúdica we decided to organize various academic activities, attempting to build a new space, similar to what our ancestors did when they rebuilt new structures after disasters. Thus, our energy began to be focused more on academic activities than on the magazine, so *Revista Lúdica* paused its publications, transforming into an academic space.

This new space gradually grew. Some of us traveled to the IPA Congress in 2015, where we learned about ILaP. We were offered the possibility of training in a condensed format, with condensed analysis sessions one week per month and full seminars taught over a

weekend by analysts who would travel to Guatemala. Although the proposal was tempting, it seemed inaccessible to us, given the high economic and psychic costs involved. Furthermore, as transgenerational marks function, there was resistance to the risk of feeling colonized once again, subjected to a European model that seemed to prioritize compliance with the requirements of a foreign institution, rather than providing us with the necessary conditions to properly digest such a complex theory and to adequately carry out a psychoanalytic process that was meant to be experienced with continuity. The training group was not formed, but a relationship with ILaP developed and grew over the years.

For five years, *Lúdica* organized three in-person conferences (2016, 2018, 2019), led by ILaP directors from different Latin American countries and attended by colleagues and students who wanted to learn more about psychoanalysis.

In 2020, after the pandemic began and psychoanalytic training moved to a virtual format, a new opportunity arose. Virtuality opened up new possibilities for continuity in training in a more timely manner for ILaP candidates: receiving weekly seminars and high-frequency analysis. New, more opportune conditions for metabolizing complex content through continuous accompaniment, necessary in the three legs of the tripod.

So, we began our training, and together, *the Claudias* and I founded the first group of psychoanalysts in training in Guatemala. With the agreement that "once the pandemic was over," we would continue under the pre-pandemic conditions or the new ones established by the IPA. For this reason, we were assigned the same analyst with whom we would have high-frequency virtual sessions and who would travel to Guatemala for condensed in-person sessions after the pandemic.

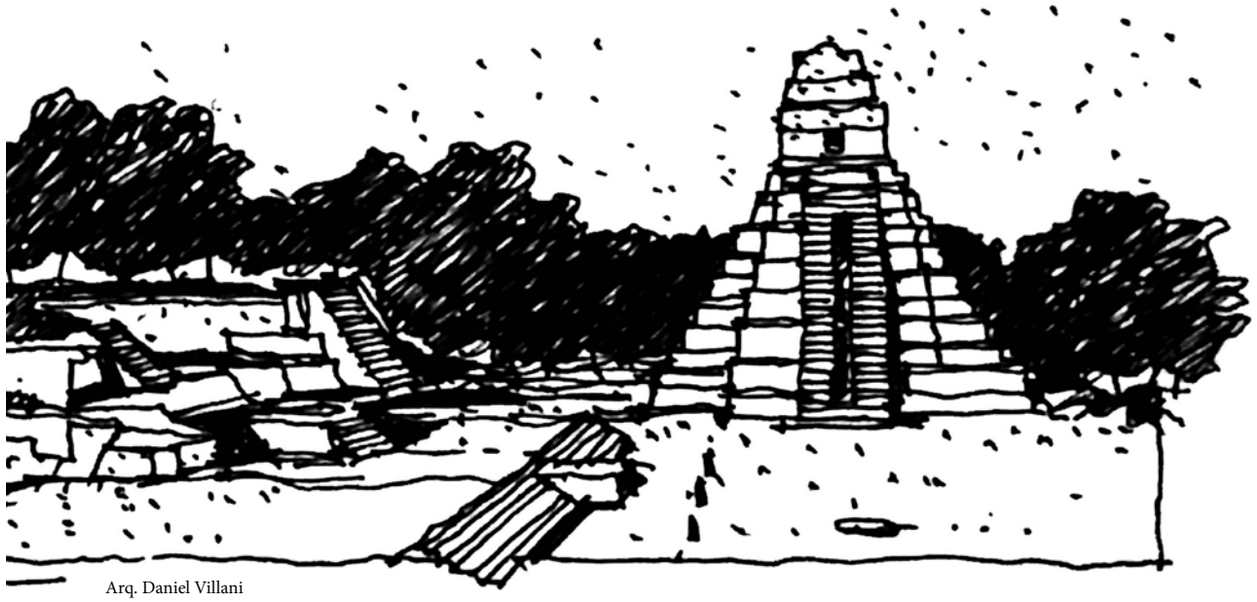
Unfortunately, that moment never came. Two and a half years after beginning the training, a new natural disaster struck. Our analyst, diagnosed with a serious illness, began intensive medical treatment and, unfortunately, passed away. By then, more colleagues had joined the training group, some of whom were also being analyzed by her. This devastating event, like the natural disasters that had destroyed our cities before, caused new wounds and stirred up some pre-existing ones, revealing the inadequacy of the pre-pandemic format of condensed training.

We found ourselves needing to seek out new analysts, just as our ancestors sought out new places to live after the disaster. Each of us, in our own time and with newfound freedom, chose different analysts from different countries and psychoanalytic societies within the Latin American Psychoanalytic Federation (Fepal). We needed to work through the pain of loss. This was an important precedent that allowed colleagues who later joined the group to each choose their own analyst.

The transfers of a capital city

In approaching the challenges faced by psychoanalysis to the history of Guatemala City, I move throughout the country, as the capital of Guatemala has changed location four times since its founding, due to battles and natural disasters that have destroyed, displaced, and rebuilt it over the years.

I quickly review its history and find myself alongside a wounded Guatemala, but never mortally wounded. Iximché was the capital of the Kaqchikel kingdom, one of the dominant indigenous tribes in the region, which was in conflict with its sister tribe, the Quiché, as Freud explained in Totem and Taboo (1913 [1912-1913]/2003c). Upon their arrival, the Spanish conquistadors convinced the Kaqchikels to ally themselves with them to fight and defeat the Quichés. After conquering the lands of the dominant indigenous tribes Quiché and Tz'utujil, the Spanish con-



Arq. Daniel Villani

quistadors turned against the Kaqchikels and, after fierce battles, conquered them. There, in Iximché, the Spanish conquistadors decided to found the city of the Kingdom of Guatemala in 1524. However, the indigenous resistance continued to fight, and shortly thereafter, they staged a strong rebellion that led the Spanish to move their city. Since then, indigenous rebellion and resistance against the country's rulers and economic leaders, who are mostly descendants of Europeans, has persisted.

After their relocation in 1527, they founded the city in the Almolonga Valley, located on the slopes of a volcano with fertile soil and crystal-clear waters. They established what is now called Ciudad Vieja, which lasted for sixteen years until an earthquake broke the crater of the volcano, which was flooded by rains, and torrents of water, rock, and earth poured out, destroying the city and killing many inhabitants. They named it *Volcán de Agua*.

The survivors sought a new place to establish their city. In 1543, they settled in the Panchoy Valley, where the city of Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala, now known as Antigua Guatemala, was founded. The capital remained there for 233 years. It was an important cultural, economic, religious, political, and educational center for the Central American region. Its streets, laid out in a checkerboard pattern, were home to various religious orders that came to evangelize the indigenous peoples and built numerous churches and convents. Its streets still exude a colonial atmosphere and Christian customs and beliefs that endure among a large part of the Guatemalan population—around 86% of inhabitants identify as Christian, according to a 2021 international report by the U.S. Department of State. This means that in our society and in our practice, we are confronted with much of what Freud describes in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927/2003b) and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930 [1929]/2003a).

The area where the colonial city was established was a seismic zone affected by several earthquakes over the years. In 1773, the Santa Marta earthquake destroyed most of the city's buildings, leaving it in ruins, so in 1776 they decided to move and look for new land to build a new city. The inhabitants who remained took on the task of gradually rebuilding the destroyed buildings. However, most of the city remained abandoned for almost a hundred years, until agricultural production, mainly coffee, brought new investment to the region.

Today, this ancient capital is one of Guatemala's main tourist attractions, enchanting foreigners who travel to visit it and city dwellers who escape there on weekends to enjoy the food and life that once again makes La Antigua vibrate. Today, it is home to a rich mix of cultures, not only indigenous and Ladino Guatemalan, but also foreigners who, enchanted by its beauty, have found a home there.

After the earthquake that destroyed Antigua Guatemala, in 1776 they moved to the Ermita Valley to found Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción, the official name of the current capital, Guatemala City. It was an important center of power and cohesion in the Central American region, where the Independence of Central America was signed on September 15, 1821. A city that marked an important milestone for the region, ending an era of conquest and ushering in an era of independence. However, we still see the marks left by the conquest, the transgenerational trauma that remains from times of subjugation and revolution that struck its inhabitants generations ago and that continues to be transmitted and made visible in different ways.

The current capital, like its predecessors, is surrounded by mountains and volcanoes. Initially, it occupied a small area, preserving the grid layout of the old city for many years, as its urban development was slow. My parents' generation still remembers growing up in the city, which occupied only a few blocks, where everyone knew each other and knew where each family lived; this was in the mid-20th century.

Over the last eighty years, the city has expanded both in width and height. Initially, it grew in a spiral shape, creating new areas organized numerically, like its streets and avenues. In "the center," we find the buildings with which the city was established, and as we travel through the different areas, we pass through the different architectural periods of the 20th century.

After such extensive growth, transportation problems have begun to arise across the city in recent years. This has led to an increase in the construction of buildings that seek to reduce travel. Unfortunately, one of the current proposals is to demolish old buildings to construct new buildings and shopping centers. We observe how, on many sites, the destruction and abandonment of old buildings prevail over repair and restoration. This occurs not only in architectural buildings, but also in psychic structures, as therapeutic proposals that seek to quickly build something new in response to the patient's demand prevail without addressing the pre-existing psychic structure in depth nor restore its history.

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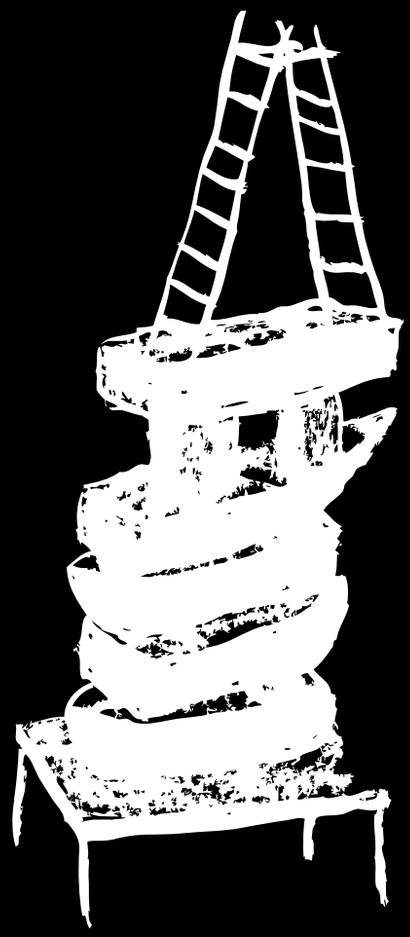
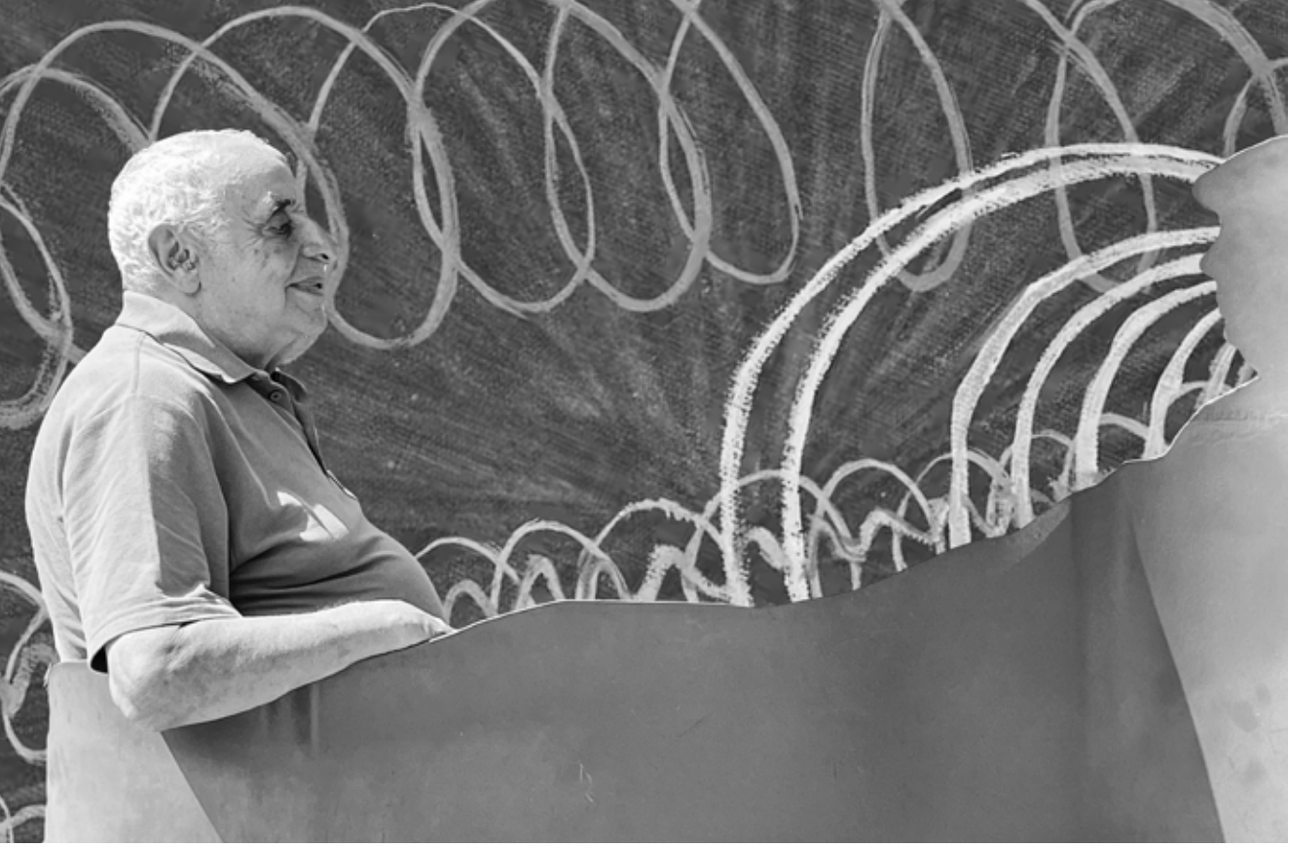


By Heart



Calibán - RLP, 23(2), 226-231
2025

Ana Clara Duarte Gavião*

Roosevelt Cassorla, so many memories…

In the 1990s, as a newly graduated psychologist and prior to beginning my training at the Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise de São Paulo (SBPSP), I began to reflect on clinical experiences within the interdisciplinary hospital setting from a psychoanalytic perspective, across various medical specialties, as I was working at the Hospital das Clínicas of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of São Paulo (HC-FMUSP). Among the authors I studied—through articles and books in this field, Cassorla was the one who most captured my interest. I began citing him in my writings and lectures as a treasured bibliographic reference, as I found deep resonance in his observations on unconscious phenomena implicit in diverse hospital treatment contexts. His work aligned closely with my own elaborations on the potential for psychoanalysis to extend beyond the private consulting room.

Until then, he was, for me, an interesting author, without the image of a physical person. The intellectual affinity, however, had already established an inner bond of gratitude for his elucidating clinical reasoning in addressing peculiar and complex demands involving patients, families, and colleagues from various multidisciplinary teams.

In the 2000s, during my training at SBPSP – immersed in my personal analysis and engaged with seminars and the study of various authors – I decided to enroll in a seminar offered by Roosevelt. At first, incredibly enough, I did not realize that this professor, in flesh and blood, was precisely the same author who had been my favorite in the early years of work at the hospital. I only had a vague impression that his name was somehow familiar to me…

Those seminars were so fruitful and stimulating that I continued attending them in the following semesters, drawn by the learning with a professor whose ability to convey psychoanalytic theories struck me as truly distinctive, and who offered an exceptionally attentive listening to each of the colleagues in the group. I was deeply impressed by the depth with which he spoke about the phenomena of unconscious communication, presenting concepts from both classical and contemporary authors, with agile and good-humored articulations, always in fine attunement with clinical observations.

Meanwhile, the earlier image of "Cassorla the author" of instructive texts on psychoanalysis in the hospital setting remained disconnected from the more recent image of "Roosevelt the professor" speaking about psychoanalysis in the conventional setting—until an uncomfortable episode finally allowed me to integrate them in my mind. During a seminar, two colleagues became heated in a fierce dispute over what was supposedly the more correct point of view, evoking memories of certain hospital team meetings from which I would leave affected and saddened by the intolerance that surfaced in the face of disagreement. In that atmosphere of hostility and general discomfort, I thought to myself: "Well… groups are like this, conflictual…"Unexpectedly, however, the primitive dynamic was reversed by Roosevelt's calm and effective intervention in setting a boundary, demonstrating—in practice—the containing function. "Our differences are uncomfortable, but they are enriching; they stimulate our thinking. We can reflect and converse, rather than fight," he said. A climate of collective respect was immediately restored, and constructive exchange resumed.

At the end of that meeting, I was in a state of perplexity, realizing that the former author Cassorla and the current professor Roosevelt were indeed the same person. While the colleagues were saying their goodbyes and leaving the room, I remained somewhat paralyzed and said to him: "You have several publications in the field of health and hospital work that were very helpful to me in my work at the HC! Only now did I realize that I already knew you through your texts!". He replied, laughing: "I'm glad you read those works! I like them very much. I still coordinate a Balint Group to this day – one of the activities that gratifies me the most".

* Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brasil.

I continued enrolling in his seminars and, already aware of the talent of "Cassorla the author," I sought out his publications dedicated to psychoanalytic clinical work in the consulting room setting. As I began reading a large number of articles, it became evident that they displayed the same quality of elucidation as those focused on the hospital field. In these writings, as well as in in-person encounters, Freudian, Kleinian, Bionian, Winnicottian concepts—and those of various other authors such as the Barangers, Meltzer, Ferro, Ogden, among others—were harmoniously integrated with the originality of his own conceptions, always accompanied by illustrative clinical material.

Among his original contributions—many of them award-winning—stand out the model of the theater in the analytic consulting room, the conceptualization of chronic and acute forms of enactment, the notions of dream-of-two, non-dream, and non-dream-of-two, the implicit alpha function, the vicissitudes of symbolization and non-symbolization processes, and the "real" person of the analyst. He also offered significant formulations on suicide, adolescent clinical work, borderline clinical presentations, fanaticism, and criteria for clinical validation in psychoanalysis, revealing the complexity inherent in the handling of psychoanalytic technique. As Donald Moss remarked at the International Psychoanalytic Congress held in Mexico in 2014, the stylistic beauty of Cassorla's writing evokes Renaissance paintings, due to its extraordinary narrative force and conviction, in harmony with a genuine scientific commitment to clinical inquiry.

My training was increasingly making sense and, quite spontaneously, Roosevelt became a close interlocutor, always available to talk about my questions and uncertainties throughout this process.

In 2008, upon returning from the International Psychoanalytic Congress in Chicago—where he presented clinical material in the working party *Listening to the Listening,*coordinated by Haydée Faimberg and Antonio Corel—he was enthusiastic about adapting the experience into an elective seminar. As an experiment, he asked the group then enrolled to have someone present clinical material from the same patient across all eight sessions, aiming to recreate the immersive experience. Faced with the group's silence—and moved by the opportunity to deepen my understanding of a particularly challenging patient—I volunteered. What followed became one of the most meaningful experiences of my training. And thus, the embryo of the working party *Microscopy of the Analytic Session* came to life.

When I became an associate member in 2010, I was honored and delighted by Roosevelt's invitation to serve as monitor, and together we began developing the Microscopy procedures. In 2012, he received an invitation from the Latin American Psychoanalytic Federation (Fepal) to present the working party at its congresses, an invitation soon echoed by the Brazilian Federation of Psychoanalysis (Febrapsi), as well as by some of their member societies in Brazil and in several South American countries. More recently, Microscopy has been officially recognized as one of the working party models of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA).

When I became an associate member in 2010, I had the joy of receiving Roosevelt's honorable invitation to join the monitoring process, and together we began developing the procedures for microscopía. In 2012, he was invited by the Latin American Psychoanalytic Federation (FEPAL) to offer a working party at its congresses—a proposal that was soon extended by the Brazilian Federation of Psychoanalysis (FEBRAPSI), as well as by several regional federations in Brazil and other South American countries. More recently, *Microscopy* has been recognized as one of the official working party models by the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA).

In this model, psychoanalytic sessions are examined in detail, under a microscopic lens. The group is invited to "dream" fragments of the session. When these "dreams" approach selected facts, the group is then asked to "dream" interventions or interpretations. Some are selected, and the group attempts to identify the implicit theories that led to them. These are then compared with those carried out by the presenting analyst, and so on, in subsequent excerpts. The participants' evaluations, collected after the group meeting, show that the activity was fertile, transforming their way of perceiving their own clinical practice – just as it happened in my own experience. Gradually, a coordinating team began to shape, with the intention that *Microscopy* continued to be carried out by trained coordinators.

A few months before the Fepal Congress held in Rio de Janeiro in October 2024, he told me about his illness and the planned surgical treatment, inviting me to coordinate the Microscopy scheduled for the pre-congress. At first, I refused, arguing that it would be better to cancel, since everyone would understand the situation. Putting myself in the shoes of the enrolled colleagues, I said it would be disappointing to have *Microscopy* without him. To this he replied, in a firm tone: "What matters is *Microscopy*, not Cassorla, and now I am counting on your coordination!". At once deeply saddened and immensely honored and grateful, I remained – and remain – struck by his detachment, his genuinely scientific spirit, and his generosity.

The generous author, professor, and interlocutor was present throughout my entire career and became a close friend—someone with whom I was able to share projects, co-authored publications, clinical, institutional, and personal experiences, difficulties, sorrows, dreams, and non-dreams…

In 2016, at his invitation, I had the opportunity to detail his academic and psychoanalytic contributions in a text for a book compiled by Jean Marc Tauszik, titled *Pensamento psicanalítico latino-americano* [*Latin American Psychoanalytic Thought*], which includes biographical information and a comprehensive list of his scientific publications up to that time, as shown in the following paragraphs:

> Roosevelt Cassorla's ancestors were expelled from Andalusia in 1492 by the Catholic Inquisition. The town of Cazorla still exists in that region. Their flight to the Balkans—and their survival for nearly five hundred years as a minority proud of its Sephardic traditions, including the Spanish language—became part of his childhood mythology. To this was added the saga of his parents' migration to the Americas (Argentina and Chile) and the challenges they faced in integrating without yielding to the pressures of the majority.
>
> Cassorla was born in Temuco, Chile. The early loss of his father forced him to migrate at the age of seven to São Paulo, Brazil. As a foreigner, he relived transgenerational mythical battles. His name, Roosevelt – his father's homage to the president who confronted the Nazis – became a positive stigma: one must always fight against deadly forces. He used to say that this omnipotence was creatively modified by his personal analysis, which transformed his exag-

gerated capacity for indignation into strength and humor, which, according to him, are sufficiently creative "when they do not revert to their sabotaging aspect." In these traits, Cassorla valued Sephardic culture.

Medicine was the obvious professional choice for someone who wished to deal with suffering and death. Healing individual patients, however, was not enough. One had to "heal" society, and in this, Cassorla was joined by many other young idealists who adhered to supposedly infallible ideological prescriptions.

He dedicated himself to Public Health and soon became a professor in the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine at the Faculty of Medical Sciences of the University of Campinas (Unicamp). He deepened his knowledge in epidemiology and social sciences applied to health and was responsible for implementing the university's first Community Program in the 1970s. This was during the military dictatorship in Brazil. Working with the community was an activity considered suspect – both by the right and by certain sectors of the left. In his youthful naïveté, Cassorla felt imprisoned. This feeling led him to seek personal analysis. From that moment on, his curiosity about emotional phenomena became a priority.

In 1983, he began his psychoanalytic training at the Brazilian Society of Psychoanalysis of São Paulo (SBPSP). He became an associate member in 1989, a full member in 1992, and a training analyst in 1997. Simultaneously, he participated in the Psychoanalytic Center of Campinas, which later became affiliated with the IPA. In 2003, he stepped down from his university position to dedicate himself fully to psychoanalysis, although he continued collaborating with the university as a visiting full professor. He remained active as a supervisor for psychiatry residents and continued overseeing a service he had created in 1996, designed to support medical students facing emotional difficulties. Today, this service provides care to all students, interns, and residents within the university's health sector.

I experienced profound learning in the months prior to his passing, after he confided to me about his illness with rare serenity in the face of the possibility of death. When we discussed some work plans, with hope and desire for new projects, he said calmly: "But don't forget that I may not survive the surgery." In fact, he did not survive, passing away on the very same day and month of Sigmund Freud's death – an uncanny reminder of the "anniversary reactions" he had studied so thoroughly. His humor, wisdom, and brilliance remain alive within me and in many colleagues who knew him.

A curious coincidence seemed to embody this enduring vitality. Stricken with grief, without the will to drive my car to his funeral, I called a taxi. The ride was calm, the afternoon was bright and sunny. When we arrived at the cemetery, the gatekeeper asked whose funeral it was, and I replied: "Roosevelt Cassorla." The friendly driver turned to me wide-eyed and asked: "Cassorla? With double S?". I said: "Yes." He continued: "Cassorla with double S is my surname too, and it's rare. I'll show you my ID!" And he did, quite surprised – just as I was.

Once again, in this final farewell, I could count on Cassorla's company and guidance along the way…

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Héctor Solari
Looking at the War, 34 (2015), pastel on paper, 38,5 x 65 cm

Binnacle

Calibán - RLP, 23(2), 234-235
2025

Mariana Mantiñán*

The overflows of losing

I used to think I'd never lose anyone if I photographed them enough.
In fact, my photos show how much I've lost[1]

Art has the gift of bringing us closer to places where we struggle for understanding, the illusion of responding, the deceptive calm of not losing—while simultaneously capturing us and necessarily leaving us lost.

When images make the letter overflow, the viewer becomes imminent. Something similar happens with losing. A jar of paint overflowing its contents or acrylic running across the canvas until it disappears, defying the limit and metaphorizing that action. Overflowing has something of the accident, of the stumble, just like the unconscious.. Yet it also departs from certain psychoanalytic uses of the term, approaching that which must not be contained—because only when freed from meaning and boundaries does it acquire creative function. What happens beyond the edge? What awaits us past the horizon line? In those images where loss plays with freedom, the interplay between what overflows and what transforms us becomes inevitable.

Anamaría McCarthy, an American photographer based in Peru, joins us with a selection of her work, based on a question presented to us as a curatorial hypothesis: Where is loss housed?

From a starting point without a predetermined answer, she uses memory as an element to weave this journey that we hope the reader will undertake in the interplay of letter and image that we propose in this new issue.

In her work *Nostalgia* (2023) [Nostalgia], where her everyday characters become our own, she uses painting alongside photographs from her own family history, a resource that characterizes her work, inviting us to explore a shared intimacy through her father's photographic archives. McCarthy delicately works on the edges extending the scene by painting over the frames of her pieces and engaging with the ghosts of her life.

Almost by chance, the artist finds and captures the empty rooms of New York's Metropolitan Museum, during those moments of changing exhibition setups. These are the images she will intervene in, filling the void, or what is lost, with photographs from her family line. The image that opens this issue evokes the constant and inherent movement of life, placing loss in that dynamic and vital place from which the photographed boy seems to emerge. In *Swimming* [Nadando], McCarthy (2010) portrays her own son, paraphrasing the metamorphosis of life. It brings us closer to the idea of loss as movement, in addition to emerging from the depths of the sea, an idea of loss that moves away from the loss and gain binomial and inhabits the dynamic. The images in *Empty Rooms* (2024) [Habitaciones vacías] also play with the edge, the concrete loss of someone who is not there, and the vastness of presence/absence, taking up the entire space in a challenging and moving montage.

Anamaría McCarthy
Marcel swimming (2010), intervened photography, Empty Rooms series

Years later, the cover artwork would be taken to be part of the *Empty Rooms* exhibition at the same museum, but this time it would be mounted, in black and white, on a bench in the gallery, with the body framed and contained within the lines of a wooden rectangle.

Death, a close associate of loss, emerges in the connection we chose to make with the work of Héctor Solari, a Uruguayan visual artist based in Germany, who presents a series of drawings that combine the delicate lightness of line with the force of image, resulting in a moving and socially critical body of work. Through two drawing series—*Watching the War* [Mirando la Guerra] (2015) and *Landscapes After the Battle* [Paisajes después de la batalla] (2019)—he maintains a steady focus on global violence in times when it imposes itself upon us.

"Death today is like sexuality once was," says Ariès (1975/2000); it is that which we do not speak of, or speak of as if it did not exist. He refers to the *silence of customs*; and it is art, time and again, that invites us not to succumb to the desensitization to which we seem to be persistently summoned.

Both artists invite us to a gaze that allows for another possible relationship with objects—where the boundaries that blur and overflow are those of loss.

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* Asociación Psicoanalítica del Uruguay, Montevideo, Uruguay.

1. Famous phrase by Nan Goldin, mentioned in the documentary *All the beauty and the bloodshed*, directed by Laura Poitras (2022).

Calibán - RLP, 23(2), 236-238 2025

Héctor Solari*

Architecture and Corporeality: Space as a Stage of Loss

From a phenomenological perspective, architectural and urban spaces profoundly affect us, in part because they connect with our conception of the body, its morphology, and its possibilities for movement. Architecture is not neutral: it summons, delimits, and shelters. Its experience is anchored in bodily perception, a kinesthetic knowledge. The order of the body—its rhythm, its limits, its gestures—constitutes the dynamic background of every architectural experience. From this perspective, all architecture is theatrical, not just scenography in the theatrical sense. The body establishes a bond of active involvement with space: it measures, traverses, occupies, and disrupts. Architecture does not exist without a body; without it, there is no touchable surface or habitable boundary.

Architectural forms challenge the body, inviting or constraining it into certain postures, gestures, or movements—some of which materialize, while others remain as virtual possibilities. Architecture is perceived, above all, through the sense of movement. At its most accomplished, architecture evokes dance: it becomes a virtual, latent stage. That is why , every spatial project should contain a choreographic logic; its composition must include time as a structural dimension.

Determining Place

Designing is, above all, determining places. Architecture establishes stations in the unfolding of life, thresholds of transit, territories of interruption. But place is not only a spatial coordinate: it is also affect, attachment, psychic inscription. Every significant place is a montage between space and time.

Spatial Rhythms

In architectural design, rhythm operates as a temporal articulation of space. Columns, arcades, windows, streets, rows: they are sequences, material phrases that imprint a logic of movement. Designing is not arranging objects, but structuring time. In this sense, architecture can be read as a score, as spatial choreography.

Silent Scenes

Roads and places are the primary elements of architecture as a stage for movement. But in the complexity of their scenic configurations, two opposing impulses emerge: one tends toward silence, serenity; the other toward excess, chaos. Both respond to profound yearnings. One seeks to freeze time in space, aspiring to eternity. The other attempts to dissolve space in the flow of the instant, invoking the power of the present.

Architecture can be a refuge for meditation, a place for interiority. But it can also be a prison, a device for paralysis, a subtle form of violence. It can immobilize, punish, even kill. Thus, the expulsion of time can operate as protection or as condemnation. In one case, it concentrates the subject; in the other, it dissolves it.

Loss

War, exile, demolition, among other forms of destruction, imply the loss of a place, a space, an architecture. The abandoned apartment, the razed house, the destroyed city: these scenes condense not only physical ruin, but also symbolic devastation. Architecture thus becomes an index of trauma.

Without a Place

The experience of the disappearance of one's own place constitutes one of the most radical spatial feelings of loss. It is the experience of being off the map, without roots, without refuge. This displacement is not only geographical but psychic: the subject is stripped of references and floats in a borderless topology.

War, as an extreme device of annihilation, produces this form of loss: it expels from space, but also from time. The body no longer finds inscription; it becomes errant , spectral.

The Eternity of the Fugitive

Space is not static: it summons events and condenses temporalities. In this sense, architectural space is virtual, insofar as it is pregnant with possibilities. It is not a mere container,

Héctor Solari
Tea in Kabul, 5 (2010), pastel on paper, 50 x 64 cm

* Uruguayan artist. Berlin, Germany.

but a matrix of the livable. But this experience can be abruptly interrupted. Architecture, in its fragility, reveals its most exposed face in the face of violence.

War erupts as a force of radical disarticulation: it sweeps away constructed forms, but also the weft of time. It doesn't just destroy buildings, but ruins the very possibility of dwelling. The home turns into rubble; the city, into a skeleton. Vital continuity—everyday time, the body's rituals—is abolished. The subject is left suspended, offstage.

In contexts of extreme violence, space becomes illegible: the familiar becomes strange, the solid becomes unstable. Walls, which once protected, now threaten; hallways become corridors of escape or confinement, traps. It is the body that bears witness to this spatial upheaval: it flees, shrinks, hides, trembles.

Time is dislocated. There is no longer before or after, but a succession of dismembered moments. The present stretches to exhaustion or collapses. In this scenario, architectural design gives way to urgency, to the precarious refuge, to the bunker. Architecture disappears as a project and subsists only as a remnant.

Faced with this reality, thinking about architectural space cannot be separated from trauma. "Disturbances" are no longer mere formal gestures: they are traces, material scars of the violent event. The cracks, the voids, the physical absences in the urban fabric become symptoms.

The bombed city is also a cartography of the unconscious: each fragment evokes a loss, each ruin signals an unresolved grief.

Perhaps there, in those remains, another form of architecture begins: one that doesn't seek to erase loss, but rather to inscribe it. An architecture that doesn't deny destruction, but rather embraces it as memory, as a warning. That allows for reconstruction—not just the dwelling, but time itself—as a possibility of continuing to live.

Postscript

This text is developed within the framework of my teaching and artistic practice, articulating reflections on architecture, the body, and spatial experience in contexts of loss and violence. It is part of the research I am conducting in the seminar *Dance and Architecture,* taught at the Palucca School of Dance in Dresden (Germany), and draws on the theoretical contributions of Wolfgang Meisenheimer (*Architektur, Musik, Tanz, Szenische Künste,* 1995/1996), Christian Norberg-Schulz (Vom Sinn des Bauens, 1979), and various articles on contemporary dance by Gerald Sigmund.

During the writing process, works by Juhani Pallasmaa, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Henri Lefebvre, Paul Ricoeur, and Walter Benjamin were also consulted.

The final version of the text was edited with the help of the artificial intelligence tool ChatGPT (free version), used to support stylistic reformulation tasks.

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Authors in this Issue

Thamy Ayouch
Psychoanalyst. Full professor in the Department of Psychoanalytic Studies at the University of Paris-Cité and visiting professor at the Universidade de São Paulo (USP). Author of articles and books in French, Portuguese, Spanish, and English. He researches the psychological effects of discrimination, combining psychoanalysis and these themes.
thamy.ayouch@gmail.com

Jorge Castro Ribeiro
Associate professor and researcher in musicology and ethnomusicology at the Universidade de Aveiro (UA). Presenter of symphonic concerts. He has published books, essays, ethnographic recordings, and audiovisual documents. He has given scientific presentations in Portugal, Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, the United States of America, Canada, Brazil, Mozambique, Ghana, and South Africa.
jcribeiro@ua.pt

Míriam Cristiane Alves
Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise de Porto Alegre (SBPdePA). Psychologist, master's degree and doctor in Psychology from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS). Professor of the Department and Graduate Program in Social and Institutional Psychology at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). Coordinator of the E'léékò Studies and Research Center. Coordinator of the Permanent Forum of Affirmative Actions of ANPEPP. Member of the Institute of Psychoanalysis of the SBPdePA.
miriamalves.ufrgs@gmail.com

Alberto Díaz Araya
Professor in the Department of Historical and Geographical Sciences at the Universidad de Tarapacá (UTA). He specializes in ethnohistory and anthropological studies of the Aymara, Quechua, and Afro-descendant indigenous peoples of northern Chile, investigating the cultural practices and festivals that take place in Andean territories and sanctuaries.
albertodiaz@academicos.uta.cl

Ana Clara Duarte Gavião
Effective member of the Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise de São Paulo (SBPSP). Scientific Director of the Federação Brasileira de Psicanálise (Febrapsi; 2024-2025). Coordinator of the Centro de Atendimento Psicanalítico (CAP) of the SBPSP (2020-2024). Editor of the SBPSP Jornal de Psicanálise (2017-2020). Master and doctor in Clinical Psychology from the Institute of Psychology of the University of São Paulo (USP).
gaviaoanaclara@gmail.com

Valeria García Cannock
Analyst in teaching at the Sociedad Peruana de Psicoanálisis (SPP). Coordinator of the Teaching Committee of the SPP Institute. Professor at the Institute of Psychoanalysis (SPP) and the Master's Program in Psychoanalytic Clinical Intervention at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP). Master's in Theoretical Studies in Psychoanalysis (PUCP). PhD candidate in Psychoanalytic Studies at PUCP.
garcia.cannock@gmail.com

Samuel Gilbert de Jesus
PhD in Film and Audiovisual from the Université Paris-III-Sorbonne-Nouvelle and a Postdoctoral Degree in Arts from the School of Communication and Arts (ECA) at the University of São Paulo (USP). He is a professor, doctor, and researcher in the History of Art and Image at the Faculty of Visual Arts, and coordinator of the Graduate Program in Art and Visual Culture at the Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG).
samuel.dejesus@ufg.br

Fernanda Graneiro Bastos
Graduated in Social Service from the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). Postgraduate in Urban Health Management from the Escola Nacional em Saúde Pública (ENSP), Fundação Oswaldo Cruz (Fiocruz). Master in Public Policies from

the Faculty of Social Services of the UERJ. Preceptor of Social Service residents and manager of the coordination of extension projects and actions of the Núcleo de Estudos da Saúde do Adolescente (NESA).
fernandagraneiro@gmail.com

Celso Gutfreind
Full member with teaching duties at the Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise de Porto Alegre (SBPdePA). He holds a PhD in Psychology from the Université de Paris. He is a writer with 54 published books, including poems, essays, children's and young adult literature, chronicles, and plays.
celso.gut@terra.com.br

Ariana Harwicz
Born in Buenos Aires in 1977, she has lived in France since 2007. *Mátate, amor* (2012) received numerous awards and was adapted for theater and film (Cannes, 2025, with Scorsese as producer). Her latest novel, *Perder el juicio* (Losing Judgment), has been translated into more than twenty languages. Her opera *Dementia* will premiere in May 2026 at the Teatro Colón.
ari.harwicz@gmail.com

Julio Hirschhorn Gheller
He holds a doctorate degree from the Universidade de São Paulo (USP) School of Medicine. He holds a psychiatrist degree from the Institute of Psychiatry at the Hospital das Clínicas, USP School of Medicine. He is a full member and teaching analyst of the Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise de São Paulo (SBPSP). He also teaches at the Durval Marcondes Institute of SBPSP.
juliohg@uol.com.br

Mariano Horenstein
Psychoanalyst in the didactic function of the Asociación Psicoanalítica de Córdoba (APC). Latin American representative on the Board of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA). Former editor-in-chief of *Calibán-RLP*. Author of the books *Psicoanálisis en lengua menor, Brújula y diván, El psicoanálisis y su necesaria extranjería, Funambulistas: Travesía adolescente y riesgo* y *Conversaciones de diván*.
www.marianohorenstein.com
mmhorenstein@gmail.com

Serapio Marcano
Full member of the Sociedad Psicoanalítica de Caracas (SPC), the Asociación Panameña de Psicoanálisis (APAP), the Federación Psicoanalítica de América Latina (FEPAL), and the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA). Former president of the Asociación Venezolana de Psicoanálisis (ASOVEP, SPC, FEPAL). Former director of the SPC Institute. Member of the IPA House of Delegates 2000-2003. Co-author of the book *Terrorismo de Estado y violencia psíquica*. Author of the book *Desafíos del psicoanálisis hoy*. Editor for Latin America of the concept *drive* for the *Inter-Regional Encyclopedic Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* (IRED).
marcano.serapio@gmail.com

Marília Mello de Vilhena
Master in Clinical Psychology from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-RJ). Graduated in Philosophy from the Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Sociais (IFCS) of the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). Doctor (PhD) in Communication from the Escola de Comunicação (ECO-UFRJ). Psychologist at the Núcleo de Estudos da Saúde do Adolescente (NESA) of the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ).
mamevi777@gmail.com

Constanza Michelson
Psychologist from the Universidad Diego Portales and holds a master's degree in Psychoanalysis. She is a writer and essayist and the author of *50 sombras de Freud* (Catalonia, 2015), *Neurótic@s* (Planeta, 2017), *Capitalismo del yo* (Paidós, 2020), *Hacer la noche* (Paidós, 2022) –winner of the Best Works Award (second place, essay mention)– and *Nostalgia del desastre* (Seix Barral, 2024) –Critics' Award, non-fiction essay mention–.
constanzamichelson@gmail.com

Lilia Moritz Schwarcz
Art and political historian, and anthropologist. Full and senior professor at the Department of Anthropology at the Universidade de São Paulo (USP), and global scholar/visiting professor at Princeton University. Member of the Cultural Heritage Advisory Council of Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional (IPHAN), the Consejo de Desenvolvimento Econômico Social Sustentável de la República, and the Academia Brasileira de Letras. Author of several books and curator of several exhibitions.
lili.schwarcz@gmail.com

Marta Lewin
Full member with didactic function of the Asociación Psicoanalítica de Buenos Aires (APdeBA). She holds a degree in Psychology and a degree in Educational Sciences from the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA). She is a psychoanalyst and a specialist in children and adolescents from the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA). She is a former teaching secretary of the Specialization in Psychoanalysis (2007-2009). She is also former director of the *Controversias online* (2015-2018). She is former coordinator of the Migrations Department at APdeBA (2019-2023). Former coordinator of the Admissions Team and the Specialization in Psychoanalysis at the Instituto Universitario de Salud Mental (IUSAM, 2021-2024). Member of the Training and Transmission Committee of the Federación Psicoanalítica de América Latina (Fepal, 2025).
martalewin@ahfsa.com.ar

Jorge Luyando Hernández
Psychoanalyst, full member of the Asociación Psicoanalítica Mexicana (APM). Liaison Psychiatrist from the Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Médicas y Nutrición Salvador Zubirán (INCMNSZ), Faculty of Medicine, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). Master's degree in Philosophy and Humanities from the Centro de Cultura Casa Lamm. PhD candidate in Philosophy from the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara (UAG).
jorgeluyando@yahoo.es

Inês Oseki-Dépré
Emeritus professor of General and Comparative Literature at the University of Aix-Marselha, where she created the master's degree in Literary Translation. A specialist in literary translation, she is the author of works such as *Théories et pratiques de la traduction littéraire, De Walter Benjamin à nos jours, Traduction et Poésie*. He translated Guimarães Rosa, Antônio Vieira, Fernando Pessoa, Haroldo de Campos, Joao Cabral de Melo Neto, Drummond de Andrade, among others.
inesoseki@gmail.com

Tiziana Palmiero
Researcher at the Universidad de Tarapacá (UTA). PhD in Latin American Studies and a Master's degree in Arts, with a focus on Musicology, from the Universidad de Chile (Uchile). She trained at the Conservatorio Luigi Cherubini de Florencia, Italy, where she studied harp and composition. She researches colonial musical expressions linked to ceremonies among the indigenous peoples of the Andes.
tizianapal@hotmail.com

Stefan Reich
Psychoanalyst of the Sociedad Peruana de Psicoanálisis (SPP). Member of Adapsys Peru and Director of the Leadership Center at the Universidad del Pacífico (LideraUP). He holds a PhD from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology (TCSPP), a master's degree in public administration from the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS), and a postdoc from Harvard Medical School (HMS)/Cambridge Hospital. He was an Eisenhower Fellow in 2013.
stefandreich@gmail.com

Florencia Romero
She holds a medical degree from the Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA, 2002); a residency in Pediatrics from the Hospital Garrahan, in Buenos Aires (2006); and a master's degree in Public Health in Developing Countries from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM, 2014). She worked with Doctors Without Borders (MSF, 2006–2023). She participated in humanitarian missions in Liberia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Peru, Uganda, Niger, and Haiti. She also worked at the MSF Switzerland offices in Geneva as a medical representative, responsible for health programs in the Middle East and Latin America, and later as head of the Staff Health Unit. She currently works at the Terre des

hommes Lausanne Foundation, where she is responsible for Staff Health and Well-being.
flor.rom@gmail.com

Cristiane Mota Takata
Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise de São Paulo (SBPSP). Psychologist. Specialist in Health Psychology and Psychopharmacology. Affiliated member of the Instituto Durval Marcondes of the SBPSP. Member of the Inter-American Network for Research in Psychology and Politics (Redippol).
cris.takata@gmail.com

Néstor Marcelo Toyos
Psychoanalyst and psychiatrist. Full member of the Asociación Psicoanalítica Argentina (APA), the Federación Psicoanalítica de América Latina (Fepal), and the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA). He is currently Scientific Secretary of APA. He is the author of numerous works published in his country and abroad. He is the author of the books *Sustancia Freud* (2016) y *La cuerda floja* (2024).
ntoyos@intramed.net

Maria Alice Tourinho Baptista
Psychologist at Centro para Doença de Alzheimer e Outros Transtornos Mentais da Velhice,, Institute of Psychiatry, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). Specialist in Psychogeriatrics and Mental Health from UFRJ. Master's and PhD degrees in Mental Health from UFRJ. Psychoanalyst with the Psychoanalytic Society of Rio de Janeiro (SPRJ) and the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA). Co-chair of the Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Aging Committee of the IPA.
mariatb42@gmail.com

Cecilia Teodora Rodríguez Plasencia
Full member with didactic function at the Asociación Psicoanalítica de Guadalajara (APG). Former coordinator of the Committee for the Training and Transmission of Psychoanalysis of the Federación Psicoanalítica de América Latina (Fepal, 2020-2024). Former member of the Scientific Committee of FEPAL (2018-2020). Former alternate secretary of FEPAL (2016-2018). Former member of the Editorial Team of *Calibán- RLP*. Honorable mention from the Education Committee of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA) for the essay "Transformaciones dentro de los modelos en formación psicoanalítica y la incidencia de los movimientos institucionales en el contexto actual" (2025).
rgzcecilia@hotmail.com

María Laura Trotta
Full teaching member of the Asociación Psicoanalítica Argentina (APA). Member of the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA) and the Federación Psicoanalítica de América Latina (Fepal). Co-liaison of the Committee on Women and Psychoanalysis (COWAP)-APA. Co-director of Margen Psicoanalítico. Author of *Oedipus in Question: Freud, Lacan, Binarism and Its Deconstruction* (2024). Co-author of books and articles in psychoanalytic journals.
lauratrotta65@gmail.com

Christopher Paul Valender Ulacia
He graduated cum laude from the Escuela Superior de Cine (School of Film) with a degree in Filmmaking, specializing in directing and editing. His filmography includes, as a director, *Báculo de Moisés* (Moses's Broom), *Privada Florida* (Private Florida), and the documentary *Decíamos ayer* (We Said Yesterday). He won the 2024 FOCINE Award for First Films from Film Schools, from the , Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía (IMCINE), with his project *La canícula de agosto* (The Dog Days of August).
christophervalender1@gmail.com

Liza M. Zachrisson
Clinical psychologist from Universidad Francisco Marroquín (UFM). Psychoanalyst in training at the Latin American Institute of Psychoanalysis (ILaP). Postgraduate degree in Psychosomatic Medicine and Health Psychology from the Universidad de San Jorge. Co-founder of *Lúdica* magazine. Contributor to the book *Dear Institute* (2024). Professor and university supervisor at various universities in Guatemala.
liza.maria.zv@gmail.com

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