

## Associação Psicanalítica de Porto Alegre - APPOA

### For a Listening... in Today's Times

"Something is out of order /  
out of the new world order"  
—Caetano Veloso<sup>1</sup>

*"What we call today 'castration,' what we call 'otherness,' and what are their effects on the malaise of our time?"*

*The Other and the others – our fellow beings – are structurally necessary for the constitution of our subjectivity: there is no subject without their inscription in the field of the Other. The Other is part of us; these voices speak to us and through us without our awareness. Voices of desire or love, but also of hatred and rejection."*

—Excerpt from the Colloquium's argument

We must not rush to understand, Lacan affirmed in Seminar 1, and continued: in fact, psychoanalysts are interested precisely in what they do *not* understand. I quote: "It is on the basis of a certain refusal of understanding that we push open the door of analytic comprehension" (2/24/54). This was another way to return to Freud, who, in his advice to young therapists, warned against the *furor curandis* — the excessive eagerness to cure.

Thus, we must be cautious with overly peremptory assertions (explaining things too quickly) regarding phenomena that clinical experience presents to us. In our conceptualizations, when we encounter something impossible to understand, something that leaves us stunned, we are dealing with something of the order of the Real.

At the same time, we are warned that psychoanalysis should not be applied as if we were building our own *Weltanschauung* (worldview), falling into a relativism that, ultimately, would also be an attempt to circumvent castration — in other words, to refuse to recognize our limits. A position not unlike trends we observe in our contemporary world: the demand for immediacy, the attribution of jouissance and knowledge to technology, and, consequently, the exoneration of individual responsibility — effects that may lead to violence against others.

### ***A hole in knowledge, contingency as a logical operator.***

Psychoanalytic experience teaches us that the future is not guaranteed and that fragments are fundamental. How do we position ourselves in relation to the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://open.spotify.com/intl-pt/track/1Sd8ttUlCuF8FXEDc625mt?si=b29c6f653ceb44e4>

diagnosis/reading we make of reality? What is our implication in it? Put differently, how do we deal with our identifications, turned into identities, that at times seem insufficient to provide the kind of guarantee we know to be impossible?

By engaging in dialogue with our peers (as we are doing here and elsewhere) and with other fields of knowledge that, through their own logic, are also grappling with contemporary malaise. For example, considering a proposal from the philosopher Yuk Hui, who reflects on the technological and geopolitical transformations we are undergoing: if America, Asia, and Europe are to conceive new ways of confronting capitalism, technology, and globalization, this should not occur either by neutralizing differences or by returning to tradition, but through a recognition of singularity and the possibilities for reciprocal reconstruction arising from the encounter between Eastern and Western thought.

Undoubtedly, we must ask: how is such transversal dialogue possible when the entire world is synchronized and transformed by an enormous technological force?

Here, psychoanalytic discourse can contribute: even under the most precarious conditions, the recourse to speech remains fundamental. Primo Levi told us this in *The Drowned and the Saved*: reason and poetry are not enough to explain the place from which they were banished, but they can help us invent the necessary words and imagine new times.

Contingency allows us to sustain an ethics of the not-all (*pas-tout*, another *jouissance*) and the art of speaking well (*bien-dire*). This logical and poetic articulation matters to us — it was crucial even in the most terrible moments.

We are aware of the difficulties this task involves, but psychoanalysts also have their contribution to make in navigating the *Unheimlich* (the uncanny) and the *small differences*. In other words, what might this tell us? It seems evident that psychoanalysis, from its very beginning, proposed a listening mode in which recognition of subjective division and the Other's otherness is foundational.

Even when, at times, the suffering we hear stems from not fitting into the “new world order,” from feeling inadequate or rejected, powerless to achieve success, and afraid of becoming “losers.” Each subject manifests their relation to the Other and to others in a singular way. Subjectivity is contingent in relation to the discourses that structure it. It is contingently shaped by local conditions — by what is spoken, what is silenced, and how one listens, all determined by the discursive environment of a given place. Here, “place” is meant both topologically and topographically, where psychoanalytic experience seeks to introduce shifts in time and space.

Psychoanalysis is a *help against*. Lacan stated this multiple times. One instance was on 4/13/76 (his birthday) when responding to a question:

“I believe that the psychoanalyst can only truly be conceived as a *sinthome*. It is not psychoanalysis that is a *sinthome*, it is the psychoanalyst.

That is how I answer the question I was asked earlier:

the psychoanalyst is, ultimately, help, which, in the terms of Genesis, we might call a reversal, since the Other of the Other is what I have just defined as a small hole. The fact that this small hole can, in itself, offer help is precisely where the hypothesis of the Unconscious finds its support.” (4/13/76)

There is no metalanguage, no absolute Other that can permanently account for the small hole residing in trauma, in *troumatisme*.

The malaise of our culture remains impossible to eliminate. Precisely for this reason, it continues to be the motor of our capacity to “desire the impossible.”

Thus, by first recognizing our own implication in the symptom we try to interpret, we also recognize the impossibility of constructing solutions in isolation. The unconscious is not a language. Alone, we lose the ability to dream, to desire, to invent something new.

The other is a source of our malaise, but also our possibility for escaping the endogamy that our identities build to shield us from the dangers of the world — and that, at the same time, trap and crystallize us.

In movement, betting on the unconscious structured like a language, we continue.

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