

## Psychoanalysis: a Utopian vocation

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**Abstract:** This study aims to problematize psychoanalysis as a method of interrogation of the subject, proposing a reflection on the ways that psychoanalysis itself carries a Utopian vocation, whilst being a political tool, from its view about the subject and the proposition of an ethic. We aim to examine how economic regimes formed subjectivities. Resistance movements to these types of life silencing logic have emerged, opening new symbolic spaces to think about Utopian practices and their ethical reverberations to the politics of life.

**Keywords:** utopia, politics, psychoanalysis.

“What is this sudden silence that is like a language we can’t hear?”

(Robert Musil)

Psychoanalysis, as a method of interrogation and listening in the interlocution of a Utopian dimension, opens space for clinical reflection as a form of a tensioning of knowledge that removes the subject from a state of dormancy in which the eternal return to this state is the currency. It is the ability to formulate questions that challenge knowledge and we confront ourselves with our “missing” knowledge.

The correct conduct for an analyst resides in oscillating, according to the need, from one mental attitude to another; avoiding speculation or meditation on the cases while they are under analysis; and only submitting the obtained material to a synthetic process of thought after the analysis is complete. The distinction between the two attitudes would be meaningless if we already had all the knowledge (or at least the essential knowledge) about the psychology of the unconscious and the structure of the neuroses that we can obtain from the psychoanalytic work. Currently, we are still far from this goal and we should not restrict the possibility of verifying what we already know and expand our knowledge. (Freud, 1912/1974a, p. 128)

Considering that the essential object in the search for knowledge is the assertion of the insufficiency of conceptual categories and the acceptance of the provisional, even in the scientific field of building knowledge, the challenge of undoing the links of knowledge being already mixed in totalizing truths has to be tackled.

About psychoanalytic research, Freud tells us that the hypotheses appear during the research process and, sometimes, only at the end of it. He also recommends the separation from the object of study – a good distance –, but with malleable borders.

One of the claims of psychoanalysis in its own favor is, undoubtedly, the fact that, in its execution, research and treatment coincide; however, after a certain point, the technique required by one is opposed to that required by the other. It is not good to work scientifically on a case while the treatment is still going – gathering its structure, trying to predict its future progress, and obtain, from time to time, a picture of the current state of affairs, as the scientific interest would require. (Freud, 1912/1974a, p. 152)

Iconoclastic utopia is the concept that an ideal cannot be placed as imperative, triggering something that we still do not know, an empty space, a non-place, a gap that puts the subject in a desiring movement to produce something new. It is opposed to the concept of projecting utopia, in which there is an unobtainable ideal of perfection. Bauman, resuming Jacoby (2007), explains this difference:

it is the intention to deconstruct, to demystify, and, ultimately, to discredit the values of the dominant life and its strategies of time, by showing that, contrary to the current beliefs, rather than ensuring a higher society or life, they constitute an obstacle in the way of both. . . . it is especially the assertion of a possibility of another social reality – a possibility still grounded in the critical review of the means and ways of presenting life. . . . it is the possibility of an alternative to the social reality, although its shape is little developed. . . . they are not carried out by shapes or advice, but by the critical reflection on

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existing practices and beliefs, to – recalling Bloch’s idea – clarify that “something is missing” and thus “inspire a unity for its creation and recovery.” (Oliveira, 2009, p. 16)

Jacoby (2007, p. 25), in *Picture Imperfect*, warns us: “Utopian ideas are dead and buried, for both are prosperous and destitute ones!” Which utopia would he be talking about? He speaks of the utopia as an ideal that is longed for, or of projecting utopia, with a project in advance that a lot of revolutionaries have relied on, but whose perfection would be impossible to achieve.

According to him, this utopia must die, decompose, and its remains must turn into compost, which the earth will use to cultivate something else. What will sprout from this land we still do not know. Only then it will be possible to dig up another utopia, which makes a bet on the future instead of a promise.

### From the failures of psychoanalysis to the revolutions of the 1960s

In an attempt to establish a hypothesis, from the psychoanalytic perspective, about this contemporary cauldron, its subject and symptoms, it is essential to return to Freud, emphasizing the effects of this Utopian rupture, effects caused by the creation of his theory, to then get to this day. We will see that, since then, psychoanalysis already announced itself as a Utopian vocation, which contributed to the future revolution movements.

Psychoanalysis, since its creation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has been passing its conflicting message through time. To the extent that it proposes a new view of the subject, outside a moral and normative standard, it shakes the interests of existing dominating institutions, swinging the coercive powers of medicine, science, and religion – to mention just a few.

Far from being a “bourgeois” practice – as it has been and still is criticized –, psychoanalysis (and the places where it is produced), by its analytical and critical aspect, has a significant revolutionary potential. Outlining, without strong contours, a tool with political functions, psychoanalysis reverberates by a Utopian vocation<sup>1</sup>.

The revolution that the notion of subject endowed with unconscious causes is worthy of an “apocalyptic frenzy” not only in the area of human sciences, but also in the social bond. By the proposition of an ethics of not knowing, psychoanalysis introduces a subversive character of denouncing the imprisonment of subjects with the disciplinary instances of their time.

But the conflict does not stop there. Left-wing movements (especially in the 1960s and 1970s) criticized

psychoanalysis as a depoliticized theory, even accusing it of consorting with a conservative proposal – moralizing, family-centered and adaptationist<sup>2</sup>! At the time, the criticism was sharp to the use of psychoanalysis and its version Americanized by the “ego psychology.” The political character of the Freudian work, however, though weakened by this practice, gained new strength in the following years. Lacan, in seminar 17 *The wrong side of psychoanalysis*, of 1969, when performing a whole reflection on the four discourses, reaffirms the sneaky nature of their effects. “These places awaken us from the paralysis of an ideal that has forgotten us. One needs to seek a thought arising from the precarious, from the insufficiency of the conceptual categories and that is also interested in the pain of the others” (Sousa, 2007, p. 12).

The political character of psychoanalysis – regardless of a notion of “political neutrality” that exists about it – was questioned not only by its critics, but also by psychoanalysts. The so-called neutrality of psychoanalysts does not imply an emptying of their political positions before the polis. Putting oneself in a listening position and ensuring the freedom of a space of speech and experience for the construction of the narrative of a desire of the patient, without the moral imperatives of having to be something, indicates the principle of the politics and ethics of the psychoanalyst.

It is in the diversity that the proposal of psychoanalysis extends and potentializes itself. The proposition of a new vision of subject and an ethics of psychoanalysis goes beyond the proposition of the political, direct action of the social movements and crosses it. We can see some of this nature in the following words by Freud:

In view of the strenuous efforts made today, in the civilized world, to reform the sexual life, it is needless to warn that the psychoanalytic research is as free of bias as any type of research. There is no other goal in sight besides shedding some light on things, when seeking to reveal what is hidden. It will be quite satisfying if the reforms use these discoveries to replace what is harmful for something more beneficial; but one cannot predict whether other institutions won’t result in other sacrifices, perhaps more serious ones. (Freud, 1912/1974b, p. 112)

The Freudian formulation of the unconscious theory emerges in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, dislocating knowledge and truths, bringing not only a new conception of subject, but the proposition of an ethic. Freud, by a revolutionary definition of a sexuality since childhood, puts down the prevailing consensual concept of the

<sup>1</sup> Here we use Fredric Jameson’s expression, from the text “Utopianism After the End of Utopia” (2006, p. 188).

<sup>2</sup> It is important to remember that the line determined as valid by the International Communist Party is the reflexology from the Soviet Union, banishing psychoanalysis as a bourgeois science and expelling psychoanalysts from the Party.

existence of a “sexual normality” defined by the adult genital sexuality, limited to the consummation of the sexual act for breeding purposes.

Freud heard the symptoms of his patients, pointing out that they were sexual desires intolerable to the moral conscience of those people and, therefore, they were expressed as symptoms. The desire was still present, but unrecognizable as such, appearing in the form of paralysis, compulsions, phobias etc.

Freud’s great foresight was that the symptoms studied by him denounced what was bad in that social logic, identifying what he called discontent in the civilization. The symptom was, then, the success of the unconscious in enunciating a failure – the one of attempting to discipline bodies and minds. “Isn’t this the ethical function of utopia: blaming us for the things that fail?” (Souza, 2007, p. 19).

However, identifying the discontent would not be enough for a “possible cure”; patients should go further and analyze what was complicit with this symptom production and take responsibility for its conservation. Otherwise, psychoanalysis would only serve to point out victims and villains.

The clinic showed that, even without realizing it, neurotics were actively engaged in the origin and maintenance of the symptoms they felt. The hypothesis of an unconscious etiology of the neurotic symptoms never stopped Freud from talking about the “choice of neurosis.” (Goldenberg, 2006, p. 20)

This Utopian proposition generates the Freudian method elaborated in his works — they are permeated by flaws. Most published cases did not necessarily have clinical success.

We often forget that Freud’s five major clinical reports are primarily reports of a partial success and an ultimate failure. . . . This examination of the failures puts us before the problem of fidelity: how to redeem the emancipating potential of such failures, avoiding the double trap of nostalgic attachment to the past and of the too slippery accommodation to the “new circumstances.” (Žižek, 2011, pp. 21-22)

Here we can point one more Utopian bias of the birth of psychoanalysis: Freud, even with a scientific ambition, let himself be guided by his clinical failures as a starting point for continuing his research about the unconscious. “I don’t believe anymore in my neurotics,” he said in Letter 69 to Fliess, of 1897 (Freud, 1897/1986). And he thus discovered the concept of “psychic reality” and phantasy.

Žižek (2011) approximates this Utopian potential from that of psychoanalysis and Marxism, and claims that these are the only theories that still practice an engaged

notion of truth. Not only theories of fight, but regarding fight. In his words:

its history is not an accumulation of neutral knowledge, because it is marked by schisms, heresies, expulsions. . . . the relationship between theory and practice is properly dialectic; in other words, it has an irreducible tension: the theory is not only the conceptual basis of practice, it explains at the same time why practice, ultimately, is doomed to failure – or, as Freud said concisely, psychoanalysis would only be entirely possible on a society that did not need it anymore. In its most radical aspect, the theory is the theory of a failed practice: “That’s why things went wrong...” (Žižek, 2011, p. 21)

As a tool for promotion to an ethical and Utopian position of subjects, it collaborates for the recognition of their constitutive incompleteness – they are broken subjects. Its task is to watch the place of the flaw. To show that it exists, that it constitutes the psyche, and that the hegemonic discourses will not respond to everything. “These stumbles still restore our humanity and provoke our thoughts as short breaks before the fury of proper functioning. Thinking is confronting what is missing in perfection” (Souza, 2007, p. 12).

Subjects may strive to keep their unconscious silent and the system may mask a dictatorship of values, keeping subjects accommodated, but the unconscious and the system themselves break, announcing a failure of the bodies in silencing what “cannot be said.” According to E. Souza (personal communication, December 2010) “The Utopian image allows the enunciation of what is silenced.”<sup>3</sup> It is precisely this flaw that opens up possibilities for intervention and rupture, whether as an analytical or a political act.

Happiness, in the sense that we recognize as possible, is a problem of the economy of the individual’s libido. “There is no golden rule that applies to everyone: every man has to find out for himself how he can be saved specifically.” (Freud, 1927-1931/1974c, p. 33)

## The failure of the revolutions of the 1960s and contemporary symptoms

### *Revolutions of the 1960s*

Already in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, women’s movements started to be created in New York, demanding better working conditions. Fifty years later, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the movement was internationalized with

3 Notes from the seminar *Desfazendo a forma – Utopia, arte e psicanálise*. Professor Edson Souza, Graduate Program in Social and Institutional Psychology – Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS).

a conference in Copenhagen, which brought together Socialist women organized in labor unions, establishing the International Women's Day. However, the United Nations only recognized it internationally in 1977.



Figure 1. Protest in 1857 (NY, USA)

Source: Unknown author. Women's Strike, 1857, New York<sup>4</sup>.

In 1969, the feminist revolution erupted, led by Betty Friedan, along with the sexual revolution of the youth. These revolutions were also driven by the movements that shook Europe and the world in May 1968. The movement began in Paris, France, where young students, relying on the accession of the working class, went out to the streets to protest against an archaic family structure, the strict discipline of the educational systems, and sexual and gender repression. The initial scene was the Paris Nanterre University, led by Daniel, "le Rouge"<sup>5</sup> ("the red" in French), one of the students, who encouraged the same manifest for the students of Sorbonne.



Figure 2. Daniel, le Rouge, facing the Guard (1969)

Source: Gilles Caron - Photo Poche - Actes Sud : Préface de D. Cohn-Bendit<sup>6</sup>.

There were many clashes with the police. The students occupied the buildings of the main universities, and many labor unions joined the movement, enacting a

general strike. These protests created and made known the slogans "It's forbidden to forbid," "The power is in the street," and "All power to the imagination". Hundreds of factories were occupied and the number of strikers reached 10 million. Flags of Mao, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and Lenin joined the demonstrations. Almost all sectors of society were involved. People of all ages were discussing in crowded auditoriums and read daily the student bulletins.

A new presidential election was called in France for the next month; however, President De Gaulle was reelected, defeating the left wing. Despite the electoral defeat, Daniel, le Rouge shows that those demonstrations opened a gap for a heterogeneous social movement; it lost in the political, but won in the sociocultural" The "May 1968" events resonated around the world. In Brazil, the incipient but fierce military dictatorship was already highly repressive and, for this reason, young Brazilians also expressed themselves, by student directories, protests and demonstrations. They were protesting against a country governed by a lack of memory and ethics. Both in France and Brazil, a united youth, conscious of their rights and force managed to make great changes in society.

A few years earlier, youth movements preceding those of "May 1968" were already seen and heard. Also, in reaction to the military dictatorship, adds Coutinho (2006), youth demonstrations began to invade the arts.

The *Cinema Novo* with *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (published in English as "Black God, White Devil") and *Terra em Transe* (Entranced Earth), both by Glauber Rocha. The *Teatro Oficina* run by Zé Celso Martinez, with, among others, the controversial play *O Rei da Vela*. In the music, left-wing intellectuals created the so-called fight songs, and Geraldo Vandré writes "Pra não dizer que não falei das flores"<sup>7</sup>, deeply angering the army, which then began to censor the works of Brazilian artists. (Santos, 2006, p. 8)

Brazilian popular music, rock, and Tropicalismo lead the challenging youth spirit by music. According to Santos (2006), Tropicalismo emerges allegorically, carnivalized, with satirical and ironic joy and criticism, aiming to create a subversive, almost anarchic, state, challenging the dominant paradigms; it became a process of reinventing the forms of manifestations, without falling in outdated rhetoric and, by artistic metaphors, thus subverting the existing cultural order.

The protests spread around the globe in 1968. While the opposition to the Vietnam War dominated the protests (at least in the United States), people were also protesting for civil liberties, in favor of feminism, and against nuclear and biological weapons.

4 Available from: <<https://goo.gl/Eqtioj>>. Access on: Jan. 31 2018.

5 Daniel Marc Cohn-Bendit was the leading student and protagonist of the May 1968 in Paris. He is currently congressman and co-president of the parliamentarian group The Greens/European Free Alliance and member of the German green political party *Die Grünen*.

6 Available from: <<https://goo.gl/E1rtHK>>. Access on: Jan. 31 2018.

7 "So that no one says I never sung of flowers".



Figure 3. May 1968 (Paris, France)  
Source: Boston, Bernie. "Flower Power". The Washington Evening Star (October 21<sup>th</sup>, 1967).

"Utopia dies in the impoverishment of desire" (Jacoby, 2007, p. 216). Mexico City, West Berlin, Rome, London, and many small cities in the USA saw protests against University administrations. In some countries, such as Spain, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Brazil, the main protests were against repressive governments. In Paris, Italy, and Argentina, the students joined the unions in the demonstrations.



Figure 4. Banksy's graffiti "Follow your dreams"  
Source: Banksy<sup>8</sup>.

It is paradoxical to think that the result of these revolutions produced a sort of position averse to utopias.

*Como nossos pais*

...

Minha dor é perceber  
Que apesar de termos  
Feito tudo o que fizemos  
Ainda somos os mesmos  
E vivemos  
Como os nossos pais.<sup>9</sup> (Belchior, 1976)

8 Available from: <<https://goo.gl/GwzRJj>>. Access on: Jan. 31 2018.

9 "My pain is to realize / That although we did / Everything we've done / We're still the same / And we live / Like our parents".

Elis Regina sings "Como nossos pais," by Belchior, showing all her disgust in seeing an entire generation fall into social conformity after many battles and her desire to rekindle the flame of the fight for utopias.

According to Birman (2006), the youth of the 1960s and 1970s had adventure and risk as their ethical values and lifestyle. They wanted to take political power, but also confront and break away from the fixed hypocrisy of their parents. Adolescence started later and ended earlier. With the advent of contraceptive methods, eroticism is separated from reproduction, thus creating another domination on the body and desire. The entry of women into schools and universities produces another insertion of the feminine universe in the social space. There is a major change in the order of the modern nuclear family.

A new post-war era of the capital in which the youth rebellion took over the democracies of the world was created. In spite of this, there was a capital reflux and an assimilation of dreams in the following decades.

Even with the political decline of some totalitarian states, the long-dreamed freedom was confronted by new forms of social control. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1997) think of this moment in history as the passage from the disciplinary society to the control society: the capitalist system gains new forces and changes its strategy. Instead of open coercion; forced meekness of the bodies; imposing, repressive, and prohibitionist discipline, the logic is now of a veiled dictatorship in which the capital is the commander and the instances of power are made by a seduction of the subject by the control of the flow of information and attitudes, instituting new social ideals of accumulation.



Figure 5. Comics from the 2010s (André Dahmer)  
Source: André Dahmer. Comics from the 2010s<sup>10</sup>.

Other movements arise in the anti-globalization struggle, just when it was believed that nothing new would occur in terms of youth protests. An unprecedented movement will arise from the queues of unemployed young people in England: the punks. The generational fights brought back the issues of symbolic values before economic values. It is not that it is a "youth" problem. In fact, some make believe that that is what it is all about. It is a problem of life and renewal of its forces that the search for utopias brings to light. The prefabricated modes of desire seek to define our entry in the world defining

10 "You can take off your uniform now Grandpa, the war finished decades ago / Have you killed all the communists? / Even better than that: We bought them!". Available from: <<https://goo.gl/4aHZXv>>. Access on: Jan. 31 2018.

patterns of sexuality, body uses, aesthetics, ethics. And the youth, as one of the central targets of this strategic shift, did not leave unharmed:

the expressions of youth rebellion were controlled and manipulated by the big top hats of the mass media, creating a set of styles, fashions, and cultural models specifically juvenile. The rebellion was turned into consumption and the market came to occupy the place of revolution. (Dick, 2006, p. 5)

The strengthening of advanced capitalism surreptitiously marks the new generation<sup>11</sup>, which affects the new forms of subjectification of the contemporary subject.

The contemporary Western culture was dominated by the mass media and started to be governed by the logic of capital. Its discourses produces knowledge and truths that are related to a production of apathetic subjective position and its consequent social bond. Within this logic, little space is offered to otherness, to inventiveness, to the subject to open up to new meanings, and to the youth to vent their questioning of the order. In this sense, contemporary subjects are intimated to build themselves from this helplessness.

New subjects are produced and new symptoms arise from it. Considering this scenario, what is the importance of discussing the political protagonism of social movements?

Causing holes in this reality is a way to summon subjects to a unique production of meaning to their existence as a way of circumventing the hegemony of mass production of subjectivities. To understand this ethics as a guide of countercultural movements – thus political – is to assume that we have responsibility about the social symptom.



Figure 6. Banksy's graffiti in Gaza, Palestine<sup>12</sup>

Source: Banksy<sup>13</sup>.

How does the subjective production takes place within this context? What is the Utopian vocation of these movements? What do they say about an ethical positioning as a political one? These are some of the questions we want to deepen in this essay.

Inserted in the context of mass society, of communication revolution, and of the empire of the cultural industries, a large number of subjects find themselves increasingly marginalized in the processes of the structural change of society, especially young people, who start to create groups in transition that do not clearly know what they want nor which way to go.

In the perverse logic of this model that prioritizes indiscriminate consumption, the technicians of profitable investment discovered the sales force of the “youthful intensity.” However, this intensity is captured, taken from multiple places occupied before, and placed in another, emptied of desires and with abundant demands. The “new” became novelty! It was put up for sale. It is to buy, to wear and then to throw away. Young people were demanded to represent an ideal of happiness for adults, children, old people, and young people themselves, serving as a narcissistic model for their society. Thus, a large movement of deterritorialization<sup>14</sup> of this youth is caused.

There was an inversion of values in which, now, young people serve as the ideal of adults, rather than the other way around. Being placed in this place of social ideal can create an omnipotence in these “model” subjects, who do not realize they are being, in fact, modeled in such a way as to be blinded and not recognize themselves anymore in the places they occupy.

Lacan's psychoanalytic studies (1962-1963/2005) point out that, to seize themselves on the inaugural experience of recognition in the mirror, children turn to the adults. These adults represent the Other. The value of the image depends on them. So, how can we think about this reversal of values in which not adults, but young people, represent this place? As pointed out by M. D'Agord (personal communication, 2011) “The question of the Other that returns to the subject of the place from which he expects an oracle, formulated as a *Che vuoi?* – What do you want?, is the one that better leads to the path of his own desire.”<sup>15</sup> According to what the social bond and the contemporary symptoms signal to us, this question has been closed by the “dominant culture” and constitutes the discourse of the Other. One does not encourage the question “what do you want?,” but states “you want this” in the form of consumption: offering “phallic objects” as something that will complete the subject. We know this is a pitfall, because this is a desire that is not mine, but that others make me believe

11 It is worth remembering that, in Latin America, the 1980s became known as “the lost decade,” not only in economic terms, but also in cultural and political development.

12 Established by the UN in December 6, 2012.

13 Available from: <<https://goo.gl/GDQ3j1>>. Access on: Jan. 31 2018.

14 Expression presented by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980/1997).

15 Notes from the classes of the discipline Pesquisa Psicanalítica e Lógica Psicanalítica – Módulo I, of 2010, taught by Professor Marta D'Agord in the Graduate Program in Social and Institutional Psychology of UFRGS. Available from: <<https://goo.gl/RFYmPr>>. Access on: 31 jan. 2018.

it is – in this sense, the subjects deprive themselves from contact with their “truth” and remain slaves of an object relation that does not have to do with their desire. As a result, the function of otherness/desire of these subjects is weakened.

The youth became the result of a socioeconomic culture that understands them as the future (related to economic power) and, at present, only as accessory. In this place in which they are put (or from which they are removed), they are not entitled to their voice, place, space, power, and rights, and often end up accepting and reproducing this model in their own collective and individual consciousness.

Thus, a perverse logic of an “ideal subject” – complete, achievable through consumption – is reproduced. This talks about a place in which a truth, a knowledge, is produced. What is being produced is an alienation of the fundamental lack that constitutes us. Thus, an alienated exit of the history of the subject is reinforced, because it is solitary and individualistic.

We are no longer talking about a downtrodden social subject, especially by the idea of repression of sexuality as in the modern society: the neurotic of Freud. Now we are in front of a subject without solid references, of a culture that changes so quickly that there is no time to settle into a territorializing identity. Subjects are helpless. Now, their happiness is more than a right, it is an obligation that will chase them.



Figure 7. Calvin, Bill Watterson’s comic strip  
Source: Bill Watterson – Calvin & Haroldo<sup>16</sup>.

Unlike the modern way of constitution of the superego – more castrator, moralist –, in the contemporary, it is the superego that dictates an “imperative of pleasure.” The superego does not weaken – it continues rigid in being categorical! – but new moral rules are created, new

values and laws: the law that, when it comes to feeling pleasure, there are no limits; anything goes!

According to Lacan (1998, p. 836), “The role of the Superego is to order pleasure and prohibit pleasure. . . . The pleasure can only be said between the lines by whoever is the subject of law, since the law is based on this prohibition (interdict).” In this case, the “prohibition” would be in being unhappy, in showing suffering?

For Kehl (1999, p. 94), “The imperative of pleasure replaced the prohibition of excess and, although it is impossible for the human being to fully feel pleasure, it is this pleasure that the superego, reproducing the dominant discourses and circulating values, demands from the subjects.”



Figure 8. “Who stops their perverse pleasure?”  
Source: Facebook.

In this logic of thought, the ideals of contemporary society, conveyed by the hegemonic discourses, collaborated to promote widespread alienation and the non-implication of the subject at the time of construction of oneself and, therefore, of the social. A typical apathy of melancholy is reinforced as a mode of subjectification.

Approaching the concepts of melancholy and resentment, Kehl (2004, p. 19) states that resentment is the opposite of regret: “installed in place of the complainant, the resentful one does not regret: he accuses,” and she explains where this condition comes from:

It is the characteristic affection of the dilemmas generated in modern liberal democracies, which beckon to the individual with the promise of a social equality that is not fulfilled, at least in the terms in which it was symbolically anticipated. The members of an inferiorized class or social segment only resent their condition if the proposed equality was anticipated symbolically, so that its lack is perceived. . . . as deprivation. (Kehl, 2004, p. 18)

<sup>16</sup> “Happiness isn't good enough for me. I demand euphoria!”. Available from: <<https://goo.gl/1KMkdA>>. Access on: Jan. 31 2018.

www.facebook.com/ocupa.lisboa



Figure 9. Message of *Ocupa Lisboa* (occupy Lisbon) that circulated the internet.

Source: Blod do Ralf & do Pluralismo Radical<sup>17</sup>.

This image-message that circulates the internet summarizes and explains the suffering of many people. There is an excessive libidinalization of the real and imaginary (to the detriment of the symbolic), in which the ideal of an I and the ideal I are aggrandized. And if the desire is in conjunction with the symbolic, the result could not be other than the weakening of the ability to desire.

The desire is sketched on the margin in which the demand is torn from the need: it is in this margin that the demand, whose appeal can only be unconditional in relation to the Other, opens up in the form of the possible failure that the need can insert there, because there is no universal satisfaction (anguish)<sup>18</sup>. (M. D'Agord, verbal communication, 2011)

On the other hand, the reaction to the helplessness that these discourses have been producing may appear as depressive symptoms, which is not to say that it is a “depressive disorder” or a melancholic structure, but only a depression. What people see as depression might not be more than an expected reaction to a stalker discourse. In this sense, Maria Rita Kehl states that the current depressed ones would be like Freud’s hysterical patients, who denounced the discontent of their time: they denounce that the discourses pervert the desiring process, that they are a decoy, they sicken them, and they

17 “Feeling sad and depressed? Are you anxious? Worried about the future? Feeling isolated and alone? You might be suffering from CAPITALISM. Symptoms may include: homelessness, unemployment, poverty, feelings of powerlessness, fear, apathy, boredom, cultural decay, loss of identity, extreme self-consciousness, loss of free speech, incarceration, suicidal or revolutionary thoughts, death”. Available from: <<https://goo.gl/VsUG7h>>. Access on: Jan. 31 2018.

18 Notes from the classes of the discipline Pesquisa Psicanalítica e Lógica Psicanalítica – Módulo II, of 2011, taught by Professor Marta D’Agord in the Graduate Program in Social and Institutional Psychology of UFRGS.

thus refuse to follow them. Depression is on the opposite side of euphoria.

A depressive person is one that leaves the party he is insistently invited to. . . . Depression, as a social symptom, is that which resists – to the imperative of pleasure, to the faith in the consumerist happiness, to the very offer of possibilities of betrayal of the desiring way. (Kehl, 2009, p. 103)

Would this be a depression or a grieving process for an ideal that fails? As well as the psychoanalytic proposal of blaming the subjects for their symptoms and its character of denunciation of the discontent, what the current social movements of occupation have been showing is an opposition to the capitalist logic. As an alternative to these trends, highlighted in the contemporary social bond, the movements of occupation – among many others – that go to the streets, resume a Utopian power that was buried since the revolutions of the 1960s.

The clinical effects of the failure of the revolutions of the 1960s, with the capitalist recovery since the 1980s, throughout their subjective form, had consequences in the social structure as a whole. The political/economic/subjective capitalist system continues to develop, but reaches a peak with effects that can no longer be ignored. What is curious is that, in the era of globalization, in which apathy appears to be the symptom that captures the subjects, we are witnessing a new awakening of global proportions. Especially in the so-called “first world” countries, where the speculative economy has greater space, a process of collapse begins, thus putting the operational logic of the current system in check. It becomes urgent to think about new sustainable practices of existence. We arrived, then, at another historical moment in which the street is again the stage of protests.\

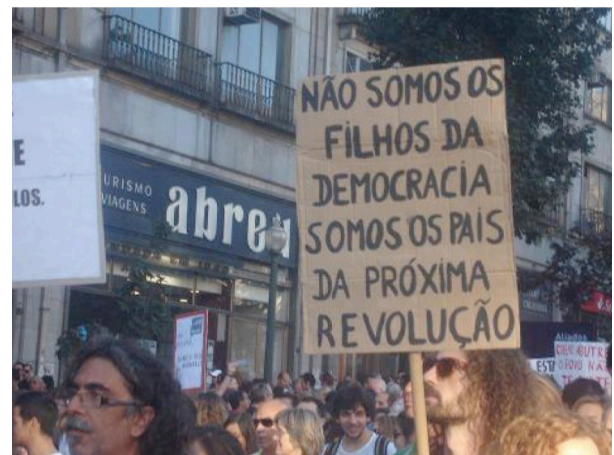


Figure 10. Occupy protest, somewhere in Brazil<sup>19</sup>

Source: Pedregulhos Verbais<sup>20</sup>.

19 In the poster: “We are not the children of democracy. We are the parents of the next revolution”.

20 Available from: <<https://goo.gl/4GmwuA>>. Access on: Jan. 31 2018.



### **Psicanálise: uma vocação utópica**

**Resumo:** Este trabalho surge com o intuito de problematizar a psicanálise como método de interrogação do sujeito, propondo uma reflexão sobre as formas como a própria psicanálise porta uma vocação utópica, enquanto ferramenta política, a partir de sua visão acerca do sujeito e da proposição de uma ética. Propomo-nos a analisar de que forma os regimes econômicos lapidaram as subjetividades. Movimentos de resistência a essas lógicas de silenciamento da vida têm surgido, abrindo novos espaços simbólicos para um pensamento de práticas utópicas e suas reverberações éticas para uma política de vida.

**Palavras-chave:** utopia, política, psicanálise.

### **Psychanalyse : une vocation utopique**

**Résumé :** Ce travail vise à problématiser la psychanalyse en tant que méthode d'interrogation du sujet, en proposant une réflexion sur la question de savoir sous quelles formes la propre psychanalyse porte une vocation utopique, comme un outil politique, à partir de sa vision du sujet et de la proposition d'une éthique. Nous proposons d'examiner comment les régimes économiques ont taillé des subjectivités. Des mouvements de résistance à ces logiques de faire taire la vie ont émergé, en ouvrant de nouveaux espaces symboliques pour une pensée des pratiques utopiques et leurs réverbérations éthiques pour une politique de la vie.

**Mots-clés :** utopie, politique, psychanalyse.

### **Psicoanálisis: una llamada utópica**

**Resumen:** Este trabajo surge con el fin de problematizar el psicoanálisis como método de interrogación del sujeto, proponiendo una reflexión acerca de la forma en que el propio psicoanálisis conlleva una vocación utópica, en cuanto herramienta política, a partir de su visión acerca del sujeto y de la proposición de una ética. Nos proponemos a analizar la manera en que los regímenes económicos lapidaron las subjetividades. Movimientos de resistencia a esta lógica de silenciamiento de la vida han surgido, cediendo el paso a nuevos espacios simbólicos para un pensamiento de prácticas utópicas y sus repercusiones éticas para una política de vida.

**Palabras clave:** utopía, política, psicoanálisis.

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