



The discourse of “neutrality”: attitudes of psychoanalysts during the military dictatorship

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Abstract

This article examines the position of psychoanalytical societies and Brazilian psychoanalysts affiliated to the International Psychoanalytical Association during the military dictatorship in the 1970s. It shows that the period was a time of extended ideas, featuring a large investment in private clinics and a resulting “marginalization” of the social universe doctrine. Through the writings of certain important members of the movement, it seeks to show how, based on the notions of “neutrality”, of the primacy of internal reality to the detriment of external reality, and of investment in the “here and now” of the setting, these psychoanalysts chose to allow psychoanalysis to be divorced from politics. It concludes with arguments in support of the importance of the involvement of such professionals in political society.

Keywords: psychoanalysis; history; Brazil; military dictatorship; politics.

At the time of the coup which installed a military dictatorship in Brazil in 1964, the psychoanalysis movement was represented by four societies with their respective training institutes, recognized by the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA), and established in three major cities: São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre, each one affected by a particular process of institutionalization and with different characteristics.

The early years of free experimentation, of friendliness, of hostility and of adherence to dogma had been definitively left behind. Half a century had passed from the days of the clinic that started in 1910, from the observation of hysterical patients interned in the Santa Casa de Misericórdia do Rio de Janeiro, examined in the first university thesis inspired by psychoanalysis and submitted to the Faculdade de Medicina (Pinto, 1914). Also in the past were the times of important public health programs in the field of child mental health, the 1930s when child clinics were opened in Rio de Janeiro and in São Paulo (Oliveira, 2009). The first initiative, the project of Arthur Ramos, attended around two thousand children in four years, while the second, the Child Guidance Clinic (Clínica de Orientação Infantil), which operated for more than thirty years in São Paulo, contributed towards the consolidation of the progress of psychoanalysis in the social sphere, even though it was used as a preventive method to “cure” behavioral deviations, in the context of a curative conception of mental health (Oliveira, 2012). These had been the first years of a clinic sustained by the arrival of social medicine and inspired by a reading of the primary Freudian topic, the strengthening of the ego to the detriment of the id.

While the 1950s were marked by the foundation of institutions, the decade that followed was characterized by the consolidation of society life. The first events (seminars, meetings, conferences) date from this time, and preceded the creation of a national body, the Brazilian Psychoanalytic Association (Associação Brasileira de Psicanálise, ABP) in 1967 and the launch of the *Revista Brasileira de Psicanálise*. The decade was also marked by the active participation of analysts in international meetings, mainly in Latin America, following the creation in 1960 of the Coordinating Committee of Psychoanalytic Organizations of Latin America (Conselho Coordenador das Organizações Psicanalíticas da América Latina, Copal), bringing together all the psychoanalysis societies in the region affiliated to the IPA.

And it did not stop there. The 1960s were also the years in which the theoretical and clinical parameters were laid down which would guide the practice of these institutions over the next decades, namely the theories of Melanie Klein, aided by the writings of Wilfred Bion, under the direction of Frank Philips. A member of the first generation of analysts trained in Brazil, on the couch of Adelheid Koch in 1939, nine years later Philips established himself in London, in 1948, where he was analyzed by Melanie Klein and afterwards by Bion, at the same time as he became a reference point for those Brazilians who crossed the ocean in search of training. On returning to Brazil in 1969, he set himself up in São Paulo, where he soon imposed his way of thinking and became the supreme authority, the “analysts’ analyst”. He was also responsible for the arrival of Bion in Brazil, whose success in interventions allowed him to escape the ostracism which had led him to change London for the USA.

The 1970s and the boom in psychoanalysis in Brazil

It should be remembered that at that time the IPA institutions, internationally recognized and enjoying credibility and prestige as they penetrated university and intellectual circles, were dominated by personalities from the medico-psychiatric world, particularly in Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre, with the addition in São Paulo of psychologists, sociologists and philosophers. With the demand for training and treatment contained, it was a time of expansion and commemoration, particularly in the São Paulo society which, from 1970 onwards moved to set up a group of analysts in Brasília and another in Ribeirão Preto, while the two institutions of Rio de Janeiro, the Brazilian Psychoanalytic Society of Rio de Janeiro (Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise do Rio de Janeiro, SBPRJ) and the Rio de Janeiro Psychoanalytic Society (Sociedade Psicanalítica do Rio de Janeiro, SPRJ) soon afterwards formed the psychoanalytical nucleus of Recife, in 1975.

Considering themselves the practitioners of "true psychoanalysis", they imposed themselves on the market, taking on other institutions which were timidly emerging outside the domination of the IPA. As well as psychotherapeutic practices such as psychodrama and Reichian procedures, which increased during the 1980s in Rio de Janeiro (Russo, 1993) and in São Paulo, there was also the movement founded by Igor Caruso. Inspired by phenomenology from the 1950s onwards, Jesuits and Catholic intellectuals of Rio Grande do Sul followed Caruso and set up Deep Psychology Circles (Círculos de Psicologia Profunda), which in the 1970s expanded to Belo Horizonte and Recife (Gageiro, Torrossian, 2014).

These expansionist and monolithic ambitions for the spread of psychoanalysis only began to be contained with the arrival of psychoanalysts from Argentina fleeing the military tyranny, many of them former students of Oscar Mazzota, who brought with them a Lacanian interpretation. They came to join, and also compete with, Brazilian followers of Lacan who, since the beginning of the 1970s, had sought to introduce this school of thought to universities in important centers such as Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Campinas, Recife, Brasília, Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte, founding institutions in some cases even before the IPA societies. They were in general young intellectuals returning from periods spent in France, whether through voluntary exile or on account of cultural or academic travel. The founders included Luís Carlos Nogueira, Durval Checchinato, Jacques Laberge, Ivan Correa, Betty Milan, Magno Machado Dias, Luís Olyntho Telles da Silva and Paulo César d'Ávila Brandão. One might say that the doctrines of Lacan emerged as an answer, on the one hand, to the demand for training produced by the extraordinary growth of courses in psychology in Brazil (the profession being regulated between 1962 and 1964) and, on the other, following the course of the reception of such doctrines in Latin America.

A clinic for the rich, a promising career

At the same time, the affiliates founded under the aegis of the IPA flourished. They became rich as they introduced analytical listening, with its tradition of social clinics, to a new customer base with considerable spending power, originating in the enlightened bourgeoisie or socially mobile classes keen to experience psychotherapeutic treatment. During this period,

one of the rare exceptions was the project developed in the vicinity of the shanty town of Cabrito's in Rio de Janeiro which, founded in 1973 by a group of 14 psychoanalysts led by Kattrin Kemper, treated in the main a lower middle-class population (Ferreira, 1986).

Various factors explain this increase in the demand for treatment, such as the new make-up of the clientele, both from the economic, as well as the cultural, scientific and technological point of view, notably during the most repressive period of the military dictatorship under general Médici (1969-1974). They resulted largely from the ambitious economic projects, in which investment priority was given to the industrial sector, to the detriment of social investment in health, education and infrastructure, leading to a concentration of wealth which in turn emphasized social inequalities, with the impoverishment of the waged and low-income sections of society (Skidmore, 1988). These were economic factors from which psychoanalysis benefited, along with various other disciplines and professions, not necessarily liberal.

Generally speaking, it can be said that the move to the clinic by this social class which represented the beneficiaries of the so-called "economic miracle", even though elitist, intellectualized and often politicized, was also the result of events which occurred in the major urban centers and constituted the so-called "cultural revolution", which characterized the generation of the 1960s and marked the second half of the twentieth century in the western world. Among other things, it made possible the relaxation of moral values and the emergence of new customs and feminine conquests, which resulted in substantial changes to the traditional family and to sexual habits, at the same time as it provoked an identity crisis of extraordinary proportions (Russo, 2012).

In such a complex situation, by privileging the moneyed classes, psychoanalysis became, for the generation of analysts arriving in the market, a promising career. It was both the possibility of being enrolled in an international organization, the IPA, and being able to depend on a clientele prepared to pay for the privilege of lying on the couch of these analysts, mainly to be analyzed by the so-called "barons of psychoanalysis", which made some of them charge their fees in dollars. As shown by the work of Candiota (1976), in the middle of the 1970s, the candidates affiliated to the Brazilian Psychoanalytical Society of São Paulo (Sociedade Brasileira de Psicanálise de São Paulo, SBPSP) represented the highest social layer, corresponding to 0.2% of the active population of the richest state in Brazil.

Thus, particularly in São Paulo, this new generation, uninterested in the subject of madness and emphasizing the private clinic intended for neurotics, was consolidating the image which still grips the imagination of society today, that of psychoanalysis as a "clinic for the rich". This is the case even though, as everywhere else, its dominance is threatened by the growth of medicalization and the advance of cognitive behavioral therapies.

In São Paulo, the stigma of a "right wing clinic"

At the end of the 1960s, arising out of the ideological split which was a feature of political thought, the "choice of the rich" was accompanied by the image of a clinic identified as "reactionary", "bourgeois", "right wing". In other words, the left in Brazil adhered to Stalinist principles established from 1927 onwards, under which psychoanalysis was gradually criticized

and condemned in the USSR, until it was outlawed and condemned as a bourgeois science in the 1940s (Roudinesco, Plon, 1998, p.673-677). A clear example of this conflict occurred within the clinic of the Faculty of Psychology of the Universidade de São Paulo (USP), notably in the confrontation with views such as those of Iara Iavelberg. A psychology graduate, this well-known militant of the extreme left labelled the prevailing theories elitist and alienating and the psychoanalysts as reactionaries, preferring, like many of her generation, the ideas of experimental psychology. To which the founder of psychoanalysis in São Paulo and clinical professor, Durval Marcondes, replied: "They want to employ Skinner on the rats of Mao Tse-Tung" (Botelho, 1989, p.20).¹ The situation worsened with the arrest of Iara immediately after her appointment as assistant professor to the chair of professional guidance in 1968. Marcondes refused to take any political step to defend Iara, including the signing of a petition demanding her release (Oliveira, 2005, p.176). Tension between the two groups reached a climax, leading to the dismissal of psychoanalysts from the clinic. As for Iara Iavelberg, once she was released she joined the clandestine opposition and took part in the armed struggle alongside her partner, Carlos Lamarca. She died in an ambush by the organs of political repression in 1971. In a tribute by the Institute of Psychology of USP, the academic center currently bears her name, while the clinic-school was named after Durval Marcondes.

Although it is known that in the early years of the dictatorship, certain important persons in the movement held conservative views, some even showing sympathy for the coup of 1964 (Oliveira, 2005), we are not aware of any evidence of direct collaboration with the regime. In the present state of historiographical research, it can be stated that no psychoanalytical institution was persecuted during the period. No society, whether or not affiliated to the IPA, came under pressure to denounce its members, and no analyst was persecuted, arrested or tortured for activities linked to the practice of psychoanalysis or for anything involving a breach of professional confidentiality. Similarly, psychoanalysis was never identified by the military as a "subversive or revolutionary" practice, as was the case with a number of leftist analysts in Argentina, who from 1976 onwards felt obliged to take the road to exile (Plotkin, 2012).

The rejection of political realities in the clinic

During the 1970s, while the country was passing through a period of violent repression, the official line, in a distortion of reality, showed signs of living on a "fantasy island". Some, such as the president of SBPRJ, the Rio-born Walderedo Ismael de Oliveira, even maintained that "we should remember that we live and work in an immense geographical area, of great importance socially and economically, which is at present passing through a moment of an awakening and a search for its high destiny" (Oliveira, 1974, p.426), and went on to argue that psychoanalysts had "a duty to collaborate fully with those forces which might ensure the continuity of cultural progress, the survival of humanity and the happiness of future generations" (p.426).

The then president of Copal (1972-1974) and active member of the Porto Alegre Psychoanalytical Society (Sociedade Psicanalítica de Porto Alegre, SPPA), David Zimmerman (1974, p.418), argued that in order to attain that "high destiny" it was necessary to confront

“certain problems”, such as “disagreements and dissent”, conflicts involving a “struggle for power”, or even those “more serious” matters involving “damage resulting from prolonged contamination of the psychoanalytical environment due to infiltration by political ideologies”. This was the tone of the speeches which opened the tenth Latin American Congress of Psychoanalysis, held at Rio de Janeiro in 1974, given in the presence of local political leaders and 337 participants from IPA institutions in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, Chile, Venezuela and Peru, as well as representatives from Portugal, the USA, France and Australia.

In a Latin America ruled by dictatorial regimes, there was no shortage of “problems” of a political nature with their echoes in the world of psychoanalysis, such as the case of the psychoanalyst Marcelo Viñar (1992), who was arrested and tortured after his consultancy and home had been invaded by the Uruguayan government in 1972; or the attitude of “negation” adopted by the Chilean Psychoanalytic Association towards the coup which overthrew President Allende in 1973 (Vetö Honorato, 2013), and even the effects of the split of the Plataforma group in Argentina which occurred in 1971.

In Brazil, the “problem” was the presence of the torturer Amílcar Lobo in the psychoanalytical circles of Rio de Janeiro. As a doctor in the First Battalion of the Army Police (Primeiro Batalhão de Polícia do Exército) between 1970 and 1974, Lobo worked in the Operations and Intelligence Department, Center for Internal Defense Operations (Departamento de Operações e Informações, Centro de Operações de Defesa Interna, DOI-Codi), at the same time as doing his SPRJ training, where he was analyzed by the analyst and principal spokesman for the group, Leão Cabernite. In 1973, having been denounced at local and international levels of the IPA, as well as by other psychoanalysis institutions in Europe, who demanded explanations, he was forcefully defended by his analyst and by representatives from the institutions involved in the process. For Zimmerman, for example, the accusations were “false and without any foundation”, or even “the outcome of unfounded rumors”, and the “case” was nothing more than “slander”, “rumors intended to destroy an institution which is growing and developing” (quoted in Sérgio, 1998, p.470). As a result, silence enveloped the case, while the person who had denounced him, the analyst Helena Besserman Vianna (1994), suffered persecution and repression. Amílcar Lobo remains the only known case of an analyst complicit in the repression.

Despite the fear of “contamination” by leftist trends in society life, it may be affirmed that the institutions concerned included members and candidates identified with both the right and the left, or democrats. At the present point of historiographical research, an ideological position never constituted an obstacle to entry or membership of such institutions.

It remains a curiosity, however, to note how some of the assumptions which supported the theoretical interpretation and clinical hegemony of psychoanalysis during this grave period in the political life of Latin America served as a defense in keeping them “protected”, “neutralized” from the “dangers” which external reality might represent. After all, reverting to the speeches given in 1974 by the illustrious representatives of the Brazilian IPA, what “high destiny” could a nation or a region have under the aegis of dictatorial regimes? What kind of “collaboration” could a discipline founded on the principle of free speech offer to governments whose watchwords were silence, fear and terror?

Dominated by the discourse of neutrality

Although we cannot speak of an unmistakable direction, either of a theory of psychic life, of analytical listening, or in understanding its relationship with social life, or even of a collaboration of Brazilian institutions with the military regime, we can however find in the documents and publications traces of the theoretical concepts which predominated in IPA institutions and which served as support for a clinic which seemed divorced from social and political matters.

It should be remembered that this period was not only one of generational but also theoretical-clinical renewal, particularly in São Paulo. It was when the founders, with their differing interpretations of Freud, passed on the baton to the generation that, under the dominant influence of Frank Philips, imposed a single way of thinking. This was an interpretation which emphasized the "depressive position" of Melanie Klein, combined with the ideas of Wilfred Bion, among others, on the importance in the transference relationship of the perception of the quality of the depression as a means of accessing the psychic reality. To reach this "refinement of listening" however, the analyst needs to "eliminate memory and any desire in relation to the patient, because otherwise we will be in an extremely disadvantageous position" (Philips, 1997, p.55). It was a time in which the maxim "here and now" ruled, as the expression of a doctrine which takes the past as "memory stripped of emotion" and the present as a place for "verifying the theories of the analyst on his objects" (Ottalagano, Szterling, Szterling, 1973, p.331). From the point of view of technique, he considered that the analyst, making use of his "intuition", should adopt "the discipline of suspending as far as possible all desire, all need for remembering" (Philips, 1997, p.117). "Without memory, without desire" was, therefore, the other maxim which served to justify the exclusion of external reality from the setting. This was one way for the analyst to avoid being "contaminated" and therefore, according to Philips (1997, p.84), being capable of capturing the "psychic reality" and of "interpreting the unknown in the patient as something distinct from the already known".

Generally speaking it can be said that in this conception the main idea was that, although the psychoanalyst is a "social being", and therefore prevented from freeing himself totally from his "political ideologies", as well as from "transferring to the patient an ideological thought", he should make every effort to "disengage himself" from these "dangers", "to escape as far as possible from his social reality", as an important representative of this thinking, Virgínia Bicudo (1972a, p.1; 1972b, p.289), used to say.

It needs to be stressed that this idea, said to be "neutral", of prioritizing the setting, was not only advocated by analysts of a conservative tendency. Hélio Pellegrino also, then a leftist militant, although he maintained that "all clinical practice, like all social practice, is political", argued that, during the session, "we must put reality in parentheses so that it does not disturb us with its rumblings". For him, the "trickery" of the analyst lay in "generalizing his apolitical attitude outside the consulting room" (cf. statement to Mello, 1982, p.186).

In fact, founded in the discourse of neutrality and silence, the rejection of political reality was not restricted to the setting. In the institutions of São Paulo it found support in the constitution of the SBPSP, which allowed the board to reject any demand for solidarity. This

was the case, for example, with the campaign for the release of the psychoanalyst Marcelo Viñar, in 1972 (Oliveira, 2005, p.272).

The questions raised on the responsibility of the analyst to society were accompanied by the theory that analytical work is directed “exclusively towards internal reality”, given that it is only “through the changes achieved in this reality” that it is possible “to hope for changes in external reality, or more widely in the social environment” (Assis, 1973, p.314). In the realm of ideas could be seen what Castoriadis (1990, p.150) called “the omnipotence of the unconscious”.

Acceptance of these ideas was overwhelming. It was a time of formal transmission, centered on submission and obedience. During the years of the dictatorship, few dared to take an independent line or to show their disagreement with these policies. Those who adopted such an attitude experienced a kind of marginalization, or, as the trainee affiliated to the Brasilia group, Luiz Meyer (s.d., p.2), protested at the time, they saw their criticisms restricted to “psychoanalytical schemes and the consequent reduction to the merely psychological sphere of a reality which demanded to be evaluated by another kind of yardstick”. On this view, said Meyer, the candidate found himself either subject to a relationship of “real and/or neurotic dependency (stemming from idealization) in relation to the institution”, or informed by a distorted perception caused by “projective and introjective identifications” (p.3). Meyer drew attention, among other things, to the normative and coercive intervention of the all-powerful analyst, to the “physiological” relationship established between the candidate and the analyst, to the “lack of freedom” and, above all, to the importance which economic power had acquired in analytical training, resulting in the fact that the relationship between the patient and the analyst was established by “contractual ties”. Meyer complained particularly of an “interpretation of a political nature” (p.5), fundamental in understanding this type of institution, which established a relationship of authority and real power, while at the same time he lamented that such a discussion had been emptied of analysis (Oliveira, 2005, p.269).

From this perspective, one can say that these institutions followed the model of heteronomous societies, governed by “a prohibition on thought, the blocking of representational ideas, a silence imposed on radical imagination (Castoriadis, 1990, p.150). Moreover, under the cloak of neutrality, there was a suppression of reality, or its confinement to internal reality, encouraging an alienation which, according to Lacan (1973), consists in a *veil* which condemns the subject in his relationship with his ego to become dependent on the Other, prevented from affirming himself as an object of desire, and thereby inserted in the Hegelian dialectic of master and slave.

The 1980s, the winds of democracy are felt in International Psychoanalytical Association institutions

In order to prove that psychoanalytic institutions are not divorced from social factors, to show that social changes find their equivalent in the individual, it was necessary to embrace the winds of democracy, a little liberty in Brazil, so that in the 1980s this attitude of submission to the master was questioned, along with this kind of transmission. Like the

return of repression, the movements for bringing back democracy were strongly reflected in institutional life.

In São Paulo, the conception of authoritarian control suffered its first defeat when, in a turbulent process, an opposition platform appeared for the first time and won the elections for the board of SBPSP (Oliveira, 2005, p.274). It was the year 1982, and for the first time since the coup of 1964 the country also held free elections for governor, resulting in a significant victory for the opposition.

In Rio de Janeiro, tensions broke out within the SPRJ, and, inevitably, over the suppressed case of Amílcar Lobo. The trigger was the event entitled "Psychoanalysis and Fascism", organized by the Psychoanalysis Social Clinic at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), in September 1980, on the theme of torture practiced against political prisoners. During the debate, a former political prisoner, Rômulo Noronha de Albuquerque, took the floor to denounce the torture he had suffered and the presence of the psychoanalyst Amílcar Lobo in the team of torturers. The demands for an explanation directed to the board of SPRJ and the public statements of revered analysts such as Hélio Pellegrino, Eduardo Mascarenhas and Wilson Chebabi were decisive. The three leading exponents of psychoanalysis in Rio also took advantage of the occasion to denounce, in a historic interview with *Jornal do Brasil*, what they called the "barons of psychoanalysis" (Cerqueira Filho, 1982). In reality, as pointed out by Mello (1982, p.181, emphasis in the original), they were protesting about what the psychoanalysis community already knew all too well: "the high cost of treatment, the gerontocracy running psychoanalytic institutions, the ideological discrimination against candidates for entry, the fake 'apolitical' stance, and even the ignorance of the works of Freud".

The reaction was not long in coming. Scarcely accustomed to debate, the SPRJ board decided to expel the three illustrious analysts. It was obviously unprepared for the strong reaction of solidarity by the members, who in reply demanded both the readmission of the analysts and a "democratic reform of the Society's constitution" (Cerqueira Filho, 1982, p.191-192). This was the start of a major internal and external process, the effects of which on the society were felt for many years and are still being felt.

These events remind us of the eloquent silence in the psychoanalytic movement over the collaboration of psychoanalysts with the Nazi regime in Germany, particularly the case of Werner Kemper, who, at the end of the Second World War, set himself up in Rio de Janeiro in December 1948 and founded the Rio psychoanalysis movement. Today we know that, having suppressed his past as a collaborator, he commenced a process of transfers in which, in the 1970s, we find his former pupil, Leão Cabernite, as the teacher of Amílcar Lobo (Kupermann, 2014). There are still considerable gaps and gray areas in this history, particularly over the responsibility of the institutions and analysts involved. The whole story is evidence of a trauma in the psychoanalytic world which has still not been treated and cured. Psychoanalysis teaches us that silence and forgetting lead to repetition (Freud, 1985) in its deadly aspect, which in turn reinforces the need to reflect on a practice which dissociates external and internal realities so as to produce a predominant "endopsychic conception" and prevents us from noting what is happening in society.

In defense of psychoanalysis in *polis*

Although psychoanalysis belongs to the private domain and politics forms part of the public sphere, it is the interaction between the two which affords a deeper understanding of the nature of social bonds (Enriquez, 1983). We find this assumption in various works of Freud, such as *Totem and taboo* (1913), *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego* (1921), *The future of an illusion* (1927) and *Civilization and its discontents* (1931), to cite only the so-called “sociological works”.

One example of the importance of bearing in mind this intricate relationship in analysis can be found in the work of Marcelo Viñar (2014, p.228) where he states that:

in a certain sense, the dictatorship has helped us to listen to how society impinges on sessions. For this purpose, there is no need for torture... modern life is enough. But at the very least the circumstances made us understand that the noise of the city entering the consulting room is not just noise, is not just something we can discard, but there is an influence on private and personal life which extends to the course of an individual in society; that something of collective history affects the individual, and something of personal life which represents the individual as a social being.

For this author, analysis cannot be immune from the porous nature of the boundary between the external and the internal. If, on the one hand, the unconscious is, as Lacan (1966, p.258) says, that part of concrete discourse in its trans-individual aspect, which the subject does not have at his disposal to reestablish the continuity of his conscious speech, on the other hand, as Zygouris (2002) reminds us, it is also collective and ethical, marked not only by family history but by the discourses of two subjects who go through the analytical process.

To deny the importance of the implications not only of politics but of the analyst in this process is to ignore the fact that psychoanalysis is “the production of two persons”. As Zygouris (2002, p.43) says, the analyst, “by virtue of his transference, his own history and, principally, his own theoretical beliefs and ideologies, will influence the investigative direction during treatment, even if he says little... even if he is silent”. As Caterina Koltai (2000, p.29) says, the fundamental question arising from this problem is to know whether “the analyst can allow himself not to want to know anything of what is going on around him?” It is as though current events which cause discontent in society are not “accepted in the consulting room as symptoms”.

As Freud (1985, p.263) said, “it must not be forgotten that the analytical relationship is founded on a love for the truth, that is to say, on the recognition of reality and that it excludes any kind of sham or deception”. For him, analysis achieves its purpose when it transmits a conviction of the existence of the unconscious, enabling the subject to perceive what has been repressed, and also, as Castoriadis (1990, p.148) stressed, when it “helps the individual to become autonomous, capable of reflection and deliberation”. We must not forget that psychoanalysis is a talking cure, based on the ethic of freedom, which is a necessary precondition for it to proceed freely, even though for this purpose the subject is aware that he is not the owner of his own self, given that it is subject to influences of various kinds.

On the other hand, as René Major says,

Psychoanalysis is based on a relationship with the word, a relationship with the other and a relationship with elements of memory which are true. This truth speaks as much through lies and all kinds of distortions as through that which is involuntarily separated from consciousness. The narrative of history therefore, whether individual or collective, contains a subjective part owing to the desires, illusions, convictions or dogmas which infest the formation and composition of the narrative (Major, Pires, 1998, s.p.).

Recall so as not to forget, and also so that responsibility for the truth can be assigned, elaborated and repaired, and thus the traumatic experience can be left behind. So that psychoanalysis, a tributary of the rule of law and of democracy, "becomes again the bastion of free and courageous thought" (Zygouris, 2006, p.10).

In this context, the publication of the reports of the National Truth Commission (Comissão Nacional da Verdade) are to be applauded. Set up with the "strategic objective of promoting the public enquiry and investigation into the grave violations of human rights in Brazil" (CNV, 2014, p.21), among its 54 recommendations is a guarantee of permanent medical and psycho-social treatment for the victims of such violations, including the training of professionals. From this process emerged the Testimony Clinic (Clínica do Testemunho), a mental health service run by psychoanalysts and intended for those affected by State violence under the military dictatorship.

This is a way to ensure that the word can circulate freely, which was banned in the prisons of the dictatorship. It is a way to prepare this tragic page from history and to provide reparation. It is equally a way to maintain psychoanalysis in its therapeutic and civilizing functions, without forgetting, as Zygouris (2006) reminds us, that the aim of analysis is to be on the side of life. For the analyst, it is a way of taking part in questioning the destiny of *polis*.

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