

Is there any way out to violence and destructivity?¹

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to examine the subjectivity production and the constitution of the psyche to the light of violence that characterizes our time. The subjectivity is comprehend from the post-modernity and the constitution of the psyche is include from the problems constitute points to ponder in the contemporary psychoanalytic thought: the masochism, the traumatic and the joy. In our daily practice, we find out narcissist forms of the psychosomatic manifestations and the self-destructing disruptions.

Keywords: subjectivity production, constitution of the psyche, masochism, traumatic, joy.

“Agora vigora a agoridade”.

Donaldo Schöler.

The objective of this paper is to examine the subjectivity production and the constitution of the psyche to the light of violence that characterizes our time. The production of subjectivity, in our days, has to do with violence, as well as the constitution of the psyche, that rests on the traumatic of how seduction registers in the child prevailing the passivity. In that context, we see masochism as a starting condition in the individual's life and it should be transposed so that the individual becomes free.

Modernity / post-modernity in the constitution of subjectivity

The theories of the modernity are focused on a rational individual, autonomous, authoritarian. The rationality of the modernism, in its bureaucratic and commercial version, brought about the objective of rupture, the transgressive daring

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that innovates, challenges and gives way to the creative and collective. Post-modernism arises as a reaction to that state of things, trying to revalue the individual and the differentiation process. In other words, the individual is placed in relation to other—similar—and their historic process is engendered starting from that necessary alterity.

The reactions to the paradigm of the modern era are proposed in several ways, by several authors. Jacques Derrida proposes a radical “decentralization of the individual”, stating that the texts do not have authors with defined objective and intention; that the language does not have speakers with stable identities. There cannot be a privileged reading of a text or of any other cultural practice, with an authenticity and universality certificate. Neither an author nor a reader, neither an agent nor subject can be the privileged conveyer of the meaning. However, was it reached in our culture? We are still tied up to competence and perform principles that place us in a subjected position. Therefore, an indispensable condition of our life is at risk: the *recognition* that presupposes the alterity.

Krishan Kumar³ tells us about the post-modernity that “the idea of culture and national identity is attacked on behalf of minority cultures: ethnic groups, of religious sects and specific community cultures, based on age, sex or sexuality. It promotes the “policy of the difference” (p.132). The post-modern architecture follows this idea and the emphasis is placed on small-scale projects, connecting people and neighborhoods and aiming at the development of the *ethos* in certain places and local cultures.

The individual, this way, should find themselves in the likeness and in the differences that might place them in their own place, not in a selfish one, but in a solidary and sociable. However, it is not what we verify in our daily practice, neither in the group coexistence, nor in our clinic. The subject -decentralized from the alterity and from the difference- gives way to the subject of the apathy and of the indifference that invades the intellectual and the social relationships. The consumption paradigm tends to put obstacles in the socialization of opportunities, since working, earning

³ KUMAR, K. Da Sociedade pós-industrial à pós-moderna. Novas Teorias sobre o mundo contemporâneo. Rio de Janeiro. Jorge Zahar Editor. 1997, p.132.

money and consuming take the whole time. The shopping malls become the main places for meeting people. The city is fragmented into three great pieces, which interact in an external way: the business side, the residential rich residential side, and the ghettos. People ignore each other; they become stranger and hostile to each other. ⁴

The paradigm of solidarity or hospitality became the one of detachment; the community and local accomplishments give way to the individualistic consumption. This is the violence competition's yeast. The only one seen is the one who has purchase power. The one who does not have this purchase power becomes invisible and, therefore, they seek -in a violent way- for their visibility and their pleasures. There seems to be a distance between what we are told by the culture intellectuals and what we observe in our institutions (families, groups, psychoanalytic societies).

The violence experiences of our world are built-in in the subjectivity production. Marilena Chauí⁵ says, "I don't worry so much about new subjectivity forms, but with new sociability forms, because it is in them that a subjectivity is modeled and shaped." Therefore, the sociability procedures in our culture are permeated by the expression of the religious fanaticism, by the sex and violence messages in television and in the media, by the constant consumption appeals and by the individuals' lack of commitment before the world. Such subjectivity processes⁶ are translated into the importance given to the consumption, into the need to ascend socially—"to rise in the life - and into the passivity before problem solution, which is transferred to the other (whether it is the State or "Superior"). We have the recent example, where although the international appeal against the war, against violence as violence reprisal, President Bush attacked Iraq and despised not only the international appeal but also UNO's. Law force is what stops violence in the most varied expressions of power, and this force has been weakened.

⁴CASTORIADIS, C. La cuestión de la democracia. In: *Zona Erógena*. Revista Abierta de psicoanálisis y pensamiento contemporáneo. Buenos Aires, n. 44.1999.

⁵CHAUÍ, M. Comentários. In: *Conferências sobre subjetividades*. São Paulo: Instituto Sedes Sapientiae, 1995, p.18-25.

In subjectivity or in sociability, the recovery of the historical connections makes possible the representation of a problem in a public level and the knowledge of its meanings in a private level. The intersection of the psychoanalysis with the social happens here, the intersections of the private with the public, the individual with their pairs as well. The recovery of the law—and its execution— happens not only at a private but also at a public level. The law subject is in compensation for the transgression, the perversity in all its dimensions.

It is necessary to redefine the perversion concept, because “it is neither a zone violation, nor a way the genitality is practiced, but articulating, in the sexual scene, the encounter with another human being.”⁷ We can broaden this concept and to think that the impossibility of the encounter with the other does not only append in the sexual scene, but also in the intersubjectivity one, in the relationship with the other (exteriority). I take Joel Birman's⁸ idea when he says, “that what characterizes the auto-centralization of the subjectivity in the narcissism culture is exactly the exteriorization excess”. It is the show and performance demand. The so-call “out-of-themselves” individual is a consequence of post-modernity that legitimates and it values the perverse forms of enjoying that end the legitimated project of subjectivity. These two ideas reinforce the concept that the encounter with the other can only be possible in a joyful context, where the other is the one who has to legitimate the transgression; however, he/she is prevented of settling as an individual who determines the own intersubjective action limits. This way, the relationship is set in a passive and excluded place.

Problems in the Constitution of the Psyche

“Knowing that one knows is not enough to characterize the human individual, more exactly this possibility of the human individual that is the reflexivity (...) it is for

⁶COIMBRA, C. Doutrina de Segurança Nacional e produção de subjetividade. In: *Clínica e Política, Subjetividade e Violação dos Direitos Humanos*. Te Corá. Instituto Franco Basaglia. Rio de Janeiro. 2002.

⁷ BLEICHAMR, S. Por um balanço em direção ao futuro da psicanálise. In: *Psicanálise e Universidade*. Revista do Núcleo de Estudos e Pesquisa em Psicanálise. Programa de Estudos Pós-graduados em Psicologia Clínica. Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, número 14. Abril de 2001.

⁸BIRMAN, J. Mal-estar na atualidade. A psicanálise e as novas formas de subjetivação. Civilização Brasileira. Rio de Janeiro. 1999.

a historic creation that this possibility becomes an effective reality: it means, there certainly is a auto-creation of the subjectivity.” (Castoriadis, 1992)

From social to personal, the condition of the historic creation arises the subjectivity process. In the constitution of the psyche we find points that also give support to that discussion and those problems constitute points to ponder in the contemporary psychoanalytic thought: the masochism, the traumatic and the joy make think why violence and abuse increase in our daily practice under narcissist and authoritarian forms of constituting the individual, as well as the multiple surgical surgeries, the abuse of medicines, the psychosomatic manifestations and the self-destructing disruptions.

Masochism and sexuality / reflexivity

The human sexuality is essentially traumatic, and the masochism is in the heart of sexuality. The constitution of the psyche is also marked by the intrusion of another one/similar who registers in a traumatic way. This primary movement, which is structural and defensive, turns into a masochistic disposition that either deals with the traumatic or deals with the joy.⁹

According Freud¹⁰, until 1924, the masochism was secondary to the sadism. However, it can be understood as a first movement, a primordial stage that corresponds to the return to itself, to the own body [auto-erotism], being the pleasure and the pain in the same psychic system as a condition of erogenous satisfaction. That corresponds to a first stage - in that we emphasize the fact of hurting, self-punishment movement, where “we find the return to the own person without the passivity to a new one” and that is a *reflexive* movement.

That reflexive movement implies, firstly, the registration of the sexual traumatic in the child, as the instinct is engendered and as the passage of the instinct through the object happens. This movement is made up of the seduction, the dissolution in

⁹ The ideas developed in these three items, which I call them "problems", are developed in the book *Prazer e Dor. O masoquismo e a sexualidade*, of my authorship. Porto Alegre. Criação Humana Publishers. 2002.

the translation road and of a new unit that arises, which is the institution of the instinct, through the *return mechanism to the own person*¹¹. Under this perspective, the child is an object before another individual, from a passive intrusion position, and in the transformation of the passive to the active, that process has an intermediate phase in which there is a return to the own person (object change), where the aim has turn itself reflexive (making oneself suffer).

From this first moment on, the experienced registrations are getting complex, through successive reflexivity movements or, in another words, the mediation of the seduction is going on and this determines the effectiveness of the traumatic and it is a mark of the transition of the passive to the active.

Starting from Freud's theory on the traumatism, it is, the precocious paternal seduction and the amount of energy that invades the protective-shield membrane - creating effraction- and I introduce Jean Laplanche's contributions related to the generalized seduction. Seduction, in this conception, is enlarged long after the factual, being constituted in the message interference of sexual character in the child, which becomes enigmatic and traumatic for the excitement excess that contains, for the strange and untranslatable that are for the child. That is why the message needs psychic procedure. Masochism, in the first Freudian conception, is beside anaclysis-seduction, it means, seduction is what propels sexuality and then the formula used by Laplanche that "the truth of anaclysis is seduction".

The masochistic disposition is settled between traumatism and death instinct limits. That disposition gathers: a) the excitement that places the child passive; b) the precocious satisfaction and pain experiences in an incipient psyche in that the topical differentiation begins to happen. That process infers the constitution of the topical psychic, of the ego and in new pleasure ways that arise. The masochism is removed from a biological and secondary conception of the sadism, and it is placed in a first time in the origin of the instinct.

¹⁰ FREUD, S. (1915) OC.AE. Pulsión y destinos de pulsión. v14, p. 123.

¹¹ This mechanism is mention in *Pulsão e destinos da pulsão* as one of the primary destinies of the repression. Then, in *Problema econômico do masoquismo*, this notion is included as inherent movement of repression in the individual's constitution.

From this point of view, masochism finds an own sexual constitution code in metapsychology and turns transformation possible. It becomes a primary pleasure type that corresponds to a masochistic disposition which aim is to deal with traumatic and desertion, through sexual representation, theorization and repression. From the perspective of organizing itself as a type of joy, later manifest itself as way of organization of pathologies, where the individual themselves inflict suffering, humiliation and damage.

Death Instinct and traumatism / passivity

The “economic problem” takes place when the pain and the displeasure can stop being warnings to constitute the aim, the pleasure principle is paralyzed and the life guardian narcotized. As Freud has been joining this paradox and trying to explain to elucidate it, modifying his theory of the masochism, we could think that the masochistic pleasure turns into a pleasure pattern. It is about an effraction effect, it is about the traumatic that places the individual in a passive and masochistic condition.

The traumatic is reality excess, an amount that needs to process, to take a psychic way, in order to be organized. The relationship between the immediate¹² and the traumatism takes place when the excess happens. Reality excess -in this case- is the seduction, and it is lived as traumatic. The repetition compulsion, in its incessant tendency to retake what it is lived as excess, becomes a mediate possibility among the traumatic, the pain and the sexuality making conditions for the individual to have the possibility to deal with the pain and the pleasure in different fields.

This way, the death instinct (trieb) and the masochism would be in correlation, however governed by different mechanisms. What is left in the death instinct, which is lived passively, will turn active in the compulsion to repeat. The masochism, as excitement that registers the individual in the field of the sexuality, will have its way of

¹². Breast-feeding experiences are registered in the body and they are linked to the real impressions (realität). Freud named “material reality” those registers in the body and the real impression. Realität, or immediate reality, merely belongs to the empiric order, based on the experience, being for that denominated factual reality or objective.

acting psychically as mechanisms the return to the own person and the transformation in the opposite, in the mediation and in the historic temporality.

On the other hand, the eroticism of the pain takes the destiny of the joy, of an unsuccessful sexuality, because it is based on traumatic seduction ways that generates effraction and pain that become registrations on the erogenous body and in the psyche in an outstanding, destructive, misplaced manner. These are anachronistic types of repetition, not historic and that take to the interference of the sexual concept that do not allow either the translation or the repression. They are also kinds of border pathologies and of pathologies in the body, such as infertility, cancer and anorexia, which work in the field of the previous mechanisms of repression.

From joy to fantasy: expropriation of the ownership

The word joy has some meanings of which I enhance the ownership notion of some thing one enjoys and from where one gets pleasure.

Joy, in the psychoanalytic meaning, comes from two sources: one, which its origin lays on the opposition to the desire concept; the other, which starts from Genuss's sense, coming from Hegel's text, in which there is a difference between desire and joy when he says that, in the desire, an object is suppressed (*aufgehen*) and another object is substitutes in its place; while in the joy situation, the object is postponed and retained, becoming an ideal¹³. Joy captures the object in a continuous way of pleasure. Lacan says it is not the law that prevents the individual access to the joy, it is " the pleasure that introduces in joy its limits, the pleasure as life connection, incoherent, until another prohibition, an undeniable one, rises from the regulation discovered by Freud as primary process and pertinent law of pleasure"¹⁴. Joy turns into insatiable enjoyment, in which the pleasure principle/displeasure does not occur like a kind of satisfactory discharge.

¹³ HEGEL, F. O sistema da vida ética. Translated from French by J. Taminiaux. Georg Lasson, p.116.

The connection between joy and masochism is indicated by the body and by the appropriation notion. Joy and pain give a reciprocal condition one another and the dimension of the individual subjection to each other can be thought. For that, I refer to the notion of joy as "usufruct", in the meaning of "enjoyment of the thing while it is an appropriation object and hiding in the theory that the appropriation is an expropriation, because something is only mine while there are others for whom "mine" is someone else's. Only what it is possessed, juridically speaking, can be enjoyable, and in order to fully possess it is necessary for the other to give up their claim on that object"¹⁵.

Starting from the notion that joy is the usufruct of something as the appropriation of what doesn't belong to me, all the other's "input" can be thought as either self-conservative cares, like Freud tells us, or as enigmatic messages, as Laplanche thinks, it is a way of object appropriation, in our case, the incipient individual. Such appropriation is made by the seduction, body joy.¹⁶

The subject-object concern rises again and it gains force when the relationship between joy and masochism is thought. When the subject and the object are united, according to Lacan¹⁷: "the subject takes the object role, (and) it is exactly that what holds the reality of the situation up -called sado-masochist instinct, and it is just in a point - in the masochistic situation itself. It is in it that the subject is object of another's will, that not only closes itself, but also it constitutes the sado-masochist instinct".

The course from joy to fantasy is described by Freud when theorizes about the seduction the child is exposed to. In the text "A child is beaten"¹⁸, the author interrelates the instincts, the bringing of fantasies to light, the masochism and he

¹⁴ LACAN, J. (1995), Subversion du sujet et dialectique du désir. In: *Écrits*. Paris. Seuil, p.821.

¹⁵ BRAUNSTEIN, Néstor. (1990), *Goce*. México. Siglo Veintiuno, p.16.

¹⁶ The expropriation movement is given by the possibility that excitements, passing through the pulsional circuit, make the conversion from passive to active, providing to the ego to translate and to repress the messages of the sexual excess of the other, heading to the subject's constitution. The expropriation turns the subject and the object different from one another, meaning the renouncement to the usufruct of the child's seduced body.

¹⁷ LACAN, J. (1973). *Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de psychanalyse*. Paris, Seuil, p.168.

¹⁸ FREUD, S. (1919). OC.AE. V7.

introduces, not by chance, the scene that causes the ghost of "being beaten by the father". That scene supposes another that, when exercising the action of beating, he places the individual in the condition of receiving an excitement amount that needs to satisfy itself actively in a passive, masturbatory, auto-erotic way.

The ghost of "being beaten by the father because he likes me" contains a conversion, which is essential to mention. The premise that "I am beaten because I am a bad child" "turned into" they beat me because they like me" and later repressed. Freud says that from the course of a formulation to the other, the masochistic condition becomes the origin not only of perversion, but also of infantile sexual fantasies, being beat=love.

Through this Freudian's thought, the fantasy, which becomes unconscious in the individual, is the one of "being beaten by the father", and, in that perspective, the fantasy is basically masochistic.¹⁹ The fantasies are mediations, expropriation ways of the other one that they are formed in the course of the child's subjection before the interference of the adult's sexuality, until the theorizations. The fantasies get, at the beginning, that masochistic nature, exactly because of the child's subjection condition that has to let its original objects go. The fantasies decipher the enigma of the interference of the sexuality.²⁰

It is, then, the way in which the individual leaves the submitted masochistic position. That way is the way of the abandonment, detachment, loss of the original objects. It can be said that this is the task Freud refers to along his work so that the child becomes an individual, and he points out this statement when he says "we have discerned a condition for the reality exam to be instituted: objects have to be lost that

¹⁹ This theme can be studied in *O livro da dor e do amor*, by J.D. Nasio. Rio de Janeiro. 1996, p.138.

²⁰. The precursory models of the interference are: in Totem and Taboo (1913) the oral-cannibalistic form of the primary object-love=devour, as a result of unconscious hostility projection on the demons, in the taboo of the deads, theory adopted by Melanie Klein as the identification origin; in Leonardo da Vinci and an childhood memory (1910) a first connection is described "the mother, that breastfeeds the child, or better: from whom the child sucks, became a vulture that introduces its tail in the child's mouth" passive homosexual fantasy, of sexuality, "introduced" by the mother-vulture in the baby. Pattern for Laplanche's generalized seduction theory.

formerly sought a satisfaction in the object (real)”²¹. The mediation process or the reflexivity one is the transformation that takes into account the object, but it is transformed into ego through the abandonment of the object. When the maintenance of the subjection position happens, the child does not accomplish the mediation; they do not let the original objects go, turning impossible their individual historic place.

Not any the instincts have to be “*tamed*” but also the identification primary objects that provide the structuring of the ego have to be abandoned. The loss of the primary objects is the impression condition and the secondary identification. What are the possibilities left to get off such a passive and dominated by the other position? Love is the substitute of the lost object and, when the individual is not captured by the joy of the other, he/she can be placed as the one who sees, the one who speaks, but not the one who suffers.²²

The law force returns here as a not capturing love, as well as indicating the interdicted, as the dominance limit (either by the incestuous desire, or by the homicidal one). This is the condition to the course to form the symbolic alterity, in other words, the way of registering the other in itself without being captured in that other one, being the other “present in me”, but “different from me”²³. The loss of the object of Oedipal desires extolled by Freud establishes the symbolism, abstraction condition. The ideal is inside the subject. The recognition presupposes the alterity, an individual before the other. From that point on, the recognition of the anatomical sexual distinction and the descapture or not alienation, through law happens.

The formula ego=ego is reflexive and identifiable, because it places the individual in front of themselves. The conversion from the passive to the active

²¹ FREUD, S. (1925) OC.AE. A negação. V.19. In this text Freud makes the difference between the subjective and the objective. The subjective is given through the adverse judgment act, that either affirms or denies thought contents and that is an intellectual substitute of repression. On the other hand, the objective is the examination of the reality, more than “finding -in the objective perception (real)- an object that corresponds to the represented, to convince oneself that is still there”(p.255).

²² . Freud, in *A child is beaten*, points out the nature that the beating scene that causes pleasure is lived by another one. The individual is excluded.

²³ To learn more about this, see Lévinas, E. *Entre nós. Ensaios sobre a alteridade*. Rio de Janeiro. Vozes. 1997.

makes the individual abandon the position of loving themselves, introducing new equation "I-another", time for repression and for the law that makes possible the secondary identifications. It is the course from reflexivity to alterity. The historic individual is recognized through the identification and differs of the other through the activity.

To end I would like to enhance the ideas I have tried to present. The topical intersubjective paradigm, which allows the individual a solidary attitude before another one, is defined as reflexivity and mediation of the reality. It is taken into consideration the law force, which settles itself as a limit and love condition. The subjectivity emerges from this field of conflict and solutions. The paradigm of perversion, seen as the impossibility of the encounter and exteriority excess, is defined by joy, by the immediate of the scene and by the fact. The result is the indifference for the other and the selfishness, stanching ways of the capacity of constituting the alterity. They are two positions that trace different ways in living the culture in its types of violence, and they take different directions before the subject's destructivity.