

Convergence Colloquium - Paris 2019
“Crise dans la culture” “Crisis en la cultura”
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THE MODERN HUNTERS

I thank Convergence and, on this occasion, I especially thank the CEG meeting organizers and the Colloquium organizers in Paris. I also thank those who are here to participate in this activity.

I am going to make a concise comment based on the articulation of the texts by Freud, “Discontent in Culture” and “Psychopathology of daily life”. These two texts allow me to understand the discontent in everyday life and psychopathology, the cultural symptomatology (although they are not synonymous, they both allow me this operation).

I talk of crises like changes, in the plural, because deeming it singular and articulating in just one crisis the multiple changes in our life is a task that exceeds me all over.

Crises in the culture: What is new? What is disruptive? A few comments.

Politics of the Nations and politics of the sexual

Psychoanalysis and politics both start with the letter p. And those of us who practice analysis have quite an attraction for letters, for the difference between capital and small letters, and for homophonies... Well, those who practice psychoanalysis have major sensitivity for differences, sounds, and senses.

Politics in psychoanalysis is the politics of the symptom, we repeat, but in certain occasions, this one for example, it is convenient to re-ask oneself what this statement elevated to the category of Lacanian maxim means.

In Seminar X, Lacan says “If the symptom is what we say, that is to say that it may be implicated completely in the process of constituting the subject, insofar as it has to occur in the place of the Other”

And I am interested in the reading that, if we cut it, it allows us to read **“If the symptom is what we say”**.

I am interested in this version of the symptom because **“If the symptom is what we say, psychoanalysis, we might say, is a politics of what is said as enunciated and as enunciation”**.

Thus we de-pathologize the symptom, but we ethically knot it to the real... When I say ethically, I say we knot it as a social link, as discourse of the Other and with the small other. Freud culturalized the symptom and symptomatized culture.

In the same way as History has been called “the big H” (with a capital H) and the “small h” has been hysteria (history in the low-case), we could say that “the big P” is the Politics of the Nations and the “small p” is the politics of psychoanalysis.

The letter p has quite a signification in Argentina. The big P and the small p have their small h in Argentina.

Although lately a change has occurred in the status of language, the most popular insult in my country, the insult among all insults, up to now has been “Son of the big *puta* (whore)”, which conservatively educated people try to abridge... by saying “Son of the big p...”. And, many times, it is even uttered not as an insult but as an expression recognizing the other’s intelligence and cleverness, or roguery, that is to say, the other’s native wit and cunning (*viveza criolla*).

“*Puteada*” is almost synonym with “insult” in Argentina and also, why not, its opposite, evidencing the high degree of interlocutor recognition.

Currently, when it is used as a form of slander, the “Son of the big *puta*” has mutated - in certain more progressive sectors - to “Son of the big *yuta*”. “*Yuta*”, which keeps its homophony with *puta*, is one of the slang names of the police.

Such change in the idiomatic expression evinces that the despicable *canaillerie* of children, in our days, cannot be completely attributed to the *jouissance* of the mother. How things have changed! True crises in patriarchal culture!

The feminist movement leading gender discourse is one of the most important factors in the present crisis of culture.

In large sectors of society, it is understood that sexual self-determination is an absolutely free choice not dependent on any linked variable.

It is not a topic on which I wish to dwell here but it certainly is a topic that I cannot let go unenunciated here. Talking to my friend, the journalist and writer Alejandro Seselovsky on the title of this meeting, he said: “Oh, you will be talking of feminism. The first thing I would say is that women’s collectives, both in Argentina and throughout the world, are causing a revolution whose size, that is, whose anatomy *vis-à-vis* the process of history is comparable to the one in other great revolutions, like the French, the industrial, the Russian, or the Cuban revolutions. All of them major events that have come to rewrite our lives”. Compellingly overwhelming, my friend.

Transculture is no longer understood, at first instance, as the movement that implies going from one country to another but rather as sexual migration.

Transculture is the culture of today. Hence, it follows that culture is sexual, as envisioned and taught by Freud over one hundred years ago. Not being receptive to the transsexual, nowadays equates to sinking barges with African migrants in the middle of the Mediterranean. It is up to psychoanalysis and to psychoanalysts to know how to interpret those facts which, in my view, psychoanalysis has contributed to generate indirectly but progressively.

The sign, the sense, the symbolic

In Lacanism, sense fell into disgrace already several years ago. And I deem that the Symbolic followed the same road, and that the discredit of sense and the Symbolic was a necessary road to disable the Unconscious, also disabling so many symbolic, despicable acts of the P.

It might be argued that doing without the Symbolic is in fashion, as if this would guarantee the full force and effect of the act. Much to the contrary, I think that there is no act, from the psychoanalytic stance, that is not supported by a Symbolic. **I think that having ourselves removed from a Symbolic does not lead us into a clinical practice of the Real, into a more efficient clinical practice; rather, it makes us slide onto a new version of suggestion.**

A sample of this insufficiency of the Symbolic –and I do not say absence of, I say insufficiency of- is a constant thought in slogans closer to mindfulness than to psychoanalysis. Because it is in the register of the Symbolic, as posed by Lacan, where we find absence as that which articulates structure, the hole as the center of the Symbolic.

The dismissal of the Symbolic, in my view, did not imply interrogating the dimension of its incompleteness, or challenging encyclopedic wisdom. Dismissing the Symbolic tends to minimize the effects of deprivation, frustration, and castration as operations of the constitution of the barred subject. **Causing absence in the Symbolic is a fundamental function of the object.**

And... how are we to articulate all of this, that is, the politics of psychoanalysis with the Politics of Nations, of National States, of Markets? Because both politics operate through the Word, through sense. The big P is also a daughter to *langage* and *langue*.

As Anabel Salafia said a while ago in a panel where she was participating, psychoanalysis is not a *langue*, much less a *langage*; psychoanalysis is a discourse that entails a specific social link.

Let us take a case

In the month of May of this year, Juan José Becerra wrote an excellent article on the murder, at the hands of the police, of four youngsters, three of them between the ages of 13 and 14, and one aged 22. After being on the verge of death, the only survivor was the fifth passenger in the car where they all traveled, a young girl aged 14. This happened in a small town of the province of Buenos Aires called San Miguel del Monte.

The hegemonic press, accomplices of the present Administration, dubbed the event “the tragedy of San Miguel del Monte”, as if it had been a natural, inevitable occurrence.

Juan José Becerra, a sharp journalist and writer in our country, wrote this excellent article under the title of “**Animal Impulse**”. In his text, he exposes the police hunt to which the youngsters were submitted.

In one of the sentences in the article by Becerra he writes: “**There is social weakness in a Fiat 147 (a car that stopped being manufactured in 1996)**” and he adds that the policemen would have never attacked an Audi Q7.

I wish to dwell on the sentence “**There is social weakness in a Fiat 147**” - it seemed to me an extremely accomplished enunciation... Because indeed it showed that instinct, if there is any, is automobilistic. That a drive does not have a preformed object, preestablished, but rather that **suspicion is based, essentially, on the sign**. Driving a car which stopped being manufactured in 1996 is an irrefutable sign that there is no danger there for the one who prowls.

The security forces sport of hunting has now been re-updated within Argentine culture. The sign of poverty invites the hunt. Possession of a face ensures that segregation will unrelentingly become an act of justice by lynching and it will be executed ... whatsoever it may be that needs be executed will be executed without due process. A Fiat is not the same as an Audi Q7. This is the culture of extermination of the poor.

If the politics of psychoanalysis is the politics of whatever is said, and - since the big P also expresses itself- it will survive also by the words. With the politics of psychoanalysis, there is a zone where someone may stir something established by the big P. Becerra does not practice psychoanalysis but in this literatere of words, in his showing the how, given the sign of

Pavlov's bell, the dog salivates, and likewise, given the Fiat 147, the hunter will charge his weapon. But this does not imply a neurocognitive system; no, this implies the magma of *langage, langue*, and discourse. Because as Lacan has very well taught us, the dog salivates but the researcher is a subject in the same experiment; and the hunter enables himself within a discourse (for example, the Chocobar doctrine) in order to control, pursue, and punish. Luis Chocobar is a former member of the police who, on June 8 2017, pursued and murdered Juan Pablo Kucok, an 18 year old young man who had just robbed and stabbed an American tourist in the district of La Boca. Chocobar opened fire when Kucok was facing away, and for this he was accused of "homicide in excess of the performance of duty". At present, he is free, awaiting a court sentence. President Macri received him with honors in Government House, which was interpreted as opening the way for the forces to fire at will. This enablement is currently known as the "Chocobar doctrine".

Long ago, I saw a comic strip whose author I have never remembered, representing Pavlov and his puppies. One of the dogs was saying to the other: "Look, now when we salivate, he will take his booklet and take notes". The joke clearly establishes that the speaking dog is a subject of the experience. And we must talk big Politics not to be taken for salivating dogs.

For this article, Becerra followed Henri Bergson. This "animal trend" which is the modified "vital trend" of Bergson's has allowed me to think back how fortunate we are because thanks to the politics of psychoanalysis we may talk about Politics. And perhaps even stir the laws, somewhat, in the hunting grounds where we live, our culture. They do not hunt like animals, they hunt with ferocious enjoyment, a ferocity which may only be sustained by the logics in the discourse of hatred. And this is human, the most human.

Psychoanalysis, I deem, is this particular way of framing the question. Psychoanalysis is noticing discordance in what seems normal. Psychoanalysis is finding the structure in what seems pathological. Psychoanalysis is discovering what does not relate, is discovering sex in what we say.