

Preface to Portuguese edition of *Psychoanalysis and Revolution*

Ian Parker and David Pavón-Cuéllar are here reunited to produce this 'manifesto', a sometimes forgotten form of enunciating aesthetic or political programs, a manifesto is a type of proposal for change or a wish. A manifesto is not content to say, albeit in a very critical manner, what should be reformulated, nor just the means to do that, but it points to the ways in which change might be carried out. It not only denounces, but invites a community to act in a certain direction. The manifesto form and psychoanalysis have a historical affinity with Brazil that we can see in the first four paragraphs of the *Anthropophagous Manifesto*, proposed by Oswal de Andrade back in 1928: 'Only anthropophagy unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically. Only law in the world. Masked expression of all individualisms, all collectivisms. From all religions. Of all peace treaties. Tupy, or not tupy that is the question. Against all catechesis. Against the mother of the Gracos. I'm only interested in what's not mine. Man's law. Law of the cannibal. We are tired of all the suspicious Catholic husbands put into drama. Freud did away with the woman enigma and other scares of printed psychology'.

The first author mentioned here is Sigmund Freud. He appears in the text in opposition to 'suspicious husbands' and in relation to 'print psychology'. Whether he solved the riddle about the woman is still up for grabs. Most significantly, this shows the continuation and persistence of the spirit of the *Anthropophagos Manifesto* in the history of Brazilian literature and the content of this new *Psychoanalysis and Revolution* manifesto. Anti-colonial and anti-capitalist, here psychoanalysis is opposed to 'printed psychologies', to psychiatry that silences the word and subscribes to practices of alienation and the exercise of power.

Ian Parker and David Pavón-Cuéllar are part of a movement that for more than thirty years has struggled against the pernicious psychological ideology that has become so necessary in modern and later contemporary capitalism in order to justify the alienating nature of class, race, gender and epistemology. Ian Parker and Erica Burman, working in Manchester, England, ended up forming over this period of time an extensive international network of resistance. They were graduates of Trotskyist Marxism and feminist activism, having crossed the critical movements of the 1970s, ranging from Stuart Hall and the Birmingham School to the critical work of Donna Haraway and Rom Harré to third wave feminism and the renewal of Marxism under the auspices of *New Left Review*. Based first at Manchester Metropolitan University and later at the University of Manchester, they have functioned as intellectual reference points with key works in discourse analysis, critical epistemology, critique of psychology as ideology, critical mental health practice, educational psychology, and in the history and sociology of psychoanalysis, Western and Eastern, in Lacanian psychoanalysis and, of course, in the philosophy and political psychology of the left.

In addition to being high-ranking researchers on the international social science circuit they, as itinerant intellectuals, have built a worldwide network of professors and activists, of feminists and literary critics and black and anti-racist thinkers, of vegetarians and Marxists, of anti-nationalists and ecologists, cyberpunks and hackers and even ... psychoanalysts. This is a network that runs from Puerto Rico to India, from Brazil to Japan, from the United States to South Africa, from Turkey, the Philippines and Uruguay, passing through almost all

of Europe. Having met Ian and Erica in 1999 in Caracas, Venezuela, I am part of this network and I was able to witness the strength of their research and political solidarity.

David Pavón-Cuéllar belongs to this network of critical researchers, and others formed over the last thirty years. Working in the city of Morelia, one of the most violent in Mexico, he has produced a respectable work on psychoanalysis, discourse analysis and social psychology. The integration of this authentic international work community is an example of how ties of activism and critical militancy on a global scale are possible, even in a situation of growing hegemony of dominant research work which is guided and limited by 'normal science'. That 'normal science' ensures that universities and their forms of science and social science have been perfectly integrated into the international system of instrumentalized knowledge, but we can see that there are always exceptions.

The Psychoanalysis and Revolution manifesto that the reader now has in their hands, already translated into more than ten languages, is written to be understood by anyone with an interest in social issues and political causes. It is concerned with presenting psychoanalysis to the completely uninformed and absolute layperson, something that is apparent in its choice of vocabulary, the use of technical terms and presuppositions about knowledge. Notice that throughout the manifesto there is not a single citation, and the names of authors are restricted to the minimum, to those who would in some way already be known to the general public.

This attempt to make oneself understood beyond the walls of the universities and the enclosed academic disciplines and fields of study is for a very good reason. This is about 'building a practical alternative to capitalism, sexism, racism and new forms of colonialism'. Psychoanalysis cannot do this alone; the manifesto is careful and unpretentious in this respect. But the claim is that psychoanalysis participates as an instrument and critical practice; in this sense, that seems right and safe. For that, it will be necessary to break down psychoanalysis, show its differences with psychology and psychiatry, expose its problematic associations and parasites. As Ian Parker put it at a famous conference in Montevideo: 'there is a class struggle within psychoanalysis'. If psychoanalysis is not really a worldview, which it is not, it can nevertheless introduce a bit of creativity and transformation.

Our sense of individuality makes it difficult to imagine our own position in a system of symbolic coordinates that overdetermines how we think of who we are, and this alone is not enough to avoid the intimate connection of the real with our experience of suffering. Instead, this is a collective practical task, one that touches the activist more than others. This is why the manifesto starts from the symptom as a link between word and action, as a structuring effect on our subjectivity, and does this in order to characterize psychoanalysis as a critical approach to psychological suffering. This entails remembering the engagement of the first psychoanalysts in community clinics, in their fight against reigning reactionary prejudices about sexuality, as well as how they were persecuted as communists and Jews long before they were perceived as aristocrats engaged in an elite treatment for the elites.

At its heart, this manifesto is a call for a return to a radical psychoanalysis, that which can be glimpsed in certain historical aspects of its origins. Symptoms are forms of individualisation and incorporation of the social malaise in which we live. And this malaise passes through

capitalism, refracted in its peculiar contradictory colonial, heteropatriarchal and androcentric forms.

The psychoanalytic conception of the subject, which is not at all reducible to the 'individual', allows us to propose models of action that are capable of transforming this suffering, of shifting away from adaptive, conformist and 'positive' psychology. This is possible if we think of psychoanalysis as a critical 'anti-psychology' that refuses to be regulated by the state and that intends to address our own different oppressive experiences of class, race and sex, not only outside of us, but also inside us and in each one of us. This approach challenges images of the self-sufficient body and the self-determined self, stressing vulnerability as a universal condition, just as activists in the field of radical disability politics do.

However, this manifesto is not about psychotherapy for everyone, nor about spreading even more the imaginary psychologisation of individuals that is seen today in 'coaching', in social networks and even in certain neo-Pentecostal narratives. Liberating psychoanalysis means repositioning the place of conflict, resistance and repetition, taking those forms of negativity as a dialectical opportunity for an impulse towards de-alienation; 'To be liberating, psychoanalysis needs to be freed'. For this, it is enough to insist that psychoanalysis be an original listening experience, not a discourse that speaks about us in our name.

The revolutionary subject defined and defended here in this manifesto is born from conflict and vanishes when it ends, and therefore is unlike the approach of institutions that think psychoanalysis is eternal; it constantly searches for a practice of self-dissolution. This, along with taking seriously our relationship with otherness configured by social class, sexism and the kinds of nationalist sentiments that have been embedded in us, inside us as part of the estrangement we feel about ourselves. Today, well-being, happiness and ecological harmony are parts of the ideology that attempts to reject conflict, rejects conflict because it rejects the unconscious.

This is not just about politicising psychoanalysis, thematising power relations within the treatment and animating liberation movements, but about providing a resource for perceiving mistaken paths to politicize the subject and to psychologise politics. In other words, psychoanalysis is not in itself treated as a kind of social policy; the claim is that it cannot exist without bringing with it implications and consequences.

What is essential in this manifesto is not merely an academic debate of psychoanalysis with politics or the investigation of in what sense psychoanalysis admits of infiltrations of power, but the declaration that there is at least the possibility of psychoanalysis that is really committed to liberation struggles. This is not the voice of an implicitly white male ego, allegedly civilized, who speaks as if they are protecting the world from barbarism by being barbaric itself. Psychoanalysis recovers a quite different idea about the world beyond the domination of nature and our relation to it, one which places it in line with ecological causes.

Just as we cannot include psychoanalysis in top-down governmental social policy, but must treat it as a discourse among others in the field of progressive and revolutionary politics, we

cannot include psychoanalysis in the field of science without first making a critique of its instrumental, operationalized, non-ecological fake-scientific practice which is so often associated with and usurped by capitalism. The subject of psychoanalysis is the subject of science, just as it is the subject of politics. The question is to know where the science of reality and true politics are. The whiteness of traditional forms of morality and modern Western science was implicitly questioned by Jewish analysts who invented psychoanalysis, and its expansion around the world contributed to colouring in this whiteness in different ways, including in Brazil. The ideological expressions of our subjective division can be reversed in this way to free us from what suppresses, oppresses and represses 'free association', the free association that is such a key and radical term to describe psychoanalytic experience.

We usually, in line with ideological commonsense, rely only on critical 'moral' judgment to repudiate patterns of familiarity and repetition of toxic relationships, in love and at work. When we do that we too often also reinforce the traumatic transformation and isolation of those who suffer in the tracks of segregation and oppression. When we make a 'moral' critique of capitalism, we create legions of purifiers, purified correct terms that dissociate and separate the liberation struggles. Their common ground is actually one and it is at the base and root of this manifesto, *human suffering*. Hierarchising it, manipulating it, using it as symbolic capital, turning the reasons for it upside down in 'moral' condemnation of people who are different from us are all 'reactive' strategies that bypass solidarity and listening. They reinforce moral judgments and often contribute to increasing exclusion. Both the 'old left' that believes itself to be the owners of the laws of history and some in the new social movements who imagine themselves to be completely free from social structures, either by force of will and individual discursive discipline, ignore how in unconscious repetition we insist on ways to enjoy this suffering itself as such.

The idealised hopes for great transformations of society that are forever delayed, always only for 'tomorrow', those generated by our immediate awareness of the world conditioned by dominant forms of 'commonsense', ignore the magnitude of the task, which is that collective revolution demands a subjective revolution. Repeating failures is not easily dispensed with, for some it is attractive, however much, and even because we may believe in good souls and their good will. That belief led the labor movement to be 'colonized' by the ideology and values of the ruling class. This is also what the recent Brazilian experience has proved, bitterly, when we think about the political strategy of inclusion based on consumption. If the unconscious is politics, 'forgetting the unconscious makes us forget politics'. In fact, this maxim seems to be confirmed in contemporary geopolitics where the temptation to retire from politics has suddenly become seen as the best way out. But no. Class struggle is not class resentment, just as legalizing drug use is not about supporting drug trafficking, or just as eco-capitalism, black capitalism and anarcho-capitalism do not fight for liberation.

Yet, psychoanalytic clinical work is not the only one alternative model for political liberation struggles. It provides some distance, some experience of subjective division, and some alternative relationship to traumatic repetition so that political and activist experience itself is subjectively possible and bearable. It enables us to learn about the significant value of words and with it the force of overdetermination represented by language. In the end this

will represent a bit of freedom, perhaps enough for the revolutionary flame to pass on. This is a tangled dense freedom, conquered partially, within the limits of structures, a possible freedom, and that is something that makes all the difference when we are between the neoliberal all or nothing, between neoliberalism and nothing. This is a form of freedom that demands work, objective and subjective, that implies self-limitation, an ethics instead of 'moral' complaint, and one that implies the recognition of a cultural paradox, which, above all, affirms that the 99% too have the right to live and prosper. This is the freedom that this manifesto fights for by asserting that it is social injustice that is our greatest challenge.

Here the struggle between our own sexuality and the capitalist fetishization of sexuality appears as one of the most forgotten struggles in terms of social emancipation. Failing to deal with our reduction to being mere sexual goods, failing to notice how eroticism permeates most of our social activities, from education to science, from culture to the arts, brings back the acute problem of ethics, our ethical stance on the use of pleasures. This is a theme that is currently totally dominated by discursive machines and ideological delimitation, distribution and a kind of 'normalopathy' around pleasure. The cooption of the drive by pornography, the objectification of women and the tyranny of the image of perfect bodies reveal that there is much to be done in terms of the politics of eroticism and pleasure, and this is something to be done based on psychoanalysis.

The care and support networks for those who enter politics who impelled by exclusionary practices demand that they form new community experiences that are compatible with what could be called, for this moment, 'radical democracy'. These small embryonic forms of cooperation and collectivism, something which takes place as multiple experiences around the world, cannot ignore the experiences or counter-experiences promoted by psychoanalysts when confronted themselves with generic questions about the management and distribution of power. Leaving aside the organic and accessible model of the extended family, many tried to evangelise about their chosen path to freedom with psychoanalysis, as if it were a political model for everyone. However, practical experience with the powers mobilized by transference warns the subject of their willingness to put themselves in the hands of the other, and to obey and serve. The real experience with transference as a device for relating to the truth that emerges from the deepest alienation we suffer is in fact a political propaedeutic.

Many do not need it, do not need psychoanalysis, but so many others can benefit from it in their activist practices, mainly in order not to transform their own suffering into a form of identity that then functions as a form of capital for them. The analyst's 'point of view' demands that they not be tied to their privileged position, not tied to the prerogative they have to reproduce a peculiar form of power within the transference. Sometimes they do, and do it in the name of psychoanalytic discourse and with a professional identity, they do this even though it turns out to be quite impossible, insufferable. When they do that they are in the realm of false psychoanalysis, in the imposture and in the cooptation, recuperation that this manifesto never ceases to denounce.

Finally, it is necessary to recognize that a practice openly condemned by the mainstream and by the psychiatric and psychological establishment over the last half century, that is rejected by the mainstream press and derogated by official science, actually continues to be

expansively present in many cultures, such as Brazil. The question is whether this is a sign of it operating as a more insidious ideology or whether it amounts to critical resistance. Eventually, it is both. In other words, the analysand – the patient who undertakes psychoanalysis – is not a final model for the liberated, nor the prototype of the leader for the liberation movements, but it does show a way to mitigate the ‘tyranny of the absence of structure’, to live with naive revolutionary ideals and hyper-voluntarist forms of political engagement. There is no direct communication that is completely purified of desire and unconscious repetition, that is happy to have overcome the symptom. There are only symptoms that have gone through analysis, that have reduced their rampant idealisation, that have recognized the history of their original conflicts and contradictions.

This manifesto explicitly supports the public psychoanalysis clinics that are unfolding throughout Brazil, movements in the struggle and defense of democracy, all those who in one way or another are struggling against the resurgence of fascism and necropolitics in this part of the world. It is also a warning to all ‘neutralized’, conniving, apparently exempt psychoanalysts, who have contributed, in some measure, to the rise of the worst after 2018, who are merely waiting for the death (of the other) to arrive. It is a warning to everyone who thinks that there is a place reserved in the psychoanalysts’ heaven for those who obey the demand to be good citizen-analyzers, concerned with their professional images, adhering to their identifications of class, gender and race, in the dark well of the unconscious, all those who are running the corral of their transferences, raising cattle for the political normalopathy that has taken us by storm.

In the first *Surrealist Manifesto* of 1924, André Breton stated that, after Freud, the human researcher should not be content with immediately available forms of reality and that the imagination should regain its rights. Why not the political imagination? For Breton, in that manifesto, ‘it is worth noting that no means has been designated a priori for carrying out this undertaking, that until further notice it can be construed to be the province of poets as well as scholars, and that its success is not dependent upon the more or less capricious paths that will be followed’.

This manifesto does not intend to make a surrealist analogue with that kind of ‘psychoanalysis at the service of the revolution’, but it does affirm that there are no established protagonists, nor determined paths in this revolution, that before being a social revolution, it was intended to be a revolution in the lives of people. Therefore, the key word of this present manifesto is ‘transformation’, and what is essential is the analysis of its nature and its failure, subjective and objective. That too is why it is effectively a reprint of an even older Manifesto, which you will recognise as that of Marx and Engels, that said: ‘Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.’

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