

# “The Love”, the pandemic and the analyst in confinement

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## Abstract

In this article, the author analyses the poem “The love”, by Vladímir Maiakóvski, in which the loving feeling is used as a revolutionary strategy, to establish relations with Brazilian inequality, the pandemics motivated by the spread of Coronavirus and the role of the psychotherapist in this context. ■



**Keywords**  
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## “O Amor”, a pandemia e o analista confinado

“The Love”, the pandemic and the analyst in confinement But thoughts, the slaves of life, and life, time’s fool, And time, that takes survey of all the world Must have a stop (William Shakespeare).

In the year of 1981, the carioca theatrical scene presented one of the plays that marked the cheerfulness that came after the political amnesty of 1979, mandatorily sanctioned by João Figueiredo, the dictator in power: *The bedbug*, by Vladimir Mayakovsky. Staged by the director Luís Antônio Martinez Corrêa – the text being an indirect translation he had done by himself and that had been proofread and cross-checked with the Russian original by the Professor and Boris Schnaiderman – the play was considerably successful not only because of the inventiveness of the Brazilian playwright and director, but for the stamina of the Russian poet’s words, who arose against the emptying of the revolutionary ideals by the student and working classes of his country, performed by the Stalinist domain that overshadowed Russia during the second half of the 1920s.

The poet and playwright born in today’s Mayakovsky, Georgia, in 1883, and deceased after shooting himself in the heart in Moscow, in 1930, sang the poetical word as a revolutionary weapon. Lyrical, political and exaggerated, he defended, until his death the ideals of the upraisal of 1917, despite being accused many times of writing with an overly individualist voice, which would result in an *oeuvre* that would be ‘incomprehensible to the masses’, title of a self-defense-poem written three years before his demise. It is not possible to enter the text of the comedy *The bedbug* without remembering that Mayakovsky was one of the signatories of the futurist manifesto “A Slap in the Face of

Public Taste”<sup>1</sup>, published in 1912, in which is written “We alone are the face of our time. The cornet of time resonates in our verbal art” (TELES, 1986). Along with other young Russian artists, inspired by “the free words”<sup>2</sup> of the Futurist program of Marinetti, – which, sadly, walked towards a conversion with the Fascism of Mussolini, counter posed to the Russian Cubo-futurism - Mayakovsky encouraged himself with the civilizatory, and perhaps salvific, possibility of the power the written word assumes when it ensembles, in a poetical torrent, the imagetic set of a specific moment in History. As an instrument of the breath that claims the personatic taste (“the face”) to magnify its ears to the clangs (“the cornet of time”) of the *anima*<sup>3</sup>, the verbal art of the poet resonates different worlds into the world and animates them.

*The bedbug* is a fantastic comedy based on a collection of *petit-bourgeois* situations. The plot is led by the character of the drunken Prissípkin, a dissident blue collar worker that ascends socially when he becomes the *fiancé* of a merchant and runs away from the trenches of work after the suicide of Zoia, a colleague with whom he had

<sup>1</sup> In the poem “*Inspiração*”, which inaugurates *Pauliceia desvairada* (2013), published by Mário de Andrade in 1922, there is a verse which establishes relations of intertextuality with the Russian manifesto: “*Bofetadas líricas no Trianon... Algodão!...*” (ANDRADE, 2013, p. 77) [Lyrical slaps in the Trianon... Cottonfield!...] (Our translation).

<sup>2</sup> In the “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature”, F. T. Marinetti suggests that “only the unsyntactical poet who unlinks his words can penetrate the essence of matter and destroy the dumb hostility that separates it from us.” (MARINETTI apud TELES, 1986, p. 98).

<sup>3</sup> The concept of *anima* is paramount in the *oeuvre* of Jung. In Latin, it means “soul” or “psyche”. It prevails, in classic Jungian literature, as the sense of the female archetypal dimension that opposes the dispositions of a predominantly male conscience. This proposition was amplified and reviewed by many authors, such as Gaston Bachelard and James Hillman, for whom the *anima* refers to the images of desire, humour, creative sensibility and belongs to the interiority, or it is the archetypal perspective through which the interiority of the subject is unveiled, revealed and known.

an affectionate relationship. A fire during the long-awaited wedding between Elzevira and Prissípkin exterminates all the characters of the play. Five decades go by and Prissípkin's corpse is found frozen in a tub of water. He is resurrected along with a bedbug, model 1928, which crawls on the wall. A terrible epidemic ravages the city and, probably, its cause lays on the alcohol consumed by the population. Or, maybe, it is motivated by the *Percevejus normalis*, hunted incessantly on the streets and found locked in a cage of the zoo. Just as this insect, the resurrected *homo sapiens* cannot adjust to city life and prefers a home in the zoo, with the other animals, after a sequence of scenes in collage, the city will recognize that the strange unfrozen and delusional figure of the former blue collar worker which, before the audience, in a pathetic and even tragic scene, reveals himself no longer a man, but an insect, the *Philistaeus vulgaris* (MAIAKÓVSKI, 2009). The distinctive elements of Mayakovsky's *weltanschauung*<sup>4</sup> appear in scene: the circus escapes, the ferocious irony against the gentrification of life and the fetish of conspicuous consumption. The man, resurrected in a globalized world can only find his legitimate place to survive in a cage in a zoo, next to an insect, considered his faithful companion. Actually, bedbugs were dangerous vermin, which transmitted diseases, impelling several sanitary campaigns during the time of the Russian Revolution (SCHNAIDERMAN, 2009).

The end of the show was modified in Luiz Antônio Martinez's staging. Due to the political momentum that signaled the end of a long dictatorial period, the bitter ending of the original text was avoided, by adding an excerpt of a laudatory poem by the author, written in 1923. By no means this alteration intended to conspurcate Mayakovsky's play. It was done with a political

view faithful to the poet's purposes. Singing love with a revolutionary tonic, the epidemic, the strangeness and the uprooting of Prissípkin are redeemed by the poem that claims for the transformation of consciences in opposition to the time that enslaves them. If the repetition of subdued work confines them, love imposes itself as an antidote to the arbitrary and empty ambitions of the political systems that revive the hypervigilant defenses of astonished citizens and excludes them from the fruition of beauty and the conscience of the passage of time as poetics of freedom. This poem, that is at the same time a declaration of love dedicated by the recluse Russian poet to his loved one, Lilia Brick, was adapted into the lyrics of a song by Nei Costa Santos and Caetano Veloso (1981), who also wrote the melody. The evocation sang in "The Love", which transposed the semantics of the end of *The bedbug* to a restless and utopic layer, ended the presentation arising as one of the most beautiful compositions of the songbook of Brazilian popular music:

*Talvez  
Quem sabe um dia  
Por uma alameda do zoológico ela também chegará  
Ela que também amava os animais  
Entrará sorridente assim como está  
Na foto sobre a mesa  
Ela é tão bonita  
Ela é tão bonita que na certa eles a ressuscitarão  
O século trinta vencerá  
O coração destroçado já  
Pelos mesquinhas  
Agora vamos alcançar  
Tudo o que não pudemos amar na vida  
Com o estelar das noites inumeráveis*

*Ressuscita-me  
Ainda que mais não seja  
Por que sou poeta  
E ansiava o futuro*

<sup>4</sup> According to the *Dictionary by Merriam-Webster*, the definition of *weltanschauung* is a comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world especially from a specific standpoint, worldview. Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Weltanschauung> Accessed in 05/jun/2020.

*Ressuscita-me*  
*Lutando contra as misérias*  
*Do cotidiano*  
*Ressuscita-me por isso*

*Ressuscita-me*  
*Quero acabar de viver*  
*O que me cabe, minha vida*  
*Para que não mais existam*  
*Amores servis*

*Ressuscita-me*  
*Para que ninguém mais tenha*  
*Que sacrificar-se*  
*Por uma casa, um buraco*

*Ressuscita-me*  
*Para que a partir de hoje*  
*A partir de hoje*  
*A família se transforme*

*E o pai*  
*Seja pelo menos o universo*  
*E a mãe*  
*Seja no mínimo a Terra*  
*A Terra, a Terra (VELOSO et al., 1981)<sup>5</sup>.*

One of the main functions of language is to presentify the world, make it tangible through sound and meaning. Hence the use, by the poet, of indicators of reading, which, in the lyrics, sustain the first and second “Maybe”, “some day”. What could sound as agonizing, such as

the echo of a hypothetical phrase (“who knows”), is diluted here by the (optimist?) assertion that announces the arrival of an entity: “she”. The phonic sequence, sang almost as a whisper, produces a visual effect in which one sees an image that sneaks “through an alley at the zoo”. The meaning of this image that could be rashly apprehended literally, due to the haste of the ordinary and serial speech, is subordinated to the analogy: “she” is the possibility of revolutionary reflection that flows throughout the paths of imagination. Jung noticed that the reflective activity is inexorably associated to psychism and that such conjunction results from a mediation of the *anima*’s archetype: “Through reflection, ‘life’ and its ‘soul’ are abstracted from Nature and given an existence aside” (1986, par. 235). Hillman (1995a) quotes this passage and remarks that the *anima* when understood through such perspective, would be both the possibility of abstraction through reflection and the personification of life and soul in reflected form. Concerning this reflected interiority, it becomes important to refer to the etymology of the word reflection – to curve one-self or to turn backwards; it indicates a meaning contrary to natural development. Bringing back Jung (1986), to reflect is to put one-self in relation or in confrontation with that which has just been witnessed. Reflection, therefore, should be understood as a gaining of conscience.

Reflection, mediated, will return embodied in the *anima*, making its way across from the zoo of human instincts – even though they are a more immanent part of the soul than they appear to be – to the conscience of the atrocities of the infamous world, vile and turned to nothing by the contemptible so-called politicians that exasperate it. This *anima* can be revolutionary if made conscient by the poetical word, it can be animate by the strength of the entrails that react to the appalling emotions of a world bewildered by the society of achievement: “the heart, already so shattered/ By the meanness”. On the argumentative path Jung suggests concerning the act of reflection, the exhausted commodity-man

<sup>5</sup> “Maybe/ Who knows, someday/ She will come through an alley at the zoo/ She, who loved the animals, too/ Will enter smiling, just like she is/ In the portrait on the table/ She is so beautiful/ She is so beautiful that, certainly, they will resurrect her too/ The 30th century will conquer/ The heart, already so shattered/ By the meanness/ Now we will reach for/ All we could not love in life/ With the stellar of innumerable nights/ Resurrect-me/ Even if it is no more/ Because I am a poet/ and longed for the future/ Resurrect-me/ Fighting against the miseries/ Of everyday/ Resurrect-me for this./ Ressurrect-me/ I want to finish living/ That which is mine, my life/ So, there will be no more/ Menial loves./ Resurrect-me/ So no one ever will/ Have to sacrifice one-self again/ For a house or a hole/ Resurrect-me/ So from today/ From today/ The family will transform/ And the father/ Will be, at least, the universe/ And the mother/ Will be, at least, the Earth/ The Earth, the Earth” (Our translation).

can elaborate this conflict – thus conceives the poet – if he addresses to the feeling function<sup>6</sup> the possibility of discriminating the inherent tension between the state of nature (the bestiality) and civilization. “Now we will reach for/ All we could not love in life” evokes, moreover, the review of the abysmal inequalities engendered by a modernizing civilizatory process that leaves us baffled, motionless, unhappy, by mobilizing the violence that constitutes the predatory instinct of the human beast.

The concept of civilization does not have a clear-cut meaning. However, we know it appears in the history of ideas associated strictly to the modern conception of progress. Connected semiologically to the relaxation of customs, the education of the spirit, the glorification of politeness, the sciences and the acquisition of material goods that represent the well-being of human life, the hermeneutics originary of “civilization” implies the positive subjugation of the condition of barbarism and the acquisition of the resources associated to a supposed civility. To make something civil implies the contrast of its own antinomy: the savagery constitutive of the state of nature (STAROBINSKI, 2001). Such perspective has not emerged in a linear way; it is rather the result of the confluence of speeches that structured it and, simultaneously, of the oppositions that emphatically mistrusted its intentions, as we can assume from the study of part of the literature of the romantic movement. In the essay *As raízes do romantismo*, Isaiah Berlin (2015) scans the poetics contrary to the ideals of formality, nobility and illuminist symmetry that are, partly, shattered by the romantic heralds, for whom the individualism, the flight towards the absolute and the unconscious prevail as themes. The primitivism, the exotic, the grotesque, the powers of darkness, the irrational, the unspeakable cast suspicion on the on the civilizatory endeavour

connected to the progress, announced at the time by the bourgeois revolutions of the seventeenth century.

The derrocade of modern civilization was announced: some element inside it was working the opposite of what was expected, making it idiosyncratic. This uneasiness was pointed out by Freud (2013) in his essay as he questions whether there was any possible way of reconciling both individual and collective interests of life in society. This conflict seems unsolvable since love and rage, archetypal forces, battle each other in the mundane stage, unveiling that science has offered advances against some forces present in the life of men, but it has not made them any happier. An aggressive frenzy escapes from the zoo and, undomesticated, turns men into relentless hunters of the other, suggesting that the illuminist proposition would be unachievable due to the erratic internal dispositions of the subjects that constitute it.

“Maybe, who knows”, Prissípkin sings, despite the pettiness of the modern world and the aggressiveness natural to the human animal, we could we reach what was denied us to love in life through the puissance of erotic imagination, “she” is the one who will come smiling and will resurrect us in a decadent civilization. Here, the images of Eros refer to a possibility of connection to the world and with the world through the poetic word: “Resurrect-me/ Even if it is no more/ Because I am a poet/ and longed for the future”. The world dies when deprived of hope in its phantasy and, if psyche is phantasy, as evidences Jung (1987), we have taken hold of the word as a resilient form so we can devise it less unequal and unfair. Maybe, who knows... Poetry here is resistance. Poetry that rests in mythical or mythopoetical ground. Poetry as the human right to the effabulation that rescues the subject from the sordid pulsion that impels it to the foolish and seductive obviousness of the temples of consumption, a trap, in which the thing that has been acquired can no longer be detached from the subjectivity that, reduced to the shameless

<sup>6</sup> Jung (1987) considers as the feeling function conscience’s capacity to appreciate emotions, order and articulate them according to values and meanings. James Hillman (1995b) considers it the content and procedure of psychotherapy.

condition of merchandise on an uncanny sale, or even humiliated by the pathetic craving for the purchase of the state of happiness.

“Resurrect-me/ Fighting against the miseries/ Of everyday”, howls the bard. Poetry is the speech that faces the injunctions of the dominant power. It is our duty to question which poetic state is that. I believe in the one that is viscerally attached to the heart’s pulse, to the feeling rushedly read as utopic, naive or even demagogic, as the bitter and hopeless would say. This is the reflection that, sustained by the feeling function, directs the acquisition of awareness that recall the erotic aspect of life as a revolutionary strategy, leads it as the knowledge imposed by the heart and does not part from it. This is the beast that hibernates in the glass zoos of societies in decadence and that, defrosted as Mayakovsky conceived Prissípkin, articulate its profound chant, which grasps the subterranean chains of mythopoetical imagination, in case it is possible to consider it a political commitment. I identify the political role of the feeling function to the account of a heart that can invigorate the struggle for the mitigation of all inequality. I refer to the structuring functions of empathy and compassion, that, when mobilized by the poetical word, relinquish the arbitrarities and the injustices of our perplexed world – or denounce them.

The revived poetry will be the revolutionary weapon against dictatorships, sings Mayakovsky in “Love”, because the content of a poem cannot be reduced to a mere expression of emotions and individual experiences. These lust for a collective listening when the poet, cornered by loneliness and despair, protests against a hostile, oppressive and alienated conjunctural situation, enouncing a world, or the dream of a world in which there would be no need to struggle to acquire “a house, a hole”. These images gain strength due to the high metaphoric voltage, considering the house our place in the world, our right to shelter so we can harbour ourselves in the delight of imagination and phantasy. With this humanizing function, cognitive value is granted to the stylis-

tic series created by poetical imagination: imagining coincides with a form of knowledge – the reflection – when it promotes an inflection that fosters the rupture with the world of appearances, displacing ourselves from the impositions of the reified world. Here, the world is the *anima*’s servant, bred-in-the-bone as the image of a beast in the zoo and flows in the speech in favour of the fruition of the beauties in the world, being an indicative of the psychic dispositions that can soften the vileities of this same world. “Love” does not scape it political chant, as Mayakovsky vociferates in “About that”:

*Maldizendo as camas,  
erguendo-se do estrado,  
para que o amor preencha a imensidão.  
Para que no dia,  
em que envelhecer de dor,  
não suplique como um mendigo.*<sup>7</sup>

This protest, that is constitutive of lyric poetry, is the base for the arguments of some authors committed to the struggles of the 20th century, as, specially, Adorno in the essay “Palestra sobre lírica e sociedade”. According to the German philosopher (2006, p. 69): “The lyric spirit’s idiosyncratic opposition to the superior power of material things is a reaction to the reification of the world, to the domination of human beings by commodities that has developed since the beginning of the modern era, since the industrial revolution became the dominant form in life”. There is a historical fracture that dissociates the poetic *persona*<sup>8</sup> from nature, from the visceral *anima*, and this evasive instance – the “I” – can commit oneself to the devotion to the *anima* through the imaginative activity implied on the poetical discourse. The greatest poetical compositions owe “their quality to the force with which

<sup>7</sup> “Cursing the beds/ lifting the bedframe/ so love can fill the vastness. / So on the day, / that one grows old in pain/one won’t beg like a tramp” (Our translation).

<sup>8</sup> As there is no direct correspondent to the expression “*eu lírico*”, we opted to translate it as “poetic *persona*”.

the “I” creates the illusion of nature, emerging from alienation” (2006, p. 71). The subjective is converted to an objective social function through the linking of images dear to the poetical language merged with nature.

The return of Prissípkin to the zoo singing “Love” at the end of the Brazilian staging of the play conceived by Martinez Corrêa, holds this evident romantic resonance, as a claim, when the hero, desolated by the human tragic comedy, decides to devote himself to the poetical phantasy, so, henceforth, “the father/ Will be, at least, the universe/ And the mother/ Will be, at least, the Earth”. In a dystopic context in which the poetical word fades away in hopelessness, the chant dissolves the narcissic walls of the “I” and imposes the opening of its doors to a collective resonance, to a collective Father and a collective Mother. This poetic approaches the mythical and utopic dimension in which a father and a mother detach from a personalist concept and, now universal instances, mitigate the inequalities that implode the imagination, already faltered by the assertion that an impossible destiny plagued the humanity.

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“The tirtieth century will conquer”: this line echoes uncomfortably above the desolate scenery of a confined planet Earth, harassed by the menaces of a pandemic caused by the dissemination of the new Coronavirus. Fustigated by phantasies of imminent death, ours and of the people we love, we are bothered by the disparate and divergent epidemiological bulletins published by the stunned health agencies of different countries in the world. We become restless precisely because of the imperative need of social isolation that renders the present powerless and oppresses the hopes of a future life in which one can consider, even briefly the possibility of touching the other and expressing through tactile register the affective commandments – image so dear to us, Brazilians -, the solidarity and the heat that embrace the despair of the other or that offers, even if momentarily, a shelter.

We do not intend in this essay to romanticize the threat to collective life that desolates us and announces the imminent impoverishment and mass unemployment, with progressive crashes of stocks and the despair of both the working class and the owners of the means of production. It would be naive and counterproductive. However, it is left to us, even briefly, if not to inventory, at least, to chronicle that the sociologic and philosophic debates register lines, that are not necessarily consonant, on the global epidemic. The Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, for example, suggests that global cooperation will increase with definite decline, that has already been vaunts, of the capitalist system based on the profit of great banks and industries, as the automobilistic. For Žižek, author of an intervention essay – *Pandemic! COVID-19 Shakes the World* (2020)<sup>9</sup> – the emergency of the virus bears a revolutionary character, because we are finding out, with a sudden blow, that we need each other. We need that an international solidarity and a globally coordinated cooperation that devise the logic of our old friend, comunism. This perception would favour the implantation of public health policies with a wider range than the ones we have followed lately: “a Organização Mundial da Saúde sempre o repetiu: e, em vez disso, não existia nada similar nem mesmo dentro da União Europeia”<sup>10</sup>.

Žižek realized that the crisis demanded sanitary, ecomic and mental health actions. On this last aspect, the Slovenian thinker goes back to Elizabeth Kübler-Ross’ illustrious study *On death & dying*. In this work, the author delimitates the phases of a grief process, that imply denial (“*Não é verdade, trata-se de uma paranoia coletiva*”<sup>11</sup>); anger (“*Os chineses, que possuem o controle da*

<sup>9</sup> In Portuguese, the title of the essay was translated as: *Pandemia: Covid-19 e a reinvenção do comunismo [Pandemic: Covid-19 and the reinvention of comunism]*.

<sup>10</sup> “The World Health Organization has always repeated it: and, instead, there was no such thing even inside the European Union” (Our translation).

<sup>11</sup> “It isn’t even real, it is nothing but a collective paranoia” (Our translation).

*produção de mercadorias, também poluem o meio ambiente*<sup>12</sup>); bargain (“*Conseguirei viver, vou cuidar da minha casa*”<sup>13</sup>); depression (“*Não suportarei, não tenho energia suficiente para o confinamento*”<sup>14</sup>); and acceptance (“*Posso morrer e a crise implicará a revisão dos rumos das vidas em coletividade*”<sup>15</sup>). In the situations that involve trauma, these stages become dramatic, not respecting a linear progression and, many times, conduct the actors involved to sheer panic: fear in its paroxysmal expression. Also, Žizek (2020) makes the diagnosis that we are paralyzed by a particular paranoia that has established itself as usual by bringing together those who share the same idea, transforming it into a state of collective mistrust that eases the delusional condition: it must be so, if that is the way it seems to us.

“Ressurrect-me/ I want to finish living/ That which is mine”: Žizek’s (2020) essay intends to be a prognosis and tries guessing how the life we still have will be, assuming, perhaps, a profetic tone that tints its own enunciation. The greatest illusion is that, after the peak of the viral dissemination, life will come back to what it was. As if Prissípkin had been defrosted and came out to the streets to celebrate a world that had been frozen as well. The socioeconomic life, as well as that of the affective exchanges, is modified when subjected to situations of crisis and this fact will cause alterations in the most elementary situations of daily life. How and when will we go to the movies, shake hands and hug our friends, share an unexpected kiss with someone we have seduced and by whom we allowed ourselves to be seduced in a party, take a seat on a plane or on a bus without fear? At the moment, only the eyes

manage to unravel themselves, frightened and suppliant, over the line of the masks that defend us from each other, telling how we long for the faces that once were exposed and that now, imposingly, hide themselves filled with dread.

These answers may not be enunciated in the near future. Invested by a defeatist analytical cognition, many suspect incredulous that the speeches will not be very assuring and that our bodies will be subjected to the impact of state control for an even longer period of quarantine than the one divided by the predictions of an overly optimistic media. These narrative productions announce the time of anguish, mandatory isolation and alarming consequences over the destinies of life in society. “*Hegel escreveu que a única coisa que podemos aprender com a história é que não aprendemos nada com a história, então duvido que a epidemia nos deixará mais sábios*”<sup>16</sup> (ŽIZEK, 2020, p. 35), says the philosopher of Ljubljana in a pessimistic tone. The new normality will be built on the “ruins of old lives” and it is left to us to question what is wrong in the productive systems and in our current social life that allowed us to be caught unprepared by this pandemic. The mere change in the way we offer health services will not be enough. The Coronavirus epidemic does not only point out the limit of market globalization, it also indicates the even more fatal limit of nationalist populism that insists on the full sovereignty of State, motive for which, remembers Žizek, the crisis resurrects some themes of the old socialist manuals, which has unleashed severe criticism from his peers.

The renowned Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, in a surprising way, has qualified as “*frenetiche, irrazionali e del tutto immotivate*”<sup>17</sup> the measures taken against the “alleged” Coronavirus epidemic. As the data did not seem, at the time of the article “*L’invenzione di un’epi-*

<sup>12</sup> “The Chinese, who have control over the production of good, pollute the environment as well” (Our translation).

<sup>13</sup> “I’ll manage to live, I’ll take care of my home” (Our translation).

<sup>14</sup> “I won’t bear it, I don’t have enough energy to be in confinement” (Our translation).

<sup>15</sup> “I might die and this crisis will imply the reexamination of the path our lives will take collectively” (Our translation).

<sup>16</sup> “Hegel wrote that the only thing we can learn from history is that we do not learn anything from it, so I doubt that the epidemic will make us wiser” (Our translation).

<sup>17</sup> “frenetic, irrational and completely unreasonable” (Our translation).



demia”<sup>18</sup> (2020), to be robust enough to cause a situation of panic, we risk, he alerts, the state of exception becoming the paradigm of a new governability. The hygiene measures produce an unauthentic militarization of the State and the curb of the freedom of going places, facts that are considerably worrying in a democratic regime. The article is part of the selection *Reflexões sobre a peste: ensaios em tempo de pandemia*<sup>19</sup> (AGAMBEN, 2020), a sort of a quarantine diary, whose provocations concern how the State will deal with the biopower, theme that touch on the individual right to freedom. Governments, health institutions and part of population have naturalized the management of life in favor of survival. Governability imposes on citizens measures that try to minimize the risks, in a threshold that separates humanity from barbarism. In the foreword for this collection, professor Carla Rodrigues (2020) emphasizes that this is not exactly a situation of exception, but the revelation of that which was concealed and that has become evident with the flare of the pandemic. In other words, the defense of life has been revindicated in order to guarantee the victory of a project of control based on biopolitics, with authorities placed in different spheres of the State and in supra-state organisms responsible for vigilance, artificial intelligence and, also, for the police and military forces that operate in service of this logic.

“So no one ever will/ Have to sacrifice oneself again/ For a house or a hole”. The Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos in *A cruel pedagogia do vírus* (2020), aligns himself to the thesis that since neoliberalism was made the hegemonic voice of capitalism and settled to the logic of the financial sector, the world has lived in a permanent state of crisis, what would be an etymological contradiction, because that which is critical is necessarily temporary, excep-

tional. When the crisis becomes permanent, it constitutes the perspective through which the rest is seen. In the last forty years, such permanence has for objective to legitimate the scandalous social inequality and concentration of wealth, what boycotts the efficient measures taken to try to prevent the imminent ecological catastrophe. The pandemic, in this context, aggravates even more the endemic situation of deprivedness experienced by the greatest part of the world’s population.

Boaventura outlines the tripod that has been used to organize societies since the seventeenth century: capitalism, colonialism and the patriarchy. These instances, that conduct us to an uncountable number of demimondes, would be invested by the prerogative of invisibility and impose us the crisis and the derrocade in which we find ourselves. With a keen critical verve, the Portuguese thinker replicates to Agamben’s observations pointing out that, in the future we will have to choose not only between state and state of exception, but, also, between democratic state of exception and antidemocratic state of exception. He refuses part of Žižek’s (2020) argumentation that “global communism” would be a possible path during the post-pandemic, as well. Such argumentation sounds inappropriate in times of “exceptional exception”. He also advises us: the intellectuals, in the present moment, must align themselves to the most elementary needs of common citizens, understand their restlessness, as if it were necessary to direct our rhetorical and poetical intentions to rearguard situations, instead of avant-garde: “*Em muitos países, [a vanguarda] são os pastores evangélicos [...], apologistas da dominação capitalista, colonialista e patriarcal*”<sup>20</sup> (SANTOS, 2020, p. 14).

“And the father/ Will be, at least, the universe/ And the mother/ Will be, at least, the Earth/ The Earth, the Earth”. In this argumentative path, Santos lists some possible lessons, beginning

<sup>18</sup> AGAMBEN, Giorgio. “L’invenzione di un’epidemia” [The invention of an epidemic]. Available at: <https://www.quodlibet.it/giorgio-agamben-l-invenzione-di-un-epidemia>

<sup>19</sup> “Reflections on the plague: essays in a time of pandemic” (Our translation).

<sup>20</sup> [In many countries, (the avant-garde) is constituted by evangelical preachers (...), apologists of the capitalist, colonialist and patriarchal domination]. (Our translation)

with the fact that the pandemic does not kill as indiscriminately as one might think, but it will affect devastatingly those regions that are less favoured in terms of medical and sanitary care. Secondly, in this moment of globalized crisis, the capitalist system will be discredited: it might subsist as one of the systems still in practice, but it will not dictate the logic of the state and of the society. The third desolating lesson: colonialism and patriarchy have been uncomformably displaying themselves as living beings in this dreadful moment. Fourth: that societies will have no choice, but to look for alternatives to the common ways of life. The last lesson is that in the last forty years we have lived a political, cultural and ideological quarantine confronted by the impositions of a capitalist system closed in on itself. In an auguring that approaches the poetical scream of revolutionary love written by Mayakovsky almost one hundred years ago, the eminent Portuguese thinker conjectures, in a politically optimistic prediction, emphasizing the transformative power of imagination as a cognitive function:

A quarentena provocada pela pandemia é afinal uma quarentena dentro de outra quarentena. Superaremos a quarentena do capitalismo quando formos capazes de imaginar o planeta como a nossa casa comum e a Natureza como a nossa mãe originária a quem devemos amor e respeito. Ela não nos pertence. Nós é que lhe pertencemos. Quando superarmos esta quarentena, estaremos mais livres das quarentenas provocadas por pandemias<sup>21</sup> (SANTOS, 2020, p. 26).

<sup>21</sup> "The quarantine caused by the pandemic is, after all, a quarantine inside another quarantine. We will overcome the quarantine of capitalism, only when we are able to imagine the planet as our common home and Nature as the mother from whom we all come from and to whom we owe love and respect. It does not belong to us. We belong to it. When we overcome this quarantine, we will be freer of those quarantines caused by pandemics" (Our translation).

In the Brazil of 2020, we have been run over by a government that is reactionary, misogynistic, homophobic, torturer praiser, partidary of eugenic ideals and alien to the recent acquisitions of science and technology. By alining with a tradition that is bossy, patrimonialist, autoritary and corrupt and that has engeneered the constitution of the Brazilian State, the current presidential government has disdained the ammount of deaths brought by Covid-19 and is trying to create a state of ministerial (in)attention to health, committed to the macroeconomy, disqualifying cientific evidences concerning the pandemic produced in the country and around the world. Armed with the hatred of a paranoid and violent speech, the current desastrous government ignores the country in its multitude, in a state of cinic blindness and deafness with programatic efforts to maintain the inequalities and that counts, in the present momento, with the support of one third of the electorate. It is sad and dounting, mostly, if we consider the silencing of a great part of the so called enlightened parcel of hte population, that shows signs of perplexion and bedazzling, as if the cruelty of the risks of the pandemic added to the malevolence of the ungovernment we are subjected, muddied the the sights, dried the throats and paralised the feathers.

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I am trying to arrange these lines from the enunciative place of the analyst bothered by the doubts on the unravellings of the pandemic, restless (im)mobilized by his own anguish of questions that cannot be answered by the voices of the present and that, maybe, cannot be adressed to past experiences. It does not please me to overlap states of exception motivated by plagues throughout history to the current state of the pandemic, an effort that seems fragile and lacking metodological stricness to me. Our time and our condition of despair activate another way of feeling the world. I ask myself which would be its components, which psychological ensembles, more specifically, which archetypical matrices could collaborate for us to be able to draft this feeling.

The theme of the wait and its antipode – despair – emerge in a free association and seem to announce their centrality. We live in the society of achievement, whose value attributed to the subjects in a market economy recall the recognition of one’s acts and the actions binded to the excellence with which one’s craft is performed. We are performative. However, faced with the recessive mist that has been announced, the narcissic places of the speeches will be bound to adapt, or be subjected to the diminishment of its effects. We have to learn how to be in time without the pretension of controlling it, without being sent by performativity and exhibitionist vanity to a gloomy zone in which the arrogance of the dispositives of power can disperse the possibly insubmissive functions of the word with revolutionary intention. Now is the time to make an agreement with time and, I believe, maybe this is not the time for longing for each other, nor of the obsessive previsibility of what is to come, but of the fruition of the time we are living now. This perspective is strange to the man of the achievement, since his daily action is a result, precisely, of the surrender of this contemplative state: being in time, inside time, in its heart.

Speaking of longing, I must confess a nostalgic and dionisiac *anima*. I miss a country that never existed, a Mayakovskyan place in which love could fight and be publicized as a revolutionary weapon. In the current dystopic context, I succumb to an apparent ridiculous positioning whenever I reactivate the context of a utopic Brazil imagined by the genius of the twentieth century, contemporaries of Mayakovsky, revolutionaries as well, specially when they proposed the fusion between life and art in their poetics, respectively, harlequin and antropofagic: Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade. I miss the hopeful diction, considerably acid and critical, but in a significative part, anchored to an optimistic *anima*, that believed that the field of aesthetics would be able to emancipate men. And also to bra-

silianize Brazil, compiling its singularities and comparing them to the lessons of the world. In that moment, one hundred years ago, a subversive and festive *anima* tried to outline our fisionomy. For example, in the poetics of Oswald de Andrade, when it is declared that there had never been catechism, that what “we made was Carnival” (ANDRADE, 2001). Dionisism and brazilianity, a thematical axis that sounds too me quite misplaced in a context of sanitary confinement threatened by the subjection to frivolous, totalitary, abject and genocidal commandments of a vile presidencialism.

But this time demands that we share the sensible, entrust the word to a place of resistance. Sitting at the table of the apartment where I live and currently work, I think of an image that could be able to materialize the place of the analyst in this adverse context. It comes to me the archetypical image of the wounded creator, Hefestus, god of the Greek pantheon. God of the work, of the crafts of imagination and art. Collecting wounds motivated by the abandonments by his father, his mother and his beloved Aphrodite, Hefestus would go towards his workshop at the base of the Etna, where jewelry, armours and beauty were born. This recollection of images oposes the ideation of confinement, being rather associated to the space of concentration, creativity and tenacity, which can be mobilized when, in conditions of confinement, we imagine a space of immersion. Like the alchemist of the word. Even if restrict to a *petit-bourgeois* context, which I do not falter to criticize, and taken by the conscience of the reach of this exchange, only this perspective of freedom can reunite sensibility and intellect, pleasure and reason that attenuate the saturnal dimension of divising the world through a screen. I have just a computer and a feeling of the world and I wish to participate, I wish for a word that is engaged, committed to transformation of the world, so the next dawn will be fat from what prophesized Carlos Drummond de Andrade when he announced in the poem “Sentimento

de mundo”<sup>22</sup>: “Esse amanhecer/ mais noite que a noite” (ANDRADE, 2012, p. 9)<sup>23</sup>.

The time is for humbleness and the search of words that communicate this participative feeling. Or maybe that shout out their impossibility. There is the fear of death and that our loved ones die. It is true that the saturnin temperament is accustomed to the subjects that deal with words, thinkers, poets and artists. And, why not add to this list, the analysts. In a condition dissonant to saturnism, the mythologem of Hefestus, closed in his crater with creative focus, with “constructive concentration”, paraphrasing the Italian writer Italo Calvino (1993), brings some light, I believe, to the recluse task that was imposed on us by the vicissitudes of nature. Far from a melancholic interpretation, the idea of work suggested by the psychological ensemble the Greek denominated Hefestus is not that of the literal transformation of the matter, but that of the transposition of senses of the matter the soul is composed of, a tenacious and contudent work, founded, in these circumstances, in the reconfiguration of the measured time. Courage demands the devotion to this work, which can transcend its effects from the prived life to the public. Even if it may seem, inadvertently a condition unsuspectingly alienated, the analytical craft that wages the poetical function of the word configures an aesthetic experience with a political intention. As if “it” the revolutionary poetical imagination, came through the alleys of the world and resurrected men for a time that is fairer. On this premissa, I cannot scape from quoting a passage bby Jacques Rancière (2009, p. 65), from the essay *A partilha do sensível*<sup>24</sup>, which converges to this argument: “A partilha democrática do sensível faz do trabalhador um ser duplo. Ela tira o artesão do “seu” lugar, o espaço doméstico do

trabalho, e lhe dá o ‘tempo’ de estar no espaço das discussões públicas e na identidade do cidadão deliberante”<sup>25</sup>.

At this point, I refer to the urgency to wage on the poetical insurgent power of the word when parted from the alienated place of repetitive work. I search on the scream that allows me to comunicate to the world for any feeling of hope and become desolated. I have the privilege, in a poor and uneducated country, to be able to submitt myself to a quarentine regime in order to prevent the contamination by the Coronavirus. The worker of the giant building that rises up in front of me is deprived of this right, as the cook of the restaurant next to my home. Indeed, restless and embaressed, I ask myself about the place of an analyst in a state of exception and focus on the listening of Caetano’s song about a poem by Mayakovsky, in which love is pronounced with a transgressive intention. In a letter to his loved one, the poet concludes: “*O amor é o coração de tudo*”<sup>26</sup> (MAIAKÓVSKI, 2018, p. 171). Love is the freedom-word, the feeling that can bestow imaginative scapes to the work with the soul, as a right to the aesthetical experience opposed to the logic of the confined and alienated everyday. Maybe, who knows, some day...

Jacques Rancière deffends this possibility of sharing the sensible, in case there is no opposition, for example, from both the imaginative activity of art and the ascending force of proletarian work: “É como trabalho que a arte pode adquirir o caráter de atividade exclusiva”<sup>27</sup> (2009, p. 68). The artistic practices are not an exception to the others activities of the production system, but they do reconfigure it. Here, we consider art the transformation of matter, of psychic matter. The

<sup>22</sup> Literally “Feeling of the world”.

<sup>23</sup> “This dawn, more like night than night itself” (Our translation).

<sup>24</sup> “*The sharing of the sensible*” (Our translation).

<sup>25</sup> “The democratic sharing of the sensible makes the worker a split being. It takes the artisan out of “its” place, the space of domestic work, and gives him the “time” to be in the space of public discussions and in the identity of a deliberant citizen” (Our translation).

<sup>26</sup> “Love is the heart of everything” (Our translation).

<sup>27</sup> “It is as work that art can acquire the quality of an exclusive activity” (Our translation).

artist as the caregiver of the psyche. I recall Israel's pavilion in the Venice Biennale of 2019, whose installation was a medical ambulatory – the Field Hospital X (FHX) – assembled by Aya Bem Ron (2019), while researching how art can act and react when facing the social diseases and corrupted values of the contemporary world. The arts of healing and the visual arts – as well as the literary – reunited, inextricable metaphor to refer the questionings of the Hefestic activity of the analyst. Adverse reality would have its bitterness attenuated by the poetic and imaginative power of the word when its deficiencies are satisfied without surrendering to alienated work, refusing the facets of the world “already so shattered/ By the meanness”.

The aesthetic experience acts, in this context as the political path that leads to freedom. In a utopic key, Mayakovsky will sing the power of the poetical word:

*Ressucite-me –  
quero viver a vida até o final!  
Para que o amor não seja escravo  
de casamento,  
luxúria,  
pão* (MAIAKÓVSKI, 2018, p. 82)<sup>28</sup>.

Also in a utopic register, the Martinez Corrêa's play celebrated the resurrection of Prissípkin as a metaphor to the Brazilians confined during the dictatorship by singing “Love” with an enchanting and revolutionary melody, so no one else would have to fight for a house, a hole. In a dystopic context years before, in 1960, Carolina Maria de Jesus wages on the transformative and salvific power of the word, trusting to her poetical diary, written in the deprivation of a slum, the bitterness of a feeling of the world lived and mourned in the *Quarto de despejo*<sup>29</sup>:

<sup>28</sup> “Resurrect-me - / I want to live until the end of life/ So love will not be slave/ of marriage/ luxury/ or bread” (Our translation).

<sup>29</sup> “Quarto de despejo” is the room in middle class apartments that is designed for maids that live in the house of their employers. It is usually very small and does not have windows.

*29 de maio. Até que enfim parou de chover.  
As nuvens desliza-se para o poente. Apenas o frio nos fustiga. E várias pessoas da favela não tem agasalhos [...] Percebi que chegaram novas pessoas para a favela. Estão maltrapilhas e as faces desnutridas. Improvisaram um barracão. Condoí-me de ver tantas agruras reservadas aos proletários. Fitei a nova companheira de infortúnio. Ela olhava a favela, suas lamas e suas crianças paupérrimas. Foi o olhar mais triste que eu já presenciei. Talvez ela não mais tem ilusão. Entregou sua vida aos cuidados da vida*<sup>30</sup> (JESUS, 2018, p. 46).

Carolina took care of herself and resisted through the poetical and political function attributed to the word. Many Carolinas in this country are not given the right to preventive social isolation in a context of pandemic. To soul-make, to take care of the other – the craft of the analyst – is to provoke, as Jung (1986) suggested this reflection. Such action implies the confrontation of the scenery of inequality we witness and, paraphrasing Adorno, the obstinate use of protest lyric as a guarantee to the human right of effabulation, in service of the acquisition of a critical conscience, undissociated from the aesthetic experience, touched by the force and the political will power hostile to alienation. Thus, the confined body resurrects and the soul is not emptied! ■

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<sup>30</sup> “May 29th. It has finally stopped raining. The clouds sway towards the twilight. Only the cold assails us. And lots of people in the slums have no coats [...] I've just realized there are new people in the slums. Their clothes are ragged and their faces, unnourished. They have improvised a shack. It hurts me to see so many hardships reserved to the proletarians. I stared at my new partner of misery. She looked at the slum, its muds, the famished children. It was the saddest look I have ever witnessed. Maybe she has no more illusions. She has given up on her life to life's care” (Our translation).

## Resumo

### *“O Amor”, a pandemia e o analista confinado*

*No presente artigo, o autor parte da análise do poema “O amor”, de Vladímir Maiakóvski, em que o sentimento amoroso é usado como estratégia revolucionária, para estabelecer relações com a desigualdade brasileira, a pandemia motivada pela disseminação do Coronavírus e o possível lugar do analista nesse contexto. ■*

**Palavras-chave:** “O amor”, Maiakóvski, poesia, pandemia, psicoterapia

## Resumen

### *“El amor”, la pandemia y el analista confinado*

*En el presente artículo, el autor parte del análisis del poema “El amor”, de Vladímir Maiakóvski, en el cual el sentimiento de amor se usa como estrategia revolucionaria, para establecer relaciones con la desigualdad brasileña, la pandemia motivada por la propagación del Coronavirus y el posible lugar del analista en este contexto. ■*

**Palabras clave:** “El amor”, Maiakóvski, poesía, pandemia, psicoterapia

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