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**THE CHALLENGE OF PSYCHOANALYSIS IN THE XXI
CENTURY**

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**MOVEMENT IN PSYCHOANALYSIS:
ILLUSION, DISILLUSION, HOPE.**

by
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Mexico City, October 10, 2012. We have 72 days left until the end of the world announced by our Maya ancestors, forecast for next December. I doubt that in a little bit more than two months something really meaningful regarding the destiny of Psychoanalysis can happen! So, as Jung taught us, from this point of view we don't have much time to attend to one of the crucial task of our existence, that is to prepare ourselves well to die.

But, what will come up if the prophecy does not come true? This case implies some diverse issues, if we accept the challenge, from the perspective of a psychoanalysis acknowledged as a fundamental component of our age, whose view of reality permeates a wide part of the last century's culture, as everyone can see in the innumerable literary, cinematographic, artistic and theatrical works which draw their inspiration from it. Basically, a strong idea which fertilized every cultural, social and scientific field. A psychoanalysis "of everybody", so different from the developmental psychologies and from the therapeutic jargons of the professionals. The issues I mentioned above can be summarized, in my opinion, in the following two:

- 1) does Psychoanalysis, represented by the psychoanalysts who live in the different countries of the world, still correspond to this view and is it still vital?
- 2) does the survival of psychoanalysts as a professional category represent an advantage or do we wish for a psychoanalysis without psychoanalysts, or, at least, without their institutional dynamics?

I consider that it is necessary for each single professional to re-own the social and political individual responsibilities.

Before entering into the core of these issues and presenting my analysis to your attention, I will start with some personal references.

In the title I wrote illusion first. As an enthusiastic young woman in the '70s, I dreamt, together with many others, of revolutions and liberation pathways, searching for an immanent value in the human being, in the totality and the fullness of life as it can be conceived beyond the conventions of the social moral. Since I was born in the South of Italy, these kinds of values were necessary especially for me. At that time I had been reading some of Freud, of Lou Salome', of Marcuse, Foucault, and I was able to strongly believe in such concepts, and with a lot of passion. In Italy, in Rome, in July 1969, a protest rally against the XXVI Congress of Psychoanalysis was organized by an international group (of which I am a Member nowadays) which was formed by French, Swiss, Italian and Argentinian colleagues. The demarcation between two types of psychoanalysts was vivid: type (A), those who considered the psychoanalytic message above all as a liberating drive and, consequently, against every dictatorships including those of thought; and type (B), those who considered it's an illusion to devote energies to this perspective and who tended to bring the world of psychoanalysts closer to one of the well-adapted liberal professions.

Two years later, in Vienna, in occasion of the XXVII Congress, another Contro-Congress (the one described by Erica Jong in "Fear of flying"), organized by the same group, which had in the meantime set up a connection network, called Platform, Plataforma, in Argentina, suggested to continue to try to retrieve some elements of liberation by reconsidering one of the most crucial points of psychoanalytic power, that is Educational power. From the Platform's point of view, psychoanalytic Education was seen more and more as an Education of the consciences of the candidates within an organization based on submission, disguised as professional Education.

Referring to Mexico again: in this country, a collection of articles by Marie Langer, titled "Memoria, historia y diálogo psicoanalítico", was published in 1981. I am citing this because this important Austrian psychoanalyst (who worked in Buenos Aires) was the main connection with the European group. Forced to take refuge in Uruguay, she introduced there the educational criteria of the psychoanalytic seminar of Zurich: this is the origin of the so called "Uruguayan model" of Education, which is currently presented in comparison with the "French model" and the "Anglo-Saxon model", without recognizing its origins.

I say this because, in my opinion, the problems that once aroused cruel controversies, for example on the number of sessions required to differentiate psychoanalysis from psychotherapy, are now overtaken by an opportunistic and pseudoscientific escamotage: comparing models, instead of discrediting the identity of others. The connection with the vicissitudes of the market is still and always evident and the suggestions for salvation seem more and more oriented to set up valid marketing strategies to insure the survival of the professional category. This factor was evident to me when I actually met both types of psychoanalysts I mentioned above. In time, I saw that the B type prevailed. That started the beginning of my disillusion.

I decided to recollect this particular moment of the 60s because it marks, as far as I am concerned, a juncture in which the wide scope of the psychoanalytical issue, which had characterized the research and the polemics from the point of view of the theory, of the technical theory, of technique, of social and political conscience of the 30s, interrupted by Nazism, the diaspora and its consequences, this wide scope allows me to suggest here the issue of hope.

I need now to underline one fact. We all know how nowadays there is an attempt to put together, as a sort of new ecumenism, the so-called “several psychoanalyses”, as in Wallerstein’s thought, that is “one or many psychoanalyses”. Some people tried to pinpoint the main currents of these psychoanalyses and, as Edith Kurzweil (The Freudians) noted, there is a strong geographical conditioning in the development of one current rather than of another. Are they disciplinarian and scientific differences or rather the chameleon-like ability of Psychoanalytical organization to adapt themselves to the local conditions and thus to develop in one way rather than another, in relation to an adaptation to the power relationships in that particular society?

This phenomenon was especially evident in Nazi Germany, when Jewish psychoanalysts were forced to escape. Many of them fled to the US, where some of them had to disguise their political ideas. They were generally politically engaged, from Fromm to Horney, to Reich, Deutsche, Jacobson, to Fenichel, who tried to keep the whole group in touch by means of secret circulars, to Marie Langer herself.

They were all people with a strong ideal thought system and for all of them psychoanalysis went beyond the circumscribed therapeutic professional field. We can certainly assume that it was an adaptation to the local conditions in order to keep the psychoanalytical message alive. But We must consider that the thesis of the defense of the “psychoanalytical truth” message, was taken up again especially in Germany, in the controversies of the early 80s, regarding the behavior of Arian psychoanalysts and the collaboration with the Goering Institute in Berlin, to justify their silence. During the Nazi period the real problem was about life or death. Nowadays, these are the stances of the so-called respectable professionals, concerned about the search for clients, who take refuge into the “neutrality” of science and whose organizations try to find salvation by means of external legitimization, begging for academic or epistemological positions inside the so-called “strong disciplines”. These are, in my opinion, the more frequent salvation proposals, mainly characterized by a corporate's ecumenism which tries to find positions in the bureaucratic-formal institutional circuits, especially the academic one, for example the salvation in Max Weber’s Beruf. It is important to see that the social legitimization’s searched by the psychoanalysts in all the different areas of the world, Italy included, gives prominence to the “triumph of copper”: everyone justifies the existence of psychoanalysis on the therapeutic level, concerning the pathology’s forms which once made Psychotherapy considered with arrogance as a sort of second division, with copper compared to the pure gold of psychoanalysis. Now we legitimate ourselves through copper: psychotics and borderlines, group psychoanalysis and more or less autistic children, everything that was not psychoanalysis, nowadays serves to mint copper medals. We moved from theology of Education to the redemption of the “good savage”. In recent years, a

strong critical push has developed towards a corporation which, on the educational level, in more than 100 years, has not been able to express a valid educational system. It has been said, for example, and this is Otto Kernberg's own thesis, that Institutions clipped artistic capacity, creativity. If it is like that, whole generations of psychoanalysts educated since the 1950's were formed by minus habentes, but this does not correspond to the truth! Actually, there are two types of psychoanalysts: those selected because of their capacity of submission, and those who were able to escape from the selection criteria, who continued to perform and to freely work. In the meantime, what can we do with the several failed artists? Many of them even have brilliant institutional careers! It is now fashionable to criticize the "Eitingon model". Here in Mexico City César Garza-Guerrero elaborated some contributions published in the International Journal of Psychoanalysis in recent years, even speaking about "a one century of marasmus" ("Our long and marasmic night of one century", Int.J.Psychoanal. 2004; 85:3-26). Anyway, the point is that, if we see what are the key-ideas in the general theory, the technical theory, in the technique itself, we find that they were elaborated until the 50s by not particularly "normal" subjects, not well-analyzed or with short term analysis. They produced indeed excellent contributions at an early age, while today we have candidates in their 50s who, if they are lucky, become Members in their 60s!

To conclude. It is clearly not my task to hypothesize collective destinies. But I believe I am entitled, after my passage through illusion and disillusion, to consider myself, on the subjective level, more than just a good professional in one of the many forms of psychotherapy.

The challenge that psychoanalysis can play beyond belonging to one orientation or another, if free from submission, still continues to be an element of freedom and Education continues to be an inevitable tool of transmission. This subjectively makes me hopeful, despite the collapse of illusions and the disillusion that followed, as I have just said.

Therefore, I make a plea to the many colleagues who, scattered here and there in trench warfare far away from academic mannerisms, think that the strong idea called psychoanalysis, which is still one of the most important challenges of thought, has still something to say about the human condition very beyond the cure of diseases and disorders.

Thank you.

