SOME THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF 'DOING NOTHING' AND DERIVATIVE REFLECTIONS FROM IT

ALGUNS ASPECTOS TEÓRICOS DE 'FAZER NADA' E REFLEXOS DERIVATIVOS DELE

ALGUNOS ASPECTOS TEÓRICOS DE 'NO HACER NADA' Y SUS REFLEXIONES DERIVADAS

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ABSTRACT

This work is dedicated to an investigation of theoretical elements related to social action, from a psychoanalytic perspective. While initially presenting a concise reflection based on a thesis about "doing nothing," it returns in a second phase to explore a consequent development of this "doing nothing," unfolding through a conceptualization of social fabric and its components. This "doing nothing" is linked, implicitly, much more to a non-acting in a protocol-driven, utilitarian, and debilitating way, affected both by the reflections of Walter Benjamin, who pointed the finger at us all saying, "You work for fascism!" – as Agamben would later ask, "How can we avoid working?" – and by the inescapable "creative idleness" of Domenico de Masi, a critic of the idolatry of work that ignores freedoms and subjectivities. We are interested in allusively highlighting such content, but objectively demonstrating the importance and power of coexistence and free time, which are indeed effective remedies against civilizational ills – although here we are thinking of clinical-political interventions in territories, that is, in care practices in services with people in situations of social vulnerability. Fighting for human rights.

Keywords: Psychoanalysis. Politics. Vulnerable Territories. Institution.

RESUMO

O presente trabalho se dedica a uma investigação acerca de elementos teóricos relativos ao fazer social, desde um ângulo psicanalítico. Se inicialmente apresenta uma reflexão reduzida desde uma tese sobre "fazer nada", retorna em segunda volta no esforço de repercutir um desenvolvimento consequente deste "nada fazer", transcorrendo sobre uma conceituação de tessitura social e seus componentes. Um 'fazer nada' que se vincula por entrelinhas muito mais a um não agir de modo protocolar, utilitarista e adoecedor, afetado tanto pelas reflexões de Walter Benjamin que nos apontava o dedo a todos dizendo 'vocês trabalham para o fascismo!' – como fazer para não trabalharmos?, nos devolveria Agamben –, quanto pelo inarredável 'ócio criativo' de um Domenico de Masi, crítico da idolatria pelo trabalho que ignora liberdades e subjetividades. Interessa-nos evidenciar alusivamente tais conteúdos,

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mas demonstrando objetivamente a importância e a potência da convivência e do tempo livre, estes sim efetivos remédios contra mal-estares civilizatórios – conquanto aqui pensamos em intervenções clínico-políticas em territórios, quer seja, em práticas de cuidado em atendimentos com pessoas em desproteção social. Na luta por direitos humanos.

Palavras-chave: Psicanálise. Política. Territórios Vulnerabilizados. Instituição.

RESUMEN
Este trabajo se dedica a la investigación de elementos teóricos relacionados con la acción social desde una perspectiva psicoanalítica. Si bien inicialmente presenta una reflexión concisa basada en una tesis acerca del "no hacer nada", en una segunda fase explora el desarrollo consecuente de este "nada hacer", desplegándose a través de una conceptualización del tejido social y sus componentes. Este "no hacer nada" se vincula, implícitamente, mucho más a una acción no protocolaria, no utilitaria y no debilitante, influenciada tanto por las reflexiones de Walter Benjamin, quien nos señaló a todos diciendo: "¡Trabajan para el fascismo!" — "¿Cómo podemos evitar trabajar para él?" Agamben nos preguntaría más tarde —, como por la ineludible "ociosidad creativa" de Domenico de Masi, crítico de la idolatría del trabajo que ignora las libertades y las subjetividades. Nos interesa destacar alusivamente dicho contenido, pero demostrando objetivamente la importancia y el poder de la convivencia y el tiempo libre, que son remedios eficaces contra los males de la civilización, aunque aquí pensamos en intervenciones clínico-políticas en territorios, es decir, en prácticas de atención en servicios con personas en situación de vulnerabilidad social. En la lucha por los derechos humanos.

Palabras clave: Psicoanálisis. Política. Territorios Vulnerables. Institución.

1 INTRODUCTION

"Sometimes it is difficult to steer an even course between doing nothing and doing something"
Winnicott, 26th May 1966 (WINNICOTT, 2005, p. 189)

The non-compulsory execution of tasks allows for the performance of countless necessary activities – generally not seen as such. Rigid and fixed agendas, embedded in a logic of massive dedication to proving results (such as products and statistical data on project effectiveness), easily render human and institutional, personal and social dimensions unfeasible and invisible, all crucial to the very benefit of desired undertakings. The social fabric, regenerated, created or developed, is indeed effective in itself. These are the theses expressed and defended here, with the punctual and necessary objective being the expansion and dissection of each of these ideas, in order to nuance and enrich them theoretically, attempting some unfolding beyond the just specific presentation. A bibliographical and essayistic work, reflective in nature, intended precisely as a work of the humanities, as humanity.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: AN INSPIRED WORK

Over the years, a series of social and governmental projects and initiatives have engaged in work with the populations living in the area known as "Cracolândia." Between 2014 and 2016, for example, one could cite: *Projeto Oficinas*, *Casa Rodante*, *SEAS Santa Cecília*, workers, interns, and volunteers from the *De Braços Abertos* Program, (*Instituto CECAP Plantarte* and *Missão Urbana Brasil*), *CAPS AD Prates*, *CAPS AD Sé, Projeto Recomeço - Unidade Helvétia*, *ONG Centro de Convivência É de Lei, Ação Educativa*, *Cia Mugunzá de teatro*, *Museu da Energia de São Paulo*, among other scholars and researchers in the region. But something always clear and felt in that territory, once more firmly rooted in the *Luz* neighborhood, was the suffering and anguish of the professionals from the various institutions working there, commonly stemming directly from individualistic and bureaucratized actions, resulting in dynamics of loneliness and helplessness. Of course, this is from the point of view of the agents, since the population being served could also feel neglected, fragmented by the different departments that would lead to more of a "this is taken care of here, that over there," "I take care of this and not that," "my part only goes up to here"—which wouldn't exactly be a problem as long as there wasn't a certain forgetting of certain sufferings.

Detailed and thorough descriptions, with discussions and lengthy well-defined case studies on this entire area, can be found in the thesis "'Doing nothing' as a device for clinical and political intervention in territories" by Raonna Caroline Ronchi Martins, supervised by Professor Dr. Miriam Debieux Rosa, defended at the Institute of Psychology of the University of São Paulo [*Instituto de Psicologia da Universidade de São Paulo*] (MARTINS, 2021), which serves as ample basis for discussions and derivations here. In fact, from there, we could select excerpts to illustrate:

> [*Fulano*] So-and-so (a worker at one of the facilities in the area), as he passed by the makeshift table we (*Projeto Oficinas* [Workshops Project]) had set up in the middle of Helvetia Street, would arrive, sit down, and gradually begin to comment on his desire to do other activities with the users besides those imposed on him at his respective institution. He spoke of his dissatisfaction, of not feeling professionally fulfilled, of not believing in his work in the way he was being asked to do it.
> [*Cicrano*] John Doe (a worker at another facility in the area) also brought up these problems and, without even knowing it, even used the same words as So-and-so. So-and-so didn't know about John Doe. John Doe didn't know about So-and-so.
> They – So-and-so and John Doe – from different perspectives, were saying and experiencing very similar things. But they didn't think so. In fact, they didn't even consider it possible to have a channel for mutual dialogue. "You can't talk to people who think like this and like that," said an employee from the former *Tenda De Braços Abertos*.
> So-and-so worked at *Redenção* and said, "It's impossible to talk to them," "They think that because we work with inpatient care, we don't know what harm reduction is." John Doe worked at *Tenda De Braços Abertos* and said, "We've tried talking to these people and it's really impossible…", "One day, in a meeting, for God's sake, they only talked about inpatient care, they didn't stop talking, they didn't listen to anyone". — "But could it have to do with the meeting space? Imagine if you were talking in a bar? Don't you think it would be different?", one of the members of the *Projeto Oficinas* asked John Doe. This question was accompanied by laughter from all sides. So-and-so used to say that there was always a lot to do. In addition to attending to the users' crises, he had to deal with the anxiety of judges and prosecutors who wanted everything yesterday; authorities whose opinions and answers could take years, while his [So-and-so's] couldn't take even five minutes (MARTINS, 2021, p. 82).

The thesis continues to nuance the work of the professional involved and many others in the field, emphatically presenting the difficulties encountered, as well as some of the strategies for opening spaces for other, freer and less rigid exchanges. Well, it is at the level of this latter opportunity that we will occupy ourselves in the present unfolding, in the effort to theorize "nothing," that is, to theorize "nothings," in order to then return in reflections to certain consequences to be theorized from this.

2.1 THEORY OF NOTHING (INTERCUTS AND RESTATEMENTS)

BION - I don't understand.
MYSELF - Perhaps I can illustrate by an example from something you do know. Imagine a piece of sculpture which is easier to comprehend if the structure is intended to act as a trap for light. The meaning is revealed by the pattern formed by the light thus trapped – not by the structure, the carved work itself. I suggest that if I could learn how to talk to you in such a way that my words 'trapped' the meaning which they neither do nor could express, I could communicate to you in a way that is not at present possible.
BION - Like the 'rests' in a musical composition?
MYSELF - A musician would certainly not deny the importance of those parts of a composition in which no notes were sounding, but more has to be done than can be achieved in existent art and its wellestablished procedure of silences, pauses, blank spaces, rests. The 'art' of conversation, as carried on as part of the conversational intercourse of psychoanalysis, requires and demands an extension in the realm of non-conversation. (BION, 1989, p. 202-203).

How can we say that doing nothing isn't 'doing nothing'? Or that doing parallel things, easily considered 'doing nothing', isn't 'doing nothing'? Silences are part of music in no less than all the notes of a score. Without intervals, there is no music, or at least the harmonic functioning is profoundly impoverished. It's not necessarily a matter of creating a continuous silence like that of the composer and music theorist John Cage. Or is it? In short, it's really a matter of looking technically at the parts that aren't the notes marked on the scores, that aren't the part of results and practices simply positivized in an institution or practical work. In fact, this isn't even great news. We've had texts like René Roussillon's (1991) psychoanalytic-institutional work, entitled "Institutional Spaces and Practices: The Junk Room and the Interstice", ["*Espaços e práticas institucionais: quarto de despejo e o interstício*" {*Espaces et pratiques institutionnelles, le débarras et l'interstice*}] which we are interested in revisiting in parts here.

Roussilon (1991 *apud* MARTINS, 2021) assumes that in any group-institutional dynamic there are official and unofficial functions – "institutional life is therefore twofold, an 'official' part, a 'hidden' part" (ROUSSILON, 1991, p. 144) –, since if there is the dimension of the instituted, of what is thought out for such a purpose, there would also be something of the 'unplanned', perhaps even the 'undesired', running parallel but with equal relevance or 'determination' over the general functioning (something overdetermining, or mutually determining):

That which cannot be formalized within the institutional structure, gain recognition, or find a collectively acceptable form must find a mode of individual and group existence [...]. Alongside the structured institution, therefore, atypical (atopic – utopian) – interstitial – institutional functions are organized, in which that which cannot be inscribed elsewhere is located. These group processes can intensify structured processes, supporting or counteracting them, or conversely, insinuate themselves between the structured institutional spaces and times (ROUSSILLON, 1991, pp. 134-135).

In other words:

René Roussillon (1987/1989) offers us an interesting debate on the fates of the residues of the symbolization process within the institution. For him, "The non-mentalized, the formless, is also searching for places to 'deposit itself,' searching for spaces to 'put itself in reserve,' in latency" (ROUSSILLON, 1987/1989, p. 134). Deposit within the framework is only one (probably the happiest for humans) of the fates of these remnants. Roussillon indicates how, through them, meetings can lose their function, scapegoats can be formed, etc. The author conceives the possibility of treating parts of these "residues" as the suffering they imply demands psychic work, but, in any case, we should be able to coexist with them to a greater or lesser degree (CASTANHO, 2012, p. 103).

The author chose two names for two of these diverse spaces: 'junk room' and 'interstice' [*le débarras et l'interstice*]. The first could be described more as a space for 'garbage', perhaps for mess, with the psychological implications of the importance of having something of the sort – sometimes people need to vent, release anger, bring anxieties to the surface; something that, in psychoanalytic terms, Donald Meltzer (1971, p. 34) had already addressed under the name "toilet-breast", explaining the importance of the existence and availability of an object in the external world capable of containing suffering (Meltzer discusses mother-baby relationships and even the psychoanalytic process, glimpsing the importance of such a disposition in human development, with the parallels duly marked). The second would refer more to everything that happens in the 'between':

Considering space, the interstice designates institutional places that are common to all, places of passage (corridors, canteen, secretary's office, courtyard, nurses' rooms, teachers' rooms, office entrances, etc.). They are places of passage, even though one may linger there, meeting places, moments of leisure between two defined institutional activities, structured and experienced as such. It may happen that these places are located outside the walls of the institution – a "corner bar," a restaurant where all or some of the members of the institution meet [...]. Defined in terms of time, the interstice is what separates the duration of work considered in legal-economic terms ("forty hours of work," for example), from the time effectively spent in carrying out work

experienced subjectively as such, occupied in activities structured within the institution. This time can range from a few minutes to a few hours, according to the institutions and their degree of organizational rigidity. The interstice [...] is experienced as an extra-territoriality; It belongs to everyone, even if not everyone necessarily feels at home (ROUSSILLON, 1991, p. 140).

To the point: "the interstice, like the escape chamber of submarines, is the space-time in which psychic re-levelings and the regulation of energetic tensions that it implies take place spontaneously" (ROUSSILLON, 1991, p. 141). It "presents itself as a time of extra-territoriality in which everyone is tempted to lessen professional vigilance, to 'reduce surveillance': the friendly, convivial character of the activities that unfold there invites this" (ROUSSILLON, 1991, p. 147), which would even lead to the question: is the interstice "a workplace or a private space? The regulatory value of the institutional interstice is linked to the impossibility of resolving this question" (ROUSSILLON, 1991, p. 143). This is indeed a paradox, quite inspired by Winnicottian transitionality, where the ambiguity of the status of the processes that unfold there is fundamental. Now, whether it will be a space for 'waste treatment', a place for 'mad evacuation', 'mere play', will certainly have to be analyzed on a case-by-case basis, considering the rather delicate 'interstitial practice'. The fact is that, depending on the qualities of these spaces (which exist, then – it is worth saying – independently of the will of those responsible for an institution), institutional functions may either be compromised (dysfunctional), or they may be lubricated, with such spaces possibly being the just co-support from which the structured institution sustains itself. That is to say, "if the interstice maintains its transitional function, preventing the rupture of the inter-individual identification network, there will indeed be a connection between individuals" (MARTINS, 2021, p. 102), resulting in behaviors that "establish bridges, provide narcissistic comfort, allow for counterphobic arrangements, avoid a very painful feeling of loneliness" (ROUSSILLON, 1991, p. 144), among other things.

an one conceive of the importance of that which is unstructured, uninstitutionalized, unframed? Of that which is not obligatory, not mandatory? That which escapes the most obvious and drastic hierarchies? "The position 'on the margins of the hierarchy' that many psychologists occupy" is indeed crucial (ROUSSILLON, 1991, p. 140), allowing and enabling profoundly differentiated insertions and dialogues.

According to Martins (2021), much of the work carried out in the *Projeto Oficinas* undertaken there in "Cracolândia" had its initial impact simply in a combined 'doing nothing'

whether it was setting up a samba circle, or a table with chairs to sit on, in a courtyard or in the middle of the street – it was there that contact between people, between employees, began. Contacts of varying qualities, sometimes difficult, sometimes more friendly, but above all: contact. People who didn't touch each other could touch each other there. (We, from the *Projeto Oficinas*) had the freedom to call them to this. We had the freedom to 'do nothing', something that most of the employees involved there generally didn't have – they were overloaded with their direct tasks and duties. The climate of pressure simply managed, at times, to inhibit and make impossible the execution of the very task for which those professionals were hired. And if (we, from the *Projeto Oficinas*) also had the function of making the services to the users work, we were able to see the crucial importance of greater integration between the professionals themselves and the users. The fact that such people (including ourselves) relate to each other not only in a contractual or hierarchical dynamic, was something that fluidified relationships and functions. At times like a social lubricant that allowed exchanges, at other times, in the recovery of a social fabric (MARTINS, 2021, p. 103).

Thus, returning to the psychoanalytic parallels:

When I come to state my thesis I find, as so often, that it is very simple, and that not many words are needed to cover the subject. Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together. The corollary of this is that where playing is not possible then the work done by the therapist is directed towards bringing the patient from a state of not being able to play into a state of being able to play (WINNICOTT, 1975, p. 59).

It is more than important to direct efforts towards creating such a condition, a friendly overlap of these spaces, and not just within a therapeutic dynamic. As Martins (2021, p. 104) says, "an interstice can not only be 'already' a work, but be 'the' work itself. Giving space and voice to hatreds or anxieties is already a great thing." Preferably, these should not be mere repositories of secrets and encystments, but what emerges in these 'occupations' can be taken up again in a later official context. Potentially a place where the 'extimacy' position of a professional can operate, not only marginally or peripherally, but in an inside that is not non-outside; or in an outside that is not non-inside. An inside that is not simply inside. An inside from the outside (equal, but singularly, intimate and exterior). The Lacanian ex-sistent version differs from the Winnicottian transitional one, but follows psychoanalytic insights: Ratti & Estevão (2015) emphasized – in their article entitled "Institution and the act of the psychoanalyst in its extimacy" – that it is the proper exercise of extimacy in the institution that enables the "mobility to act and shift the question(s) towards something constructive", highlighting that "the analyst's position as extimate is not something exclusive to the analytical

setting (the consulting room)", since precisely "the psychoanalytic discourse has effects beyond this setting, if there is someone who supports it both as an agent of the discourse, and also in the singular field" (RATTI & ESTÊVÃO, 2015, p. 7).

It is worth emphasizing that there is no intention to promote such a specific psychoanalytic stance within the broader context of global endeavors, but merely to use such 'parallels' to highlight the quality and relevance of spaces that are notably distinct from the more commonplace and well-defined ones, as well as to demonstrate that knowledge of work and knowledge of leisure go hand in hand and are quite inseparable. This is not the same as productive leisure, although that could well be suggested. Concomitantly, for Roussillon (1991, p. 149): "Intervention within the interstitial space must take the form of a certain personal involvement; it will only be 'professional,' this is its paradox, to the extent that it does not formulate itself as such" (interstitial practice could not be defined as a professional practice even though it is a professional practice). But, as Martins (2021, p. 105) asks again at the end of his reflections: "how to show those who are in the logic of neoliberal 'entrepreneurship,' which promises to do what it cannot even do, that it would be necessary to include other things to achieve the intended objective?".

2.2 OTHER PRIMARY CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING GROUP DYNAMICS

> *It happens that, whenever a group exceeds a certain number of participants, a minimum of working rules becomes necessary and, inevitably, an institution takes shape. The 'instituted 'always tends to repress the 'instituting'. But it is the instituting that drives the creativity necessary for vitality.* (ZYGOURIS, 2020, n.p).

Here is an unavoidable question about the institution:

Institutions and organizations are all the same – they're dead. Let me put it this way. An institution behaves in accordance with certain laws and bylaws – it has to make them – and all organizational laws become as rigid and definitive as the laws of physics. An organization becomes hard and inanimate like this table. [...] but the people inside them aren't, and the people grow, and something's going to happen. What usually happens is that the institutions (societies, nations, states and so forth) make laws. The original laws constitute a shell, and then new laws expand that shell. If it were a material prison, you could hope that the prison walls would be elastic in some sort of way. If organizations don't do that, they develop a hard shell, and then expansion can't occur because the organization has locked itself in. [...] If the organization does not respond to human needs, either it or the individual will be destroyed (BION, 2017, p. 153-154).

"To hate the shell, but to consider it necessary, is a contradiction inherent in collective configurations in general. Not allowing oneself to be suffocated or crushed is part of an ethical effort of an instituting or institutionalized entity" (MARTINS, 2021, p. 106). But it is obvious that current hatreds are not directed only at walls, legal or continental, their most common and potent infiltration being that which takes hold in the hatred between the people who are part of the collective.

People hate each other (sometimes with good reason). It's part of human difference. It's something to deal with. They also accumulate their hatreds and frustrations with social and constitutional functioning, embodying them in other people. This, too, cannot be avoided. It would even be necessary to recognize "hatred as an authentic manifestation of the subject in its particularity" (DIAS, 2012, p. 100):

> What is the problem we face in our civilization, particularly with regard to Christian ideals? It is that hatred cannot exist. Indeed, Freud makes this clear in his text on antisemitism. What should be expected of a Christian civilization is precisely what is not found in it. Because it is as if every manifestation of hatred had to be transformed into love (DIAS, 2012, p. 100).

If it were just jokes and festivities, it would be very easy. And what is really desired, at all costs, is to avoid hostilities and displeasure, to silence them, preventing them from surfacing, generally waiting for the "good" to come instead. Do we want to transform hatred and aggression into love or good things? As Winnicott (2005) rightly said: "My idea is that any kind of sentimentality is worse than useless." [...] "A sentimental idea is one that leaves no room for hate, or at least for aggression" (WINNICOTT, 2005, p. XXVIII). It's important to understand that hatred doesn't only arise in specific moments during the treatment of certain patients, but that it's a daily part of the job; moreover: "[...] the worker's hate is contained in the structure of the professional relationship, its finite nature, its being paid for, etc.." (WINNICOTT, 2005, p. 170).

The question would be precisely what place to give to this? How to take care of this dimension? The 'junk room', or "shed", described by Roussillon (1991) would propose itself precisely as a space 'of this kind', where anxieties and hatreds would receive a voice without being ignored, so that "the rest of the institutional functioning" could be "relatively preserved" (ROUSSILLON, 1991, p. 137). "Let it be a space, a meeting, an environment where pains and difficult experiences are listened to; let it be a venting, a moment of venting and

'dumping'; let an aggressiveness appear, a rage arise and be recognized" (MARTINS, 2021, p. 109), seen. Without waiting for miracles or really falling back into types of sentimentalism.

The Hungarian psychoanalyst Sándor Ferenczi, for example, went so far as to consider that "no analysis can succeed if we do not, in its course, come to truly love the patient" (FERENCZI, 1990, p. 171). "Only sympathy heals. Understanding is necessary to be able to use sympathy at the appropriate moment (analysis) and in the best way. Without sympathy, there is no cure" (FERENCZI, 1990, p. 248). "The presence of someone with whom one can share and to whom one can communicate joy and suffering (love and understanding) HEALS the trauma. The personality is reunited. 'HEALED'. (Like "glue")" (FERENCZI, 1990, p. 248). This consideration is pertinent, essentially for understanding what would work in a 'space for the bad'. Perhaps Ferenczi's hypothesis involved the relevance of sympathetic presence and understanding. Looking at and understanding anger could, more than being beneficial, actually heal it.

Alternatively:

> In fact, love does not "cure" in the social work or psychoanalytic senses. [...] In social work (as in psycho-analysis) certain factors such as reliability, dependability, [...] provide a specialised environment over a period of time in which the highly complex internal factors in the individual and between the various individuals in the client group may rearrange themselves. The "good" (or I would say "good enough") climate enables a client to review his or her relationship to climates that were not, or did not seem to be, good (or good enough). Moreover, in complex cases [...] there develop bad periods in the social-work situation [...]. Social workers have to be able to endure these bad times and wait for a recovery, which does in fact often come (WINNICOTT, 2005, p. 171).

"It cannot be forgotten that, in Winnicott's view, satisfactory or sufficiently good includes failures, shortcomings, and errors; and that enduring bad situations is not the same as turning the other cheek," even "recognizing that this has a cost, that it will be necessary to take care of it and not just 'be a giant' to endure it" (MARTINS, 2021, p. 110). And the bad should come, neither fetishized nor rejected (common and costly risks), while for the professional: "there must be evident a capacity to identify with the patient without loss of personal identity" (WINNICOTT, 1984, p. 10). Survival is important and even a goal, but it is not the solution itself, only a part. And the mixture is limited, it has limits.

Finally, diverse thoughts arise regarding what, ultimately, operates within the context of this eviction process. But, up to this point, we have reviewed some theoretical points of a

work – generally not considered work – with 'human material', especially deriving it, in a summarized and adapted way, from the content elaborated in Martins' thesis (2021). This content still serves as an inspirational basis for the reflections that follow, however, the aspect that interests us now was nothing more than what was pointed out there, and it is appropriate to pursue new and distinct explorations of this precisely here.

2.3 SOCIAL TISSUE, VITAL ORGAN

> Lineu - *I can make one more point. In Elias Canetti's essay, "The Writer's Profession," he quotes a letter from a poet written on August 23, 1939, a week before the Second World War began, a letter to a friend that said [something like]: "Now, unfortunately, it's all over. If I had been a truly good poet, the war wouldn't have happened." And he (Elias Canetti) recounts that at first he found this phrase arrogant, boastful, and later, he says he couldn't get rid of it. This phrase was kind of enveloping him; he couldn't let go of it. And as time passed, he came to believe that this poet was right, that he had reason to feel responsible for the destruction that was happening in the world* (SILVA FILHO, 2015, p. 34-35).

Torn, frayed. Detached, infertile, or unproductive. Unfinished or poorly done. Undone or simply not done. What do we encounter when we arrive at a work area like "Cracolândia"? 'Work area', 'war zone', 'area of doing nothing'. How many work orders need to be carried out there? It's clear that we are faced with a broad-spectrum social rupture. Users on one side, professionals on the other, residents. Each of these categories opening up to a very diverse range of 'parties'. Professionals would include everyone from health agents to police officers. Residents could be divided into long-time, new, and transient users; those who leave home or those who stay locked up at home. Users, then, what a complex infinity of subtypes one could speculate about. This is without even going into the merits of their 'humorous' dispositions: 'rebellious', 'passive', 'complicit', and so many more. Richer or poorer. Who cares and who doesn't care? It's difficult to find those who don't care, although the quality of that 'caring' is – once again – so diverse and complex. Those who are bothered should move? Let each person deal with their own anger and feelings?

The basic scenario encountered is one of disengagement, of a lack of ties, of a dizzying void between the parties. It's not 'nobody belongs to anybody', it's 'nobody has any idea about anybody'. One knows nothing about the other. The indigence is mutual and overwhelming – although it cannot be said that the indelible mark of misery is carried by everyone, because it isn't (indeed, this mark is very exclusive and distinct; whoever bears it

is not unnoticed; 'going hungry' – and this can be replaced by so many other 'miseries' – can be hard to overcome, but not forgettable). However, this is not a dimension reducible to the economic, however deep the roots and tributaries of this river of torment may be. The point is that there are no partners, compartments, or sharing. There is no whole. There is no exchange and, therefore, no space.

One last immediate opportunity:

An employee might say: "Damn, I woke up early, took the bus at four in the morning, to get here and be mistreated by X, for Y to miss appointments, Z to spit in my face – the guy doesn't appreciate it, I'm trying to help and he doesn't cooperate: there's no way around it"; "this damn company makes me work overtime, and if I ask for a day off, I will suffer punishment and persecution"; "the employees of that institution are all lazy, they don't do anything here in the area"; "so-and-so does whatever he wants, messes things up and nothing happens to him because he has connections"; "why does that company always get more funding and it never has any repercussions for us employees who work there?". A user might say: "These rich kids think they know everything about life"; "you worry more about junkies than about workers"; "I'll have to use drugs, then, to get priority: they get spots in appointments, in hotels, and I'm left without?!" "You guys aren't aware of any of the shit that happen to us," "You come here, pretend to do nice things, but then go sleep at your own homes," "You're not the ones who get beaten up by the police every day." In a meeting of an institution: "We don't have money to buy toilet paper, we have to pay out of our own pockets, while at that other institution they even have an employee to serve the coffee"; "Who gets recognition in newspaper articles? Which institution will the mayor visit? Why does that institution have more government recognition and everything we do is considered garbage and boycotted, even though in practice our actions are similar." (MARTINS, 2021, p. 108).

While the oppositions are blatant, the flaws don't necessarily become obvious. Debris and wreckage, fragmented, scattered, and disparate, which is confusing.

We look at a desertion. It is deserted and *deserted* [arid and to desert]. No matter how many people are there and act there. Loneliness in presence has always hurt more. But emptiness always hurts.

And how do you grout? How do you make grout? Ask the bricklayer, the construction worker? Mortar for the separated parts. Seeking integration? Building bridges? Perhaps it's not that simple. This isn't a theory of filling. Of occupation. And interstices or junk rooms would already be quite specialized, localized, and locatable partitions (locating as well – from where one orients oneself). At least their psychological outlines, as slightly traced earlier, offer a more precise glimpse. The bold and pretentious cut would be precisely that of delimiting what culture is, and how it is cultivated – how bonds and gaps are cultivated, without being filled.

The term "interstitium" was indeed brilliantly chosen. Very recently (between 2015 and 2018[5]), in the field of human physiology, the interstitium or interstitial compartment was elevated to a new category: an organ in itself. Still somewhat unofficial, but it went largely unnoticed because it couldn't be seen under a microscope. Its existence was known, but it was assumed to be merely dense connective tissue. But it's not just a space between cells. It's not just a "space" (empty? of nothing?) between the skin and other organs. It's a completely dynamic and variable space, whose volume changes completely (in kind, number, and degree) depending on health conditions. It's a whole world there. Biology helps us. In fact, it's just as we remember Professor Cunegundes teaching about what ecology is: 'Is it the little animals? No! Is it the little plants? No! Is it the whole planet? No!', and she continued: 'Analogously, what is a school?' Are they the little students? No! Are they the teachers? No! Are they the little students plus the teachers? No! Is it the building with a sign that says 'school' in front? No! I know: students plus teachers plus building, how about that? No!', after joking about including yet another number of other possible parts of a school, like a cleaning employee or even a fire extinguisher, the teacher would conclude (always adding a 'No!'): 'A school is not the sum of its parts, but the very relationship between parts. We cannot take a picture of a relationship. It is something that is in the 'between', more than the conjunction itself. It is a way of acting and relating to one another. How do you illustrate that? Well, the best ecologists have only managed to do it with arrow diagrams… it's not much, but it's something we could manage.' How do you illustrate a relationship? A way of relating, of interacting? How do you see an interstices that are not visible under a microscope, no matter how good the impregnation and dyeing techniques are? At the New York University School of Medicine in 2015, it was quite by accident that, while performing a procedure with a technology called confocal endomicroscopic laser combined with a fluorescent substance (a technique that works 'in motion') [a technique now known as confocal endomicroscopy or confocal laser endomicroscopy], an anatomy was discovered that did not correspond to any previously known one. They had to create a new technique to observe the new 'territory'. The fact is that the territory is very much a functioning, a series of relationships – which even possess and serve as networks of contact and intercommunication, although they are not limited to that.

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[5] JOHNSON, Alex. Interstitium: Scientists say they've discovered a new human organ: The interstitium was right there under our noses (and skin) all along, but it took a new way of examining tissues to figure it out [March 27, 2018, 10:57]. NBC News. Available at: https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/scientists-say-they-ve-discovered-unknown-human-organ-could-help-n860601. Accessed on December 12, 2020.

Could culture be separated from connective tissue? What would be the very nature of culture? Art is culture, museums are culture, behavior is culture. Is emptiness culture? Are musical pauses culture?

When faced with social, not just economic, abysses, what is striking is the disconnect. In times of interconnection, of an internet that connects interspaces, enabling access and reach, we practice maximum polarities, distancing bipolarities: proof that the point is not merely a vehicle for exchange.

It won't be enough to schedule meetings with all the participants in the territory. That's not it. It's not a bureaucratic, obligatory, or compulsory space, even if it requires a certain continuity. It's not a connection between sides of an insurmountable wall. Perhaps it's much more about creating a common space for ventilation. It's not a 'love' that binds the parts together, nor exactly a presence of trust. It's not just a space for hatred, or a mere area for coffee and cigarettes. The difficult thing is to portray what is not just a simple thing in itself. It could be the water fountain área [or watercooler area]. But it isn't necessarily. Nor will it compose an inseparable unit. Nor is it simply doing nothing, as expected of the spontaneous, completely contingent and surprising. It's not the work of an ant, even if its responsibilities are being addressed. For years, the skin was called the largest organ in the human body. Perhaps today that title has indeed been passed to the interstices.

A 'living area' without people living together is useless.

It is obvious that many economic factors and their interests remain inescapably at play. But the misfortune of the social fabric, which includes evictions and gaps, is not exhausted, despite having the air of a sewer. Inherent ambivalence, it is worth noting. Culture that changes, important to rethink. Because there is this: how does culture change?

Returning to museology (which studies the relationships between society and its heritage, including the conservation, organization, and promotion of collections, which can be artistic, historical, scientific, cultural, and even private collections), one risk being highlighted is the overvaluation of the material aspect. Is a museum an effect in itself, or should it promote effects? How do we measure the effects of a museum, of the existence of a museum? Spaces intended for exchange and communication, archives and documentation, research and investigations, are easily categorized as museums. We store things so as not to forget, perhaps tô to do things differently. Like a monument in a square, marking history. Living history. There are museums that are the product of looting – just ask the Greeks who recently demanded that London museums return sculptures from the Parthenon. How to form

memory? And to change behaviors? It's really a matter of transmission. Is it necessary to remember what is easily erasable? To record what is lost, so that it no longer exists. So, would the effects of a museum be recognizable in changes in social behavior? To know if a museum had an effect, one observes whether dictators or wars reappear. Perhaps, in fact, museums are much more about effects, remnants of what was, rather than producers of effects. Or would we want them to tell us history from the point of view of memory? If history has already been told from the point of view of the victors, it has also been thought from the point of view of the defeated, from the point of view of the prostitute, from the point of view of Eros (certainly much of history has been told from the perspective of life's connections), or from the point of view of caritas, of charity, history built from charity, from helping. There are those who have defended history from the point of view of Wrath, which undoubtedly moved mountains: a good part of historical changes were unquestionably the agency of wrath. Should we now consider history told from the perspective of responsibility? A responsibility that acknowledges that liberations imply annihilations? That it is not about reconciliations? A delicate axis. An abrasive theme. Could fraternity overcome equality? Probably it would.

Could the poet [or writer] prevent war? Would he have that responsibility? If they were good enough to describe realities and create human fictions, to represent and illustrate moods, to cultivate and inspire emotion, would there be a different mode of destruction (since it wouldn't be a case of excluding it)?

"But everything is over. If I were really a writer, I would have to be able to prevent the war." What nonsense, people say today, since we know what has happened since then; what presumption! What could a single person have prevented, and why a writer of all people? Can we conceive of any claim that is further from reality? And what distinguishes this sentence from the bombast of those whose sentences deliberately brought the war? I was irritated by that line, I copied it down with mounting irritation. Here, I thought, here I have found the thing that most repels me about the word Dichter, a claim that contrasts so grossly with what a writer could do at best, an example of the blustering that has discredited the word writer and filled us with mistrust as soon as a member of the guild beats his breast and comes out with his colossal intentions. But then, during the next few days, I felt to my astonishment that the sentence wouldn't let go, it kept haunting me, I plucked it out, chopped it up, pushed it away, and pulled it out again as though it were solely up to me to find some meaning in it. The way it began was already odd: "But everything is over," an utterance of a complete and hopeless defeat in a time when victories ought to begin. Whilst everything was focused on victories, he is already expressing the bleakness of the end, and in such a way as if it were inevitable. When one takes a closer look at the sentence, however—"If I were really a writer I would have to be able to prevent the war!"—it turns out to contain the very opposite of blustering, namely an admission of complete failure. Even more, it

expresses the admission of a responsibility, and at those points—this is the amazing thing—where we could speak least of all about responsibility in the normal sense of the word. Here is a man who obviously means what he says, for he is saying it quietly, is turning against himself. He is not establishing a claim, he is giving it up. In his despair at what has to happen now, he accuses himself, not the true bearers of the responsibility, whom he certainly knows precisely, for if he did not know them, he would think differently about what is to come. Thus the source of the original irritation remains one thing: his idea of what a writer ought to be and the fact that he considered himself one until the moment, when, with the outbreak of the war, everything collapsed for him. It is precisely this irrational claim to responsibility that gives me pause to think and captivates me (CANETTI, 2011, p. 312).

It's not about avoiding, but about taking responsibility. A fieldwork that isn't about solving. A following, managing to lose.

It's an excessively massive number of people out there. Who lose the possible interludes. It won't be enough to play with causes. If for a cell phone that fell in water, it's enough to leave it in rice until the water dries up, the source of the damage is extinguished, it's not the same as what we can do when a cell phone falls into a fire. Replace parts? Compose new ones? Forget the cell phone? Invest in the interstices? It's a new fabric, to be woven, the social one. Whether with carnival, hall of hates or cigarette dance, the construct is that it shows itself as an exchanged glance leaves complex moments of return. That there is space between, not clearly occupied. That interaction doesn't need convention or imposition, and revenge plays and conjugates in the plural.

3 CONCLUSION

The aim here was to outline elaborations detailing elements related to healthcare in vulnerable settings, although these are essentially for reflecting on the social fabric itself, its composition and functioning. The function of the interstitial space was highlighted, both for local intra-institutional events and for broader social dimensions. Furthermore, it concluded with a brief discussion regarding responsibility as a basic and minimum sense for human existence – although much more on this remains to be explored (this was a synthesis and principles for discussion; much remains to be done).

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