

DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES OF IMPERIALISM: PSYCHOANALYTIC ANALYSIS OF TRUMP'S DISCOURSE ON THE INVASION OF VENEZUELA

ESTRATÉGIAS DISCURSIVAS DO IMPERIALISMO: ANÁLISE PSICANALÍTICA DO DISCURSO DE TRUMP NA INVASÃO DA VENEZUELA

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ABSTRACT

Our time is being shaken by political, social, economic, and subjective transformations that, although previously signaled, have begun to erupt abruptly like massive and relentless avalanches, awakening sensations of uncertainty, fear, and disorientation. The election of Donald Trump to the government of the United States of America (USA) has been the major trigger. Inaugurated in January 2025, he immediately launched an aggressive policy against other countries and leaders considered dangerous enemies. This article aims to understand the meaning-making strategies used by Trump to justify and legitimize his interventionist actions, particularly in Venezuela, against the government of Nicolás Maduro. To this end, news reports, social media posts, interview statements, and government announcements were collected from major media outlets until January 20, 2026. Additionally, journalistic pieces from columnists of leading communication vehicles were compiled. The collected material was subjected to content analysis and discussed with the aid of authors and theories pertinent to the established analytical categories. It was possible to verify that Trump employs short and vague statements, delivered in an assertive and categorical manner, in a threatening tone and laden with emotional content of aggressive nature to subjugate, convince, and forcefully impose what he deems necessary and beneficial for his country. Rationalizations, denialisms, and displacements that conceal his true intentions are some of the main devices employed. By attacking and weakening the world order, he leverages chaos, intimidation, and fear to exercise absolutist, imperialist power.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis. Political Psychoanalysis. Trump. Imperialism. Venezuela.

RESUMO

Nosso tempo está sendo sacolejado por mudanças políticas, sociais, econômicas e nas subjetividades que, embora estivessem sendo sinalizadas, começam a irromper abruptamente como grandes e incessantes avalanches, que despertam sensações de incerteza, temores e desorientações. A eleição de Donald Trump, para o governo dos Estados Unidos da América (EUA) está sendo o grande estopim. Empossado em janeiro de 2025, deflagrou imediatamente uma política agressiva contra outros países e

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governantes considerados como inimigos perigosos. O objetivo desse artigo é tentar compreender estratégias de produção de sentido utilizadas por Trump para justificar e legitimar suas ações intervencionistas, sobretudo na Venezuela, contra o governo de Nicolás Maduro. Para tanto, foram coletados, na grande imprensa, notícias, mensagens postadas nas redes sociais, falas em entrevistas e anúncios de governo até o dia 20/01/2026. Além disso, foram compiladas matérias jornalísticas de colunistas dos principais veículos de comunicação. O material coletado foi submetido a uma análise de conteúdo e colocado em discussão com o auxílio de autores e teorias pertinentes às categorias de análise estabelecidas. Foi possível verificar que Trump utiliza falas curtas e vagas, proferidas de maneira assertiva e categórica, em tom ameaçador e carregadas de conteúdos emocionais de índole agressiva para subjugar, convencer e impor à força aquilo que julga como sendo necessário e benéfico para seu país. Racionalizações, negacionismos, deslocamentos encobridores de suas verdadeiras intenções são alguns dos principais artifícios utilizados. Atacando e enfraquecendo a ordem mundial, se vale do caos, da intimidação e do medo para exercer um poder absolutista, imperialista.

Palavras-chave: Análise do Discurso. Psicanálise Política. Trump. Imperialismo. Venezuela.

RESUMEN

Nuestro tiempo está siendo sacudido por cambios políticos, sociales, económicos y en las subjetividades que, aunque venían siendo señalizados, comienzan a irrumpir abruptamente como grandes e incisantes avalanchas, despertando sensaciones de incertidumbre, temores y desorientaciones. La elección de Donald Trump para el gobierno de los Estados Unidos de América (EUA) está siendo el gran detonante. Investido en enero de 2025, desencadenó inmediatamente una política agresiva contra otros países y gobernantes considerados enemigos peligrosos. El objetivo de este artículo es intentar comprender estrategias de producción de sentido utilizadas por Trump para justificar y legitimar sus acciones intervencionistas, sobre todo en Venezuela, contra el gobierno de Nicolás Maduro. Para ello, fueron recolectadas, en la gran prensa, noticias, mensajes publicados en redes sociales, declaraciones en entrevistas y anuncios de gobierno hasta el día 20/01/2026. Además, fueron compilados artículos periodísticos de columnistas de los principales vehículos de comunicación. El material recolectado fue sometido a un análisis de contenido y puesto en discusión con el auxilio de autores y teorías pertinentes a las categorías de análisis establecidas. Fue posible verificar que Trump utiliza declaraciones cortas y vagas, proferidas de manera asertiva y categórica, en tono amenazador y cargadas de contenidos emocionales de índole agresiva para subyugar, convencer e imponer por la fuerza aquello que juzga como necesario y benéfico para su país. Racionalizaciones, negacionismos, desplazamientos encubridores de sus verdaderas intenciones son algunos de los principales artificios utilizados. Atacando y debilitando el orden mundial, se vale del caos, de la intimidación y del miedo para ejercer un poder absolutista, imperialista.

Palabras clave: Análisis del Discurso. Psicoanálisis Político. Trump. Imperialismo. Venezuela.

1 INTRODUCTION

Our time is being shaken by political, social, economic and subjectivities changes that, although they were being signaled, begin to erupt abruptly as great and incessant avalanches, which awaken feelings of uncertainty, fears and disorientation. The world seems to be plagued by a state of vertigo, taken by oscillating, uncoordinated and unpredictable movements. Paraphrasing the title of Berman's book (1986) referring to the sensation of those who lived, stupefied, the advent of modernity, the contemporary to reedit a human sensation that everything that seemed solid is melting into thin air: world governance organizations such as the United Nations (UN), World Trade Organization (WTO); international relations and law, until then minimally equalized; migratory movements, reasonably assimilated; violence and wars, relatively under control; the Human Development Index (HDI) reaching its highest level in 2023, even if decelerating, suggesting a solid path towards improving the quality of life of the world population, finally a world that seemed to be moving solidly towards a promising future, suddenly seems to collapse or in a state of mutation.

The election of Donald Trump to the government of the United States of America (USA) is being the great trigger. Sworn in in January 2025, he immediately launched an aggressive policy of reconquering US hegemony under an imperialist, megalomaniacal and nationalist banner synthesized in the slogan: Make America Great Again (MAGA) or make America great again. Since then, the world has been shaken, practically every day, with announcements of threats, accusations and bombastic measures against countries, economic blocs, international institutions and people, aiming to impose, if necessary by force, the interests of their government, arrogating to themselves the spokesperson of that country, to the rest of the world. Along with the use of military force or preceding it, the press and social networks are bombarded by forged justifications to legitimize, through discursive strategies that produce effects of meaning, an absolutist power and imperialist actions.

2 OBJECTIVE AND METHOD

The objective of this article is to map and analyze strategies for the production of meaning effects, used by Donald Trump, as president of the United States, to justify his aggressive policy of imposing the supposed interests and needs of this country on the Western world and Latin America, in particular. The invasion of Venezuela, with the use of military force, the kidnapping of its president, Nicolás Maduro and the subsequent attempt

to manipulate and control a provisional government, with the purpose of seizing that country's oil, was taken as a paradigmatic case.

The methodological design included the collection of Trump's messages posted on social networks, his speeches in interviews, government announcements, and news released by the mainstream press, until 01/20/2026. In addition, journalistic articles by columnists from the main media outlets were compiled. The main sources used were The New York Times, Folha de São Paulo, O Estado de São Paulo, the television channels Globo News and Band News; the websites UOL Notícias, Metrópolis and Portal Globo.

The material consulted was selected according to the objectives of the research and submitted to thematic content analysis, proposed by Bardin (2011). The themes raised by the content analysis were organized and discussed in topics presented in sub-items of the results section and interpreted through hypotheses based on the psychoanalytic framework.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 THE SOUND THAT PRECEDES THE FALL

There is a moment — Freud knew it well — when the subject realizes that the danger was not fantasy. The defense mechanism that protected us from anguish suddenly reveals itself, not as a shield, but as a veil. In the early hours of January 3, 2026, explosions, airstrikes, and military movements were recorded in several regions of Venezuela, including areas near Caracas. President Nicolás Maduro and his wife were captured and removed from the country. What once inhabited the territory of the feared-but-distant has crossed the membrane of possibility and has become flesh, wreckage, widows. More than a hundred dead, according to Venezuelan sources. Violence, we are now told, is on our doorstep. But psychic truth is subtler and more terrible: it has always been. What changed was the impossibility of continuing not to see her. García Márquez once wrote that Latin America carries "a hundred years of solitude" — not as a temporal metaphor, but as an existential condition. We are the continent that the North visits when it suits it, to extract what it needs and name as "aid" what is plunder.

3.2 DOCTRINE AS A SYMPTOM

Every tyranny announces itself before it imposes itself. Despots, curiously, do not lie about their intentions — they only rely on our refusal to believe. Trump characterized the action as an application of the Monroe Doctrine, to which he explicitly referred. Invoking a

nineteenth-century doctrine to justify bombings in the twenty-first century is not an anachronism — it is a confession. It is to say, without metaphor: you are an extension of my territory, and my desire is law. The Monroe Doctrine, formulated in 1823, declared that any European intervention in the Americas would be considered a hostile act against the United States. The subtext, however, has always been different: Latin America belongs to us. The "backyard" is not just a geographical metaphor; it is a psychic device that transforms subjects into objects, nations into property, peoples into resources to be "managed". Jung would speak here of the collective shadow — that portion of the unconscious that a culture projects onto the other in order not to recognize it in itself. The empire that claims to defend freedom bombs civilians in the name of the law. Venezuela's defense minister said U.S. combat helicopters fired rockets and missiles at urban areas. In Catia La Mar, the attacks hit a three-story civilian residential building.

3.3 LANGUAGE AS A BATTLEFIELD

Paying attention to words is an act of resistance. Orwell knew this when he invented Newspeak: totalitarianism must corrupt language before it can corrupt bodies. The American mainstream media called the invasion an "operation," "capture," "escalation of pressure" — terms typically reserved for fugitives, not sovereign heads of state. When Putin invaded Ukraine in 2022, the same outlets did not hesitate to use "war" and "invasion". The American press made fun of Putin's euphemism, "special military operation", and refused to adopt it. But when the aggressor is Washington, the semantics bend, genuflect, serve. Lacan taught us that the unconscious is structured as language. We could add: domination too. The Trump administration claims that the attack was not an act of war, but "law enforcement" — operated, however, by about 15,000 military personnel, agents of the CIA, FBI and DEA, with bombings in Caracas and other states. To call this a "prison" is what psychoanalysis recognizes as reactive formation: to transform the thing into its nominal opposite in order to make it tolerable to consciousness.

3.4 THE SHADOWS THAT DO NOT ABSOLVE

It would be intellectual dishonesty — and bad psychoanalysis — to ignore the shadows of the regime that was attacked. Maduro's Venezuela was not a full democracy. Elections contested by international observers. Political prisoners. Repression of dissidents. A humanitarian crisis that has expelled millions of Venezuelans to neighboring countries —

Brazil among them, which has welcomed hundreds of thousands of refugees in Roraima and other regions. But — and here is the knot that this essay also dares to try to untie — none of this justifies bombing. None of this authorizes a foreign power to kidnap a head of state, kill civilians, and announce that it will "manage" the country as long as it sees fit. International law is not conditional. It doesn't just apply to governments that we approve. If that were the case, it would not be right — it would be convenience. The Charter of the United Nations exists precisely to prevent the powerful from doing what they want with the weak under the pretext of their virtues. In other words: it is possible — and necessary — to simultaneously sustain two truths:

- a) The Maduro regime had serious problems of democratic legitimacy and human rights.
- b) The American invasion is illegal, immoral and sets a catastrophic precedent. Anyone who can only see one of these truths is blind in one eye. And partial blindness, in politics, is complicity.

Freud identified in the death drive (Thanatos) a force as primordial as Eros. Empires do not sublimate this drive — they discharge it directly, but they cover it up through rationalizations: they transform destruction into "order," plunder into "development," murder into "national security." The death drive operates in a raw state, only discursively made up. Trump said his country would be "very heavily involved" in the Venezuelan oil industry after the attack. Days later, he met with executives from major U.S. oil companies to discuss investments of up to \$100 billion in Venezuela's energy sector. The phrase needs no comment. It is the naked confession of what Maduro has always denounced and that the hegemonic press treated as paranoia: the interest was not democracy — it was hydrocarbon. Venezuela has the largest proven oil reserves in the world. This data is not context — it is text. It is the key to reading that the media buries under layers of humanitarian justifications.

In addition to the misleading justifications or cover-ups of real intentions, another media burial was the omission of the prolonged economic sanctions imposed by the US, including previous Trump administrations, which contributed significantly to the corrosion of the Venezuelan economy, producing the impoverishment and penury of its people, with disastrous political effects (Uol notícias, 2026) The adoption of the so-called "unilateral coercive measures" is not a new tactic used by governments Americans: first it tries to economically asphyxiate the country considered dangerous and nefarious to weaken it and

make it more vulnerable to interventions and manipulations (UOL, 2026). With the adversary weakened and worn out internally and externally, it is easier to dominate him, either by manipulating internal politics or simply attacking him with an arsenal of war. The infiltration of espionage agents from the *Central Intelligence Agency* (CIA), assumed by Trump, without subterfuge, as he publicly announced (UOL, 2025), has shown, as in other cases of political coups perpetrated against various countries, at different times in recent history, as important as the use of military force to overthrow Maduro and take over the governability of Venezuela, as far as its oil is concerned. As Eduardo Galeano wrote in *The Open Veins of Latin America*: "We are poor because the soil we tread on is rich." Venezuelan tankers were seized. Vice President Delcy Rodríguez took office under American pressure — Trump has declared that she has "no choice" but to cooperate. Transition is not liberation; it is guardianship.

3.5 PRECEDENT AND FEAR

Experts warn that the United States is seeking to "discipline governments" in the region, and Venezuela was the first stone of a geopolitical domino based on the renewal of imperialist objectives. The domino is an accurate image: one piece falls so that the others know they can fall. Less than 48 hours after the invasion of Venezuela, Trump suggested that a military operation against Colombia "sounds good" to him, accusing the government of Gustavo Petro of allowing drug trafficking. The message is addressed to all governments that dare to differ: you are next. As one analyst noted: "Any government in the world should be alarmed by the message sent by the United States: in their zone of influence, they will remove whoever they want." Winnicott described a sufficiently good environment as a condition for the healthy development of the subject. What happens when the international environment becomes bad enough? When the law is replaced by force and treaties become decorative paper? The collective psyche regresses: fear, paranoia, preventive submission.

3.6 AND WE DIVIDED

It would be comforting to narrate a Latin America united against aggression. But the reality is harsher. President Lula, President Claudia Sheinbaum of Mexico and President Gustavo Petro of Colombia led a strong repudiation of the attacks, denouncing their illegality. Cuba condemned the action as "imperialist aggression." But Argentina's Javier Milei, El Salvador's Nayib Bukele, Paraguay's Santiago Peña, and Ecuador's Daniel Noboa have

expressed support for the U.S. operation. The Latin American right celebrated Maduro's fall as a "victory for freedom" — ignoring or minimizing the method. This division is not accidental. It reflects the polarization that fragments the continent and weakens any collective response. This is precisely what the empire wants: a divided region is a dominable region. The question that remains: is it possible to build a position that simultaneously defends democracy and sovereignty? That criticizes Maduro and condemns the invasion? That position exists — it is the position of international law — but it finds few spokesmen in an age of trenches. In the face of the collapse of the UN and the difficulties in establishing, at this moment, another unified organization of global governance, it is possible to make regional economic and political organizations such as Mercosur thrive; CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States); CAN (Andean Community); ALADI (Latin American Integration Association and others currently of lesser expression? Along these lines, and no less important, will it be possible to strengthen the existing ones and create other entities and associations of professionals, research, academic and artistic exchanges, within the scope of Latin America and the so-called Global South?

3.7 AND SILENCE

There is a kind of silence that is not prudence — it is the one that slides into an unconscious complicity. The subject being silent in the face of barbarism is not neutral; He is choosing the side of the strongest, just without realizing it. Ferenczi — and later Anna Freud — described identification with the aggressor: a mechanism by which the potential victim adopts the values of the one who threatens him, hoping to be spared. It is the serf who defends the master, the colonized who internalizes the colonizer, the Latin American who justifies the boot around his neighbor's neck thinking that this way it will not step on his own. But there are also those who remain silent out of exhaustion, fear, and a sense of powerlessness. To these, there is no room for judgment. The invitation is appropriate.

3.8 THE AWAKENING AND ITS COSTS

Waking up is costly. It implies abandoning the position of those who believe that adults — the institutions, the treaties, the "international community" — will take care of everything. The fantasy of a benevolent father who ensures order is one of the hardest to abandon. The designation of criminal groups as Foreign Terrorist Organizations has operated a dangerous legal shift: groups previously treated as threats to public order are

now treated as threats to national security, opening a pretext for the extraterritorial application of force. The mechanism is old: to create the legal category that justifies the exception. The Nazis had laws. Apartheid had laws. Slavery had laws. Legality, when divorced from justice, is just a bureaucracy of horror. It is only the imposition or formal legitimization of arbitration, of the tyrant's will in the exercise of sovereign power that, at its extreme, ensures the power to kill (Foucault, 2014). Trump aspires to this type of power and the US has long built it as a state with sovereign power over the world, arrogating to itself the right to subjugate other countries and to kill, as it did in Hiroshima, in support of coup plotters and dictatorships in Latin America and other parts of the world, and attacks and executions against leaders and rulers of various countries. The genocide practiced in Palestine, although carried out at the hands of the Jews, is one of the greatest recent demonstrations of sovereign power, the power to kill, necropolitics – the one that was, at least, endorsed by the US and by Trump in particular.

Agamben (2004) mentions the State of Exception, when rights guaranteed by current laws and by the constitution of the country, including individual guarantees, are suspended for various justifications. War situations are the most common for the evocation of this device, but there are other situations when exceptional devices are activated in localized situations, not involving the entire State, thus disguising their nature. Persecution of immigrants practiced in the USA, military interventions in favelas, as occurred in Brazil, summary executions practiced by police and many others may not constitute a State of Exception *per se*, but they are indications of its appearance or its use in certain territories or against certain segments of the population.

Extending Agamben's (2004) concept, it is possible to understand the current dismantling of institutions, laws and instruments of world governance as the advent of a "State of Exception" encompassing the whole world, that is, as a "world of exception" in which international rights are suspended or cease to exist and, in its place, enters the unipolar imperialist sovereign power of the USA in dispute with the other great powers and their aspirations as other poles of power.

Venezuela and Maduro are yet another demonstration of a world on the way to a state of exception. It remains to be seen whether such a state will be temporary until a new world order and laws are re-established or the exception will be the rule from now on. It remains to be seen whether there will be an awakening or a plunge into a deep sleep that

even some will be able to emerge and indicate silenced meanings and possibilities of elaboration.

4 PSYCHOANALYTIC HYPOTHESES AS AN INTERPRETATIVE GRID OF THE EFFECTS OF MEANING

The psychoanalytic reading offered here is not proposed as a diagnosis of the enunciator, but as a hypothesis to understand the effects that certain discursive resources produce in the social bond, especially in contexts of fear, threat and exception. It is about investigating how mechanisms known to psychoanalysis — present in all subjects, although in varying degrees and configurations — can be mobilized, amplified and instrumentalized by political communication strategies. Psychoanalysis enters here as a listening to the effects, not as a clinic of the subjects, it enters to read effects of ideological massification, not to clinic the leader.

Hypothesis 1: Split and polarization as organizers of the political field

In a speech on Syrian refugees, Trump declared: "We have had a 500% increase in Syrian refugees entering our country. How stupid is that?" (Exame, 06/22/2017). On China: "China is our enemy"; "They don't like us."

The insistence on the "us versus them" axis is not just rhetoric — it is a technology of social cohesion. A rigid dividing line is produced that organizes the perception of reality into two irreconcilable fields: the inside and the outside, ours and theirs, friend and enemy.

The insistence on rigid oppositions ("us" versus "them"), associated with the moralization of the enemy as a rapist, criminal, or existential threat, tends to favor what Melanie Klein (1977) described as the paranoid schizoschial position: a mode of psychic organization that divides the world into good and bad, reducing tolerance to ambivalence.

On the collective level, this arrangement facilitates adherence to violent solutions, seen as legitimate defense and not as aggression. If the other is pure evil, destroying him is not a crime — it is self-preservation.

This mechanism does not describe Trump's clinical structure, but rather an effect that his discourse produces on the social fabric: the reduction of political complexity to moral combat. The adversary ceases to be an interlocutor and becomes an enemy to be eliminated.

Hypothesis 2: Projection and externalization of evil as a cohesion mechanism

When the source of danger is repeatedly placed outside — in collectives elected as hostile (China, immigrants, dissident governments) — the discourse operates an externalization of evil: the origin of the malaise is shifted to the other and, at the same time, an internal cohesion based on threat is built.

Freud (1921/2010) observed, in *Psychology of the Masses* and *Analysis of the Self*, that the bond of a group can be strengthened by the election of a common enemy. The aggressiveness that could divide the "we" is channeled outward, towards a stabilized target.

It is not a matter of stating that Trump "has" a pathological projection mechanism, something possible, but that his speech invites this projective movement in the public. The responsibility for internal problems is shifted to external threats: it is not social inequality that generates crisis — it is immigrants. It is not deindustrialization — it is China that "violates us."

Hypothesis 3: Denial and symbolic cleansing of violence

In a speech on January 3, 2026, Trump classified the invasion of Venezuela as an "operation", a "brilliant", "precise" and "large-scale" attack, avoiding the terms "war" or "invasion" (Seu Dinheiro, 03/01/2026).

He referred to Maduro's capture as a "prison" and said that the action was an "application of the law", although conducted by 15,000 military personnel, agents of the CIA, FBI and DEA, with bombings in Caracas and other states.

In psychoanalytic terms, one can think of this as denial operating on the level of language: an effort to neutralize the ethical conflict by the word, producing an effect of tolerability.

Freud (1925/2011) described denial (*Verneinung*) as a mechanism by which the repressed content can return to consciousness, as long as it is denied: "It's not that I hate my father" (but that's exactly what it is).

In the political discourse on Venezuela, something similar operates: "It's not an invasion, it's an operation." "It's not kidnapping, it's prison." "It's not war, it's law enforcement." The thing returns, but denied in his name.

This allows the moral conscience, which should disapprove of the invasion, to be appeased by the renaming. What would be intolerable as "war" becomes acceptable as a "technical operation".

Hypothesis 4: Political acting out and shortening the elaboration time

The way Trump presents himself discursively is not ornament — it is method. His speeches rarely follow the traditional protocol of state pronouncements: structured press conferences, official documents, prepared speeches. In its place, a scene of communication marked by performative urgency and temporal compression prevails.

Short answers, delivered in transit — airplane doors, corridors, entrances and exits of meetings — construct a specific temporality: that of the event at maximum speed, with no time for deliberation. There is no ceremony, there is no institutional mediation. The word is an immediate gesture, a sign to be replicated, a command to be executed, more than an argument to be pondered.

This form is not accidental. It communicates, before any content, a policy of urgency: reality moves too fast to wait for the slow gears of diplomatic negotiation, parliamentary debate, popular consultation. Whoever hesitates, loses. Whoever reflects, delays. Whoever deliberates, is run over.

The accelerated format of the utterance — short sentences, instant answers, compulsive posts — shortens the time of elaboration in the public and favors a mode of action that dispenses with mediations (debate, test, deliberation).

Lacan (1962-1963/2005) distinguished between acting out and passage to the act: acting out is an action that speaks, that addresses the Other, that seeks to be interpreted; The passage to the act is a radical rupture, an exit from the scene.

In the case of Trumpist discourse, something intermediate is observed: an action that replaces thinking, that cuts off the process of symbolization, but that remains within the scene — in fact, that makes the scene its privileged stage.

On the collective level, this functioning establishes a regime of permanent urgency: there is no time to think, only to react. The speed of digital communication enhances this effect: the message needs to be shared before it can be understood.

This produces a subject in a state of chronic alertness, always reacting, never reflecting. And a subject who reacts is not a subject of desire — he is an automaton of anguish.

Hypothesis 5: Identification with the aggressor and preventive submission

In scenarios of threat and demonstration of force, the discourse can produce an adhesion motivated less by conviction and more by fear.

Anna Freud (1936/2006) described identification with the aggressor: a mechanism by which the potential victim adopts the values of the person who threatens him, thus hoping to be spared.

It is the serf who defends the master, the colonized who internalizes the colonizer, the Latin American who justifies the boot around his neighbor's neck thinking that this way it will not step on his own.

Part of the public tends to align itself with the strong pole as a form of symbolic self-preservation, naturalizing abuse as "political realism". After all, if everyone else is "weak", "stupid", "criminal" – it is better to be on the side of the strong, even if it means betraying principles, dignity, memory.

Hypothesis 6: Jouissance in the exercise of power and the pedagogy of excess

At a press conference held on January 3, 2026 at the Mar-a-Lago resort, Trump announced: "We will manage the country [Venezuela] until we can carry out a safe, adequate and judicious transition" (Agência Brasil, 03/01/2026).

In previous posts on social networks, similar formulations appear without explicit criteria, deadlines or conditions: "Venezuela needs to adapt"; "Cuba needs to make a deal."

There is something about the way Trump announces, celebrates, and spectacularizes his actions that points to an excess that does not merely dominate—it enjoys dominating.

Lacan (1969-1970/1992) described jouissance as that which goes beyond the pleasure principle: it is not satisfaction, but instinctual insistence that always seeks an "more". The superego is not content with prohibiting — it orders, demands, pushes towards this insatiable plus.

When embodied in sovereign power, this functioning becomes a pedagogical spectacle: the gesture of power is not content with obtaining a result — it needs to show that it obtains it, it needs the other to know that it is captureable, it needs witnesses.

So, in analytical terms, the kidnapping of Maduro is not just a means: it is an inscription, a performative mark that aims to teach a lesson. "See what I can do. Know that you can be next. Behave."

This produces, on the collective subjective level, what we can call anguish due to the presence of the Other's jouissance: the Latin American subject learns that there is an Other

who enjoys disposing of him, who treats him as a disposable object, who can capture, manage, eliminate him — and who still celebrates this publicly.

These phrases operate in the imperative mode: they do not suggest, they do not propose, they do not invite dialogue — they command. The verb "to need" functions as a grammatical mask of the command: it presents itself as a finding of objective necessity, but operates as an imposition of unilateral will.

It is an effect of authority that does not require prior justification. The sentence does not say why Venezuela needs to adapt, what it should adapt to, according to what criteria adequacy will be evaluated. The order is self-justifying: it is enough to be uttered for real.

This transforms politics into a disciplinary scene: someone who commands, someone who must obey. The asymmetry of power ceases to be questionable and becomes natural, as if there were an evident hierarchy inscribed in the order of things. There is no room for negotiation — only for conforming to what has been determined.

In psychoanalytic terms, this is close to what Lacan described as the master's discourse: a kind of social bond in which the master-signifier commands without having to explain himself. The master does not argue — he orders. And the strength of his order does not come from reason, but from the position he occupies.

The master's discourse, in Trump's case, as a perverse montage (Di Nizio, 2023), takes on a typically cynical character, in its contemporary format, widely used by the far right, seeks its psychological settlement in perversion. In the contemporary, cynicism/perverse abandons some old traits and accentuates the aversion to norms, conventions and laws, assuming derision, hatred in its antisocial or anti-system crusade. The current cynic does not shy away from assuming his wickedness or harm that he can cause to others, to promote his interests. It does not contain itself in making the other a simple object of its desire to enjoy more, but seduces and manipulates it, in order to obtain its "voluntary", masochistic submission to its power. A good part of the Brazilian extreme right expressed its ecstasy with the interventionism in Venezuela and with the kidnapping of its president Nicolás Maduro and even called for an equivalent action here in Brazil, expressing a great admiration and desire for submission to a power exercised in an imperialist way.

5 CONCLUSION

From this set of effects, it is understandable how the Venezuelan precedent operates not only on the geopolitical level, but also on the psychic and discursive level: it produces diffuse fear, disorganizes trust in common rules and favors the social acceptance of the exceptional as normal.

Finally, it is reiterated that this interpretative grid aims to understand the affective and symbolic economy mobilized by the discourse, and not to attribute a clinical structure to the subject who enunciates. Psychoanalysis here does not diagnose — listening. He listens to the effects of meaning, the modes of affective capture, the unconscious resonances that make certain discourses politically effective, even if morally intolerable.

Because, after all, the question is not "what's wrong with Trump?", but rather: "Why does this discourse work? What does it mobilize in the social bond? What anguish does it touch, what fantasies it feeds, what mechanisms does it activate?"

And, even more importantly: "What effects does this way of addressing the word produce on us, Latin Americans? What does this do to our capacity to desire, to think, to recognize ourselves as political subjects in their own right?" To what extent does Trump's discourse appropriate, update and use the discourse of the colonialist who accompanied the domination of Latin America by the Europeans?

Psychoanalysis, when ethically oriented, can help to formulate and, who knows, to begin to answer these and many other questions, directed at discursive strategies that aim to subjectively co-opt the masses to submit them and adhere them to projects of power of an authoritarian and imperialist nature.

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