

Psychedelics and schizoanalysis: Towards a critical philosophy on the production of subjectivity

Psicodélicos e esquizoanálise: Por uma filosofia crítica da produção de subjetividade

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ABSTRACT:

This paper aims to discuss, drawing from the references of Schizoanalysis, the relationship between the politics of production of subjectivity and psychedelics. By considering the contemporary as the problematic field, there is an urgent collective need to invent new forms of subjectivity that refuse what we have become and affirm singular ways of living. In this direction, plants and psychedelics need to be understood in composition, tracing lines so desire can encounter new becomings and create alternative ways of living, differing from the predatory capitalist modes of existence.

KEYWORDS: psychedelics, schizoanalysis, capitalism, subjectivity, ways of living.

RESUMO

O presente artigo pretende discutir, a partir dos referenciais da Esquizoanálise, a relação entre as políticas de produção de subjetividade e os psicodélicos. Ao tomarmos o contemporâneo como campo problemático, torna-se urgente a atualização coletiva da invenção de novas formas de subjetividade, que sejam tanto uma recusa ao que temos nos tornado, quanto a afirmação de modos de vida singulares. Nessa direção, as plantas e os psicodélicos precisam ser compreendidos sempre em composição, traçando linhas por onde o desejo pode encontrar novos devires e criar modos de vida outros, que se diferem dos modos capitalísticos predatórios de existência.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: psicodélicos, Esquizoanálise, capitalismo, subjetividade, modos de vida.

Critical philosophy, political philosophy

In order to understand how the new relations of body-power, pleasure-knowledge and *pharmakon-subjectivity* were established in the West, we must now take an indispensable detour into the relations between capitalism and the destruction of our entheogenic traditions.
Paul B. Preciado

What is happening, what is being born when the deterritorialized flows of contemporary capitalism, in its neoliberal form, combine with the deterritorializing flows of psychedelics? This is the driving force behind this text.

For Michel Foucault, there is a line in philosophy, initiated by Kant, which defines the philosophical task as thinking about the present: "What happens at this moment? What happens to us? What is this world, this period, this precise moment in which we live?" (Foucault, 2014, p. 127). The year was 1784 and a German newspaper asked Kant, "*was heisst Aufklärung?*", "what is enlightenment?", a question made in present tense. By answering, the philosopher turned to an analysis of his own time, and not just the metaphysical foundations of a system of knowledge, as tradition supposed. "Who are we at this precise moment in history?" is the question that gained importance with authors such as Hegel, Schelling, Nietzsche and, later, with Deleuze, Guattari and Foucault himself.

Foucault points out that "the critical analysis of the world in which we live increasingly constitutes the great philosophical task" (Foucault, 2014, p. 128). By moving away from the traditional position of the Cartesian philosopher who asked "who am I?" and who sought to find the essence of a supposed universal subject, Foucault undertakes the task of constituting a genealogy of Western subjectivity. From this perspective, what matters is to turn philosophy into historical and critical thinking, always guided by the question "how have we constituted ourselves?": problematizing the relationship with the present and its constitutive processuality. In this sense, the function of philosophy becomes, from an understanding of the historical constraints that make us who we are, a critique that opens up space for us to become others, to become-others, and to advance "as far and as widely as possible the infinite work of freedom" (Foucault, 2005, p. 348). Critical thinking would therefore be an exercise of freedom, understanding here that freedom, due to its ontological condition, is unsubmitive and refuses the conditions of imprisonment, formatting and control (Castelo Branco, 2007). Philosophy as an action and attitude, therefore, which can open up a field of analysis from a perspective of questioning the evidence, to shake up habits, re-evaluate institutions and thus apprehend desirable changes for the

present, without pretending to establish new global or universal values. This *praxis* is a history of what we have done and, at the same time, an analysis of what we are (Foucault, 2006).

By taking the contemporary as a problematic field, we agree with Foucault (2014) that we need to produce new forms of subjectivity that are a refusal of what we are and what we have become. This is a field of confrontation that must be linked to the confrontations against exploitation (economic) and domination (political). It is therefore a question of making visible the social and historical workings that impose the individualization and totalization of capitalist power in its neoliberal form.

There is an urgent need to position ourselves in the current political, economic and subjective scenario, in all areas. We invoke an ethical-political concern in relation to the positions occupied by psi operators and intellectuals in general. We remember how Félix Guattari (2009, p. 22) invites the "psy people" to get rid of their white lab coats, "starting with those invisible ones they carry on their heads" and in their way of being, in order to elaborate a recomposition of their social and individual practices. Guattari also calls on educators, health, cultural, art and media professionals, everyone, to reposition themselves in relation to the established knowledge of their fields of work, in order to engage in the production of other aesthetic possibilities, in other words, in the collective production of other modes of existence.

Foucault (1979) is consistent in his criticism of researchers who want to erase from their research the moment they are in, the place from which they speak, the side they take and their own passions in the problematic field in which they exist. In this sense, many studies are produced through an ideal of impartiality and scientificism, aiming for a supposed analytical neutrality in relation to the data. The point here is to think of intellectuals who are ethically, aesthetically and politically connected to their problematic fields, whose implication is expressed as attention to the present. And what present are we talking about?

Subjective crisis, social crisis, planetary crisis

A central political issue in the thinking of Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze is to think about the historical conditions of production of subjectivity. In this direction, Guattari proposes a processual perspective of subjectivity: as opposed to an essence, a fixed state, or a predetermined state in early childhood, subjectivity is "the set of conditions that makes it possible for individual and/or collective instances to be in a position to emerge" (Guattari, 1992, p.19). We consider it important to emphasize that the hegemonic modes of subjectivity production, including the capitalist mode of production, produce not only ideologies, meanings or parental identification models, but a "direct connection between, on the one hand, the great machines of production and social control and, on the other, the

psychic instances, the way of perceiving the world" (Guattari; Rolnik; 2005, p. 78). That said, we renounce the perspectives that determine that social phenomena derive from a sum of individual subjectivities, determined by systems of identification with universal maternal or paternal poles, for example, as in the classic theories of the ego or personality. On the contrary, we affirm that individuality is a result of the intertwining of forces that act in the social field and that require the creation of an individual terminal that is in the position of consumer of subjectivity (of systems of representation, sensitivity, etc.), which finances the production of capitalist profit (Guattari; Rolnik; 2005). Subjectivity is not personal identity, although psychology and philosophy have historically thought of it from this perspective. According to the authors: "there is no evident unity of the person: the individual, the ego, or, we could say, the politics of the ego, the politics of the individuation of subjectivity is correlative to systems of identification that define models" (Guattari; Rolnik, 2005, p.38). It is precisely in these hegemonic modes of production of subjectivity, which connect each and every experience to an individuality oriented towards consumption, that neoliberal capitalism's power of capture lies and where we identify the crisis of the continuity of these same modes of production of subjectivity on the planet.

The capitalist mode of production, driven by its axiom that seeks to swallow up everything and everyone at all costs, is creating an unprecedented crisis, threatening all life on Earth. A system that defines privileged and excluded, centers and peripheries, and economic reference systems that define passages and blockages for certain flows between its poles. The predatory exploitation of "resources" accelerates the degradation of the planet. Rampant deforestation, widespread pollution of rivers and seas, the mass extinction of species and worsening climate change are just a few examples of the serious consequences of this destructive dynamic. We also understand that what we call "crisis" is nothing more than the very functioning of capitalism, even more intensified in its neoliberal moment: Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (2004) point out that capitalism "only works well when it works badly". Crisis is an immanent means of capitalist production whose function is to produce instability and shake the limits, aiming for an infinite expansion of the system¹. Crisis keeps the machines turning. Capitalism has understood this: that societies feed on the contradictions they create and that they only work by creaking, by not functioning well. "No one has ever died of contradictions. And the more it breaks down, the more it schizophrenizes, the better it works, the American way" (Deleuze; Guattari, 2004, p. 156).

Planet Earth is going through a period of intense technical-scientific transformations with extensive ecological imbalances which, if not remedied,

¹Since capitalism only works by expanding its limits, in other words, if all apparent limits are always relative, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) point out that its absolute limit is schizophrenia, since the schizophrenic does not allow himself to be regulated by laws, contracts and institutions, nor does he fall within the movements of consumption and monetization of existence. In the end, the schizophrenic is the only one who doesn't allow himself to be captured.

will ultimately threaten life on its surface. In parallel with these disturbances, individual and collective human lifestyles are evolving towards progressive deterioration. Kinship networks tend to be reduced to a minimum, domestic life is being gangrened by media consumption, conjugal and family life is often "ossified" by a kind of standardization of behaviour and neighbourly relations are generally reduced to their poorest expression (Guattari, 2009, p.7).

It is on the basis of these concerns that Félix Guattari (2009) proposes ethical, aesthetic and political foundations to confront the planetary destruction caused by capitalism and leads us to think about the need to review our field of philosophical thought in the face of the new problems that arise. Both political movements and technology have shown themselves incapable of grasping all these transformations, as well as understanding all the consequences of this process of "implosion and regressive infantilization" of humanity (Guattari, 2009, p. 7). Political structures, executive bodies and major social players are showing a remarkable inability to grasp the complexity and scope of this problem. Although they are beginning to partially recognize the most obvious dangers threatening life on the planet, these entities generally limit themselves to addressing issues related to industrial damage or "personal trauma", and even then from technocratic and individualizing perspectives.

In this sense, Guattari proposes that three ecologies (mental, social and environmental) be articulated ethically, aesthetically and politically, otherwise we will continue to be threatened by the deterioration of social relations and life on the planet. In this sense, we need to think about reinventing our relationships with the world, considering the interconnection and interdependence between different beings, human and non-human, such as animals, fungi and plants, which are outside the category of subject in the foundations of Western thought².

Following this line of thought, it is essential that we seek to create other forms of recognition for living beings that are not restricted to the objectives of producing material and immaterial goods, and that we move away from the position of individuals produced by capitalist subjectivity. The invitation is to establish new social practices, new aesthetic practices, new practices of the self in relation to the other. It is only in the articulation of latent subjectivity, a changing *socius* and an environment at the point of eruption that a way out of the crisis is possible.

To this end, it is urgent to reconfigure the modalities of group existence through "existential mutations that concern the essence of subjectivity" (Guattari, 2009, p. 16). The aim here is not to create universal rules for human *praxis*, but to liberate the antinomies between the three ecologies: building

²It is important to note that when we refer to the "Western world", we are not only considering geography, but also the conceptions of the world and thinking practices associated with the dominant paradigms of the colonizers.

practices that make the three ecologies resonate, showing that social, subjective and ecological problems are not isolated.

Thus, faced with this tendency of capture and production of subjectivity in the contemporary world, it is necessary and urgent to carry out new experiments - both at the micro-political level³ and at the macro-political level - that are different from the ways in which we have conducted our lives:

There will be no real response to the ecological crisis except on a planetary scale and on the condition that a genuine political, social and cultural revolution takes place, reorienting the objectives of the production of material and immaterial goods. This revolution must therefore concern not only the relations of forces visible on a large scale, but also the molecular domains of sensitivity, intelligence and desire (Guattari, 2009, p. 9).

In this context, it is necessary to reinvent relations between human and non-human beings, opening up spaces for the emergence of other encounters and becomings - animal becomings, plant becomings, cosmic becomings. All these encounters and becomings are processes of subjectivation, and these other processes, in turn, are the experimentation of openings for relationships with other flows (familial, social, planetary and cosmic).

Plant, fungal, animal and cosmic forces

If capitalist subjectivity is understood as a production organized by large systems of control and serialization, how can we think of ways of escaping? Affirmative ways as potency in the face of destruction? We think, as Dias (2020) does, that in order to enter into communication with the living world, humans need to stop being the center of communicative processes, making room for other non-human forces. What does a plant, a fungus or an ecosystem have to tell us? What can an encounter with a substance produce? How can we open up our bodies and our thoughts to other lines of composition that can reorient our philosophical practice with the present?

We have pointed out an important political direction: we are subjectively colonized from a very early age. The narratives shared in the formation processes of this hegemonic subjectivity are marked by the values of "Western civilization", based on a Judeo-Christian consciousness, for which so-called "primitive" societies have no history, which is, to say the least, "weak and inadequate" (Deleuze; Guattari, 2004, p. 155). In addition, we have largely adopted European languages, our institutional structures

³Paul Preciado, in the prologue to the book "Spheres of Insurrection: Notes for a non-pimped-out life", written by Suely Rolnik (2018), tells us that micropolitics "[...] is the name that Guattari gave, in the 1960s, to those areas that, because they were considered to be related to 'private life' in the dominant mode of subjectivation, were excluded from reflective and militant action in the politics of the traditional left: sexuality, the family, affections, care, the body, the intimate. All of which Foucault would later try to point out with the terms 'microphysics of power' and, later, 'biopower'".

strongly reflect influences from that continent and the predominant religions have their roots in Christianity, while animist practices and traditions that make no distinction between nature and culture, characteristic of Amerindian communities, are often marginalized, persecuted or ignored (Luna, 2018). At the current stage of contemporary capitalism, we also emphasize the predominance of English as the current colonial language, a so-called universal language, erasing local and partial singularities and inserting everyone, in the many corners of the planet, into a capitalist mode of production determined mainly by the United States.

We face an obvious challenge. In the history of Western Judeo-Christian thought, it has been common to establish a marked distinction between human beings and the rest of nature, which often promotes a vision of human exceptionalism and superiority over other species. This separation has its roots in the religious conceptions that have predominated in the West, according to which the human being was created in the image and likeness of a God-man, giving him a supposed authority over other living beings. In addition, the Greek philosophical tradition, which profoundly influenced Western thought, also contributed to this view of the exceptionalism and prominence of the human being (Luna, 2018).

Some Greek philosophical traditions, on which the predominant thinking of capitalist societies is based, also postulate a place of exceptionalism and prominence for the human figure. In the wake of Platonism, Aristotelian thought, for example, postulates that only humans have a "rational soul", while animals have a "sensitive soul" and plants a "vegetative soul" (Luna, 2018). In turn, Amerindian animism and that of other traditional societies on other continents drastically opposes this perspective.

The animist visions of native peoples emphasize that the world is inhabited by a multiplicity of living entities, each with its own perspective and dignity. The animist perspective recognizes the interconnectedness between all beings and promotes a sense of responsibility and care for the great living community. Furthermore, this conception implies establishing ethical relationships and reciprocity not only between human beings, but also with beings other than humans, such as animals, fungi, plants, elements and spirits of nature. These perspectives challenge the prevailing anthropocentric vision and propose a less destructive, dominating and predatory form of interaction with the planet. It is a way of thinking that recognizes intelligence in the natural world (Luna, 2018).

In Haraway's work (2021), we find a similar theoretical alignment that emphasizes the interdependence of all beings, whether human or non-human, in a constant state of "symptomesis". The author seeks to challenge the anthropocentric perspective that treats nature as a separate object, highlighting instead the importance of human beings learning to establish kinship alliances with the

ecosystems that surround them. Haraway (2021) emphasizes the creation of ties in a complex and interdependent network of interspecific relationships.

Philosophy and psychology need to expand their conceptual horizons, engaging in dialogues with other areas of knowledge and with beings other than humans, in relationships that go beyond the individual sphere and incorporate a socio-cosmic dimension where human beings are no longer seen as the centers of the universe. We therefore need to develop philosophies that can communicate with an all-living world and with the epistemologies of native peoples, where the relationships between beings are perceived as immanent and implicit. To think non-metaphysical ontologies, thus, refractory to the Platonic-Aristotelian legacy, which can weaken the I-form and the Man-form, as in the philosophy of difference proposed by Deleuze (Vasconcellos, 2005).

When we think about the phenomenon of the *malaise* that permeates a certain mode of humanity on this planet, a central issue in philosophical and clinical practice in psychology, we cannot simplify it as an individualized concern experienced within an "I" that positions and repositions itself more or less "neurotically", "psychotically" or "perversely" in the face of the chaos of contemporaneity. Rather, it is a collective *malaise* that requires different approaches to understand both the self and the world as interconnected parts of a wider network.

Rethinking life, rethinking the unconscious

Based on the thinking of Frantz Fanon and Felix Guattari, Suely Rolnik (2018), a Brazilian psychoanalyst and philosopher, calls "colonial-capitalist unconscious" the dominant policy of production of desire in the West since the end of the 15th century. Allied to the current economic system of power - neoliberal and international capitalism - this unconscious regime remains active, establishing its dominance through the production of subjectivities that are anaesthetized and insensitive to the world around them. At the same time, it captures the vital force of living beings "[...] in favor of producing scenarios for the accumulation of capital" (Rolnik, 2018, p. 34). The extractivism and domination of this petrosexoracial regimen (Preciado, 2023) depends on the fabrication of this mentality, of a subjectivity organized in a regime of colonial-capitalistic desire.

The subjective capture carried out by this regime aims to intentionally desensibilize human beings to the "signals that life emits", simultaneously deactivating a knowledge that Rolnik (2018, p. 54) conceptualizes as "'knowledge-of-the-body' or 'knowledge-of-the-living': [...] an intensive knowledge, distinct from the sensitive and rational knowledge proper to the subject". Therefore, a knowledge that cannot be accessed through the conscious, rational and logocentric sphere on which the regime is based, but rather through an "extracognitive" capacity.

This body-knowledge is a unique way of knowing and interacting with the world, something that many peoples who live differently from the contemporary Western regime still preserve and value. They keep it alive despite the catechesis of all kinds that the colonizers have tried to impose on them, as well as the massacre and genocide they have suffered and continue to suffer to their cultures, their bodies and concrete territories⁴.

According to Preciado (2018), it is impossible to think about the current modes of production of subjectivity in this regime of colonial-capitalist unconscious without considering "the relationship between capitalism and the destruction of our entheogenic traditions"⁵ (ibid., p. 158). Our contemporary subjective formation is crossed by the historical actions of the Catholic Church, which determined that all those who held knowledge and manipulated medicinal plants (such as farmers, women considered witches, midwives and alchemists) should be persecuted and "declared heretics and satanic deviants". Still in the words of the philosopher: "modern colonial capitalist knowledge pathologized these technologies of subjectivation produced by the collective and bodily experience of rituals" (ibid., p.165) that involved such agency with plants and other elements capable of producing alterations in attention.

The process of delimiting land, expropriating popular knowledge, criminalizing practices of 'voluntary intoxication' and privatizing plant germplasm had only just begun. It reached its apex in the modern period with the colonial expropriation of plants, animals, bodies and knowledge; the persecution of 'drug' producers, consumers and traffickers; the gradual transformation of natural resources into pharmaceutical patents and the confiscation by legal-medical institutions of all experiments involving self-application (ibid., p. 159).

Preciado emphasizes the importance of a philosophy that embraces the body as an active platform for technovital transformation, stating that any philosophical approach that neglects this dimension is doomed to failure, "stepping on the wrong foot". He emphasizes the need to build thoughts oriented by the "knowing body", a term coined by Rolnik (2018).

Preciado narrates in the first person the subjective transformation that takes place through the self-administration of testosterone outside of the legal protocols for gender transition. The connection between the production of subjectivity and the use of various substances is significantly addressed in an interview⁶ where the author argues that there is no difference between his use of testosterone and the

⁴ROLNIK, Suely. "Decolonizing Subjectivity". Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CwE9x0gn0s&t=1576s>.> Access: 05/01/2024.

⁵ According to Lucas Maia (2022), "[...] in 1979, researchers studying the use of psychoactive plants and fungi among indigenous ethnic groups and traditional communities proposed the term *entheogen*, a combination of the Greek *entheos* (literally, 'God within') and *gen* ('to become'), referring to that which 'generates the divine internally', thus seeking to highlight the ritualistic/mystical/spiritual use of these substances".

⁶ Interview given by Preciado to Dolores Cuia (2015).

practice of philosophy. When questioned about this apparently paradoxical statement, he replies: "Both are techniques for producing subjectivity, just like shamanism and ayahuasca", highlighting the effect of subjective transformation that can be brought about in an encounter with this indigenous beverage. Still in relation to popular knowledge, we affirm that:

The contemporary resurgence of shamanic cultural practices with their teaching plants and reverence for the earth and all its creatures, human or not, can be seen not only as a global response to the enormous degradation that has been occurring in the biosphere, but also helps to overcome the chasms established by the modern paradigm configured in the classic distinction between subject and object, nature and culture (Albuquerque, 2018, p. 11).

However, this possible activation of a "knowledge-of-the-living" through the alliance with plants, fungi or other substances encounters mechanisms of control, capture and anesthetization produced by neoliberalism, which aim to block the different ways of possible access to the extrapersonal face⁷ of subjectivity. There is, therefore, the intentional production of a difficulty for people to have the experience of realizing their "condition of living among the living" (Rolnik, 2020). At the same time, capitalism operates the colonization of psychedelic plants and substances for a "controlled", "adult" and "safe" use defined by hegemonic science. After all, as stated by Deleuze and Guattari (2004), scientific innovations are controlled and only adopted on the basis of the rates of profit that investments can give, and it is up to market speculation to introduce the innovations necessary for the revolution and updating of the capitalist system itself. In the authors' terms, this is exactly how the capitalist machine works: social codes are decoded and deterritorialized for the production of new frontiers, simultaneously axiomatizing and reterritorializing for the purposes of expropriation and profit expansion (Kubala, 2023).

With regard to this colonization exercised over all bodies (human and non-human) or rather, as Rolnik puts it, this "pimping of the vital drive", the important ethical task for us is to decipher how the dominant power of this regime captures desire, in other words, the forces that escapes control and serializations. However, this task cannot be carried out through the use of reason alone, given that:

Available at: https://medium.com/@bryan_axt/a-import%C3%A2ncia-de-chamar-se-paul-a4bfaa1e21f6. Accessed on: 13/05/2023.

⁷ Suely Rolnik (2018) discusses the production of subjectivity using the metaphor of the Moebius strip, which suggests two inseparable faces: one personal and the other extrapersonal. The personal face involves visible and conscious, molar aspects, such as social class, gender and profession, i.e. where we assert ourselves as an "I". On the other hand, the extrapersonal face is less familiar because it is unconscious, related to vital, molecular forces, in a continuous state of relationship with the other forces that make up an ecosystem (mental, environmental, social, emotional) in which this body is inserted. It is a face that cannot be apprehended through perception, but rather through the effects of affections on the body (Rolnik, 2018). Therefore, in the extrapersonal face it is not possible to say "I", or to think in terms of an individuality, but rather in terms of relationships with different fields of forces. There is no synthesis between these faces, but rather a continuous tension where the movements of desire are produced.

The way of deciphering one's own power to evaluate affections is extra-cognitive, what we usually call 'intuition'. However, the use of this word lends itself to misunderstandings due to its disqualification in our culture which, by reducing subjectivity to the subject, despises everything that is not of the order of cognition and imposes on us the hegemony of a logocentrism (Rolnik, 2018, p. 54).

Indigenous shamans have been discredited and persecuted, and women have been labeled witches and burned at the stake for escaping the imposition of this logocentric regime: for mastering other ways of knowing the world, producing other learning, in other ways. Davi Kopenawa (2015), for example, says that Yanomami shamans study in their dreams, with the *xapiri pë* spirits, who come from far away and tell them many unknown things, and not like white people, who only know their own thoughts on paper.

Colonialism, capitalism and heteropatriarchy are always articulated and engender a production of knowledge and subjectivity that delegitimizes knowledge that is not considered "scientific", such as the knowledge of native peoples. These peoples and their relational practices with the world can perhaps teach us to unleash processes of singularization, of affinity with desire in its potency for invention, constituting a way of apprehending a world that, as living beings, allows us to capture the signs of the forces that agitate bodies (Rolnik, 2018). Luiz Rufino (2021) calls "cognitive and social justice" the possibility of indigenous thought being able to enter universities (and Western thought) by composing relationships of equitable exchange, with reciprocity⁸. In a Deleuzian sense, we can call this reciprocity, solidarity or mutual intercession (Vasconcellos, 2005) as a taste for encounters.

However, it is difficult to capture these forces that agitate the body within the unconscious captivity of desire, because the subject often limits themselves to "obeying the kidnapper's slogans", directing their vital drive towards reproducing the system, tuning in to the universal norms of gender, race, sexuality and State that are based on the production of a Eurocentric, white, Western subjectivity, considered the "maximum of human development". Rolnik (2018) also points out that in order for human beings to decipher how this invisible power of the colonial-capitalist regime captures the forces of desire, it is necessary to "[...] seek ways of accessing the power of creation in ourselves: the source of the pulsational movement that moves the actions of desire in their different destinies" (Rolnik, 2018, p. 37). Guattari (2005) proposes calling desire the will to create, to invent another society, other perceptions of

⁸Interview given by educator and writer Luiz Rufino to Elástica Magazine (2021). Available at: <https://elastica.abril.com.br/especiais/luiz-rufino-escritor-sabedoria-ancestral-racismo-liberdade>>. Accessed on: 13/07/2023.

the world, other value systems, in other words, movements that question and contribute to the dismantling of the colonial-capitalist unconscious regime.

The ability to be receptive to "knowledge-of-the-living", in other words, to other ways of knowing, is linked to experiences "outside the subject", when the body hardened by the colonial-capitalist regime can open itself up to the vibrations of "something that functions as a kind of a(fe)tivation factor in its existence" (Rolnik, 1989, p. 39), thus activating its power as a vibrating body or pulsional body: "it could be writing, dancing, a hallucinogen, a love encounter - or, on the contrary, a disagreement... In short, you are the one who knows what allows you to inhabit the illocatable, sharpening your sensitivity to the ambient latitude".

Questioning the implications of this thinking on philosophical and clinical practices with the use of psychedelics, Patricia Kubala (2023) reiterates these political positions by stating that there are several researchers, clinicians, activists, patients, among others, who have been questioning the "psychedelic renaissance" and insisting on the work of decolonizing care practices, creating alternatives that escape the perspectives of the production of capitalist subjectivity, where substances are seen as "magic pills" by psychiatry and the pharmacological industry and where patients are perceived as consumers with neurological problems that demand individualized interventions based on an ambitious universal protocol. Furthermore, the author denounces the fact that indigenous or underground practices are being captured, taken out of context and patented by the nascent mass psychedelic industry. All this makes us wonder: what do our practices produce, with what forces do they act and what worlds do they create? This is the fundamental ethical-aesthetic-political question.

Millions of dollars are made available for research that produces "magic pill" treatments; this investment could instead be dedicated to educating therapists on how to tune in to clients and to developing better ethical protocols, means of accountability and ways of reducing harm when it occurs (KUBALA, 2023, p.494).

In short, it is at the moment of tension between these two sides, revolutionary or capitalist, that desire can act from what Rolnik (2018; 2019) calls an "active micropolitics" or, at the other extreme, from a "reactive micropolitics". In active micropolitics, subjectivities recognize the value of the "alarm signal" contained in *malaise* (mental, social and planetary) and begin to connect with people and situations with which they can compose another fabric of relationships on an individual and collective level.

The actualization of this world in a virtual state [...] will take place through the invention of something - an idea, an image, a gesture, a work of art, among others; but also a new way of existing, of sexuality, of eating, a new way of relating to others, to work, to the state or to any other element in the

environment. Whatever this something is, what counts is that it carries with it the intensive pulsation of the new ways of seeing and feeling - which have been produced in the web of relationships between bodies and which inhabit each of them singularly - in such a way as to make them sensitive (Rolnik, 2018, p. 61).

However, the desire oriented towards a reactive micropolitics is one that does not tolerate change, that stiffens in the face of the procedural possibility of reinventing life, and that allows itself to be captured by the dominant values of capitalist subjectivity.

Psychedelics, politics and prudence

Contemporary science is looking for innovative approaches to treating depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and a variety of other mental health conditions. But at what cost and in what ways? Linked to what ethics, aesthetics and politics?

Anthropologist Nicolas Langlitz (2013; 2022) says that psychedelics are the new frontier for the mental health industry, an industry that has been stagnating since 2010, precisely when scientific research with psychedelics gained momentum, investment and entered the mainstream. No wonder. Langlitz even points out that there is public and private investment in the formulation of "non-psychedelic psychedelics"⁹, i.e. substances that have "commercial benefits" (antidepressants and anxiolytics, for example) without producing the psychedelic effects considered by the Pentagon to be "intolerable and deleterious". Other research aims to reduce the duration of action of the psychedelic effects of substances or to carry out integration therapy sessions with artificial intelligence and cell phone applications to minimize costs for therapists (Hartogson, 2023; Devenot, 2023). There are also academics suggesting the use of virtual reality glasses to conduct sessions with psychedelics (Sekula et al., 2022), despite the issues raised (Devenot, 2023).

However, as Silva (2017) warns, it is crucial to avoid the trap of the reductionist biomedical view, which tends to emphasize purely physiological explanations and disregard the interrelational contexts and meanings of "master plants". Adopting this limited perspective can lead to an incomplete and even harmful understanding of the therapeutic potential of plants, fungi and other psychedelics. It is therefore essential that research into psychedelics considers their cultural and spiritual dimension, as well as their biomedical aspects, in order to effectively activate "body knowledge" in an active micro-politics. Approaching the subject through medicalization and reductionism sounds like a set of coercive moral

⁹ Available at: <https://news.unhealthcare.org/2022/09/scientists-create-non-psychedelic-compound-with-same-anti-depressant-effect/>. Accessed on: 08/04/2024.

rules and individual solutions to complex social and historical issues, disconnected from the production of "psychedelic justice" (Cavnar; Labate, 2021) and "social transformation" (Davies et al, 2023).

Deleuze and Guattari (1997) point out how experimentation with different substances has played a transformative role in society, both for those who have used them and for those who have not. The effects of psychedelics cannot be separated from the revolution in thinking and ways of life that took place in the 1970s and which mark who we are today. They are movements that met, that acted in the production of other possibilities of existence: "repercussions of events" (Guattari, 2022). De-territorializing flows of desire, devirs and psychedelic lines of escape, traces of other micro-politics. Foucault himself used LSD in California and it is said that the experience had an immense impact on his work (Wade, 2019)¹⁰.

Plants and psychedelic substances need to be understood as agents that, in the composition established with humans, alter individual and collective perceptions of reality, tracing lines of escape through which desire can find new becomings. Therefore, substances need to be understood as potential tools of resistance and creation, allowing the composition of new forms of subjectivation, which differ from capitalistic modes of existence, creating other forms of life. These substances can create ruptures in the lines of power, opening up spaces for non-normative experiences and the reconfiguration of social and personal relationships. However, it is important to point out that lines of escape, like psychedelic substance use, are not intrinsically positive or liberating, as such ruptures can be risky and dangerous. The art of doses and experimentation in the production of prudence is fundamental (Deleuze; Guattari, 1997). When escaping from dominant structures, it is possible to find oneself in situations of extreme vulnerability, facing unwanted consequences or putting oneself at risk (physically and existentially), which can even lead to death.

It is necessary to fear and always denounce, as much as the abandonment of the practical experience of everyday life, an excessive deindividuation from which there would be no salvation, a fall into madness, into schizophrenia with no return. Hence the need to use a kind of "touchstone", an ethical compass that is continually tested and repositioned, so that we don't go too far in our experimentation. Hence the whole question of procedures: the measure of the doses, the presence of sober companions, the choice of the substance and the guarantees about its purity, the delimitation and ambience of the space, the prudence of not having to return to the surface straight away, the marking of the rituals, the purpose, etc (Moraes, 2017, p. 38).

¹⁰ According to Simeon Wade (2019), Michel Foucault returned to France after his LSD experience and destroyed the manuscripts of his initial project on the history of sexuality, reframing the research problems and reworking the material we have access to today.

Also, we can not expect that these compositions with the substances will automatically lead people to eliminate prejudices related to race, class and gender, making them more connected to environmental and human rights issues, for example. Any claim that the therapeutic or recreational use of any psychedelic substance necessarily leads to anti-authoritarian views must consider numerous historical and contemporary examples that challenge this idea. Again, there are active and reactive micropolitics.

Some academics (Conner, 2023; Devenot, 2023; Devenot & Pace, 2021; Langlitz, 2020; Petrement, 2023; Tvorun-Dunn, 2022) have been exposing the links between psychedelics, neoliberalism, far-right movements and big corporations. The dangerous Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson, for example, has been mixing his controversial "rules for life" with defenses in favor of the use of psychedelics (Devenot and Pace, 2021). Jordan Peterson is one of the "gurus" of the American and Brazilian far-right, defined by the "Brasil Paralelo" platform as "one of the most relevant intellectuals of our time"¹¹ alongside Olavo de Carvalho. In Brazil we had the case of leaders of UDV (União do Vegetal) linked to the election of Jair Bolsonaro¹². In the United States, the main psychedelic research centers receive donations from far-right figures such as Steve Bannon and Rebekah Mercer (Langlitz, 2020; Devenot and Pace, 2021). On Wall Street and in Silicon Valley, all the billionaires are using psychedelics¹³ to boost their creativity and to focus on their journeys as successful white-male-technocrats, proving that the substances are connecting deeply to the neoliberal way of life, cyber and pharmacopornopolitical regimen (Preciado, 2023).

With so much money invested, financial returns are expected, and investors have put pressure on researchers to get results faster and have been inflating research results in the media, seeking popular support. Furthermore, in the clinical trials carried out in the United States, black, brown and indigenous populations are totally marginalized in the process¹⁴. In both the United States and Brazil, training for "specialists" is expensive and difficult to access. Here in Brazil there are already courses available and there is an online postgraduate course, approved by the MEC, which can cost up to R\$50,000¹⁵.

Conferences on the subject have been heated and expose the contradictions of a global movement that is anything but "peace and love". At the closing plenary of the last MAPS

¹¹ Available at: <<https://www.brasilparalelo.com.br/artigos/quem-e-jordan-peterson>>. Accessed on: 07/04/2024.

¹² Available at: <<https://chacrana.net/right-wing-psychedelia-bolsonaro/>>. Accessed on: 01/12/2023.

¹³ Available at: <<https://money.cnn.com/2015/01/25/technology/lsd-psychedelics-silicon-valley/>> . Accessed on: 15/09/2023.

¹⁴ Available at: <<https://www.altaonline.com/dispatches/a38326035/psychedelic-drugs-gentrification-roberto-lovato/>>. Accessed on: 30/08/2023.

¹⁵ Alma Viva Institute. Available at: <<https://www.almavivabrasil.com/pos-graduacao/>>. Accessed on: 11/04/2023

(Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies) conference in 2023, for example, the world's largest on the subject, therapists and indigenous people stormed the stage and protested saying "you have been deceived; this is no renaissance, this [use of psychedelics] has been going on for a long time; this is capitalism, not a liberation movement"¹⁶.

On the majority side of the events, neuroscientists interested in brains, neurotransmitters, synthetic versions of molecules and pharmacological principles: the core of so-called "hard science", defined by Brazilian journalist Marcelo Leite (2021) as "scientific competitors", including some Brazilians, focused on performance and intellectual clashes, who invest in works that are often divorced from public policy agendas. On the other side, participants from minority groups (including researchers from the humanities and Brazil) who formulate and support affirmative political agendas for women, LGBT+ and BIPOC¹⁷ communities, who problematize the appropriation of old substances and knowledge by the mainstream and many who keep alive the memory of the psychedelic counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s. Leite (2021) defines the difference between the groups present at the previous conference in 2017 in a pejorative way, stating that the event was the "crowning achievement of a long process to remove psychedelic drugs from the exotic ghetto of counterculture and illegality and return them to the respectable arsenal of the psychiatric pharmacopoeia" (p. 97).

We think like Daan Oostveen (2023): in the eagerness to be mainstream, there is a pharma-optimistic utopia being produced around the aforementioned "respectable psychiatric arsenal", and the work of Deleuze and Guattari can help us understand how the flows of capital are colonizing psychedelics. Alongside this, we observe the exclusion of the "counterculture" and the underground (characterized as an "exotic ghetto"), the appropriation of indigenous knowledge and the commodification of psychedelic therapies, training and even the substances themselves. The couplings with psychedelics alone do not guarantee any transformation: we understand that psychedelics are pluripotent (Devenot and Pace, 2021), depend on the set and setting¹⁸, and can amplify potentials in favor of life, otherness and ideas to postpone the end of the world (Krenak, 2019), as well as amplifying the inclinations of groups and people to the extreme right, as is the case with invaders of the Capitol in

¹⁶ The video of the moment when the protesters take to the stage can be seen from different angles at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLga8Hjt4_I> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9XM_Q2azR0>. Accessed on: 30/08/2023.

¹⁷ *Black, Indigenous and peoples of color.*

¹⁸ Following the common definition in psychedelic research as proposed by Timothy Leary (2022).

the United States¹⁹, neo-Nazi groups seized with home production of synthetic DMT²⁰, machospheres²¹ involved in conspiracy theories using psychedelics (Conner, 2023), and "gay cure" therapies with psychedelics (Belser et al, 2022). It's up to us to clearly define which practices we're going to make kinship with in this time of ours.

Final considerations

Félix Guattari (2005) makes it clear that his analysis of the capitalist mode of production is not intended to describe a fixed state to which we would be doomed. On the contrary, it is precisely because of its productive nature that "capitalist subjectivity brings immense possibilities for deviation and appropriation" (Guattari; Rolnik; 2005, p. 53). Now, if the production of capitalist subjectivity is embodied in the ways in which bodies and groups live, it is also through bodies and groups that clashes and struggles can be organized. Social confrontations need to establish connections "between the different ways in which individuals and groups understand how to live their existence" (Guattari; Rolnik; 2005, p. 53). Suely Rolnik (2005) points out that our attention needs to be directed to the points of rupture that can be produced in the complex device for producing subjectivity, understanding these points of rupture as important focuses of political resistance and molecular revolutions, insofar as they are lived experiences on which it is possible to elaborate other ways of living, returning here to what Michel Foucault defines as an exercise in freedom. If contemporary capitalism works by investing us with crystallized ways of feeling, loving, breathing and living, then it is through the invention of other sensitive forms that resistance as creation is possible. We therefore believe that psychedelics, in their wide range of possibilities for agency and connections, can be important tools for bringing about these ruptures and reinventions of our existence on this planet.

However, it must be emphasized that "it would certainly be inconceivable to pretend to return to previous formulas, corresponding to periods in which, at the same time, the demographic density was weaker and the density of social relations stronger than today" (Guattari, 2009, p. 16). In other words, it would seem to us to be a great mistake to determine that "the" solution to escaping capitalist subjectivity would be to operate as traditional and indigenous communities do, copying their practices and

¹⁹ Available at: <<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/01/15/trump-rioters-planned-to-kill-congress-members-fed-probe.html>> . Accessed on: 08/04/2024.

²⁰ Available at: <<https://www.vice.com/en/article/m7qv xv/arrested-neo-nazis-built-a-weapon-were-making-dmt-court-docs>> . Accessed on: 08/04/2024.

²¹ Machospheres, manospheres or masculinist movements characterize some current links between men, usually young men, around misogynistic practices and discourses. Linked to the extreme right, they concentrate hate movements and conspiracy theories on social networks and incite attacks.

appropriating their ways of life. Based on the fantasy of a supposed "ancestry", linked to romantic ideals of "harmony with nature", or on the reductionism that equates all peoples and ethnicities, ignoring all the social and historical complexity of the original peoples, there are those who shout "we are all indigenous!". This seems as absurd as it sounds and is in no way the solution to the crisis we are facing. It is neither possible nor desirable to "go back in time" in search of a supposed "better life", just as there is no way of reversing technological progress or ignoring the fact that humanity's future is increasingly linked to the urban future (Guattari, 2009). We must remain suspicious of any thinking that follows the flow of a nostalgic feeling towards a supposed lost origin, where there would be "awakened consciousnesses" and "immaculate knowledge" (Tadeu; Lepe-Carrión, 2021). Furthermore, we cannot wish to create "the" interspecies perspective that guides philosophy and psychology, nor can we establish criteria from a life practiced by indigenous ethnic groups to morally define how we conduct ourselves in the present. But we do believe it is possible to learn from the movements of history and from other ways of life that dismiss the primacy of the human, collecting clues that can guide our conduct, calibrating our ethical-political compasses in the construction of this time that is ours.

We feel it is essential to approach the notions of set and setting from a schizoanalytic perspective: our set, in other words, our ways of thinking, feeling and acting, are produced in the networks of neoliberal capitalist subjectivity and by its colonial unconscious. Our settings are also deeply crossed by the same production of subjectivity, especially when we think of work with psychedelics based on isolating subjects in confined spaces, either to control variables or through individualized psychological approaches. Set and setting are social and historical, and need to be understood and worked with as such, in a broader perspective.

The notions of "trauma" and so-called "mental illness" also need to be understood as social and historical issues: they are collective developments, produced at the intersections between capitalism, colonialism and heteropatriarchy. Depression, anxiety, PTSD and other "disorders" are social symptoms of the mode of production of capitalist subjectivity and demand care in equally broad approaches, in other sets and settings. The "treatments" for contemporary "disorders" need to involve the invention of other ways of producing desire, in other processes of subjectivation, and not just the administration of some medicine or substance found in some plant, without the context of collective transformation. These same plants, fungi and substances can be the engine for other modes of ethical, aesthetic and political production, in the creation of mentalities that escape capitalist control. And it seems fundamental to us that philosophy and psychology take this as a direction, in the production of spaces of care that go beyond protocols, badges, lab coats and shoes.

Subverting requires putting body and mind into action, and this causes displacement. So there's no alternative but to start and do it. But how to start? You have to start by doing something, and the only hint I would give in this regard is: learn to take off the shoes you use to walk along paths and access theoretical knowledge learned at the center. Let your feet touch the ground in the territory. Your shoes will become small and won't fit the collective feet, they will squeeze our minds so much that they will limit access to knowledge in the territory of the body (Xakriabá, 2023, p.330).

We need to realize that psychedelics demand the reinvention of our ways of doing research and clinical practice, as Kubala (2023) proposes, in the direction of what Oostveen (2023) calls "a new materialism" in psychedelic research, from an immanent perspective of the relationships we establish with plants, fungi and substances.

Some of the current protocols and models of psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy, by promising a "cure" in just a few sessions, are very American: linked to a neoliberal, rushed and shallow way of treating mental health, focusing on individual results. Many individual protocols are based on the idea that there is an "inner intelligence"²² that guides the client's "inner journey", disregarding the fact that "inner" and "individual" are social and historical constructions and that for the majority of native peoples and other marginalized groups the use of psychedelics is not individual: it is linked to a complex multi-species network, in other ontologies and modes of existence.

One could argue that the individualized approach, focused on therapies with individualized perspectives, is important for the approval of substances in the context of clinical trials, which require the "double-blind gold standard" of hard science, based on the isolation of variables, which is essential for reproducing phenomena in the laboratory (Barros and Kastrup, 2020). However, this model is spreading rapidly around the world, being offered in courses in Brazil and abroad, being carried out by various professionals and disseminated on social networks, and being controversially standardized and patented by companies²³ that aim to link substances to certain sets and clinical settings (Devenot et al, 2022).

Furthermore - and here is an important political critique of this text - to individualize the psychedelic experience is to reduce its desire potential, minimizing the possibilities of bricolage, agency

²² As described in the MAPS manual for MDMA-assisted therapy for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder in US war veterans. This perspective was strongly influenced by Stanislav Grof, mentor of MAPS founder Rick Doblin, based on the work of Carl Gustav Jung. Available at: <<https://maps.org/research-archive/mdma/MDMA-Assisted-Psychotherapy-Treatment-Manual-Version7-19Aug15-FINAL.pdf>> . Accessed on: 25/03/2024.

²³ This is the case with *Compass Pathways*, a company owned by billionaire Peter Thiel, who is linked to the US far right. Available at: <<https://www.vice.com/en/article/93wmxv/can-a-company-patent-the-basic-components-of-psychedelic-therapy>>. Accessed on: 13/04/2024.

and multi-species connections, which could catalyze real social changes at an active micro-political level. For Guattari (1992; 2009), the way out of the deterioration of human ways of life involves a whole reorganization of social relations: practices of reinventing collective ways of being (a social ecology), practices of reinventing the subject's relationship with the body (a mental ecology) and practices of caring for natural resources (an environmental ecology).

We need to reinvent our relationships with philosophy, with the body, with the clinic, with our workspaces and with the Earth in order to expand the possibilities of becoming-others in contact with "power plants" and other psychedelic substances. This is what the shaman Davi Kopenawa dedicates himself to, handing over his words to the white people: to understand that we need to dream further and pay attention to the spirits of the forest (Limulja, 2022). We point out the need for more academic studies to be produced along these lines. Maybe then we can postpone the end of the world and prevent the sky from falling.

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