

## **Adolescence and the *Occupy School*: returning of a question?**

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### **ABSTRACT – Adolescence and the *Occupy School*: returning of a question?**

The article discusses the operation of adolescence in contexts that make possible the discursive subversion and the questioning of the mastery place in the social bond. To that end, the authors focus on the *Occupy School* movement and make approximations with the May 1968 movement. At the interface between psychoanalysis, education and politics, it analyses the social bonds present in school occupations, whether through the conception of phratry, extracted from the Freudian paradigm, or by the proposition of the discourses in Lacan's theory. The occupations allow us to think about the possibility of establishing new ways of bonding within school, carried out by the adolescents, who give way to desire and to the singular dimension in the transmission of knowledge.

**Keywords: Adolescence. Psychoanalysis. Education. Social Bond. Youth Movements.**

**RESUMO – Adolescência e o *Ocupa Escola*: retorno de uma questão?** O artigo aborda a operação da adolescência em contextos que possibilitam a subversão discursiva e o questionamento do lugar de mestria no laço social. Para tanto, focaliza-se o movimento *Ocupa Escola* e são tecidas aproximações com o movimento de maio de 1968. Na interface entre a psicanálise, a educação, e a política, analisa-se os laços sociais presentes nas ocupações de escolas, seja através da concepção de fratria, extraída do paradigma freudiano, seja pela proposição dos discursos em Lacan. As ocupações permitem pensar sobre a possibilidade de instauração de novos modos de fazer laço dentro da escola, protagonizados pelos adolescentes, que dão lugar ao desejo e ao singular na transmissão do saber.

**Palavras-chave: Adolescência. Psicanálise. Educação. Laço Social. Movimentos Juvenis.**

## Introduction

At the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the events of 1968 around the world, a moment when young people emerge as political subjects par excellence in the social scene, we are requested to think again about the repercussions and developments of the May movement. There are many possible points of view over 1968, varying from the glorification of the youth movement that questioned power structures, whether in academic, cultural or political contexts, to their condemnation in favor of the neoliberalist rise and the consolidation of an individualist culture that set up new control devices.

It is in this scenario of the end of the 1960s that both Foucault and Lacan theorize on discourses, each in his own way, along with their participation in the new field of conflicts of knowledge and power in which politics begins to take place. But it is also in this moment that we witness a conjunction, so far unusual, of new horizontal and solidary social relationships between students and factory workers in the fight against several forms of oppression that reach economic, political, cultural and aesthetic spheres, also questioning the instituted knowledge. While the French May 1968 was marked by occupations of factories, schools and universities in a unified movement, that culminated in a general strike involving the entire country, in Brazil we could also find parallel resistance movements carried on by high school students, university students and factory workers, even though they were especially marked by the strong repression and violence, typical of the Brazilian military dictatorship (Mhereb, Corrêa, 2018).

Fifty years later, some events take back something of the spirit of 1968, *the year that has not ended*, according to the convenient expression and title of the book by Zuenir Ventura (2008). In many aspects, the protests in 2013 and the even more recent school occupations by high school students between 2015 and 2017 in Brazil remind, also in a controversial way, that original milestone of student revolt. In this article, we propose to discuss aspects related to those two times of student movements in history, their complexities and paradoxes. Such discussion was made possible thanks to a research<sup>1</sup> conducted between 2017 and 2018 with students who participated in the movement known as *Ocupa Escola (Occupy School)*<sup>2</sup>. We will try, thus, to point out our reflexions about the significance of this event for those youngsters, considering the social and political scenario in which it occurs.

## From May 1968 to School Occupations: developments

As Badiou (2012) indicates, there is no consensus between those who have endeavored to analyze the impacts of 1968 on social life. There are controversies around whether this was a milestone of the victory of postmodern individualism or whether it also represented an important experience of achievement in the process of emancipation of social sectors submitted to the most different forms of domination (colonial,

patriarchal, sexual, ethnic-racial, political, among others). Badiou, who has excelled for his reflections regarding politics in the contemporary world, states that May 1968 itself is an event of great complexity, and it is impossible to deliver a unified and easy image of it. He highlights the heterogeneity of forces involved, focusing on the overlap of three factors, namely: the rebellion of university and high school youth; the general strike promoted by the biggest central union in France, the CGT (General Confederation of Labor); and, finally, the libertarian journey undertaken by women and homosexuals. There is also, according to him, a fourth process articulated to the movement, that developed between the 1960s and the 1980s, related to the questioning about what politics is, which results in several debates on the usual ways of representative entities to do politics.

In parallel, we can also identify in the movement of 1968 a critique of the structuralist perspective headed by Lévi-Strauss, shown by students through the emblematic sentence print on the walls of Sorbonne: *structures do not walk on the streets*. Such criticism aims to point out that the place of history would be eclipsed in structuralist theories, questioning the statute and outreach of social transformation on the agenda. Lacan (2008 [1968-1969]) is also challenged by this criticism, responding to it in his seminar *From an Other to the other*, when he comments on the events of May 1968. In one of his statements about the movement, he declares that it is a structural phenomenon, in which the relations between desire and knowledge are questioned. Thereafter, he dedicates himself to redefining the relation between the Real and the structure by inscribing the jouissance in the symbolic network itself, which will be developed in the following seminar (Lacan, 1992 [1969-1970]), where he presents the four discourses. In this seminar, he formalizes some of the foreseen consequences of the 1968 movement, which, according to him, did not dismiss the master, but contributed to his transformation through the consolidation of the discourse of the university and the discourse of the capitalist.

This view of the multiplicity and openness incited by the movements of 1968 indicates a possible common thread for us to articulate it with our current Brazilian context, where spontaneous movements largely made up of youngsters – such as the 2013 demonstrations, as well as several social movements, unrelated to political parties or other institutional representations, that have attempted to gain attention in the political arena since then – have been disqualified and delegitimized from their transformative power. Particularly, regarding the questioning related to the student movement, we would like to propose some reflections, based on the discourse of young participants in recent school occupations in Brazil.

Between 2015 and 2017, we could witness a social movement considered unprecedented in Brazil, judging by its dimensions and its strategies, the *Occupy School*. The movement was led by students from schools and universities in the whole country, occupied by them as a manner of protest and resistance against measures taken by state and

federal governments, which endangered the quantity and quality of investments in education, in an intermittent way, during this period. The movement had its first major manifestation in São Paulo in 2015, due to the risk of closing almost one hundred high schools by the state government (Campos; Medeiros; Ribeiro, 2016). After that, it had great expressiveness in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, initially in support of a state teachers' strike and, finally, establishing itself as a separate movement, with its own assemblies and agendas. At the end of 2016, *Occupy School* increased enormously and spread across more than a thousand schools all over Brazil, in addition to hundreds of universities, in repudiation of the Proposed Amendment to Constitution (PEC) 241, that later became PEC 51, which limits public expenditure with education, as well as Provisional Measure (MP) 746, which establishes a reform in high school education in the country. At the time, occupations gained a dimension that surprised and involved a great part of society, provoking intense affection, whether for those who supported it or for those who opposed it. As Brum (2016) stated at the time, the *embodied word* brought by those youngsters had not been present for a long time in the field of political confrontation in Brazil.

Within this scope, as psychoanalysts, our interest goes beyond the macropolitics that takes place in public spaces – and that is not done without subjects and desire –, because it also concerns the micropolitics that takes place at the borders between social discourses and subjects who are traversed by them all the time, being capable of subverting them. The events of 1968 clarify the social conditions that consolidated the emergence of the subjective experience of adolescence, forged in an ambiguous relation with previous generations: on the one hand, provoking fascination and admiration, on the other hand, provoking attempts of control and containment. We know that adolescents experience such a subversion intensely, since the task of adolescence involves precisely transforming what we receive as a symbolic inheritance, making possible some singular appropriation of it, even though always marked by something that transcends and exceeds it. The student rebellion of 1968 expresses the strength of this adolescents' subversion for the emergence of desire in their own name, that includes the search for disalienation from the Other's demands. Nevertheless, some questions regarding 1968 are still pertinent: what readings can be done of this subversion? Is it possible to totally dismiss the master? How can we evaluate the strength of these movements without invoking purely objective rates of the achievements conquered, but also including the dimensions of the subject and the desire in our analyses?

For that matter, it is worth mentioning here what Calligaris (2018, n.p.) states based on his own experience of 1968: "There is no point in Revolutions (with capital R) without our effort to be revolutionaries (with lowercase r), in other words, without our effort to escape from our own passion to regulate and control the actual life of others and ourselves." Apart from closed and extremist discourses that have disseminated today in the field of politics, leading to hermetic readings about

failure or success of social movements, we believe that psychoanalysis can contribute to enlarge the spectrum of this debate. It is based on psychoanalysis, and on the readings allowed by it, that we can approach the youth movement of 1968 and recent uprisings in Brazilian schools: more than a real revolutionary struggle, it is a question of giving way to a subversion of the discursive order, which is not done without the subject in his singularity. This is the strength of adolescent rebellion that, when it gains the dimension of a collective, can indeed affect, in a crucial way, something of the social-political order. That is what we will try to demonstrate here, based on a point of view over adolescence in school occupations in Rio de Janeiro in 2016/2017.

### **The Adolescent, the Other and the Education**

As we have already indicated, our discussion is based on a research, constructed on the interface between psychoanalysis and education, aiming to investigate relations between the psychic work of adolescence and social bonds, more specifically based on the recent phenomenon of school occupations held by high school students in the state of Rio de Janeiro. We assume that researching adolescence in occupations is also researching the social bond, particularly the educational bond in school. Adolescence is considered as an oedipal and narcissistic reedition (Coutinho, 2009), a moment of a new encounter with the Other (Alberti, 2004) and a moment of contestation of the phallic significance built during infancy, in favor of a new symptomatic construction (Poli, 2014), with effects on the subject's ways to bond with the social sphere. This implies new ways of representing oneself as someone singular in the collective, through new narratives and discursive addressing modes. The adolescent subject has the challenge of going beyond the place occupied in family discourse and in social discourses that might alienate or silence him.

We can claim that the psychic work of the adolescents is a work of construction of borders that provide contours to the drive and are rectified in adolescence, which does not occur outside cultural and social bond. This is the reason why the research on adolescence always requires us to dialogue with other fields of knowledge that deal with human relationships, such as education, social and political sciences, or the juridical field. For psychoanalysis, as various authors have pointed out (Alberti, 2004; Coutinho, 2009; Poli, 2014; Rassial, 1999), adolescence leads us to the fact that our body has nothing of natural, in a way that puberty imposes the construction of new drive circuits, based on new social bonds, there included the exercise of a sexed position<sup>3</sup>.

In a Freudian point of view, as it was already worked by Kupfer (1996), in order to learn/grow it is necessary to overcome the master – that is, to become their own master – through the appropriation of his teachings. We can assume, then, that this conflict expresses a struggle between subject and education, since in order to grow, that is also in order to learn, it is necessary to symbolically kill the master. The rela-

tionship between adolescents and educators, in a way analogous to the relationship with their parents, is also penetrated by the fall of ideals and by the detachment from the father figure, as Freud (1996a [1914]) observed. This transference relationship appears in the form of the student's ambivalence towards the teacher and, on the other hand, it has repercussion in the form of a constant malaise within educational practice with adolescents. Therefore, the adolescent may both identify with the master and disqualify his authority.

Tension between alienation and separation, as theorized by Lacan (1988 [1964]), is central in adolescence (Alberti, 2004; Poli, 2014). Thus, we can situate the fundamental paradox experienced by the adolescent before the adult world: to find it/to confront it in order to become separated from it, to identify himself in order to become singular. The decline of the idealizations of parents is maintained by the movement of separation, of abandoning a position of dependence and alienation experienced as mortifying in adolescence. The adolescent lives under the permanent threat of objectification, and this threat will be present in all the relationships with representatives of the adult world, which is noticed in a remarkable way at school.

Nevertheless, whenever knowledge and teaching pass through desire, there is a transmission of a desire to know, that is, what is transmitted by teaching is desire and a relation to knowledge, and thus, many times, what could be uninteresting and impersonal becomes interesting (Guiterra, 2003). Therefore, it is important to highlight the place of reference that the teacher occupies when he is in the place of master, distinguishing himself from the student. But if he is situated as a not-whole master, he transmits a bet, that is, he gives space for the adolescent subject to be able to engage there his desire, with leads also to the possibility of new discursive and social bonding. This seems to be important for the adolescent, because there is the possibility of constructing something new from his own unconscious. It is evident that when teachers care enough to listen to their students about their experiences, without necessarily giving up the formal content, its effect benefits learning and instigates the desire of knowledge. On the other hand, the adolescent often tries to destabilize the one who occupies a place of mastery, since his own subjective work implies to separate and requires from the teacher the possibility of being not-whole (Pereira, 2016). Teaching adolescents is, in this field, a paradigm of current challenges, intensifying the narcissistic blow and the malaise in sustaining its practice, despite the adverse context.

Questioning of the place of mastery is intrinsic to the work of disalienation ongoing in adolescence. In this regard, the teacher is convoked to take position in teaching from his unconscious, marked by desire and lack in his relation to knowledge. Nevertheless, when the educator retreats and renounces to occupy this uncomfortable place, anomie prevails in the educational bond, leaving open, this way, the space for a social discourse legitimized by science and by the instrumental rationality that stigmatizes, segregates and/or victimizes children and

youngsters (Rosa, Vicentin, 2013). When there is no more room for the educator's impossible work, it often happens that the doctor, the judge and/or the businessman kick in, allied to the power of the State or the Market, and adolescents, many times, are dismissed in their words and acts, being offered to them as the only possibility of nomination a pathological, criminalizing or marginalizing identity. Hence, as Rosa (2016) observes, there is the risk of a naturalization of social helplessness, which erases the discursive strength of those who are submitted to it, in a way that, along with social helplessness, the discursive helplessness of these adolescent subjects, who are silenced and excluded from the field of knowledge and power, is also produced.

Thus, the work of adolescence, many times, implies acts of resistance and subversion regarding instituted discourses, so that the subjective field is overlaid by a political field of struggles and disputes that the adolescent must come across. Therefore, the place occupied by school is fundamental as a potential public space for the reconfiguration of the symbolic network in adolescence, providing new encounters with the Other and with others, which does not happen outside the discursive struggle present in the wider social field that becomes updated there. The research held in the context of the occupations of 2016/2017 brings us elements to advance about these questions, as we shall see below.

### **The Research: framing and method**

The research material<sup>4</sup> results from meetings with adolescents participating in occupations held in state and federal schools in the state of Rio de Janeiro, through two main sources: 1) individual or group interviews; 2) field diaries written by interviewers<sup>5</sup>. The meetings with the adolescents occurred after the end of the movement, through previous contacts with the participants during the occupations or through social networks (exchange of messages through Facebook pages of the occupations and of student groups from occupied schools) and it was not intermediated by schools, since the movement happened outside the regular functioning of these institutions. The authorization to participate in the research was required (as documented by Free Informed Consent Terms and Free Informed Assent Terms) and provided by the youngsters themselves or by their parents when they were underage. We have adopted as the criteria of inclusion/exclusion of the research that the youngsters should be between 14 and 20 years old, they should have participated in the occupation of the school where they study (or the school where they studied at the moment) and they should have voluntarily agreed to talk about their experience. The interviews were held in spaces arranged between adolescents and researchers, usually taking as an initial meeting point the school entrance, having as the central issue the experience of occupation in the adolescent's life and in his relationship with school. All 12 interviews were recorded and then transcribed.

We are based on the paradigm of research in psychoanalysis, guided by the ethical principles that orient clinical practice (Alberti, Elia, 2000), taking the analyst's (that is, the researcher's) desire as the one that initiates the possibility of a speech in which the subject takes place (Rosa, Domingues, 2010). We do not seek a prior knowledge, rather we aim to encourage the interviewee to formulate it in a singular way, based on a transference bond that allows the unconscious, which includes the field of relationships with the researcher, to express itself (Costa; Poli, 2006).

From the exercise of a psychoanalytic listening while researching, as in the analytical setting, we consider the interviewee's speech in free association, as well as the researcher-psychoanalyst's free-floating attention through a position of not-whole knowledge, that sustains the very dimension of the unconscious and opens possibilities for the desire to express itself. Considering the proposal of a *flânerie listening* as a research device in psychoanalysis (Gurski; Strzykalski, 2018), through the records made in field diaries, the researcher's experience at the moment of the interviews was also considered. Such a device allowed us to give place to the unpredictable of each encounter and to what could be manifested not only by words, but also by the adolescents' actions within the research relationship.

The work with the occupants' speeches did not aim to build categories on its content in an objective and neutral way. Based on *free-floating attention* as the analyst's way of listening, as proposed by Freud (1996c [1912]), a *free-floating reading* of the field material was made, articulating it to the theoretical references of psychoanalysis about adolescence and social bond. Therefore, the statements that we mention here do not fulfil the function of demonstrating theoretical considerations, rather they serve as an inspiration for us to think of them and to illustrate what the research has allowed us to learn.

### **Adolescence in School Occupations: new social bonds**

In contrast with the dominant discourse about the inevitable struggle between adolescents and school, the routine of occupied schools was marked by the occupants' strong involvement with school, whether taking care of its physical space and of the maintenance of the occupation, or programming activities that took place there, both supported by rules and functions agreed and shared by everyone. Several educational and cultural activities happened at school, programmed by students themselves, many times with the collaboration of parents, teachers and members of the surrounding community who volunteered to contribute. During occupation, school was run by various commissions that were responsible for different functions established to guarantee the functioning of space: reception, cooking, cleaning, security, communication and pedagogical content. Adolescents almost always stayed on the same committee through the entire occupation, because they felt that this would make it easier to learn and perform tasks. But



whenever necessary, exchanges were made, or others came to help a specific committee at a time of greatest need, as was the case of the kitchen in busy moments during meals. There was absolute respect for the work of each committee. From the beginning, the movement was characterized by horizontality of relationships, both within the same school and within exchanges with other occupants, largely levered by social networks, which undoubtedly helped to consolidate strategies and to organize occupations in Brazil, also based on the experiences of other countries such as the *Penguin Revolution* in Chile<sup>6</sup>.

During conversations with adolescents participating in occupation of schools, the majority of which high schools, some points called our attention and made us work from them. First, it should be mentioned that, of all twelve interviews held, only two were done individually. Even though researchers made previous contact with each adolescent individually, at the time of the interview, it was recurrent the request for the participation of other occupation fellow to speak together. At this point, it was interesting to observe how each researcher reacted to this request, either responding to it with some resistance or simply accepting this demand as something to be included in the transference bond constituted in the research situation. Something similar also occurred to the choice of where the interview would be held. Initially the meeting point was in front of the school where the adolescent studied. But also, in most cases, the adolescent invited the researcher to enter the school, making her testify his free access to the principal's office to ask for the authorization of entry, as well as his freedom to transit through several spaces in school. Through this act, adolescents addressed themselves to the principal like an Other of education that welcomed them, authorizing them to pronounce themselves. We may suppose that perhaps the researcher, coming from the university, was also situated in the transference bond in a similar way, that is, in the position of this Other of education. Before them, the youngsters did not feel threatened. On the contrary, they included the activity in the significant series promoted by school, and they allowed themselves to participate in the construction of the research situation, whether proposing the place where the interview would be held, or inviting colleagues to participate.

In the adolescents' statements, we can point out many mentions to experiences of both identification and encounter with otherness in the social bonds established during occupations. On the one hand, there is the reference to identification to the other as someone similar and present in horizontal friendship bonds, the possibility of sharing experiences and helping each other mutually; on the other hand, there is the experience of the Other as otherness, when the other appears as different and incites a *sense of collectivity*, as named by the high school students.

During the occupation, I met people from other shifts that are still my friends. They go out with me today. We match. I talk to them about my life. They feel comfortable to talk to me about their lives too. They are

people of various ages and different tastes, but I have identified myself with them in some way (Marina, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of high school)<sup>7</sup>.

And I saw that and, man, this is the occupation. It's the union. And I kept looking at people doing all that. It is a feeling of belonging, of pride. This is to be a student at the School X<sup>8</sup>. This is to be a student and to be fighting for what we want (Sônia, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of high school).

To worry about things beyond school, but that also have a lot to do with education, with the sense of collectivity. I think this sense of collectivity is a very difficult thing to find, and in the occupation, we experienced a little of how it should be. Of how it is when you take more responsibility and how it is when you have an individual notion, but you live within a society, within a collective. Since you are an individual, you live everything in the micro. When you are in an occupation, you end up seeing a little more of the macro (Marina, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of high school).

The importance of the similar's place in the constitution of the subject, as well as the constitution of horizontal bonds sustaining the social bond, is fairly emphasized by Kehl (2000), when she proposes a *fraternal function*. With this, the author considers the similar's participation as a necessary, and not a contingent, condition in the constitution of the subject. The experience of phratry is taken as a reedition of what happened at the mirror stage, promoting the *socialization of narcissism*, such as Assoun (1998) names it. The brother introduces to the child the experience of similarity in difference, which forces a re-elaboration of the specular relationship with the ideal ego and produces a distance from the alienating identification to the Other. Later, in adolescence, "[...] experiences shared by the phratry confirm and at the same time relativize the absolute power of truth coming from the paternal word, enabling the subject to recognize himself as the creator of language and/or social facts" (Kehl, 2000, p. 44).

Indeed, based on the occupants' speech, we can think of the horizontal identificatory bonds in school occupations as giving support to new networks of signifiers, in which subjects can speak of themselves and situate themselves in the face of the Other in an extra-familiar sphere, as, for example, *being student of the X School* or *belonging to the movement of high school students*, with the new social implications that these insignia may indicate. Furthermore, as some psychoanalysts have warned (Kehl, 2000; Musati, Rosa, 2018), the horizontal axis of identifications, the sense of phratry, may be important in conceiving ways of facing hegemonic, excluding and stigmatizing social discourses that silence the subject by assigning him totalizing identities. The adolescents' reports about the occupations seem to indicate other possibilities.

The way in which the construction of solidary bonds can be witnessed in relationships between the youngsters who occupied schools indicates a possibility of opening to another logic, unlike that one present in mass psychology. Different from the phenomena of established groups, as described by Freud in 1921 (Freud, 1976a), that is, marked by regression, by the illusion of omnipotence and by an identity logic,

which refers to the ideal ego, the horizontal identifications established there can be thought in a fraternal logic, as suggested by Assoun (1998) and Kehl (2000). According to both readings, the horizontal axis of fraternal identifications has been systematically left in a secondary place by psychoanalysis in favor of the prevalence of the vertical axis, referred to the father's place in the horde or to the leader's place in the mass. The fraternal bonds refer to the bonds between the brothers in the myth of the primal horde described by Freud (1976b [1913]).

If the brothers' act, in the origin myth, has instituted the paternal function, it is based on culture and language that this function keeps operating. The real father and the several authorities who can replace him do nothing more than transmitting the Law – to which they too are [...] submitted. To separate the real father from the symbolic father corresponds, in ontogenesis, to the primal murder; to retrace in personal life the course from primal horde to civilized collectivity is a task that is not accomplished without the similar's participation (Kehl, 2000, p. 35).

As Kehl mentions, in the course of the Freudian myth proposed in *Totem and Taboo* (Freud, 1976b [1913]), the horizontal axis of relationships between siblings is crucial, from the necessary complicity in the crime against the father to the task of separating the real father from the symbolic father, guaranteed by fraternal identifications. Therefore, what she questions is whether the paternal function is capable of operating if it is not elaborated in a collective way and sustained through the horizontal identifications between siblings. The horizontal identifications, typical of a phratry, depend on the vertical relationship with the father, but they also make an indispensable alternate of it, which, according to her, can be thought in terms of identificatory traits that are secondary in relation to the primary identification to the father, passage from Law to regulation.

Assoun (1998) emphasizes that the scheme of social bond as proposed by Freud in *Mass Psychology* (1976a [1921]) slides from the prominent problem of the interdiction highlighted in *Totem and Taboo* to idealization. According to him, what Freud points out in 1921 is the legitimation of the paternal interdict by the subjects themselves through the constitution of the ideal and the fraternal identifications. In fraternal bonds, the brothers identify themselves precisely because of the helplessness and the collective guilt that result from the father's murder, which convokes them to constitute a place for a third instance, the ego ideal, sustained by the horizontal relationships between them. Therefore, one of the phratry's traits is the siblings' recognition of helplessness, which makes the rivalry shaded by the necessary renunciation of immediate satisfaction of drives and by the experience of the necessary mutual support, sustained by pacts and the construction of common cultural references (ideals, religion, institutions etc.). In the case of school occupations, statements about solidary relationships between youngsters let us suppose that one of the traits of the social bond

made there is the fact of being founded in a condition that is similar to the fraternal pact, supported by the common work of mourning for the dismissed father/master.

I see someone from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and I say ‘what’s up, how is it going? Need some help?’ I have this freedom, you know? I think people aren’t into that hierarchy thing either (Carolina, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of high school).

We even call ourselves the Occupy family, because in fact it was a conviviality that we had, one helping the other, a very big affinity (Diogo, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of high school).

There we are in a fraternal supported regime – the basis of democracy<sup>9</sup>, by the way – that implies the recognition of helplessness, of lack and of differences between its members, different from what occurs in the totalitarian horizontal bonds of masses, ruled by the logic of the identical and by the narcissistic omnipotence of the ideal ego. It is a bet on the collective living for the construction of new discourses that support the renewal of the civilizing pact. That way, identifications among occupants also appear in statements in which the feeling of belonging is evoked, but not without being anchored in singular ways of being, as an achievement of the singular in the collective.

We could fight for our rights as students and everything. That makes a lot of difference to me, you know? Like it or not, I’m a black student, a poor girl in a white elite school, where men prevail in matters of intelligence and all. And my chances of being in school were very few, you know? And also to see how school as an institution, not being in occupation, wasn’t prepared to have a student who didn’t identify or like it so much, who didn’t feel so comfortable, but she was there to see and occupy space. During occupation, this is pretty much what I felt. I felt more freedom to show who I was, to show what I felt, to show that I was more human too [...]. I can’t say that I was out of this world, but I feel more in it. I have this feeling that, in the environment where I live, I belong more to this space as an individual, as a person who has characteristics and who accepts it (Marina, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of high school).

The adolescent’s statement refers to *being an individual* as a way to express singularity. According to psychoanalysis, the singular does not correspond to the individual, since the subject is constituted in the bond with the Other and with others, bringing the division as a founding mark. The coexistence among adolescents also evokes the subject’s encounter with the Other in himself, through experiences with difference within similarity.

I didn’t get along with many people, but we had to get along, because we were here, stuck in one place, talking and having to make one’s voice to be the other’s voice, and managing to make a single shout. Relationships were very boring, because we wanted it to be a horizontal thing, but it wasn’t always (Gabriela, 1<sup>st</sup> grade of high school).

It ended up as a good experience to learn to deal with some problems and learn to deal with people, as Sônia said. Because you can’t always get the patience to calmly deal with a person who’s doing something dumb, you

know? We had a lot of trouble. It got to a level that we had to create rules, because it didn't work, you know? (Rafael, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of high school).

Such experiences, as expressed by occupants, made them a demand for work, often stressful, and maybe felt as another way of being *stuck* in the school, tied to it, different from what they experience in their routine. Therefore, beyond identification, the coexistence among occupants at school also promoted an encounter with otherness. The occupants' statements show us an oscillation between identification and singularization present in the movement the whole time, denoting the tension between alienation and separation in the subject's relationship with the group. Thus, it is worth distinguishing between identification processes, which have as a trait a necessary instability, and identity processes, which follow the logic of the one, of the mass, of the discourse of the master. The tension between alienation and separation, present in the work of adolescence, is one of the manners of thinking about this balance between identification-singularization, "[...] which makes the subject find himself in the other, but being able to move away from him, so that there is, together with the process of necessary alienation, constituent in relation to that image that answers who he is, a separation from that insufficient answer" (Musati, Rosa, 2018, p. 97). Such a balance allows us to consider what is proper to each subject without disregarding the relevance of collective constructions.

### **In Occupation, the Discourse without Words**

In addition to fraternal bonds, as a support for the construction of new narratives and for the restitution of symbolic networks in which the adolescent subject can locate himself, occupations also brought malaise and experiences that were difficult to name for the adolescents who participated in it. Something of the Real – a Lacanian term for the unspeakable – seems to appear and feed the mobilization and adhesion to the collective. This is formulated in statements about something that is not clear how to say or explain, but that was intense, unprecedented, never felt before, that could bring malaise, but also moved them and strongly attracted them to participate.

[...] there was a lot of pressure from outside, from inside and from within. I think you can't handle this for three months, it's tough. I think I got sick also because of that. Then I had to take some time to breathe, understand and come back here (Gabriela, 1<sup>st</sup> grade of high school).

For the first three days, I didn't sleep at all. I felt a stuff that I'd never felt. It was like an anguish, I don't know. It was something I needed to be tied to all the time. Then I was 'Damn, I never felt that. I don't know what's going on' and I was very stressed (Carolina, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of high school).

On the other hand, in contrast with the apathy that prevails in school routine, which can be thought as an effect of the massive presence of the discourse of the capitalist, occupants are quite desirous and tied with the movement of occupation. In the capitalist production

logic, the subject is approached as an object to be consumed and produced, excluding the other from the social bond (Voltolini, 2001). Ruled by this discourse, educational policy, both public and private, invests in the standardization of education systems, fed by the other side of the discourse of the capitalist in education field – that is, the discourse of the university-science –, shaping a discourse of domain and power, of which the subject, with his singularity and desire, is excluded.

From the inside out, in occupations we witness the questioning of universalisms and of the imposition of hierarchical and bureaucratic models, through social bonds traced by desire, which also allows us to think of the adherence to the movement from the discourse of the hysteric, as proposed by Lacan (1992 [1969-1970]). This does not disqualify the strength of the social bonds established by identification to the Other's lack and desire, as Freud pointed out in 1921. While introducing the notion of a discourse of the hysteric, Lacan highlights the idea that hysteria is defined not only by the hysterical symptom, but also by a kind of social bond, founded by desire.

In resonance to the 1968 rebellions, Lacan (1992-1970) responds to students by denouncing in the revolutionary movement the aspiration for a new master, taking them somehow closer to the discourse of the hysteric (Ferreira, 2018). Based on experiences of occupations, we can try to move towards and construct another reading of this. There is a bond that is established from the sharing of an unachievable and transitory ideal, in the sense of the Freudian scheme of a phratry, which we have indicated above, or there is one that is established by identification of a desire, such as the hysterical bond formulated by Lacan. According to Soler (2016), this bond refers to the transference as aimed in an analysis in which desire produces knowledge, but it is not satisfied with the master. For this reason, the analyst's work is oriented towards the hystericization of discourse. Therefore, it is worth to evoke the transformative strength that such discourse contains, by positioning in the agent's place the subject of desire, marked by castration, by his non-knowledge, that makes the movement to address the master (S1) in search of knowledge, but, in finding an analyst, produces knowledge (S2) and movement (Lacan, 1992 [1969-1970]).

Supposing that the occupation undermined the instituted masters who guide the regular functioning of school, including science, bureaucracy and capital, it seems to us that adolescents could produce discursive spins in the social bonds instituted in school routine. While educational policies, many times, still bet on the mechanism of voluntary servitude of masses, in which the subject is annulled in the name of the homogenizing *One*, that refers to the discourse of the master, in occupations students talk about singular and unprecedented experiences marked by the presence of body and desire, bringing to the center of debates held in most of their activities life topics as sexuality, social place, body, cooking etc.

Highlighting a place for the subject of desire within the school space, occupants make us think about transmission<sup>10</sup>. While referring

to different experiences related to the knowing/learning process, they indicate the distance between what occurs in the regular functioning of school and what occurred during occupations. It is, thus, necessary to observe the difference between a prior knowledge which dismisses the subject from his process of construction and that which, being a fruit of experience, includes him by principle.

We had a lot of this kind of learning [...]. We didn't have any academic learning, of things that we learn at school. But we had experience learning, like knowing how to live with the other, knowing how to respect the other's timing, this is also very important (Marina, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of high school).

To turn school into a geographic space that you use for a certain end. We used it to study before the occupation, and then we also used it to learn, but other things. The way of teaching has changed, and my way of learning has also changed a lot (Gabriela, 1<sup>st</sup> grade of high school).

By mentioning issues involved in teaching and learning, occupants interrogate school and the education field through elements that seem to be unknown to both, but which involve what, in psychoanalysis, is named transmission. We believe that the education field would have much to gain if it took consequences from what adolescent occupants said about the unprecedented experience with knowledge they could have in this movement. An experience that began with the non-knowledge lived in adolescence and shared by them, towards the production of knowledge and discourses that provide them new bonds in the social Other.

## **Final Remarks**

To think of the adolescent as a being of language is necessarily to think of the discursive relations that constitute him. Whether concerning the objectifying and generalizing notions that predominate in developmental theories, or the medicalizing logic that prevails today, whether concerning the possibilities of being a subject, with his words and acts in the social bond. It also implies considering the historical and social conditions of the construction of adolescence, in the tension between freedom and control, and of how this occurs in Brazil, where the references to the public space are fragile, predominating the privatist and familialist relationship in the care of children and adolescents.

The movement of school occupations in Brazil, between 2015 and 2017, was a valuable historical event, from the point of view of macropolitics and concerning the micropolitics that is crucial for subjectivation mechanisms and that impacts the adolescent subject in a particular way. The possibility of being present at school in an unprecedented way and the vigor with which the youngsters started to refer to it lead us to believe that there is still a lot to hear and talk about.

Alluding to the 1968 movement, maybe this new adolescent subversion will also bring to the scene the impossible conclusion: 2016 is

not over yet. If it has succeeded in its purposes and claims, it is controversial. The speech of the adolescents that we could hear indicates us that there was success regarding the discursive and subjective productions that it generated and that perhaps it is still generating.

The approximation between politics, education and life, 50 years later, reminds us of the insistence of desire to return through the recurrence of issues such as sexuality, feminism, racism and several forms of social oppression. Are changes in the subjective sphere not always political changes (and vice versa)? It was about this that Lacan set to work after the May 1968 movement, through discourses as social bonds. Without visible effects or predictable scopes, in adolescents' speech, occupations produced many changes. Effects that could not be measured by the logic of effectiveness and results, so present in school routine, but they can be considered if we think of what this event has provided for the possibility of creating symbolic traits that inscribe desire in and around the world.

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## Notes

- 1 It is the research entitled *Adolescence, Education and Social Bond*, held in the scope of the Faculty of Education of Universidade Federal Fluminense/Program of Postgraduate Studies in Education of UFF, and coordinated by professor Luciana Gageiro Coutinho, counting on scientific initiation scholarships from Pibic/Cnpq and Faperj.
- 2 The movement was fairly promoted and expanded through social networks, mainly Facebook, in which it is possible to find a page named *Ocupa Escola*, besides several others created for each school occupation or each community organization connected to the movement.
- 3 To take a place in the sexes division, claiming to be a man or a woman, is not a result of either anatomy or the choice of a sexual and loving object, it is rather a symbolic operation of a new relation to the Other, from which the adolescent extracts new phallic references to desire.
- 4 The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee/Brazil Platform, under the CAAE number 63079016.6.0000.5243.
- 5 During the period when school occupations occurred, before the research, visits were made to occupied schools in the state of Rio de Janeiro, where conversations were also held with adolescent occupants, and some discussion circles took place. But these speeches were not recorded, except for a single experience recorded by the research coordinator, which is included in the observations reported in this article.
- 6 "The student mobilization of 2006 corresponds to a series of protests held by high school students in Chile between April and June of 2006 and between September and October of the same year. This mobilization is informally known as the Penguin Revolution because of the students' traditional uniform.



It is estimated that more than a hundred students from more than a hundred schools throughout the country were present in mobilizations on Friday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, before the national students strike called for May 30<sup>th</sup>, which had an adhesion of more than 600,000 students, becoming the greatest student protest in the history of Chile, exceeding those occurred in 1972, during Salvador Allende's government and his project of the National Unified School, and in the 1980s, against the Military Regime policies" (Available at: <[https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobiliza%C3%A7%C3%A3o\\_estudantil\\_no\\_Chile\\_em\\_2006](https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobiliza%C3%A7%C3%A3o_estudantil_no_Chile_em_2006)>. Accessed: 24 March 2019).

- 7 The interviewees' names are fictitious, and schools were not identified, although it is important to inform that all interviewees are (or were in the period of occupations) students from public schools – either state or federal schools – situated in diverse localities of the State of Rio de Janeiro.
- 8 It is a traditional public school, acknowledged for its quality of teaching, and with various units throughout the state of Rio de Janeiro.
- 9 The idea of phratry leads to a collective supported by a pact and not by the submission to power imposed in a verticalized way and/or by a totalitarian mode of functioning. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud ([1921]1976) mentions democracy as a regime in which the individuals do not fully join a group, rather they can belong to several groups, keeping their singularity and a certain independence in relation to them.
- 10 The concept of transmission in psychoanalysis refers to the impossible to educate evoked by Freud (1996b [1937]), pointing to the dimension of the Real, the inapprehensible in relation to knowledge. Knowledge is not-whole, and it is in that hole that the subject appears in each teaching relationship, but this is not always accepted in the education field.

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