

REFLECTIONS ON AUTHORITY: A DIALOGUE BETWEEN HANNAH ARENDT AND JACQUES LACAN

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Réflexions sur l'Autorité: Un Dialogue entre Hannah Arendt et Jacques Lacan

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Abstract

This article aims to formulate a notion of authority regarding the psychoanalytic treatment of Lacanian orientation. To do this, we dialogue with Hannah Arendt's theory. First, we address the distinction between authority in the private and public spheres. Considering that authority is an effect of the hierarchy, which is established from the difference between its levels, it is presented in a natural way in the private sphere, which welcomes the differences. In the public sphere, equality is the determining factor; making it necessary to establish the difference. Then we approach the Roman strategy for establishing authority in politics, namely, its source is an external element to the relationship between rulers and ruled, in this case, the foundation of the city of Rome. Finally, we emphasize the conception of political authority established by the actors of the American Revolution, who shifted the source of authority from the founding act of the ancestors to their own founding act, which is represented by the Constitution of the United States as a result of mutual commitments established between the actors of that body politic. Thus, Arendt postulates that authority results from a hierarchy and that its source is external to the relationship between leaders and leaders, even if that source is not placed as a superior or absolute parameter; but derives from the mutual commitment between individuals acting in concert. From there, we analyze the relation between authority and truth in the Lacanian work, considering that the latter derives from the division between the grammatical and enunciation subjects, which means to maintain this notion in the field of language and to refuse the necessity of a metalanguage. In addition, we take into account the author's propositions on the authorization of the analyst. Finally, we conclude that legitimate authority in psychoanalytic treatment comes from the manifestation of the truth of the subject of the unconscious as a third place in relation to the analyzer and the analyst, as well as the relation of truth to the transmissible knowledge that takes place at the end of the analysis. Our methodology is the bibliographical research, guided by the search for inspiration of the Lacanian-oriented psychoanalysis by Arendtian political theory.

Keywords: *authority; truth; policy; psychoanalysis.*

Resumo

Este artigo visa formular uma noção de autoridade relativa ao tratamento psicanalítico de orientação lacaniana. Para tal, dialogamos com a teoria de Hannah Arendt. Primeiramente, abordamos a distinção entre a autoridade nas esferas privada e pública. Considerando que a autoridade é efeito da hierarquia, a qual se estabelece a partir da diferença entre seus níveis, ela se apresenta de forma natural no âmbito privado, o qual

acolhe as diferenças. Já no âmbito público, a igualdade é o fator determinante, fazendo-se necessária a instauração da diferença. Em seguida, abordamos a estratégia romana para o estabelecimento da autoridade na política, a saber, sua fonte é um elemento externo à relação entre governantes e governados, no caso, a fundação da cidade de Roma. Por fim, destacamos a concepção de autoridade política estabelecida pelos atores da Revolução Americana, os quais deslocaram a fonte da autoridade do ato fundador dos antepassados para seu próprio ato fundador, o que está representado pela Constituição dos Estados Unidos enquanto resultado de compromissos mútuos estabelecidos entre os atores daquele corpo político. Assim, Arendt postula que a autoridade resulta de uma hierarquia e que sua fonte é externa à relação entre líderes e liderados, ainda que essa fonte não se coloque como um parâmetro superior ou absoluto, mas derive do compromisso mútuo entre os indivíduos que agem em concerto. A partir daí, analisamos a relação entre autoridade e verdade na obra lacaniana, considerando que a última deriva da divisão entre os sujeitos gramatical e o da enunciação, o que significa manter essa noção no campo da linguagem e recusar a necessidade de uma metalinguagem. Além disso, levamos em conta as proposições do autor sobre a autorização do analista. Por fim, concluímos que a legítima autoridade no tratamento psicanalítico advém da manifestação da verdade do sujeito do inconsciente enquanto lugar terceiro em relação ao analisante e ao analista, bem como da relação da verdade com o saber transmissível que tem lugar no fim da análise. Nossa metodologia é a pesquisa bibliográfica, guiada pela busca de inspiração da psicanálise de orientação lacaniana pela teoria política arendtiana.

Palavras-chave: autoridade; verdade; política; psicanálise.

Resumen

Este artículo objetiva formular una noción de autoridad relativa al tratamiento psicoanalítico de orientación lacaniana. Para eso, dialogamos con la teoría de Hannah Arendt. Primeramente, tratamos de la distinción entre autoridad en las esferas privada y pública. Considerando que la autoridad es el efecto de la jerarquía la cual se establece a partir de la diferencia entre sus niveles, ella se presenta de forma natural en el ámbito privado, lo cual recibe las diferencias. Ya en el ámbito público, la igualdad es el factor determinante, siendo necesaria la instauración de la diferencia. En seguida, tratamos la estrategia romana para el establecimiento de la autoridad en la política, es decir, su fuente es un elemento externo a la relación entre gobernantes y gobernados, en el caso, la fundación de la ciudad de Roma. Finalmente, enfatizamos la concepción de autoridad política establecida por los actores de la Revolución Americana, los cuales desplazaron la fuente de la autoridad del acto fundador de los antecesores para su propio acto fundador, lo que está representado por la Constitución de los Estados Unidos mientras resultado de compromisos recíprocos establecidos entre los actores de aquel cuerpo político. Así, Arendt postula que la autoridad resulta de una jerarquía y que su fuente es externa a la relación entre líderes y liderados, aunque esta fuente no se ponga como un parámetro superior o absoluto, pero resulte del compromiso recíproco entre los individuos que actúan en concierto. Desde ahí, analizamos la relación entre autoridad y verdad en la obra lacaniana, considerando que la última resulta de la división entre los sujetos gramatical y el de la enunciación, lo que significa mantener esta noción en el campo del lenguaje y rechazar la necesidad de un metalenguaje. Además, llevamos en cuenta las proposiciones del autor sobre la autorización del analista. Finalmente, concluimos que la legítima autoridad en el tratamiento psicoanalítico viene de la manifestación de la verdad del sujeto del inconsciente mientras lugar tercero en relación al analizante y al analista, bien como de la relación de la verdad con el saber transmisible que tiene lugar al fin del análisis. Nuestra metodología es la investigación bibliográfica, norteada por la búsqueda de inspiración del psicoanálisis de orientación lacaniana por la teoría política arendtiana.

Palabras clave: autoridad; verdad; política; psicoanálisis.

Résumé

Cet article vise à formuler une notion d'autorité relative au traitement psychanalytique d'orientation lacanienne. À cette fin, on a dialogué avec la théorie de Hannah Arendt. Tout d'abord, on discute la distinction entre l'autorité dans les sphères publique et privée. Si on considère que l'autorité est l'effet de la hiérarchie (qui, par sa fois, est établie à partir de la différence entre ses niveaux), l'autorité se présente de façon naturelle dans le contexte privé, ce qui accueille les différences. Dans la sphère publique, pourtant, c'est l'égalité le facteur déterminant, ce qui rend nécessaire la mise en place de la différence. Puis, on discute de la stratégie romaine pour établir de l'autorité dans la politique, c'est-à-dire, sa source comme un élément extérieur à la relation entre gouvernement et les gouvernés, dans le cas particulier, la fondation de la ville de Rome. Finalement, on attire l'attention à la conception de l'autorité politique établie par les acteurs de la Révolution Américaine. Ils ont déplacé la source de l'autorité de l'acte fondateur des ancêtres à leur propre acte fondateur, ce qui est représenté par la Constitution des États-Unis comme le résultat des engagements mutuels entre les acteurs de ce corps politique là. Ainsi, Arendt postule que l'autorité est le résultat d'une hiérarchie et que sa source est externe à la relation entre gouvernement et gouvernés, même si cette source n'est pas mise comme un paramètre supérieure ou absolue. En fait, elle dérive de l'engagement mutuel entre les sujets qui agissent ensemble, "de concert". A partir de ces notions, on analyse la relation entre l'autorité et la vérité dans l'oeuvre lacanienne, toujours en considérant que la dernière dérive de la division entre les sujets de la grammaire et ceux de l'énonciation. Cela signifie maintenir cette notion dans le domaine du langage et refuser la nécessité d'un métalangage. En outre, on tient en compte les propositions de l'auteur sur l'autorisation

de l'analyste. Finalement, on conclut que l'autorité légitime dans le traitement psychanalytique provient de la manifestation de la vérité du sujet de l'inconscient tant que troisième place par rapport à l'analysant et à l'analyste. Elle provient aussi de la relation de la vérité avec le savoir transférable, ce qui a place à la fin de l'analyse. Notre méthodologie, s'agit-elle de la recherche bibliographique, guidée par la psychanalyse d'orientation lacanienne inspirée par la théorie politique de Hannah Arendt.

Mots-clés: *autorité; vérité; politique; psychanalyse.*

This article has the objective of formulating a notion of authority related to Lacanian psychoanalytic treatment. For this purpose, we sought elements from Hannah Arendt's theory of authority, especially the principle on which she based her concept of authority in the political field, namely, mutual commitment and the consequent rejection of any external, superior or absolute source that would sustain the capacity of leaders to influence their subjects. This conception of authority takes us to Jacques Lacan's criticism of the notion of metalanguage in psychoanalytic treatment, according to which he postulates that the dimension of truth at the level of the subject derives from the division between the grammatical subject and the subject of the enunciation. In other words, the operation of the truth refers to an operation that is internal to the field of language and does not derive from metalanguage. We therefore propose that authority and truth are equivalent in Lacanian psychoanalytic treatment.

Arendt's Theory of Authority

An authority relation is a social bond where there is a dissymmetry between individuals. To be in a position of authority implies having a superior hierarchical position recognized by those below it without the need for either violence or persuasion in order to have one's influence assured (Arendt, 1954/2009, p. 92). Hannah Arendt points out that the establishment of this difference follows specific logics in the public and the private spheres. In the private sphere, the fact that persons occupy unequal positions takes on a naturalized, predefined and evident character (Arendt, 1954/2009, p. 148). There is a complementarity between the child who must be cared for and a mother who cares, between a student who needs to overcome ignorance and a teacher who knows, or a believer tormented by sin and a spiritual guide. Such differences structure the private life of individuals and there is even an element of physical and psychic violence that sustains this domination, because the domination over the body puts the subject at the mercy of the mother who manipulates, the father who punishes, the school that disciplines, the doctor who examines. The institutionalization, establishment, and recognition of inequality pre-establishes what people may or may not say, thus removing from words and acts their power to cause something unexpected. Thus the family is essentially a place for transmission, institutionalization, and reproduction of a specific view of the world, a place for repetition. Churches and schools are among the institutions that perpetuate and impose tradition, disseminate culture and strengthen our sense of continuity with the past. They also forge common cores of meanings to be shared by their students and members. In other words, the fact that people occupy positions of inequality in their private spheres favors the establishment of authority relations.

Considering that this connection between hierarchy, private sphere and authority has an almost natural basis for Arendt, how one can understand the more or less generalized crisis of authority in the modern world? The author (1954/2009, pp. 91-92) proposes that the crisis of authority in the private sphere is a consequence of a crisis of authority derived from the public sphere. Therefore, in her view, one of the problems of the modern era is the establishment of authority in politics, and in order to follow her reasoning we must first approach some notions in her political thought that are related to her conception of authority.

Authority Relegated to the Private Sphere in Ancient Greece

When Hannah Arendt speaks of politics based on the Athenian experience, she frequently refers to an agonistic model, where men meet to discuss common topics and try to stand out through great words and deeds that will be remembered in posterity (Arendt, 1958/2010, p. 41). This is the Greek solution for the fugacity of human actions and words: the urge to play them out at the polis. There is a desire to submit actions and words to the recognition of other men who will remember them, recount them and write about them. In this context the figure of the hero emerges, the man who will be named by history. Arendt especially mentions the deeds of Achilles in Homer's Iliad. In this model we find important factors that Arendt highlighted for the modern notion of politics. First, there is politics as performance and beginning, that is, politics seen in

action rather than in habits, reactions or behavior. Secondly, there is the narrative dimension of politics where one can see the web of relationships that classifies all politics as a topic of the human sphere (Benhabib, 2003, p. 125).

It is important to stress here the failure of attempts at establishing authority – which depends on hierarchical relations – in the Athenian polis. Arendt tells us that this attempt was made by Plato after Socrates was condemned to death by decision of his equals. This episode convinced Plato that Greek public life could not continue to be administered only through agreements based on persuasion. He sought to bring to public life a private model of authority, a mechanism supposedly able to compel men without using external means of violence. He sought to establish “a relationship in which the compelling element lies in the relationship itself and is prior to the actual issuance of commands” (Arendt, 1954/2009, p. 109). But according to Arendt, Plato’s attempt failed because he used a model of relations that follow the logic of private life – the shepherd over his sheep, the slave-owner over slaves, the physician over a patient. This is why the concept of “authority” in the political sphere was not forged in ancient Greece, but only at a later time, in Rome, where a more inclusive political model required the creation of a hierarchy in public life.

The Birth of Public Authority in the Roman Republic

The Athenian political model was based on large-scale exclusion, since citizens were defined as wealthy men who were free from concerns about their own survival and who had time to dedicate some of their attention to public affairs. This meant that women, slaves and workers had absolutely no voice in the polis. Rome, on the other hand, established a Republic and gave voice to the people in its political structure by bringing onto the public stage some of those who, until then, had lived only private lives. This created a complex structure of division of power and political hierarchy that implied a relationship of authority between the Senate and the people (Brunkhorst, 2002, p. 187). Arendt uses the image of the pyramid to describe the structure of government based on authority – differentiating it from tyranny, which is based on violence, and from totalitarianism, which is based on terror. In this scheme, the source of authority is located at a point outside the pyramid (1954/2009, p. 98). As one moves down the pyramid one finds, successively, persons with less responsibility, authority and freedom, and these differences allow articulation among the different levels of the pyramid. What sustains the leader’s authority and the obedience of subordinates is the mutual recognition of the position occupied by the other. Reciprocal and tacit consent is established, which is different from both the horizontal relations of processes of deliberation that occur among equals, and from the domination that is based on violence or even terror. As Arendt wrote:

The authoritarian relation between the one who commands and the one who obeys rests neither on common reason nor on the power of the one who commands; what they have in common is the hierarchy itself, whose rightness and legitimacy both recognize and where both have their predetermined place (Arendt, 1954/2009, p. 93).

Arendt (1954/2009) notes that the form the Romans encountered to establish authority in public life was to put into place an element that is external to the relationship between the ruler and his subordinates. The ruler did not demand obedience in his name; he referred to an outside source of authority that legitimated the inequality of positions. In this way the hierarchy was sustained by the consent of both parties and generated the obedience of the governed. This source is the past.

The word “authority” (*auctoritas*) is related to the verb “augment” (*augere*) and what it augments, or increases, is the foundation. In other words, “once something has been founded, it remains binding for all future generations” (Arendt, 1954/2009, p. 120). In this sense, “[t]o be engaged in politics meant first and foremost to preserve the founding of the city of Rome” (Arendt, 1954/2009, p. 120). Thus, the model, the example, the foundations of the ancestors became references and standards with the strength of authority. Authority is coercive capacity based on parameters that are consecrated by time that points back to the founding fathers. This led the Romans to take the eminent Greek philosophers and poets who lived before them as their ancestors, raising them to the dignity of authorities and sources of tradition to be transmitted. Tradition is that which is transmitted from the past and then from one generation to the next, providing an anchoring point by which we establish a certain version of what came before us. Consequently, tradition prevents us from perceiving it differently from others. In short, tradition is a guardian of the past. In our culture, we find an example of this notion of authority in the custom of rendering homage to founders, notably in classical performative arts. At the New York City ballet, for example, the dresses of the ballerinas of “Hot Chocolate,” in the “Nutcracker Suite,” are adorned with cameos of Lincoln Kirstein and George Balanchine, founders of the company. This ritual has been practiced in all such performances of the ballet since 1954, when Balanchine re-created the dance, originally choreographed by Marius Petipa. Since the cameos are invisible to the audience they have no specifically decorative function. Their purpose is to constitute and preserve the tradition of this

space of art that has survived for generations.¹

It is important to stress that the principle of augmenting the foundation of the city that governs Roman political authority contains in itself a solution for the challenge of perpetuating that which was founded. This is because everything that is established augments the sacred first foundation and goes on to constitute it, taking on the guarantee of being preserved. Nonetheless, this principle is opposed to the birth of anything new that is not a continuation of the paternal act of founding. In other words, what comes into existence is in reference to a tradition and this determines its existence and its meaning for people. This means that the Roman Republic was an important reference for Arendt due to her affinity with classical republican experience, as we will see below. Nevertheless, it is not a model of politics that would tend to allow the human ability to initiate, which is also fundamental to her political theory. This explains Arendt's enthusiasm for the revolution that, in her opinion, managed to unite the two aspects of founding in the political field, namely, the emergence of something new by concerted action, and its preservation through the formation of compromises among political actors.

The Capacity to Promise as a Principle of Public Authority in the American Republic

In her analysis of the French and American Revolutions, in her book *On revolution* (Arendt, 1963/2011), Arendt shows how the foundation of the American Republic was structured on a displacement of the principle of the Roman Republic, that of "augmenting" the foundation of ancestors in order to "augment" the product of its own founding act. Arendt considers that the good fortune of the American Revolution, in contrast to the French Revolution, took place because the men who carried it out understood that authority and power stem from different sources. Contrary to the French, who placed both power and authority in the popular will, the Americans, although they knew that power springs from popular association, established their Federal Constitution as the source of the authority needed to constitute the Republic. This means that, even though the Constitution was drawn up on the basis of the individuals who made up the body politic when it was written, it became a stable legal reference, albeit subject to amendments. It became a third element between rulers and those ruled that could provide the necessary authority for the functioning of the body politic. This implies that – differently from the Romans, who took the founding act of their ancestors as a reference – the Americans refer to the product of their own act to sustain authority in the body politic. They made a break with the Roman way of founding "Rome again," to found "a new Rome," a new world order (Arendt, 1963/2011, p. 204).

The question as to the source of authority of laws is widely debated in political thinking. To what superior parameter can positive laws refer, laws that regulate day-by-day relationships in a body politic? To divine wisdom? Sovereign will? Values consecrated by tradition? The natural law? The light of reason? Popular will?² Arendt (1963/2011, p. 206) was especially in favor of the American solution, namely, "the principle of mutual promise and common deliberation". This means that the American Constitution became the source of authority not because it referred to some type of absolute principle or some logic free of the ambivalence suffered by human affairs. It became the source because of the ability of the members of that body politic to establish and comply with collective commitment. They implicated themselves for there to be words and acts agreed upon that did more than merely prescribe and proscribe: they established a substratum for collective life.

In this reflection on authority in the political sphere, we see how the specific nature of Arendt's ideas on authority emerged. It is authority in the sense of feeling coerced into accepting orders because one shares a hierarchy, a system of obedience, which has legitimacy only in relationships of the private sphere, where the differences among individuals are the bases for such relationships. In contrast, obedience in politics is based on consent. In this sphere, when those led accept the hierarchical position of leaders, they offer support and they back up the position of their superiors. It is from this stance assumed by those who are ruled that governments obtain their power to act and their authority to govern. "An adult consents where a child obeys; if an adult is said to obey, he actually supports the organization or the authority or the law that claims obedience" (Arendt, 2004, p. 46). One of the arguments on which Arendt based her analysis of Eichmann's responsibility, at both the legal and moral levels, was related to this notion that, in the political sphere, obedience implies consent. That is, the justification of "obeying orders" would not release the Nazi official from assuming the consequences of his deeds.³ To be

1 For other examples, see Cooper (2013).

2 Barbour, and Pavlich (2010, p. 2-6) briefly discuss how political tradition has found the source of legitimacy for establishing sovereignty and the law in the body politic. We might mention here the key point of the four aspects presented by the authors, and the main theoreticians who represent these aspects, namely, the divine or natural law (Hobbes), the people (Habermas), the pure strength of the sovereign (Carl Schmitt), and the historical context (Foucault).

3 Berkowitz takes the notion of obedience as consent in the public sphere, as a key for analyzing Hanna Arendt's position in the Eichmann case. This lets him displace the usual understanding that, according to Arendt, Eichmann's incapacity to think meant that he carried out orders automatically, like a bureaucrat, without conviction. Berkowitz argues that if obedience in public life implies consent, then Eichmann truly consented to Nazism, and he was anti-Semitic, since these two facts cannot be dissociated. The author thus states that "Arendt concluded that evil in the modern world is done neither by monsters

brief, we call special attention to two meanings of Arendt's proposition to the effect that the source of authority in the public sphere is external to the relationship between rulers and the ruled. First, she does not refer to a superior place from which authority could be legitimized. She rather refers to a level that results from the mutual promises assumed by individuals who have put their opinions – individual and plural by nature – to the test from the point of view of their equals in deliberative struggles. Finally, the source of authority is not a direct derivative of the will of the nation. It does not reflect this will in a mirror, but constitutes a level of otherness to this same “will” and resists changes to it. In other words, the source of authority of a body politic is something common to individuals. But this is not a sense of “common” that causes homogenization among these individuals, as one might use the term “common” to refer to identification processes. On the contrary, this is a notion of “common” that preserves the differences among the individuals who act together.

As for the need to create institutions that will give a certain stability to the body politic and resist the winds of popular will, we can see that Freud's paper on mass psychology (*Group psychology*, 1921/2011) represented a warning about the trend toward “contamination,” identification and psychic unification among individuals in mass societies. He showed how easy it is to create consensual majorities in mass societies regarding highly emotional topics. In such cases, what happens to the rights of the minorities in society? How can society avoid the perpetuation of racial, sexual and economic segregation of minorities when this same society tends to univocally proclaim conservative standards? Among other duties, political institutions have the function of dealing with social segregation through the principle of civil equality. Institutions should serve as antidotes to the dictatorship of the majority, which is a symptom seen in democratic societies.

As for the fact that authority in the public sphere depends on support from the individuals at the base of the structure, we can see their maximum exposure at certain inspiring moments during popular revolutions. At such moments we can see that what is at stake is not merely the rejection of a ruler, which could be taken care of easily by simply removing this individual from power. The question is that people can no longer bear the very source of the authority of that body politic. A good example of this was the revolution in Tunisia that set off a series of other rebellious movements that became known collectively as the Arab Spring, in 2011.

The Tunisian Revolution ousted Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's longtime authoritarian regime, who took power in 1987 through a coup against the dictator Habib Bourguiba, in power since 1956. Supported by the United States and France, Ben Ali succeeded to implement constitutional reforms that would transform him in president for life, as his predecessor. Having used the War on Terror as a ruse to violate human rights and democratic values, as such free speech and pacific assembly, Ben Ali turned Tunisia into a gigantic surveillance camp without tolerance to any kind of dissidence (Gana, 2013, p. 5).

Proposing a narrative on the Tunisian Revolution requires a complex analysis. In general lines, it is necessary to understand it from the broader context of a longtime confrontation between authoritarianism and practices of resistance, as a culture of dissidence took place in the country since its fight against the French colonialism during the 30s and 40s. This resistance gave birth to both artistic forms of criticism, like plays, poetry, cinema, and music, as well as labor, students, and women's rights movements (Gana, 2013, p. 15). The social movements played a remarkable role in the pacific protests that followed Mohamed Bouazizi self-immolation, the vegetable vendor that had his means of life confiscated by the police and became unable to provide for his family, in December 2010, and took place until Ben Ali ouster in January 2011. They were also crucial during the intense period of civil disobedience of the post-revolutionary transition — from the constitution of the interim government, right after the dictator's removal from power, until the urge for elections and the formulation of a Constitution, which culminated in the elections of a National Constituent Assembly in October 2011.

In addition, it is noticeable the role of the increase of poverty, unemployment, and corruption since the 90s, when the country embraced neoliberal practices to get in line with its Western partners. And, finally, we highlight the importance of social media, which allowed the wide and decentralized broadcasting of Bouazizi's self-immolation, police violence against the protesters who opposed the government, as well as information about corruption involving Ben Ali's family, leaked by Julian Assange's *Wikileaks*.

That is to say that the Tunisian Revolution (as all revolutions) was overdetermined by a series of factors, but what made it an “Arendtian Revolution” — to use Jonathan Schell's expression (2011, pp.23-24) — was the emergence of a strong power from a pacific, collective, and spontaneous action between equals, seeking in the first place to change how power was concentrated in the political body rather than claiming specific demands. In this sense, we join Gana's celebration (2013, p. 1) of the Revolution that became also known as the Jasmin Revolution:

Never before in the history of the modern Arab world had a grassroots revolt toppled an entrenched dictator of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's caliber and longevity without recourse to any established ideology, organized social movement and political party, or foreign intervention, which until recently continue to be bandied about as the only midwife to real democracy in the Arab world.

nor by bureaucrats, but by joiners.” (Berkowitz, 2013). In this sense, to act without thinking means to refuse the concrete meaning of the situation in the name of being part of the movement. It means to act “as someone convinced that he was sacrificing an easy morality for a higher good” (Berkowitz, 2013).

Thus, we observe how Arendt's theory on political action grounds her conception of authority. Political action itself is not able to institute authority in a political body. However, it creates a space between men who act in concert, possibly leading to the establishment of mutual promises, where authority sustains itself from.

As we mentioned above, the principle of mutual promise inaugurated by the American Republic inspired Arendt's political theory. It is clear that she adhered to the principles of Republicanism, meaning a government of laws rather than of men. This view implies the division of powers among political institutions as a means for mutual limitation and shared responsibility among citizens for the *res publica*. As a consequence, these features, as well as the absence of domination in the political sphere are elements of classical Republicanism that inspired Arendt's conception of Republic. Inversely, she rejected the heroic ideals of freedom-bent leadership and self-sacrifice in the name of the fatherland with the dissolution of the notion of the individual.

Her notion of political plurality and the relation of this plurality to individual distinction is contrary to a model of fraternity and collective unification. These aspects rather suppose that citizens replace the sovereignty of the ruler by creating a space of common commitment based on a diversity of opinions. They therefore introduce unpredictability and the possibility of discontinuity in the protocols of citizenship (Canovan, 2002, pp. 205-214). It is with this conception of Republicanism that Arendt proposes a notion of political authority as a support for leadership derived from the capacity of association of individuals in a space of common ground created by mutual promises.

There is great value in this approach because it brings up the issue of interruptions in tradition in a way that demands neither the restoration of an absolute measure in the public sphere, nor falls into a relativism where all common measures are suspended and where collective life would be transformed into a temporary arrangement based on private interests. This is because mutual promises consist of agreements that remedy the unpredictability of the future of human matters. This is certainly not an arrangement that can guarantee the future, but it does guarantee that one is not alone. One can participate in a world with some degree of common measure and takes responsibility for this common defined as becoming. In this sense the responsibility of individuals plays an important role in the constitution of the world in Arendt's theory because the world is the effect of the implication of the word in the form of act.

At this point, we understand, a space for a dialogue with psychoanalysis emerges.

A Reflection on the notion of Authority based on the Aphorism that “there is no Other of the Other”

In order to draw up a notion of authority in terms of psychoanalytic treatment, let us go back to the term “authority” in the following text by Lacan (1960/2006, p. 688):

Let us begin with the conception of the Other as the locus of the signifier. No authoritative statement has any other guarantee here than its very enunciation, since it would be pointless for the statement to seek it in another signifier, which could in no way appear outside that locus. I formulate this by saying that there is no metalanguage that can be spoken, or, more aphoristically, that there is no Other of the Other.

To analyze the above quotation we should look at some points of criticism by Lacan of the application of the notion of metalanguage in the field of psychoanalysis. Iannini (2013, Kindle Location 3288) explains that the notion of metalanguage was created to determine the truth of certain propositions, taking into account only the level of the statement. In other words, it is a recourse needed to sustain the notion of truth through semantics, as Alfred Tarski did.

A semantic conception of the truth requires confrontation between semantic paradoxes. An example is that created by the paradox of the liar, formulated by Epimenides of Crete, who said that “all Cretans are liars” – which is also known simply as “the paradox of ‘I lie.’” To solve this type of paradox, Tarski proposed a distinction between object-language and metalanguage, this latter having the purpose of establishing the attribution of truth over the semantic proprieties of object-language. In this case, the truth is an attribute that cannot be determined as of the basis of the interior of a language. It must have an external reference, a metalanguage artificially constructed to function as its criterion for validation.

Lacan says that, at the level of the subject, there is no external *locus* for the field of language that could serve to guarantee the value of truth. In other words, his criticism of metalanguage is his way of saying that “there is no Other of the Other.” For the author, in a psychoanalytic operation, the truth must be defined according to a logic extracted from language itself. More specifically, the truth must be extracted from the division between the subject of the statement and the subject of the enunciation, the grammatical subject and the subject of the unconscious.

He analyzes this question in *Seminar 11 (The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, (1963-64/2008))*. There he shows that the subject of the enunciation is related to the transference, that is, that the speech in analysis is addressed to an Other and this puts into play the aspect of fooling (fooling the Other, fooling oneself) by which the truth is revealed – which

is contrary to the establishment of the truth through an external criterion. Truth and lies are not opposed here; they participate in the same dimension (Lacan, 1963-64/2008, p. 138).

The fact that the truth is formulated by fooling someone means that the game with the Other of the signifier keeps all meaning from being enunciated, and the enunciative dimension is left over. Put another way, in a signifying equivocation one suffers for not knowing everything that is said, producing effects of truth in the lack of knowledge. By taking the truth from the side of knowledge, of saying, of the statement — to place it beside the enunciation — the consequence is that the false becomes a way of formulating the true. The truth reveals its fictional structure as an act of speech that requires another place — the Other-witness, the Other that is not just any partner (Lacan, 1960/2006, p. 684). From this one concludes that the fact is facticious. In this sense, the enigma becomes a paradigm for interpretation in a treatment process. That is, the analyst's intervention follows the structure of a knowledge that is enunciated from the place of the truth, as semi-saying, to the extent that "truth can only ever be said by halves" (Lacan, 1969-70/2007, p. 36). "Saying it all is literally impossible: words fail. Yet it's through this very impossibility that the truth holds onto the real" (Lacan, 1974/2003b, p. 3).

In the passage quoted above from Lacan's text, where the notion of authority appears, authority takes the place of the truth, to the extent that one can say that there is no signifier outside the field of the Other that could serve to back up the authority of a statement. In other words, there is no transcendent instance that can guarantee that a statement will do something, that it will not just go by without effect, except its own enunciation, its capacity to mobilize the dimension of the subject. This means that authority can only be thought of in the context of the "there is no Other of the Other" as analogous to an effect of the truth. Understanding this in the context of psychoanalytic treatment, it can be said that the analyst should not take the position of being the Other of the Other, as if she or he could be the external criterion to ratify the truth value of the patient's speech. This model of authority could not lead anywhere but to the phenomena of suggestion and the identification of the analysand with the analyst. The legitimate dimension of authority in psychoanalytic treatment is in presentifying the subject of the unconscious and the effects of the truth that the subject bears relative to the dimension of the Other as a third place beyond the analyst and the analysand.

Language as the dimension of alterity to both analyst and patient is interestingly exemplified when Goldenberg (2006) reports his interpretation on his patient's associations about a dream. The patient, who has been dealing with her mother's cruelty, dreams that the mother occupies the entire sky and associates it with a movie. Being aware of the movie, the analyst remarks, "The Jewish mother." But instead of taking Jewish as the adjective related to the noun mother, the patient takes it as the verb hazes, since in the Portuguese language, these words are one and the same signifier. In this case, "The Jewish mother" comes from the Other's discourse to both the patient as well as to the analyst.

We propose this notion of authority for psychoanalysis inspired by Arendt's conception of authority since she proposes that the source of authority presents itself as an other dimension in regards the relationship between leaders and subordinates, as long as this third place is not taken as something absolute, superior, or transcendent. It is clear in her interpretation of the founding conditions of the Constitution of the United States, product of the American political actors' collective act that keeps playing an active role in that political body due the constant revitalization that it gets from its citizens' support. It suffers from the frailties that concern human affairs and, at the same time, it bars the winds that come from the immediate popular will (indeed, the Constitution regulates the government, preventing it to act as if it was the embodiment of the popular will).

This notion of authority inspires us to propose a conception of authority for the lacanian psychoanalytic treatment. It derives from the unconscious truth as a place other in regards the imaginary subjective game between analyst and analysand — for instance, the notion that the analyst deserves authority before the analysand because he or she ascended to some kind of ideal of the end of analysis, like the genital position or the integration of the ego — and, at the same time, it does not places itself anywhere before or beyond the field of language.

From this point, let's analyze the way in which Lacan himself dealt with the question of authority, namely, through the subject of the psychoanalyst's authorization. In the "Proposition of 9 October 1967 on the Psychoanalyst of the School", the author states that "the psychoanalyst derives his authorization only from himself. (...) This does not exclude that the School provide a guarantee that an analyst has come out of its formation" (Lacan, 2003a, p. 248, our translation). On the one hand, there is the act of authorization of the subject that psychoanalyzes himself or herself and that passes to the position of the psychoanalyst. On the other hand, there are some other psychoanalysts that take part in the School of psychoanalysis and offer a guarantee to the psychoanalyst, which derives from the proper logic of the formation. We are in the domain of the end of the analysis.

To our understanding, the notion of truth alone is not able speak to the logic of the psychoanalyst's formation once it is carried out. We add to it transmittable knowledge [*savoir*] since the end of the analysis requires, necessarily, transmission. We do not understand knowledge as independent of truth as the cost would be to attribute to the latter an ineffability that tends toward subjectivism. Much less does truth coincide with knowledge, in which case one would be falling back into the search for the final knowledge. (Paradoxical situation that was the reality in many movements and associations of psychoanalysis.) Indeed, the truth is an effect of the refraction of the signifier, which keeps meaning from being entirely absorbed by knowledge. However, it is not to be found either before or beyond language; it is a property of enunciation,

as we stated previously. That is, non-sense and too much meaning — the homes of truth in Lacan's teaching — are part of the framework of language in his theory. Consequently, truth and knowledge are neither independent nor do they coincide.

With regard to the status of knowledge referred to above, we are not dealing here with some knowledge supposed to some higher instance — such as the unconscious, the analyst, God, science, etc. — but to that knowledge which is the product of formalization and that can be transmitted to anyone. In this sense, knowledge adds the operation of transmission — related to the letter — to the operation of the truth, related to the signifier. The truth that has a place in analysis is not about any broadening of knowledge about one's symptom. It is rather about a reduction of knowledge to the naming of a bone that resists the signifying chain but cedes to writing, that is, it connects with the letter.

The letter has the ability to write the real through its transmissibility, a characteristic that is lacking to the signifier. Even though the value of a letter depends on its relationships with other letters, it has an identity that goes beyond its position in relation to other elements in a system. The letter has a positive order. It has qualities, sensitive support and physiognomy and it can be erased, deleted, printed, scribbled, unduly written or abolished. In other words, it can be held in the hand, moved here and there and transmitted. The signifier, in contrast, is always other. It might be missing but will never be destroyed since its power to represent, in order to create meaning, derives from its ability to handle oppositions and relationships in a system. In a discourse, the signifier represents the subject while the letter transmits the real, which is sustained by its body. As Milner (1996, p. 105) wrote, “[T]he signifier derives only from the register S [Symbolic], but the letter connects R [Real], S [Symbolic] and I [Imaginary]”.

In this sense, for the analyst not to give in to the position of the Other of the Other by using his power of suggestion to raise any knowledge to the status of truth, his interpretation must hold to the dimension of the letter of the patient's symptom. It is from this stance that the authority of the letter appears in the constitution of the effects of truth in the process of psychoanalytic treatment.

In sum, Arendt's propositions on authority — namely, that it requires the establishment of a hierarchy, which is sustained, first, by getting its legitimacy from a place external to the relationship between the individuals that take part in it and, finally, by the ever renewed and active support of the individuals that are at its base, with the consequent refusal of “higher” solutions designed to sew up the precariousness of human affairs — inspired us to propose a conception of authority that speaks to the logic of the psychoanalytic treatment. Authority in psychoanalysis is not located in the power that the transference relationship gives to the psychoanalyst, but in the manifestation of the subject of the unconscious from the place of the Other. The truth takes place through the half-said rather than through its coincidence with the knowledge that would come from the psychoanalyst's interpretation. The half-said, in its turn, is not a path to reach out a truth that would squeeze into a place other than the language, but indeed the operation of the enunciation, which divides the subject who is an effect of the language and dwells the practice of politics.

To conclude, we state that the basis, the past, the tradition support themselves over changing, not necessarily longstanding principles, since longstanding is the subject's capacity to act and speak in concert. In this sense, the tradition would carry through the principles of authority once legitimated by the human conditions that allowed to derive its becoming from its transmission.

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