

## Metapsychological assertions about the inscriptions of time in the psychic apparatus: Bonaparte and Laplanche

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### ABSTRACT

The objective is to make work via Laplanche the specificities of the inscriptions of time in the psychic apparatus from the Bonapartean claim that time is like a strange and threatening intrusion imposed on us by adults as children. The pertinence of this research is its methodological choice when analyzing such assertion through the theory of generalized seduction - TSG and the notion of message. Our results predict that the unconscious does not remain alien to time, despite its timelessness. The sensation of infinite time brings not only the feeling of illusory immortality, but also leads us to the commotion of being taken without control in the temporal and timeless rhythm of pleasure and displeasure in the psychic apparatus.

**Keywords:** Unconscious, Message, Other, Time.

### INTRODUCTION

The increasing physical fragility and dependence on the care of other adults that usually occurs in old age leads to the reopening of the fundamental anthropological situation (Laplanche, 1992), a condition originally experienced by babies in total subjection to the care of adult caregivers. Thus, in this care, infants are subjected to messages committed to the unconscious sexuality of adults addressed to them<sup>2</sup>. The messages are felt as traumatic precisely because of their enigmatic (sexual) character and constitute “the great engine of the symbolization process” (Tarelho, 2017, p. 28). Thus, our hypothesis is that time can acquire the status of a message (which comes from the other), therefore, it is susceptible to psychic inscription (Bonaparte, 1939; Ribeiro 2021; 2022; Santos & Ribeiro,

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<sup>2</sup> What in Laplanchean theory is called Generalized Seduction Theory (GST), which from my point of view is not a method, but rather an explanatory theory of the psychic apparatus based on the role of otherness. The Laplanchean method is carried out through the so-called unfinished Copernican revolution (Laplanche, 2008a) in the reading of Freudian texts in the Ptolemaic paths of the biologizing deviation, that is, the attempt to explain psychic functioning by linking it to biological causes and not to the libidinal history of the subject. And, in the Copernican paths, which preserve the notions of primacy of the sexual (primacy of the other/seduction) and the unconscious. For a better understanding, I suggest reading Ribeiro & Belo (2018).

2022), a thesis that initially recognizes the Freudian limitations and difficulties surrounding temporality in metapsychology.

Thus, this work is divided as follows: in the first section, we address the aspects of time in Freudian metapsychology (Freud, 1900/2017; 1950[1895]/1996), demonstrating that even though the unconscious remains timeless, it does not mean that there is no inscription of time in the psychic apparatus. In this line of reasoning, the spatial structuring of the psychic apparatus (unconscious/preconscious/conscious) is fundamental to understanding the psychic functioning of time. In the second section, we present the thesis of time implanted as a message, the result of our interpretation via Laplanche (TSG) of the Bonapartean statement that states that time is like “a strange and hostile intrusion imposed by adults” (Bonaparte, 1939, p. 61, our translation) on children. The third and final section presents the specificities of time in old age, the infinite time that instead of being perceived as murderous time is felt as immortal time. And the fraying of the self as one of the contingencies experienced by very elderly subjects (Matos & Belo, 2021; Carvalho, 1996) who take the temporal detuning of pleasure-displeasure of the threatening psychic apparatus.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Freud (1915/1976a) reminds us that the unconscious is timeless, does not know time, nor does it have any intellectual concept of time. Since every concept is a late acquisition of the intellect, the unconscious cannot know anything about time. The unconscious remains unchanged despite the passage of time. It is curious how the emotions of childhood, full of pathogenic memories, act on an eighty-year-old man as if time had not passed, remaining unchanged in the unconscious for an indefinite period.

Are there those who oppose the thesis of the timeless unconscious? Bonaparte (1939) says he knows a fellow psychoanalyst who raises some objections to this Freudian thesis, the first of which is that:

When we sleep and fall under the rule of the unconscious, we can maintain a sense of time to the point that some sleepers can wake up on their own after a certain period of sleep. The unconscious senses time flowing, so that is why they wake up at a certain exact hour (Bonaparte, 1939, p. 75, my translation)

This situation can happen when a worker who needs to wake up very early every day to go to work, without the help of an alarm clock, wakes up alone, for example, routinely at 4:30 in the morning.

The second objection, taking dream work as an example, states that:

The dream, this royal road, according to Freud, which leads to the unconscious, does not know how to do without space and time! Space is very evident, because the dream is generally visual and the image is projected into space. Now, even though space often seems to be abolished in the dream, in fact it is always there, in the folds of the most incoherent dream images. Even where temporal demands no longer seem to exist and the years there contract into a single instant of apparent abolition of time. But, whatever distortion time suffers in a dream, it is always time. Therefore, these ineluctable forms of our perception, time and space, are saved in the unconscious (Bonaparte, 1939, p. 75-76, my translation).

So, this argument states that while we dream, time is only disturbed, but it continues to act intrapsychically, since the perceptions of space and time subsist in the unconscious.

The third claim takes obsessive neurosis as an example, since:

...the obsessive ego has a very specific rigidity. The timelessness that emanates from the unconscious brings to his ego, which has an acute feeling of possession of time, an enormous conflict. [...] And this conflict becomes one of the bases of his confrontational temperament. The obsession with time in the obsessive neurotic usually does not give way even in the final confrontation with death itself (Bonaparte, 1939, p.78, my translation).

In turn, this bizarre and contradictory attitude in obsessives must be related to their perception of possession of time. A pathology of time can therefore be caused by an inability to integrate time into the representation and perspective of action, or by a fixation on one temporal style to the detriment of others, resulting in an elaborate but boring representation. We would thus have pathologies due to excess current affairs, of which some neuroses such as hysteria are the prototype, or pathologies due to monotonous stereotypy, as in obsessives.

These two axes – the extension of time, the temporal horizon available to the individual, and the spatial figures through which the subject uses them to organize his/her action – could help to redefine this entire psychopathology of the obsessive subject with time. Precisely in this context, Bonaparte (1939) alludes to quantum physics and considers that types of “psychic quanta” (p. 77, our translation) are formed in the psychic apparatus of the obsessive individual that erupt from the unconscious into the preconscious system, until reaching the conscious system. It would be this fact that disturbs the relationship with time in these individuals. In other words, everything happens as if a short circuit were produced in the representational regime of the obsessive neurotic between the obstinate possession of the obsessive control of time (in the preconscious and conscious systems) and the timelessness of the unconscious system. We ask ourselves if this would not be a form of

'temporalization' of time, such as the 'schizophrenic objectification'? The second one deals with the pathology of language in the relationship between psychoanalysis and language or linguistics, while the first one deals with a defense against time seen as a "castrating Father" (Assoun, 1996, p. 210). For Bonaparte (1939) "time in itself is beyond all experience" (p. 103, our translation), in this sense, quantum physics has demonstrated that time has an intimate relationship with the deep reality of the universe!

Studies have been carried out on time in psychoanalysis today, and important considerations have already been made about Lacan's elaborations on logical time in the management of time in psychoanalytic treatment (Pimenta, 2014; Garcez & Cohen, 2011; Fingermann, 2009; Askofaré, 2008; Raoult, 2006; Gondar, 2006; Santiago, 2004; Lacan, 1945/1998). We know that different psychoanalytic conceptions about time imply different points of view on subjective constitution, as well as different clinical strategies. In turn, more recently, psychic quanta have been explored (Ribeiro, 2022; 2021; Santos & Ribeiro, 2022; Careggio, 2018; Bass, 1997; Farjani, 2013; Martin, Carminati & Carminati, 2013). Some of the results of this research have pointed to the completion of a universal mental quantum field, underlying all mental processes. Thus, the systems and mechanisms that form the psychic apparatus, whether they are the conscious, preconscious and unconscious systems, or even the drive itself, can be quantized (Ribeiro, 2022). But, after all, what does this imply? If we take the theory of nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) as a metaphor, we can imagine that both the movement of charge and discharge under the aegis of facilitation (Bahnung), as well as the system of neurons:  $\phi$  (sensation, perception) and  $\Psi$  (memory) (Freud, 1950[1895]/1996), would function as a set of quantum qubits within the psychic apparatus. Thus, a qubit of a system, be it the unconscious (Ub), can evolve temporally into another system such as the conscious system (Bews), and vice versa, just like the behavior of quantum entanglement. According to Ribeiro (2022), the idea of psychic quanta points to a space-time representation of mental processes based on the notion of wave function and quantum fields.

Visionary contributions on the subject of psychic quanta can be found in Bonaparte's manuscript (1939), which at the time was supervised by Freud himself. At the time, he informed him that in some points of the reflection on time and the unconscious, Princess Marie was right (Bonaparte & Freud, 2022). Let us see what Freud says:

'The perception of space', Freud added, 'cannot be separated from that of time'. (...) Psychoanalysis, in fact, has taught us to finally recognize in the psyche various instances that we are obliged to represent to ourselves. Spatiality can be said to come from an introjection within us, from sidereal space, from exterior space. Thus,

the space of the exterior world would be projected from our internal space, as also occurs with time (Freud cited by Bonaparte, 1939, p.102, [author's emphasis], my translation).

And it appears in a letter from Freud to Bonaparte dated May 27, 1937, the following:

There is one area where boundaries belong to both the external world and the ego: our perceptual surfaces. Thus, it may be that the idea of time is linked to the working of the conscious, preconscious system. Kant, then, would be right if we replaced his old a priori with our more modern introspection of the psychic apparatus. The same must be true of space, causality, time, etc. (Freud quoted by Jones, 1989, p. 451)<sup>3</sup>.

From our point of view, the most promising aspect of this discussion concerns the conception of psychic quantum<sup>4</sup>, whose basis is located in the brief conjunction of affinities between quantum physics and psychoanalysis. We humbly acknowledge that further studies are necessary in order for research to better clarify the implications of psychic quanta in the Freudian metapsychological edifice. Bonaparte (1939) offers us the following clarification:

Our internal perception would be just a continuation of what is projected outwards, thus our prototype of time. During sleep, these investments would be withdrawn, hence the abolition of time during sleep. However, time is reborn during sleep as a hallucinatory perception. [...] It can be added that in the measurable fragmentation of time the psychic quanta are reestablished (p.103, my translation).

Taking the mechanistic metapsychological model of the psychic apparatus (Mezan, 2019; Freud, 1950[1895]/1996) with its two ends, one perceptive ( $W$  = perceptions;  $Wz$  = indication of perception) and the other motor, “we call the system that lies behind it unconscious, since it has no access to consciousness except through the preconscious, a passage that forces its excitatory process to tolerate changes” (Freud (1900[2017], p. 569). The functioning between the systems: conscious /preconscious / unconscious can now depend on the dominance of one over the other, since “what is decisive in this topical representation is the idea of a constant spatial orientation of the systems, one in relation to the other, like telescope lenses” (Assoun, 1996, p. 59-60). And it is depending on this oscillation that time as a trace where it can be inscribed and represented, since “this discontinuous mode of work of the preconscious-conscious system is the basis for the appearance of the representation of time” (Laplanche, 2008b, p. 364, our translation). This

<sup>3</sup> This same letter is found on pages 925 and 926 of *Correspondance intégrale entre o pai da psicoanálise e a princesa Marie* (Bonaparte & Freud, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> For those who want to know more about this topic, we suggest reading: Santos and Ribeiro (2022) and Ribeiro (2022).

assertion is inspired by the comparison of the functioning of the psychic apparatus with the mechanism of the magic block, opportunely explored by Freud (1925[1924]/1976c). It is known that the magic block is a device composed of two elements in precarious contact, between the wax memory and the flying sheet, and nothing is expressed if these two parts cease to be in contact. For something to be expressed, there must be a certain relationship of tension between the two parties. So, on the one hand, there is the device that stores the lasting traces, and on the other hand, the device that generates the updating of new traces that disappear each time the close contact between the paper that receives the stimulus and the wax board that preserves its impression is broken. Thus, it is in this “syncopated structure that the representation of time is inscribed” (Assoun, 1996, p. 129).

Freud (1915/1976a) states that the process of repression does not aim to destroy an idea that represents a drive, but rather prevents it from becoming conscious, remaining in an unconscious state. Let us remember that a drive can never become an object of consciousness, but only through an idea or in the manifestation of an affective state. And suppressing the development of affect constitutes the purpose of repression. However, even after repression, the idea continues to exist in the unconscious system. However, a distinction deserves to be pointed out: ideas are cathexes (memory traces), while affects and emotions correspond to discharge processes, whose final manifestations are perceived as feelings. We only know the unconscious through something conscious, after that something has undergone transformation or translation into something conscious. Thus, “conscious and unconscious ideas constitute distinct registers, topographically separate, but of the same content” (Freud, 1915/1976a, p. 180). The transition from the unconscious system to the unconscious another system is not processed by the realization of a new record, but by a modification in its state, an alteration in its cathexis. In the unconscious there are only cathected contents with a greater or lesser charge of force. There are mechanisms specific to the unconscious system, for example, through the process of displacement an idea can give up its entire quota of cathexis to another; through the process of condensation an unconscious idea can appropriate the cathexis of several other ideas.

For Freud (1915/1976a), another important characteristic of the unconscious system is that it is not temporally ordered and does not change with the passage of time. It is up to the preconscious system to effect possible communication between the different ideational contents so that they can influence each other in order to give them a temporal order, in



which censorship plays a fundamental role. Censorship between the preconscious and unconscious systems is decisive for the process of awareness.

For what we are inclined to consider evident and which we define as a primary influence of time on psychic mnemonic remains – the fading of memories and the affective weakness of impressions that are no longer recent – are in fact secondary modifications that are brought about by means of painful work. It is the preconscious that does this work, and psychotherapy cannot take any other path than that of subjecting the unconscious to the dominion of the preconscious (Freud, 1900 [2017], p. 606).

According to Freud (1900/[2017]), the passage of unconscious content to the preconscious system and the conscious system is easier than the other way around and occurs through the work of condensation, displacement, figuration present in dreams, or even forgetfulness, slips of the tongue and jokes in analysis sessions, among others. On the other hand, “the content of consciousness is very small, so that most of what we call conscious knowledge must remain psychically unconscious” (Freud, 1915/1976a, p. 172). We know that in the waking state the unconscious does not fully penetrate what constitutes our daily life, this is due to the work of censorship of the preconscious, whose existence “the dream revealed to us” (Laplanche, 1993, p. 42). However, “the subjugation of the unconscious by the preconscious is not complete; the measure of this repression provides the degree of our psychic normality” (Freud, 1900 [2017], p. 609). It is worth noting the importance of the preconscious, since it acts as a barrier between the unconscious and the conscious systems. However, nothing is recorded in the unconscious if it is not in the relationship of at least two events separated in time by a moment of mutation that allows the subject to react differently to the memory of the first experience. This is the so-called theory of a posteriori (Nachträglichkeit) or trauma in two times. The first is the time of terror in which the subject is confronted with a highly significant sexual action, but he is not prepared to understand or translate it (Cardoso, 2017). Therefore, this memory remains suspended, only becoming traumatic when it is revived on the occasion of a second scene that enters into associative resonance with the first. The direction of the vector of time is from the present to the past, but it is the memories of the past that are the protagonists, for example, of neurotic symptoms in the present. In this sense, “the engine of the temporalization of the human being is the relationship with the original other” (Laplanche, 2006 p. 12, our translation), the adult to the child in the fundamental anthropological situation. And it will be the perceptions of pleasure and displeasure and the work of translating the messages addressed to the child that will influence the course of

investments within the psychic apparatus (Laplanche, 2008c), and thus make a memory more or less traumatic.

It seems that thinking about time throws us into a paradox, because “the dream comes from the past in every sense [...] By showing us a wish fulfilled, the dream in fact takes us to the future; but this future that the dreamer takes as the present is created by the indestructible wish in the image of that past” (Freud, 1900[2017], p. 648). And “the unconscious is of the order of the repressed, therefore composed of signifiers removed from their referential context, and not of the order of memory or of an implicit and hidden chain of signifiers” (Tarelho, 2017, p. 37). Portraying time as a psychic process in its dynamic, topographical and economic aspects, we begin to refer to it through a metapsychological presentation. The Freudian assertion that “the processes of the unconscious system are timeless; that is, they are not ordered temporally, they do not change with the passage of time” (Freud, 1915/1976a, p. 192) remains reliable and necessary. For, the unconscious ignores the sense of time precisely because it is entirely subject to the primary process, governed solely by the pleasure principle and not by the secondary process where we can locate the effects of the reality principle and the subsequent understanding of time (Laplanche, 2008c). However, “the differential factor established between the primary and secondary processes fundamentally affects the relationship that the subject establishes with his/her satisfaction and the way in which the amount of energy that circulates in the psychic apparatus is activated” (Burgarelli & dos Santos, 2018, p. 664). But how is time inscribed in the psychic apparatus? This is only possible as a message coming from the other in the child’s educational process regarding the reality principle. This is what we will see in the next section.

Laplanche (2008b) distinguishes four levels of the notion of time: level 1, which he calls cosmological time or world time. Level 2 refers to perceptive time, that of immediate consciousness or even “the time of the living” (p. 363, our translation). Level 3 refers to the time of memory, of the temporalization of man; level 4 is the time of the history of human society as a whole. Now, let us reflect on the time of level 2, chronological time, the time of the clock as our educator or organizer of our routines in daily life. Now, it is through the relationship of care between the adult and the child (Nebenmensch) that the child begins to organize his or her life in terms of: time to wake up, time to play, time to bathe, time to eat, time to go to school, time to return home, time to go to bed and receive a goodnight kiss, and so on... Later, all these things will become part of the lives of all adults, who will incorporate them into their routines without having to think too much about why things are



organized chronologically in this way. This is how time originally comes to us as “a strange and hostile intrusion” imposed by adults” (Bonaparte, 1939, p. 61, our translation), that is, when we were children in our educational process.

In a way, the entire scheme of the day is integrated from the outside. According to the theory of generalized seduction - TSG (Laplanche, 1992), we can interpret this strange intrusion of time as a message from the adult. For, if the message of the other becomes our own word, this also implies that the time of the other becomes our own time. This is how time inhabits us and is symbolized in early, late, day, night, today, tomorrow, last year, next month, happy new year, etc. In other words, in the fundamental anthropological situation, the child in his fundamental helplessness (*Hilflosigkeit*) cannot obtain by his own means the satisfaction of his needs for his survival. “The infant, due to his basic immaturity, his helplessness, spends a good deal of time revolving around this king star, the adult with its heat, which warms and is the source of life, but which also does not stop burning” (Tarelho, 2017, p. 19). And it is also subjected to a kind of “overflow of structuring capacities by an exuberance of messages to which it does not have the key, but which it knows to be messages” (Laplanche, 1993, p. 184). And then, with the translation codes taken from the social environment, from the *socius*, she begins her work of translating the messages addressed to her. These messages are hostile precisely because of their enigmatic nature, committed to the unconscious sexuality of the adult. With this, we can attribute to time the category of message (Laplanche, 2008a/1992) because it is related to the child's unusual task of translation. And as a message, it always carries a traumatic connotation because it is committed to the sexual<sup>5</sup>.

Learning about time occurs through inter-human relationships, in which adults teach children the notion of time, from learning to read the time on a clock by the position of the hands to training them in their daily routine. Therefore, it is as a message from the other that time can be inscribed in the psychic apparatus. The child wakes up, gets up, runs, eats, plays, cries or laughs, in a time that is felt by them as being much longer than the time of the adult. The latter, in turn, feels time as short and fast. The child's time is somehow immeasurable. However, the child's feeling of infinite time is not disturbed until they reach a sufficiently mature age, and only then will they possess the time of the adult and, as an adult, will they be able to observe the passage of time, the limits of days, weeks, months

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<sup>5</sup> It is worth clarifying to the reader that Laplanche (2015) defines sexuality as follows: “it is multiple, polymorphic. A fundamental discovery by Freud, it is based on repression, the unconscious, fantasy. It is the object of psychoanalysis” (p. 155).

and years. In contrast, “only perhaps do the elderly more or less find something of the infinite time” (Bonaparte, 1939, p. 63, my translation) of the child.

Time is only perceived as a “foreign and hostile intrusion” (Bonaparte, 1939, p. 61, our translation) because it is an imposition by adults who end up implanting their own time in the child. Consequently, it is as a message from the other or “parental communication” (Laplanche, 1993, p. 182) that time is apprehended, metabolized and translated. However, it is also necessary to consider that this inscription of time remains under the condition that we take the sexual in its wake, insofar as it comes from the other as a message committed to the adult’s sexual unconscious. Therefore, Laplanche (2008b) evokes archaic time, located in the rhythm of the first symbiotic relationship with the mother, which will be incorporated into specific temporal parenting styles and which each subject will translate according to their way of being in the world, their defenses and their orientation in the course of existence. And with psychic maturation, one experiences the complexity of temporal structures in order to integrate the time of the world or cosmological, of level 1 (Laplanche, 2008b).

We see Freud confronting himself little by little, not without difficulty, throughout his work with the problems that evoke time. In the first period of his work he tried to represent, above all, linear time, the time of stages or phases (oral, anal, genital), and in a later period he preferred to get rid of the problem by placing the unconscious outside of time. However, this assertion of the timelessness of the unconscious only makes sense in linear time, but perhaps does not apply to rhythmic or spiral time (Duparc, 1997). In another phase, time appears in Freud's work through the compulsion to repetition with its two aspects: a timeless aspect, at the service of death drive; and another aspect, that of regression in the service of life, with attempts to temporarily return to the symbiosis of primary narcissism. We observe a rather circular or spiral time that applies to rhythmic time, in connection with the most primitive effects, in which the pleasure and displeasure of the drive give proof of satisfaction and pain, constituting the bases of the psychic apparatus (Freud, 1920/1976d). Therefore, what is decisive in the sensation of pleasure-displeasure is the rate of decrease and/or the rate of increase in a given time. In other words, the game of control of the pleasure principle and beyond the pleasure principle has a rhythm, tuned, for example, in Freud's grandson, with the game of the presence and absence of the object, the game of the reel with its vocalizations: 'F-o-ord' ... Da!' (De Gueller, 2022), which evoke, in their syncopated rhythm, a kind of dance in two times. That is:

Pleasure and displeasure cannot be related to the increase or decrease of a quantity (tension of excitation) [...], but to a character that we can designate only as qualitative [...]. Perhaps it is the rhythm of the temporal flow of changes, rises and falls in the quantity of excitation (Freud, 1924/1976e, p. 288).

Our instinctual balance will depend on our translation of the instinctual (sexual) attack inoculated in us by the other (Laplanche, 2015; 2008d; 2008e), and often translated as fantasies of beating in the movement of secondary repression. In this way, it constitutes the first translations of the first painful aggressions caused by the adult in the fundamental anthropological situation. And, felt as an internal stranger, an enigma intruded in us by the seductive intervention of the adult. Behold, “sexuality does not appear as an isolated and discernible instinct” (Laplanche, 2008b, p. 42, our translation), but it is through the theory of support that the vital function distances itself from its natural object and is then lost and appears in the field of sexuality, of the instinctual. For, “the primacy of the other and its enigma do not necessarily end when the concrete adult-child relationship disappears” (Laplanche, 1999b, p. 5, our translation). The sexual that continues within us attacks us and makes us fail in the translation, a translation that fails (partially) in the face of the internal attack.

It is worth noting that the original seduction through which the notion of time, the time of the other, comes, will result from the baby's translational effort to decipher such messages, whether they are intrusions (which occur routinely and are less threatening) or implantations (messages perceived as threatening, precisely because of the involuntarily invasive nature of sexuality). Therefore, such messages can be translated through facilitated cultural channels and others can cause intrusions, remaining as embedded remains, impossible to be symbolized (Laplanche, 2008a; 2008b). That said, we can not only think about the psychic and instinctual effects of the internal-external opposition (internal time / external time) inherent to delimitation and the boundaries of the self with primary repression (Laplanche, 2008c), but, above all, the translation of time comes with secondary repression. In other words, the code of time is included in the series of so-called original scenarios, whether these are the original scene, castration or Oedipus.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Time is experienced very differently depending on the age at which it is experienced. When we think about the specificities of psychotherapy in old age, time is an important element of analysis, since we are not dealing with the adult experience of time, but with the experience of infinite time similar to the experience of time in childhood. However, the

elderly have a whole life history that children do not have and this cannot be disregarded. Infinite time occurs in old age due to the basic, insurmountable condition of the experience of helplessness (Hilflosigkeit). Then:

As people get older they become potentially or actually weaker than younger people. They become visually more dependent on each other. [...] There are people who have to be fed, put on the toilet and cleaned like small children (Elias, 2001, p. 82-83).

This also means that infinite time comes as a response to the fact that the “unconscious of each of us is convinced of his own immortality” (Freud, 1915/1976b, p. 328 and 335), the elderly despise the possibility of dying and the experience of infinite time is a situation where new possibilities for desire are played out and created. On the other hand, it is the statement of a Bergson (1896/1990) that tells us that time is experienced as interior to man, consubstantial to his vital flow. In this way, time is like a hypercomplex pulse, a tangle of rhythms and scansion, of eternities and ephemeral passages, of repetitions and evolution.

On the other hand, when we speak of infinite time, a question deserves to be asked: are the distinctions between past, present and future essential to time? According to McTaggart (2014), such distinctions “are not essential to time” (p. 754) because each unit of time forms a permanent series that is present, past and future. “It is admitted that it is essential to time that each of its moments should be either before or after each of the other moments” (p. 754). If event A is past, it was present and future. If it is future, it will be present and past. If it is present, it was future and will be past. Thus, all three series are predicable. Since there can be no time without a series, the distinction between past, present and future would only make sense within each series, so there would be many presents, for example. Time involves change and the only change we can have is that of the course of life. One thing is certain: cyclical time does not allow us to differentiate between past, present and future, and time organized according to the pleasure principle knows only repetition, or organizes chronology in its own way, in the order that meets desire. Even at its unconscious level, the drive can only be satisfied with a path starting from an origin, to reach a goal, according to a rhythm; a circular trajectory animated by its constant impulse. “For all this, we believe that there exists in the unconscious a rhythmic time, linked to the affects of pleasure and displeasure, even if it is not the object of a representation elaborated throughout the past-present-future” (Duparc, 1997, p. 1489, our translation).

The time we experience in dreams does not resemble that of waking life. A strangely magical atmosphere surrounds us, our desires are fulfilled, overcoming spatial and temporal demands.

In our arms lie reluctant loved ones or sick loved ones return to health, or even we grow old or simply become children again, Aladdin's carpet carries us through the air through which we ride the sun and the stars, we are young forever (Bonaparte, 1939, p. 66, my translation).

On the other hand, as soon as we use time, it destroys itself. Having time for oneself never means having in front of oneself that which one has not yet enjoyed, "because to live time is to die" (Bonaparte, 1939, p. 65, our translation). According to some psychoanalysts (Duparc, 1997; Roussillon, 1997; Guillaumin, 1997), the feeling of being immersed in a time with an infinite space, like the rotation of a great cosmic wheel or falling along an unlimited line, leads us all to the feeling of threat of being carried away without control. And, "this time has the paradox of being only a variety of space" (Duparc, 1997, p. 1429, my translation).

This issue of the specific temporal rhythms of each of us is perhaps one of the most conflicting, whether in adapting to the reality of one rhythm by another, or in itself in order to understand the other sex, and in everyday life, for example, in the actions of a couple. The temporality of the masculine and the feminine allows us to study time in psychoanalysis while remaining close to the erotic body and psychosexuality, thus avoiding the philosophical trap of a pure rationality of the time of consciousness that aims to achieve the predictable temporality of the physical world (Duparc, 1997). Thus, sexualized time is simultaneously a time of the body, of the unconscious and of the living being with its affects and representations; it cannot be just an a priori condition of consciousness. Only a complex vision of time, born from the encounter of multiple temporalities specific to both sexes, through the figures born from their encounter, can lead to a living time.

The work of integration and complexification of the Superego does not result only from the latency period that follows the decline of the Oedipus Complex (Freud, 1924/1969); it operates in both periods: adolescence and old age. In these two phases of life, characterized by an identity crisis and an economic reorganization of investments, the role of the sociocultural environment is very important, since it depends on the realization of a project where the other is the condition of an always random success. As a result, in these two stages, the support of the cultural Superego-Ideal of society plays a not insignificant tutoring role in overcoming the crisis.

Unlike adolescence, old age motivated Freud to consider it a limit for psychoanalysis. Advanced age would be a contraindication to a cure, since the elderly no longer have the plasticity of the psychic processes on which therapy is based. Freud (1914/1970) evokes the narcissistic withdrawal of the libido of the elderly man. It is true that the elderly face great losses and mourning, which sometimes exceed their strength: mourning for their loved ones, their physical and sexual capacities, their autonomy. Symmetrically, the analyst may feel incapable of carrying out analytical work with a subject who will have to mourn before the end of the treatment, or with the confrontation of his own death. On the other hand, mourning is also a work of the egoic instance in two stages: that of decomposition and that of recomposition of oneself. Thus, “in old age, very often, there are both losses that lead to psychic work, and an imposition of psychic work that leads to losses, transformations of the self” (Matos & Belo, 2021, p. 648). In addition to these mournings, there are possibilities of subjectivation and achievements specific to the elderly subject. A favorable subjective result can be found in the constitution of an identity of memory, in the critical screening of the lived experience to organize it into a superegoic inheritance that can be assimilated by future generations. And in the activity of transmission, the elderly person can find their dignity so that they can reap at the end of life the prestige and wisdom that are its fruits.

In African societies and among Amerindian peoples, the elderly are generally the memory of the community, and play a role in transmitting wisdom and culture. On the other hand, elderly individuals often did not anticipate this phase of their lives, or were insufficiently prepared for it, or the society in which they live has become accustomed to isolating them in a nursing home (Elias, 2001). However, in order to achieve this, the elderly encounter many difficulties. In order to mourn as they should, they would need the support of the community's Superego-Ideal, to help them put themselves at the service of their participation in the common heritage. However, today's society, entirely imbued with an ideology of seduction by being young and beautiful, efficient and successful, by speed and urgency, does not give them any support for this task. Old age activates sexualizing inscriptions and, together with the resulting ways of relating to others, time, and finitude, it awakens enigmas and imposes a demand for symbolization in the face of the wasting body. There is a non-linearity of time linked to the helplessness of the need for the other in the original situation (fundamental anthropological situation) as an infant, and in the subsequent updates of this situation throughout life (Matos & Ribeiro, 2021). In old age, the implications of the constant loss of objects of love lead to a strong tendency to revive a helplessness



linked to the sensation of the body's fragility and the realization of one's own finitude felt in a slow and progressive time.

That said, we can think about the psychic and instinctual effects of the fraying of the boundaries of the self (Carvalho, 1996) inherent to aging, which refers to time as a tangle of deaf rhythms. And this worn and frayed fabric of temporal cadences sometimes throws us into the infinity of immortality and sometimes into the disarray of the cyclical rhythms of pleasure and displeasure. The analyst cannot be content to ignore time, believing that he is imitating the unconscious. Timeless, indefinitely repeated traits do not develop by themselves; they need a gap, a representation of this gap and an elaboration. Some experiences, if only repeated (in bad encounters), can turn out to be worse than the past ones, sometimes due to traces that seem to contain negative reserves, tending to make any new encounter fail to reverse time.

## CONCLUSIONS

Our results indicate that in the unconscious itinerary and time, the feeling of illusory immortality corresponds to a time that no longer destroys, but a time that preserves, a time that creates. It is the result of the reverberation of our unconscious that “does not believe in its own death, but behaves as if it were immortal” (Freud, 1915/1976b, p. 328 and 335). Then, one fine day or night, when we are tired, our consciousness already weakened and weakened by our long life, then we will close our eyes and surrender ourselves to the sweetness of death, whose prediction we have lost with infinite time. The total absence of relations between the unconscious and time seems to me to be an excess that can only be conceived by admitting cyclical, repetitive time and, above all, the rhythms inscribed in the psychic apparatus in the rhythm of pleasure-displeasure.

Time is not a simple thing; it is simply an almost unrepresentable concept, always escaping the one who seeks to define it. Therefore, a metapsychology of time is perceived as a rope braided with a few threads, the red thread of which would be desire. Or as a river with whirlpools that can turn upside down anyone who ventures into its waters. Time is always the time of the other, whose resonance remains in the duration of the subject who gives it meaning.

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