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## THE CINEMA AND PSYCHOLOGY: AN ANALYSIS OF SUBJECTIFICATION PROCESSES IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT.** Since the early twentieth century, cinema and psychology have become a constant presence in capitalist societies and, particularly, in big cities, being part of people's everyday lives. Which effects film exhibition has produced and produces in the constitution of subjects? Where does psychology stand regarding the subjective transformations that the cinema causes? The objective of this article is to examine the trajectory of Psychology, which, systematically reaffirming the unity of the subject in the concept of personality loses sight of the multiplicity inherent to the subjectivity that the cinema evidences. Additionally, it is also worth identifying the subjectification processes that gain support as the cinema grows popular. The analysis of this relationship between the cinema and psychology is justified by the strong presence of the former in contemporary societies, affecting subjectification processes. Such processes can be characterized as a multiplicity of effects that are irreducible to unification, since the cinema enables multiple simultaneous identifications with different characters. To carry out this study, the qualitative research procedure was adopted, aiming at understanding the relationship between the cinema and psychology from a historical perspective. As a partial result of this theoretical research, it was possible to come to the conclusion that in the course of the twentieth century Psychology transformed itself, adopting conceptions of personality in which multiplicity prevails. Thus, there is the emergence of theoretical perspectives admitting that the heterogeneity and the complexity of subjects are not compatible with the unifying focus of personality that prevailed in Psychology since the beginning of the century.

**Keywords:** The cinema; subjectivity; contemporaneity.

### CINEMA E PSICOLOGIA: DOS PROCESSOS DE SUBJETIVAÇÃO NA CONTEMPORANEIDADE

**RESUMO.** Desde o início do século XX, o cinema e a Psicologia tornaram-se uma presença constante nas sociedades capitalistas e, de modo particular, nas grandes cidades, inscrevendo-se no cotidiano das populações. Que efeitos a exibição cinematográfica produziu e produz na constituição dos sujeitos? Como a Psicologia se posiciona perante as transformações subjetivas que o cinema provoca? O objetivo deste artigo consiste em examinar a trajetória da Psicologia que, reafirmando sistematicamente a unidade do sujeito no conceito de personalidade, perde de vista a multiplicidade inerente à subjetividade que o cinema evidencia. De modo complementar, cabe ainda identificar os processos de subjetivação que ganham suporte à medida que o cinema se populariza. A análise dessa relação entre cinema e psicologia justifica-se pela forte presença do cinema nas sociedades atuais, incidindo nos processos de subjetivação. Tais processos podem ser caracterizados como uma multiplicidade de efeitos irredutíveis a uma unificação, uma vez que o cinema possibilita múltiplas

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identificações simultâneas e com diferentes personagens. Para a realização deste estudo foi adotado o procedimento de pesquisa de natureza qualitativa voltado para a compreensão das relações entre o cinema e a Psicologia em uma perspectiva histórica. Como resultado parcial desta pesquisa teórica, chegou-se à constatação de que no decorrer do século XX a Psicologia transformou-se, adotando concepções de personalidade nas quais a multiplicidade prevalece. Assim, emergem vertentes teóricas que admitem que a heterogeneidade e a complexidade dos sujeitos não são compatíveis com o enfoque unificador da personalidade que prevalecia na Psicologia desde o início do século.

**Palavras-chave:** Cinema; subjetividade; contemporaneidade.

## **CINE Y PSICOLOGÍA: UN ANÁLISIS ACERCA DE LOS PROCESOS DE SUBJETIVACIÓN EN LA CONTEMPORANEIDAD**

**RESUMEN.** Desde el comienzo del siglo XX, cine y Psicología se convirtieron en una presencia constante en las sociedades capitalistas y, en particular, en las grandes ciudades, suscribiendo en a la vida cotidiana de las personas. ¿Qué efectos la pantalla cinematográfica ha producido y produce en la constitución de las personas? ¿Cómo la Psicología posicionase ante de las transformaciones subjetivas que el cine provoca? El propósito de este artículo es examinar la historia de la Psicología que, reafirmando la unidad del sujeto en un concepto sistemático de personalidad, pierde de vista la multiplicidad inherente en la subjetividad que el cine muestra. De manera complementaria, también se busca identificar los procesos de subjetivación que ganan apoyo con la popularización del cine. El análisis de esta relación, entre el cine y la Psicología, se justifica por la fuerte presencia del cine en las sociedades actuales, centrándose en los procesos de subjetivación. Dichos procesos pueden caracterizarse como una multiplicidad de efectos que son irreducibles de la unificación, ya que el cine permite múltiples identificaciones simultáneas con diferentes personajes. Para el presente estudio se adoptó el procedimiento de la investigación cualitativa que se centró en la comprensión de la relación entre el cine y la Psicología en una perspectiva histórica. Como resultado parcial de esta investigación teórica, se llegó a la constatación de que, en el curso del siglo XX la Psicología se convirtió, adoptando concepciones de personalidad en las cuales prevalece la multiplicidad. Así, aspectos teóricos emergen que admitten que la heterogeneidad y la complejidad de los sujetos no son compatibles con el enfoque unificador de la personalidad que predominaba en la Psicología desde principios de siglo.

**Palabras-clave:** Cine; subjetividad; contemporaneidad.

### **Introduction**

In the early twentieth century, two significant events are given highlight and quickly become of great importance for the societies of that time. The first one, coming from the arts, was the creation of the cinema, developed with the use of the cinematograph, by the Lumière brothers in 1895, with the first projection happening in the same year (Kemp, 2011, p. 8). The second one is Psychology, with Wilhelm Wundt's experimental perspective and the outlines of psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud (Schultz & Schultz, 2002).

For Kemp, in just 20 years of these pioneering efforts a glance at the history of literature and art , films began to be watched by large audiences all around the world (Kemp, 2011). As the author explains, the expansion of the cinema around the world was fast: within those first 20 years it was seen and gained importance in almost all countries. The cinema reached the Western and the Eastern market concurrently. Two factors can be pointed out as the agents of this expansion: the first one, as Bernadet (2012, p. 23-24) explains, was the ease of copying, enabling a low-cost unlimited reproduction, with the rapid spread of the same material. The second one was the fact that at that time films were silent and, for this reason, led to the creation of a universal language, proper of this media, since it used only images. That is what Aumont notes using Delluc's work to analyze the emergence of cinema:

The essential characteristic of this new language was its universality, permitting one to bypass the barriers posed by the various national languages. It seemed to realize the ancient dream of a "visual Esperanto." As Louis Delluc writes in *Cinéma et Cie*, "The cinema goes everywhere and is a great

means of allowing people to converse". Hence, this "music of light" need not be translated since it is understood by everyone and allows the return to a sort of "natural" state of language, preceding the arbitrariness of language systems (Aumont, 2012, p. 159).

Despite having lasted for a short time the first sound film dates back from 1927 (Power, 2011, p. 78), silent films had strength enough to insert the cinema in popular culture, thus making the barriers of national languages irrelevant. In a short passage, Kemp (2011) points out that because of the way things happened, when sound films came into play the habit of going to the movies was already firmly rooted to be discouraged by language barriers. And from then on methods appear so that the language barrier was transposed (subtitles, voiceovers, simultaneous translations inside movie theaters). The consolidation of the cinema in the world culture throughout the twentieth century can be verified by the numbers of this segment of the industrial culture. Currently, the market involving the practice of filmmaking makes about 34.7 billion dollars a year (Motion Picture Association of America, 2012); and in the Brazilian market, taking into account a population of around 190 million inhabitants (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2011), approximately 150 million tickets were sold in 2013, raising about 1.7 billion reais (Agência Nacional de Cinema, 2013).

But how to approach the cinema? We can go beyond the projection itself and talk about other characteristics of the seventh art. In his publication of the *Primeiros Passos* collection, entitled "*O que é Cinema*" (What is the Cinema) (2012), Bernardet explores various facets of the cinema. In the context approached herein, it is worth highlighting the complex chain involving its production and marketing matter. Regarding production chain, Bernardet comments that besides the process we experience when we go to the movies, from choosing the film to paying the ticket at the box office, there is a whole process involving:

(...) a thousand one different elements, starting with your taste for this kind of spectacle, advertising, people, foreign and national companies that make and invest money in films, distribution companies that send films to theater owners, and, finally, the exhibitors, who project them for the viewers who paid to sit in a chair and stay there staring at the images on the screen. It also involves censorship, in addition to processes for adapting the film to viewers who do not speak its original language (Bernardet, 2012, p. 9).

In short, the cinematic experience comprises a range of professionals in its several procedural stages. Therefore, it is necessary to think of the cinema as an area that goes beyond the projection room. From there, we enter the film market. As previously exposed, the cinema was born and develops as an extremely profitable art of easy distribution. Following the territorial and capital expansion of the film industry, countless specialties are created in order to transform the creation of the film into production process. Bernardet (2012) says that "As the industry established itself, a greater rigor was imposed upon the planning of the film, and the functions began to be divided" (p. 68). The transformation of the film production process took place in a continuous manner, in which each worker has his/her specific role and often does not see the product as a whole. At the same time, there is the massification of the consumer public, whose preferences become object of investigation. An evidence of this process is the formulas or molds on which scripts, scenes and acting should be based to please the audience. We can say that we still live with this film production formula that was established in the 1930s in Hollywood (Bernardet, 2012).

With the development of the cinema several film languages have been created, being diversified by the experimental perspectives from the beginning of film production. The standardization and unification of these languages happened, however, due to a marketing matter, since the consumer public is interested more easily in a model that goes through little variation than in several models containing major changes (Bernardet, 2012). What is worth highlighting about these languages? From the advent of television – and, therefore, the opening of a new market characterized by a more immediate and constant consumption – the film language becomes a constant presence in the life of the population. Considering that 95% of Brazilian households have one or more television sets (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2011), we can conclude that the televised film language is one of the means of communication and leisure that is present in the population's everyday life. What is the subjective

impact that the systematic exposure to cinematic content broadcasted on television and in movie theaters produces? How are subjects constituted in a society strongly impacted by the means of communication? Answering these questions as well as understanding the relationship established between contemporary subjectification processes and the universalized diffusion of cinematographic images is the objective of this research. How to attain it? We enter, thus, the field of methodology, which asks for a description of the procedures adopted in the course of the research.

## Method

To carry out this study we adopted the qualitative research procedure, aimed at understanding the relationship between the cinema and Psychology from a historical perspective. A theoretical approach was chosen, taking into account that the theme of cinematic media is object of an extensive psychosocial analysis.

In the theoretical study, works that do an analysis of both the cinema and psychology were selected, considering the insertion of each of these productions in contemporary societies. In a particular manner, works that focus on the constitution of subjectivity from its relationship with these two different productions, the cinema and psychology, were chosen. In the works analyzed the aim was to put in evidence the conception of personality so as to constitute a coextensive theoretical field between art (The cinema) and science (Psychology).

Finally, we analyzed authors and works focusing on contemporary artistic and scientific productions in which the notion of subjectivity already results from the recognition of the field shared between the two areas. From there we elaborated a text systematizing the descriptions of subjective processes experienced in the cinema as well as outside it by the viewer. The psychosocial effects of the articulation between the cinema and psychology could be evidenced and analyzed critically, considering the current historical moment.

## Results and Discussion

Even with the great economic relevance and the fascination power that the cinema has, psychological studies turned to this phenomenon have remained scarce and began to gain prominence around the 1960s. Its birth, along with the experimental perspective of psychology, resulted in some studies such as that by Hugo Münsterberg (1916), in which the author, through the *Gestalttheorie*, sought to investigate how film viewers perceived and experienced the film. Münsterberg used concepts like attention, memory, imagination and emotions (Aumont, 2012, pp. 224-225).

Studies in other areas of the human sciences were performed in larger amounts. Among them semiology can be mentioned, with the studies by Etienne Souriau (1953), and anthropology, with the studies by Edgar Morin (1956). These two authors give rise to studies about the subjectivity that the cinema produces (Aumont, 2012, p. 235). Souriau (1953 cited by Aumont, 2012) discusses the influence of what is produced during the film session on the everyday life of the viewer, beyond the projection itself. The author comments the existence of “some kind of impregnation that produces role models” (p. 235) that the cinema provides. Morin (1956 cited by Aumont, 2012) bases himself on Souriau’s essays to describe the film viewer as a subject who carries an imagination. This imagination manifests through the cinema, in which viewers can create, imagine or dream in accordance with the impressions. In the words of Morin himself, the cinema works “as a representation of a live representation, the cinema invites us to reflect on the imaginary of reality and the reality of the imaginary” (Morin, 1977, cited by Aumont, 2012, p. 236). Another important point in Morin’s theory is the approach to the “projection-identification”, about which Aumont says that “instead of projecting himself/herself in the world, the subject absorbs the world in himself/herself” (2012, p. 237).

In the 1970s already, Christian Metz’s studies gain relevance; the author uses the Lacanian psychoanalytic theory to explain the identification of the spectator with films. For Metz, the screen would be like a mirror in which the spectator, though not seeing his/her own body, can assimilate specific

identifications on his/her imagination. Also according to the author, there are two possible types of identification: the first being with the vision of the movie camera, and the second with the characters, the plot, with what is depicted in the film (Aumont, 2012).

Still in the 1970s, however, widening the psychoanalytic approach, Félix Guattari talks about the cinema that intends to produce and that produces a social imaginary as a means of subjectification. In this device, a multiplicity of intensities conveyed by the images present themselves on the screen, crystallizing a plot, "characters and behavioral stereotypes" (Guattari, 1980, p. 113). As a result, innumerable images are captured by viewers and no one would say that the entertainment is limited to the film exhibition, but rather that in the movie theater the intensities are produced and incorporated into the subjectivity by those who watch the film.

Guattari and Rolnik (2005) understand subjectivity as a continuous social process that conveys subjectification components appropriated individually. Subjectivities are constituted, then, from the contact with the outside, with the social, but, once incorporated, keep on being reproduced in different social contexts. The authors relate the production of subjectivity to the socioeconomic system and, in this way, conceptualize the capitalistic subjectivity: "It is about direct connection systems between the large production machines, the large social control machines and the psychic instances that define the way of perceiving the world" (Guattari & Rolnik, 2005, p. 27). Currently produced under the logic of the capital, subjectivity has in the cinematic media one of its main diffusion vectors.

Generally speaking, it is possible to consider that the cinema is currently one of the large production machines, capable to elaborate and disseminate world perception modes. Guattari notes, with regard to this power of the cinema:

we pay for a chair in the movie theater to make ourselves being invaded by whatever person and to be carried away in whatever kind of adventure, in encounters in principle with no tomorrow. In principle! Because, actually, the modeling that results from this vertigo at a low price does not happen without a trace: the unconscious becomes inhabited by indigenous people, cowboys, cops, gangsters, Belmondos and Marilyn Monroes (Guattari, 1980, pp. 114-5.)

However, the author insists that not only one is affected by the characters and the film story, but that there are countless other intensities that have this power to affect, to produce subjective components to be incorporated in the psychic constitution of the subject. Let us see: "The codes entangle without any ever having the preeminence over the others, without constituting significant "substance"; there is a back and forth, from perceptive codes to denotative, musical, connotative, rhetorical, technological, economic, sociological codes, etc." (Guattari, 1980, p. 113).

Therefore, it is necessary to think of the cinematic language no longer as a finished tool endowed with meanings, but as "an instrument within a complex semiotic orchestration" (Idem). Thus, the language of the cinema would no longer be a producer of behavioral patterns, but rather a means of subverting the capitalistic productions of subjectivity tied to characters stereotyped in plots with predictable outcomes.

This ability that the cinema has to produce subjectivities, with its plot and characters, but especially with the intensities conveyed, is what enables the singularization process in which the cinematic art can engage when inscribing itself into the production of subjectivities. To singularize oneself is to open spaces for other combinations of desire, to other ways of being, other sensitivities, other perceptions, in a movement that eventually opposes to the capitalistic subjectivity in its movement to conquer and control almost completely the ways of living in the world (Guattari & Rolnik, 2005).

In face of the multiple power of the cinema in providing raw material for the subjectification process, it is difficult to consider the individual subject as non-divisible. Subjectivity in this context is not subject to totalization because it involves multiple intensities and is produced amongst a variety of social gatherings. For this reason, the authors consider: "the individual (...) stands in the crossroad of multiple subjectivity components" (Guattari & Rolnik, 2005, p. 34).

Although there is the intention to define the subject from an individuality, the variations of the human are possible within a multiplicity that indwells him/her according to his/her constitution in the collective

realm. In the fragment below, Guattari and Rolnik expose this conception of a subjectification produced in a social context and in which subjectivity is inherent:

The ego always intends to affirm itself in a continuity and a power. But the production of speech, of images, of sensitivity, the production of desire does not stick absolutely to this representation of the individual. This production is adjacent to a multiplicity of social intermediations, to a multiplicity of machinic production processes, to mutations of universes of value and universes of history (Guattari & Rolnik, 2005, p. 32).

It is therefore necessary to recognize that we constitute ourselves in a multiplicity. Deleuze and Guattari point out that is on the level of desire that said multiplicity takes place: “Only the *multiplicity* category, employed as a noun and surpassing both the multiple as the One, surpassing the predicative relation of the One and of the multiple, is able to handle the desiring production: the desiring production is pure multiplicity, that is, affirmation irreducible to unity” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2010/1972, p. 62).

Even though the concept of multiplicity has become strategic and necessary for an analysis of contemporaneity, offering conditions for understanding subjectivity in the interface with the cinema, psychology has not approached it. The history of psychology, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, attests instead a maximum detachment from multiplicity that can be pointed in two ways. On one hand, psychology, with highlight to its psychoanalytic perspective, systematically starts to seek the unity of the subject. On the other hand, when referring to multiplicity, it always speaks of the sign of illness, of disqualification, due to a lost unity.

In his “Mental Illness and Psychology” (1975), Michel Foucault highlights this movement, which is common to psychology, to psychoanalysis and to psychiatry, and which identifies the normal subject as constituted in a unitary whole. As a result, all psychology becomes tributary of a certain conception of man. Let us see:

By means of the unity that it provides and the problems that it eliminates, this notion of totality is well adapted to introduce into pathology an atmosphere of conceptual euphoria. It was from this atmosphere that those who had to any extent been inspired by Goldstein wished to benefit. But, unfortunately, the euphoria was not matched by an equal rigor. (Foucault, 1975, p. 16).

On the other hand, the constituting multiplicity of the subject was put in evidence by its relationship with the different configurations of the pathological personality. That is what we can observe in this description of the subject considered mad because devoid of unity:

The complex synthesis of dialogue has been replaced by fragmentary monologue; the syntax through which meaning is constituted is broken, and all that survives is a collection of verbal elements out of which emerge ambiguous, polymorphic, labile meanings; the spatiotemporal coherence that is ordered in the here and now has collapsed, and all that remains is a chaos of successive here and isolated moments. (Foucault, 1975, p. 24).

The conception of a subjective unity that comprehends the body and subjectivity sometimes gives way to another totalization, more restricted, which lies only on the subject’s psychism. The concept of personality is then evidenced in the fields of psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis, circumscribing an integrating function, producer of the whole. Madness in this context manifests through the subtraction of this very same unity, as in the following passage: “Pathological regression, then, is simply a subtractive operation; but what is subtracted in this arithmetic is precisely the final term, the one that gives movement to and completes the personality; that is, “the remainder” is not an earlier personality, but a suppressed personality”. (Foucault, 1975, p. 33). It becomes possible to understand at this point that the absence of an element of personality (the whole) deconstructs it, thus leaving only a multiplicity of fragments.

It is also possible to catch a glimpse of the fact that the delimitation of the fields of madness and sanity is done taking into account multiplicity and totalization, with illness being repeatedly identified with

the multiple, and sanity, with the whole, whose often pointed out characteristics are stability, organization and coherence present in the totalization.

When concluding his work, Michel Foucault addresses the matter of the multiple and of the whole, relating it to the social environment in which subjectivity is incessantly produced. The thread of the analysis herein is the characteristics attributed to totality, but also to the psychologically healthy human: coherence and stability. Would these elements be present in the life in society? Let us see: "Man has become for man the face of his own truth as well as the possibility of his death. Only in the imaginary can he recognize the fraternal status in which his social relations find their stability and coherence" (Foucault, 1975, p. 94).

If life in society is multiple and complex, marked by segmentation and by the infinite variation of acts, positions and evaluations, how to maintain the expectation that the human socialized and subjectified in these conditions is constituted as unity, in the form of a coherent personality? By taking these questions under analysis, Foucault ends up recognizing, in the personality which is called schizophrenic, divided and fragmented, the mark of the historical time in which we live, of the capitalist contemporaneity.

The contemporary world makes schizophrenia possible, not because its events render it inhuman and abstract, but because our culture reads the world in such a way that man himself cannot recognize himself in it. Only the real conflict of the conditions of existence may serve as a structural model for the paradoxes of the schizophrenic world. (Foucault, 1975, p. 96).

Here it suffices to simply disentangle the notion of conflict from any duality to rediscover a multiplicity of conflicting forces, irreducible to any totalization, as a plausible description of life in today's society. Why would it be different in the psyche of the subject who was constituted in this very same society?

The subject is first of all the singular and multiple production related to the world around him, since he was formed in this very same world. So the cinema, with its incessant variation of perspectives, its small multitude of characters, each one of them searched by the viewer, with whom he finds identification. The cinema is then a mirror of the world, as multifaceted as it is, irreducibly multiple and conflicting.

The cinema thus creates the conditions for a historical critique of subjectivity conceptions present in the different perspectives of psychology, realizing in practice the demystification of the human. After all, is not in vain that Gilles Deleuze, philosopher and film expert, said in a dialogue with Michel Foucault: "We are all small groups" (Deleuze, em Foucault, 1984, p. 70).

Currently, psychology also shares the conception of the conflicting multiplicity present in the world. It is this multiple capacity that comprehends theoretical chains standing at the margin of major theories most commonly explored that seek to understand this multiple subject constituted in the social context. It is worth citing two examples of these constructions: the proposal of the family psychotherapy based on Naffah Neto's Nietzsche in "*A psicoterapia em busca de Dionísio*" [Psychotherapy in search of Dionysus] (1994); and the proposal explored by Deleuze and Guattari in the book "Anti-Oedipus" (2010), already cited. The focus here is to point out the need for a paradigm shift in the understanding of the psychic constitution so as to abandon the idea of unity of the subject.

Naffah Neto proposes the construction of a psychotherapeutic theory based on Nietzsche's philosophy. For such a purpose, he uses the Nietzschean perspective, which criticizes this field of knowledge because he considers: "All psychology so far has got stuck in moral prejudices and fears; it has not dared to descend into the depths." (Nietzsche, 1990 cited by Naffah Neto 1994, p. 19).

Distancing himself from the standardizing role of psychology, Naffah Neto (1994) puts as the primary role of the therapist the "transmutation of values". That means working on the moral values that imprison the potentialities of patients by restricting their ways of living, in order to favor a more creative life. In the words of the author himself:

For the task of the Nietzschean psychotherapy is this exact one: the transmutation of values. Whether patiently tracking the composition of a constituted value, whether mapping the various

points of the social body where marginal movements erupt to question and pose a risk to it, the genealogist-psychotherapist will be primarily an instrument of change (Naffah Neto, 1994, p. 21).

In this context, Naffah Neto uses etymology to conceptualize psychotherapy, defining it basically as the care for life. Using the Nietzschean theory that puts the will to power as the driving force for creation, for life, Naffah Neto approaches the idea that psychology has as task the disengagement of this will to power. It is worth stressing the characteristics of this disengagement, which does not aim at reaching predetermined points, nor their sequence, but rather a blossoming of multiple possibilities, of powers. Or also:

Dis-engagement here means exactly what the etymological origin explains, that is, dis-entanglement, differentiation; therefore, nothing that has to do with the idea of evolution or progress in the sense of a predetermined direction or of a configuration sequence. The sick life is the life entangled by values that intoxicate, block, deplete it, requiring dis-engagement, release, freedom, to regain its creative power and produce new forms. Psychotherapy will therefore take care of the dis-engagement of life in the blossoming of its forms. (Naffah Neto, 1994, p. 23).

We have in the above citation the definition of a sick life, which would be the depletion of affection relationships through intoxicating values. It then becomes important that we understand what health is in this Nietzschean perspective on psychotherapy. Health, notes the author, is the “self-control and discipline capable of allowing the spirit to inhabit the multiplicity” (Naffah Neto, 1994, p. 29), that is, the possibility of creating ways of living that incorporate the multiple facets of existence, that throw life into the adventure that the multiple is.

It is also important to emphasize the author’s understanding of the concept of personality. As previously seen, personality, according to ruling theories, refers to a set of crystallized characteristics present in the individual subject, with its variation being considered pathological, while the individuality regarded as healthy is that endowed with stability and coherence, with unity. The break evidenced by Naffah Neto’s theory (1994) is in the understanding of what personality is. For the author, the latter is characterized by a set of masks (*persona*, in Greek) that compose the multiple instances of subjectivity. The concept of masks is crucial for making possible the understanding of this multiple dimension of our reality, be it social, be it subjective. According to Naffah Neto, the mask “... designates, thus, in its multiple and mutant dimension, the sensible reality of the human, and behind the mask there is no other reality; only the fields of forces, in their connections, fights, forming circuits of production” (Naffah Neto, 1994, p. 73).

We must take into consideration too that each mask is formed and changed by the competition between countless relational fields. In view of this, the main characteristic of masks is their constant updating, which allows us to think of personality as an ever-changing multiplicity. It is from the alternations of these masks that social positions are possible.

Considering the two approaches exposed, Naffah Neto’s and Deleuze & Guattari’s, we have in common life being treated as experience, as a place for the creation of potentialities and, consequently, an affirmation of the desiring multiplicity. Thus, we come to the break of the previous models, in which the primacy of the unified subject signaled the characterization of the multiple as pathological.

Returning to the cinema, it is worth highlighting a passage in which Deleuze and Guattari (1972/2010) point out how the seventh art differs from the psychoanalytic and psychiatric theories: “It is possible that the cinema is capable of grasping the movement of madness, precisely because it is not analytical or regressive, but explores a global field of coexistence” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/2010, p. 362). Coexistence, one needs to consider, presupposes the existence of a multiplicity of perspectives that coexist without unifying themselves in a single look, a single subject.

It is possible to identify the characteristics present in the cinema by analyzing the film “Holy Motors” (2012), written and directed by the French director Leos Carax. This work follows a day in the life of Monsieur Oscar, employee at the company that gives the film its name. His function is simple, to walk around Paris playing roles. One moment he is an elderly homeless woman, in another an actor, in yet another a musician... During the film the main character multiplies. He transmutes himself in his trips



while thinking about the multiple tasks he must perform during the day. We can say that this character represents each one of us, with his change of action, change of mask, change of look, of perspective.

The subjectification processes, in which we become subjects, are multiple and this multiplicity is printed in our ways of being. The continued production and consumption of these images expose the viewer to the strange adventure of experiencing each of the many characters with whom he/she identifies. The profusion of these images, which are consumed at random, enables the emergence of a multiple, split and fragmented subject. And this subject carries, thus, the marks of his/her historical time, the heterogeneous and complex dimension of contemporary social means, in which he/she is constituted. The emergence of theoretical conceptions in Psychology that admit the subjective multiplicity, its condition irreducible to totalization, recognizes that Psychology takes its place through a continuous critique of its own assumptions and procedures. This happens due to the permanent transformation of the ways of making oneself a subject, its object of study.

The adoption of a new conception of subject in Psychology attests, simultaneously, the irreversible changes that the capitalist contemporaneity prints in the life in society and the provisional nature of knowledge production in psychology, when the latter is inserted into a historical approach. Through continuous criticism, Psychology can distance itself from the condition of a normalization instrument that adopts as model those who are considered psychologically intact, putting the others under a pathologic condition.

Multiplicity, as we have seen, is an intrinsic characteristic of existence. Without it, we imprison ourselves to depleted forms of life. We become hostages of "paralyzing narcissisms", as Naffah Neto (1994, p. 29) says. We can experience life as the character in the film, fully exploring at every moment the masks that make us. Psychology is in charge of fitting this perspective into its practices, of being a facilitator of experience, ally of the power and not a hindrance of desires, for the sake of the coherence, the constancy and the continuity of the individual subject.

### **Final considerations**

Once the developmental trajectories of the cinema and psychology throughout the twentieth century and in the early twenty-first century were covered, one can perceive that these two types of production, heterogeneous in relation to each other and with quite different objectives, can be related. A matter that articulates these productions is the conception of the human that they convey and spread. Psychology, as a discipline of the human sciences, needs to characterize the human whom it wants to know and did so by attributing to him/her, at least to the human considered normal, the condition of being unitary, a cohesive and intact whole. This movement lasted throughout the twentieth century and can be understood as the extension of a long-standing philosophical and medical tradition. This perspective is based on the notion of totality and incessantly returns to it.

The cinema as an audiovisual production does not have any concern about the theoretical systematization of subjectivity. It puts into operation a complex dynamics in which multiple characters interact with each other conveying to the viewer the motives, desires, convictions, values, ways of feeling and thinking of each one of them. This myriad of subjectivity fragments is then appropriated selectively by the viewer who consciously and unconsciously has his/her subjective constitution transformed by the acquisitions that the cinema provides. It can be said then that the cinema, from its birth and later popularization, brings the mark of the urban and mass societies of the twentieth century in which the human condition gained heterogeneity and complexity. In the urban environment, due to a continuous expansion, lifestyles are affected by encounters with an increasing number of people. It is in this context that multiplicity becomes a constituted mark in the life in society.

The cinema has also become one of the hallmarks of life in big cities, shaping a collective mode of entertainment which in turn engendered new types of sociability. The contemporary, individual and collective life is full of heterogeneity and owes that to the cinema too, which affected each viewer with the experience of others, displayed on the screen.

The urban cultural environment that takes shape in this process can be considered one of the forces that have propelled psychology to review its paradigms, abandoning, at least in some aspects, the philosophical notion of unity.

At the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century it has to be said that the cinema is no longer the same when it comes to the form that prevailed since its emergence. The collective exhibition rooms largely gave way to the home viewer who watches movies on TV and on the computer. Its diversifying role, however, remains. The effects produced on ongoing subjectification processes among populations will also be one of the marks in the human life of the twenty-first century. What can we expect as a result of that? Probably, new displacements in the field of psychology will come, following the fast subjective mutation that, on a global scale, the cinema helps drive.

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