

Ferenczi and Freud Revisited: the uses of denial (*Verleugnung*) in scientific production

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ABSTRACT – The present research aimed to investigate the uses of the concept of disavowal (*Verleugnung*) in scientific productions. An integrative literature review of scientific papers was carried out in the Scielo, Biblioteca Virtual de Saúde and Web of Science databases in Portuguese, English and Spanish. Thirty-nine publications were analyzed. Extrapolations of the concept as circumscribed to the clinic of perversions were found, with the predominance of an analysis of *Verleugnung* in its inseparable relationship with culture, a general trend. Three predominant forms of its use were observed in the literature: 1) dialogues with the paternal function; 2) dialogues with Ferenczi and his trauma theory; 3) dialogues with fetishism. As for the gaps, there is lack of consistent proposals for intervention at the clinical and political level, as well as lack of dialogue between certain theoretical lines.

KEYWORDS: *Verleugnung*; psychoanalysis; disavowal; bibliographic research.

Ferenczi e Freud Revisitados: dos usos do desmentido (*Verleugnung*) na produção científica

RESUMO – A pesquisa apresentada teve como objetivo investigar os usos do conceito de desmentido (*Verleugnung*) nas produções científicas. Realizou-se revisão integrativa de literatura nas bases Scielo, Biblioteca Virtual de Saúde e Web of Science, nos idiomas português, inglês e espanhol, no formato de artigos científicos, analisando-se 39 publicações. Verificam-se extrapolações do conceito enquanto circunscrito à clínica das perversões, com o predomínio de uma análise da *Verleugnung* em sua relação indissociável com a cultura, tendência geral dos artigos. Observaram-se três formas predominantes de seu uso na literatura: 1) em diálogo com a função paterna; 2) em diálogo com Ferenczi e sua teoria do trauma; 3) em diálogo com o fetichismo. Quanto às lacunas, há carência de propostas consistentes de intervenção no plano clínico e político, bem como a escassez de diálogo entre certas linhas teóricas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Verleugnung*; psicanálise; desmentido; pesquisa bibliográfica.

The concept of *Verleugnung* (disavowal) was conceived by Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939). Later, it gained a new guise when explored in the work of Sándor Ferenczi (1873 – 1933) given the articulations to his innovative theory of trauma. In contemporary times, the developments of Slavoj Žižek (2011) and Jean Pierre Lebrun (2008) are prominent in the discussion of the concept. Such contemporary developments are pointing to the concept's potential for reading cultural phenomena from a psychoanalytic perspective, opening the field for a greater dialogue between clinic and culture, extrapolating the scope of disavowal beyond the traditional

clinic of perversions and reviving the Freudian letter. We insist here, therefore, on the reopening of a rift that was originated by the indications left by the initiators of the psychoanalytic movement. The context, by itself, seems to demand the dilation of this gap, opposing the tendencies that operate under the suture logic (i.e., keeping the concept limited to purely clinical theorizations).

Given the complexity of the concept (which is made explicit by the number of neologisms and all the divergences in the translations into Portuguese, for example) there is the need for densification with regard to the use and

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consequent articulations of *Verleugnung* in the scientific productions that take it as a central category. This article has, as a general objective, the investigation of the uses of disavowal (*Verleugnung*) in scientific production, and as specific objectives: a) To explore the openings proposed by the revisitations of the concept; b) To characterize the themes to which this category is being articulated; and c) To indicate gaps and trends in scientific production on the subject.

THE PSYCHOANALYTIC CONCEPT OF “VERLEUGNUNG” AND ITS ORIGINS

In order to carry out this research, it is essential to go back to the beginnings of psychoanalytic literature related to the concept of Disavowal (*Verleugnung*), as well as to outline the evolution of this concept until we reach contemporary scientific productions.

“Desmentido”, “Negação”, “Recusa”, “Renegação” or even “Desautorização” are notions used as synonyms for the concept of *Verleugnung* in Portuguese language. The divergence found with regard to the transposition of the *Verleugnung* into Portuguese (and consequently to all other languages to which it was translated) exemplified by the five terms mentioned, can be taken as a starting point and justification for the brief reconstruction of the use and creation of such a concept that follows.

Sigmund Freud and the creation of the concept of *Verleugnung*.

The origins/first appearances of *Verleugnung* in Freud’s work can be traced back to its use as a noun and verb (“*Verleugnen*”) in different contexts, even before it took on the status of a concept in his later writings. Freud, used the German term in his writings always in order to accuse some kind of “negation”, which corresponds to the articulation proposed by Souza (2010) in his analysis of the terms of the Freudian vocabulary, where he states that *Verleugnung* can, in different aspects, be equated with “negar” of the Portuguese language.

It is from 1924 onwards (Freud, 1924/1996) that *Verleugnung* starts to gain the consistency (and the consequent delimitations) of a concept, being then taken as a form of rejection/negation that would be, in this part of the Freudian work (1924 to 1925), associated with psychosis. Such an association can be found in the 1924 text “The loss of reality in neurosis and psychosis” where, when elucidating the conflicts between psychic instances, Freud says that “psychosis denies reality”: “Or, in yet another way: the neurosis does not deny [verleugnet] reality, it just does not want to know about it; psychosis denies it [verleugnet] and seeks to replace it.” (Freud, 1924/1996, p. 140, emphasis added).

A year later, in his text “Some psychological consequences of the anatomical distinction between the sexes” (1925/1996),

In this work the following will be found: a table (Table 1) exposing the articles used for the research (arranged chronologically); information related to the theoretical foundation used; the methodology used in the analysis of the aforementioned articles and the results from the analysis carried out which deal with the bibliometric characteristics of the studies, the predominant ways of approaching disavowal in the productions, and the main gaps observed.

Freud again reinforces this association, treating *Verleugnung*, when present in adult subjects, as a trigger for a possible psychosis: “[...] the process that I would call “denial” [*Verleugnung*], which in the psychic life of the child seems to be neither rare nor very dangerous, but which in the adult would initiate a psychosis.” (Freud, 1925, p. 182, emphasis added). Here there is also a curious indication that points to the incidence of the process in children’s mental life and, consequently, the lack of the strict link with pathology.

This close association (between disavowal and psychosis) was not maintained for long. Three years later, in Freud’s work on fetishism (Freud, 1927/1996) the use of *Verleugnung* was then linked to the metapsychology of perversion, when the author states, in a more incisive delimitation of his own concept, that when it comes to perversion, the destination of representations would have to be explained based on the German term “*Verleugnung*”.

The solution found by the pervert regarding the fate of the aforementioned representations that comes from the realization of the reality of sexual difference and the threat of castration is then what he called, in this part of the work, *Verleugnung*: “Wanting firmly to differentiate the fate of the idea from that of affect, reserving the term ‘repression’ for the affect, the correct German designation for the fate of the idea would be *Verleugnung* [refusal, repudiation]” (Freud, 1927/1996, p. 246). With this kind of fixation of the concept, it is already possible to begin to understand the solution commonly found by Brazilian¹ and French translators, for example, since *Verleugnung* here starts to consist in a disavowal of sexual difference in its reality.

Eleven years after the publication of the aforementioned text (Freud, 1940 [1938]/1980) entitled “Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence”, it can be said that the concept reaches the apogee of its theoretical precision in Freud’s work when it is used to explain the “Splitting of the Ego” (*ichspaltung*) in this unfinished text, creating a field of theoretical opening that has been explored until the present day: the studies of the contradictory tendencies of a split

¹ It is understood from authors such as Drawin and Moreira (2018) (article 30 in table 1) that such a solution may have been influenced by the indications of Jacques Lacan, who proposes “*démenti*” for the French translations of the Freudian *Verleugnung*.

ego. One of the most relevant contributions with regard to *Verleugnung* came from one of his disciples: Sándor Ferenczi, as explained below.

The *Verleugnung* in Sándor Ferenczi

Ferenczi, known for his innovative theory of trauma - one of his most prominent psychoanalytic contributions, which in certain aspects conflicts with Freudian theory - when approaching and outlining his theoretical elaborations on how trauma would acquire a pathogenic character, he uses the *Verleugnung* as a fundamental concept inseparable from the traumatic process. We can read: “[...] The worst thing is really the denial [*Verleugnung*], the affirmation that nothing happened, that there was no suffering [...]” (Ferenczi, 1931/1992, p. 79, emphasis added). In the Ferenczian elaboration, Freud’s contributions related to disavowal are linked to the trauma theory, endowing it with new colors, and attributing an active role to disavowal in the characterization of pathogenic traumatism (through the movement of retroaction/resignification, which ends up characterizing the experience as pathologically traumatic).

It is clear that such an approach causes a wide opening in which *Verleugnung* can be explored in contexts that transcend its traditional/current use at the time (the conceptualization of the term as basically limited to the structural delineation of perversions and the ego splitting mechanism). Theorizations related to the social field are highlighted, as it can be seen later in this text. The exquisite opening proposed by Ferenczi marks the shift of *Verleugnung* from a restrictively intrapsychic application to an application that considers the dimension of the social bond as indispensable.

Ferenczi (1931/1992) evoking the issue of “disauthorization” of the child’s narrative/report as a constituent of the temporality of trauma, simultaneously

presents us with a new model for thinking about the discursive application of the Freudian concept. Ferenczi’s text contains, in germinal form, foundations for thinking about the ethics of the analytic experience and the repositioning of the analyst as such: the analyst can be the one who “disavows” and, working against the transference management, invalidates the account of the analysand. Themes such as “recognition”, “trust” and “horizontality” are evoked by the reading of Ferenczi’s theories, opening space for possible political articulations.

The Contemporary uses of *Verleugnung*

Considering the conceptual opening left by Freud and Ferenczi, our understanding of the contemporary uses of the concept is broadened. Now both are taken to think about situations different from those that the two authors dealt with in the early days of the psychoanalytic movement and to explore and amplify the use that the authors gave to the term.

The prominence of scientific productions that deal with *Verleugnung* as linked to the social and political field is notorious. In national [Brazilian] territory, one can observe, for example, the work of Gondar and Reis (2017) called “Com Ferenczi: Clínica, Subjetivação, política”, one of many works that aim to revisit the works of Ferenczi and Freud in order to bring to light their political dimension and consequent openings.

Internationally, the contributions of Jean Pierre Lebrun stand out, with his work “La Perversion Ordinaire” (Lebrun, 2008) being well known. This work uses the term in order to explore – among other issues – the contemporary social bond, the paternal function and its mutations. Also of interest, in this sense, there are the works of the Slovenian Slavoj Žižek, who in several writings and, notably, in his book “*In Defense of Lost Causes*” (Žižek, 2011), elaborates the “disavowal of reality” for a psychoanalytic/political analysis.

METHOD

The present research is characterized as an integrative review. The choice of methodology was guided by the need to carry out a bibliographic survey of qualitative nature that could integrate the results obtained through the analysis into a set and to promote a broad understanding of the topic addressed, as well as to enable the reproduction of such a methodology for scientific purposes.

Regarding the integrative review, through Souza et al. (2010), it is understood that the purpose of the method can be summarily defined as the realization of a form of synthesis of researches on a given topic, aiming to lead/guide scientific practice and it is originated from the need

for a method that encompasses the “applicability of results and significant studies in practice” (p 102). The search was carried out in April 2021 in three different databases: Scielo (Scientific Electronic Library Online), Virtual Health Library (BVS) and Web of Science. The research covered Portuguese, English and Spanish articles, without delimiting a specific time period. The following keywords were used (in a standardized way in all the aforementioned databases): “Desmentida” or “*Verleugnung*” and “Psicoanálisis”, “Desmentido or *Verleugnung* and Psicanálise”, “Disavowal or *Verleugnung* and Psychoanalysis”. The addition of the original German term (*Verleugnung*) in all searches is due

to the frequency with which it is cited in publications in different languages.

In a first search in these databases, 456 publications were obtained. After completing this first stage of the search process, followed by a previous analysis of the material found, the following inclusion criteria were adopted: only works that are published in the form of a scientific article; available in full version; that take the concept of disavowal (*Verleugnung*) as central to their development. All articles repeated in the different databases were excluded.

After using the aforementioned inclusion and exclusion criteria, the final number of 39 articles was selected for further analysis. As for the method to be used in the forthcoming analysis of the amount obtained after the said

processes of inclusion and exclusion, Discourse Analysis was taken in its dialogues and intersections with psychoanalysis:

[...] the relationship between Linguistics and Psychoanalysis is a two-way road. At the same time that information from Linguistics is of interest to Psychoanalysis, the latter can also contribute to Linguistics. Thus, for Leite (1994), unconscious discourse engenders displacements and, as a result, Lacan refused to think of Language as an exclusive object of Linguistics. In this way, he affirms the existence of a theory of language forged from the concept of the Unconscious and already outlined in Freud's work. (Melo, 2005)

Such analysis culminated in the exploration of the material and treatment of the results obtained. The articles selected for the research are listed below.

Table 1
Selected articles.

Nº	YEAR	TITLE	AUTHORS
1	2004	A questão da crença versus a questão da fé: articulações com a <i>Verleugnung</i> freudiana	Cintra
2	2007	Luto insólito, desmentido e trauma: clínica psicanalítica com mães de bebês	Iaconelli
3	2007	A divisão do sujeito: a hipótese de uma <i>Urverleugnung</i> (desmentido primordial)	Queiroz
4	2008	A guerra e o repúdio ao feminino: Tróia como paradigma	Filho & Quadros
5	2009	Neopentecostalismo: desamparo e condição masoquista	Paravidini & Gonçalves
6	2009	Pedro e o lobo: o criminoso perverso e a perversão social	Sequeira
7	2010	A perversão e a teoria queer	Flores
8	2010	As patologias do niilismo em nossa modernidade	Gori
9	2010	Desamparo y desmentida en la familia actual: intervenciones del analista	Rojas
10	2011	Ambiguidade e bissexualidade: desdobramentos da recusa no campo transferencial e do pensamento	Silva
11	2012	Acerca de la <i>Verleugnung</i> en el contrato masoquista	Bisso
12	2012	Ferenczi como pensador político	Gondar
13	2013	Algumas considerações sobre o papel da <i>Verleugnung</i> na situação clínica	Honda
14	2013	Estudio comparativo de las defensas localizadas en el discurso de una adolescente con adicción grave	Coronel
15	2013	How I learned to stop worrying and love the market: virtualism, disavowal, and public secrecy in neoliberal environmental conservation	Fletcher
16	2013	Traços-memórias na literatura das américas: Margaret Atwood, Linda Hogan, Maryse Condé e Benedicto Monteiro	Walter
17	2014	A perversão no território: os efeitos do desmentido	Filho & Facundes
18	2014	Práticas sociais das perversões: modernidade do laço, organização social e dilemas morais	Lévy
19	2016	Parla Moise! De como Freud criou o conceito de desmentido	Fuks
20	2016	O outro que não existe: verdade verídica, verdades mentirosas e desmentidos veementes	Santos, T.
21	2016	“A Qualquer Preço”: quando a realidade é desmentida	Padilha
22	2016	Desmentido ou inexistência do Outro: a era da pós-verdade	Santos, T.
23	2016	Do psicopata-monstro ao psicopata comum: os desmentidos nossos de cada dia	Santos, M.
24	2016	O desmentido da privação na atualidade	Quintella
25	2017	O desmentido é um artifício utilizado pelo cínico para lidar com a existência do Outro	Tironi
26	2017	Thinking About Denial	Hall & Pick
27	2017	A obesidade e o desmentido da castração: uma posição religiosa	Antunes
28	2017	La gravedad del duelo como acontecimiento	Guzmán & Escalante

Table 1
Cont.

Nº	YEAR	TITLE	AUTHORS
29	2018	A lógica do fantasma na passagem da modernidade à contemporaneidade	Oliveira & Santos T.
30	2018	A Verleugnung em Freud: análise textual e considerações hermenêuticas	Drawin & Moreira
31	2018	Algunas de las paradojas del creer: una mirada psicoanalítica, sociológica y antropológica	González
32	2018	Considerações sobre as anorexias e as especificidades das neuroses contemporânea	Oliveira & Santos T.
33	2018	Eyes wide shut: the fantasies and disavowals of education policy	Clarke
34	2018	São 788 degraus: a psicanálise sobre o morro	Alencar
35	2019	Two Forms of Fetishism: From the Commodity to Revolution in “Us”	McGowan
36	2019	Ferenczi e a educação: desconstruindo a violência desmentida	Arreguy & Montes
37	2019	Ferenczi e os objetivos do tratamento psicanalítico: autenticidade, neocatarse, crianceria	Kupermann
38	2019	Psicanálise e história: um olhar sobre a desigualdade no Brasil	Conte
39	2019	Trauma, clivagem e progressão intelectual: um estudo sobre o bebê sábio ferencziano	Mello et al.

BIBLIOMETRIC CONSIDERATIONS

The 39 articles analyzed, in terms of authorship, were written by 28 women and 17 men. The publications are distributed in 26 different journals, among which the following are prominent: “Revista Latinoamericana de Psicopatologia Fundamental” with six articles, and “Revista aSEPHallus de Orientação Lacaniana” with four articles. The vast majority (77%) are journals of clinical psychology and/or psychoanalysis.

Among the authors analyzed, two of them appear with more than one publication. Coelho Dos Santos (2016/2018) stands out in the authorship of four of the analyzed articles [articles 20, 22, 29, 32 in table 1]; Oliveira (2018) is the author of two of the articles in the analysis archive [29; 32], both co-authored with Coelho Dos Santos. With regard to the background of the authors, there is a predominance of psychology and psychoanalysis. Thirty articles were written by psychology graduates, and 26 of these authors have psychoanalytic formation. Among the other academic areas of the authors are: languages, medicine, theology, education (two authors), history, anthropology and philosophy.

Among the selected articles, 31 are in Portuguese, four in English and four in Spanish. Thirty-two articles were published in Brazil and among other countries are: Colombia (1), Argentina (1), United States (1), Costa Rica (1), England (2), and Mexico (1). It is understood that the predominance of articles in Portuguese and written by Brazilian authors may point to national trends regarding the revisitation of the Ferenczian and Freudian work in relation to the concept of disavowal to think about the Brazilian social reality. The possibility that such prominence was due to the choice of keywords is also not ruled out, considering that *Verleugnung* is usually translated in different ways in different languages, which points us again to the density and nebulosity of such a term mentioned during the course of the article.

Without defining a period for the search, the distribution of articles took place between the years 2004 and 2019. This search result points to the expansion and revisitation of the concept in the productions of the last 20 years, the underlying hypothesis of this work. The analysis revealed the years in which more publications were concentrated: 2016 (six articles), 2018 (six articles) and 2019 (five articles). The VI Symposium of the Instituto Sephora de Ensino e Pesquisa de Orientação Lacaniana (ISEPOL) “Invenções e desmentidos - verdade, mentira e ficção” held in 2016 gave rise to two of the analyzed articles (which may explain the concentration of publications in this period).

The ways to approach disavowal.

During the research, a myriad of themes linked to the concept of disavowal in the analyzed scientific productions are faced. Among these themes, three were prominent: 1) changes in the paternal function; 2) trauma; 3) fetishism. These themes emerged as the main ways of approaching the concept of disavowal. In addition to the three prominent themes, there are: etymological analyzes and investigations of the origin of the concept in Freud’s work [articles 30 and 19]; investigations of clinical phenomena [articles 28, 23, 10]; and also: articles that, despite not having any of the three themes considered prominent as main guides, point to an understanding of disavowal in culture and as an active process in contemporary discursive modalities [articles 33, 26, 25, 9 and 16].

It was observed, then, the predominance of an analysis of *Verleugnung* in its -inseparable - relationship with culture, which was located as a general tendency of the articles, a relationship that opens paths for contemporary social analysis, having disavowal as a paradigm for the

understanding of cultural changes in contemporaneity - following the psychoanalytic path - in order to suspend the opposition between “internal and external” which by itself is no longer sustained in psychoanalysis, as we know that the word comes from the other.

The disavowal in dialogue with the paternal function.

In psychoanalysis, with the Freudian theorization concerning the Oedipal complex (1913), Freud already introduces the subject of the paternal function as structuring the social bond and causing the cut that dissolves the “completeness” of the purely dual relationship, initiating desire. The paternal function is not restricted to the biological father (male and taken as an individual) since it is entangled in the dynamics of the subject and is indispensable to the formation of the subject as such. In Lacanian psychoanalysis - supported by a return to Freud - the paternal function is emphasized as taken within the symbolic operation that intervenes in the mother-baby relationship as a gateway for the subject to enter the symbolic network. We speak here of the domain of castration, of the subject’s entry into sexual desire through the renunciation of the incestuous object/the recognition of impossibility.

Since the beginnings of psychoanalysis, the paternal function, as an element external to the mother-child relationship, introduces a traumatic mark in the psyche, before which the subject necessarily experiences a relationship of submission. The other side of this relationship with the father is the symbolic debt that the subject contracts with the one who frees the child from its undifferentiation with the maternal Other. (Oliveira & Coelho dos Santos, 2018, p.933) (article 29)

Discussions regarding the disavowal as related to changes in the “paternal function” predominate, appearing in 13 analyzed articles, which are identified in table one, with the numbers: 1, 4, 6, 12, 14, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 27, 29 and 32. These are in dialogue with the themes: belief, faith, narcissism, castration fetishism, perversion, lack, the feminine, phallus, politics, social contract, horizontality, social movements, reality, splitting of the ego, virtuality, tradition, law, neoliberalism, consumer capitalism, passage from modernity to contemporaneity, obesity, the phantom.

In the discussions regarding disavowal as related to changes in the “paternal function” there are mentions of its implication in the constitution of the subject and, more specifically, its relationship with what can be grouped in the generic category “contemporary subject”. Authors such as Jean-Pierre Lebrun emphasize the importance of taking what they call the “decline of the paternal role” as a significant trend that has considerable reflexes/impacts in the social and psychic spheres.

Considering the paternal function in its interdictory aspect, it is understood that its decline would inevitably culminate in an “unrestriction” of jouissance and, consequently, in a symbiotic movement towards the figure of the primitive mother, marking the impossibility of the separation process. Here, the legitimacy of the paternal role would be disavowed. Therefore, it appears as a consequence that: the form of inscription (or the disavowal) of the paternal function is manifested in culture, inevitably affecting and provoking mutations in the social bond.

The dismantling of patriarchy, the rise of science discourse², the plasticity of capitalism and, finally, the influence of neoliberalism’s social engineering can be thought of as prominent aspects when analyzing contemporary forms of jouissance.

This study is relevant to the reflection on the role of authority in the Oedipal plot that marks an important difference in the constitution of the contemporary subject, especially with regard to the establishment of the ego ideal. The breakdown of the father’s authority in the family plot is increasingly evident since the deconstruction of patriarchy and the emergence of the discourse of science (Lebrun, 2009, p.119). (Quintella, 2016 [article 24]) (Emphasis in the original)

One of the articles (article 12) approaches the theme of the paternal function from another perspective. Considering the tendency raised in the previous paragraphs as “declinologist” (because they would be pessimistic discourses regarding the decline of the paternal function), it points to criticisms that consider the “positive” character of the horizontalization of relationships. It is worth mentioning that the article mentions Jacques-Alain Miller as someone who “admits the horizontality of the social field without regrets, as an unavoidable process of feminization of culture”, but that, nevertheless, Miller would remain attached to a phallic reference. The criticism here is focused on an “attachment” to the phallus that seems to culminate in a resistance to contemporary movements that would abandon such a “phallogocentric” notion. It is also noteworthy that a dialogue that considers the Ferenczian notion of disavowal in its articulation with the “declinologist” authors takes place solely and exclusively in this article (out of the 39 analyzed).

Despite the divergence of approaches, (“declinologist” or not) the authors tend to converge with regard to the influence of the “paternal function” (and its transformations) in the structuring of the contemporary social bond. The new forms of subjectivity/experience of the subjective, as well as the new “social engineering” that accompany the development

² Lebrun’s work, supported by the Lacanian theory of discourses, proposes articulations between the emergence of the “discourse of science” (in its distinction from science itself) and the structuring of the social bond. The author deals with the “omission of the subject” and the “instrumentalization of language”.

of “contemporary subjects”, can be thought of in the light of such a function. Article [24], for example, points out that the dissolution of the social bond in contemporaneity, linked to the experiences of excess, can culminate in calls for the restructuring of the paternal role in an even more radical way: “desperate attempts to make the law assume there its value” (Quintella, 2016) (article 24).

In culture, one finds the discourse that disavows lack and castration, a discourse that aims to make the impossible immanent, relegating the carnal father to impotence before the great Other as the provider of everything. The social bond founded on such a discourse would lead to this weakening of the symbolic effectiveness of the interdict which, under the aegis of disavowal, produces changes in all contemporary subjectivity. Such alterations seem to blur the “lines” that would separate the great psychic structures proposed by psychoanalysis, having a significant impact on the sovereignty of neurosis and repression. Lebrun (2008) seems to point out that, in contemporary times, repression and “normal neurosis” have been dethroned as paradigmatic (as they were in the modern era). The disavowal (perverse mechanism) and a “common perversion” seem to succeed the former duo in the sense of organizing the current social bond. The common should not be confused or purely identified with structural perversion.

The articles analyzed in the present work seem to converge in the sense of pointing to the question of disavowal as disconnected from a close and inseparable link with structural perversion: thus, the disavowal is also present in neurotics. Such recognition, which agrees with the openings proposed in the Freudian theorizations, expands the socio-political reach of psychoanalysis, and allows dynamically updating the letter of the Freudian work.

Ferenczi and the Trauma Theory

In the analyzed articles, among the themes that dialogue with the Ferenczian theory are: mourning, communication, mother-baby bond, recognition, modernity, death, clinical horizontality, vulnerability, new social bond, politics, facilitating environment, social suffering, democracy, education, authenticity, neocatharsis, identification, groups, inequality, ethics, cleavage, the wise baby.

Within the Ferenczian theoretical framework, his theory is used to think about the social bond from the perspective of the denial of experience, a refusal of recognition or disavowal, which appears in seven articles, namely: 2, 12, 34, 36, 37, 38, and 39. For this, his innovative theory of trauma is evoked: “[...] The worst thing is really the denial [Verleugnung], the affirmation that nothing happened, that there was no suffering [...]” (Ferenczi, 1931/1992, p. 79, emphasis added). It is worth mentioning that, in the articles researched, it was observed that the authors who opted for a “Lacanian” or “Freudo-Lacanian” approach did not promote articulations with Ferenczi’s trauma theory, in the same

way as the “ferenczians” do not mention the elaborations of the aforementioned authors in relation to the paternal function, with the exception of article 12, which points to “declinologist” tendencies.

No thinker has dedicated himself so insistently, rigorously and passionately to elaborating a theory of trauma as Ferenczi. However, he has rarely been summoned to the debate on contemporaneity, as if, unlike Freud, his contributions could not extrapolate the clinical field. (Gondar, 2012, p. 194) (article 12). The social non-recognition/disauthorization, as a form of disavowal, is highlighted in Ferencz’s work and would simultaneously point to a social malaise and to a consistent clinical practice guided by the logic of recognition. In this, we re-enter the discussion on the constitution of the “new” social bond founded on the disavowal of contemporary discourse. The aforementioned author, using the Ferenczian theory, points to horizontality in clinical praxis and sees a “positive possibility” of intervention in the new political-social organization that “would overcome verticality” (the creation of a social bond that is guided by the recognition of the vulnerability), which again contrasts him with authors primarily based on Lacanian/Freudo-Lacanian as Lebrun (2008) in approaching the mutations of the social bond. On the other hand, the latter, while discussing the problems caused by said mutations, also points to social movements of resistance (article 17, for example), and provides us with theoretical material to think about the restructuring of the clinic in contemporary times from through the notion of disavowal.

The disavowal associated with the issue of refusal of recognition brings Ferenczi closer to the discussions that would involve a new modality of social bond, even though the dialogue between “declinologists” and Ferenczians is scarce in the analyzed articles. An ethical-political position can be clearly drawn from Ferencz’s ideas, considering both his theories about trauma and the recognition of vulnerability, as well as the theories concerning clinical horizontality (which extend to the horizontality of relationships in contemporary times).

With the correlation of the *Verleugnung* with the trauma theory, the Freudian contributions are imbued with a new meaning, in order to attribute an active role to the disavowal regarding the characterization of trauma as pathogenic. In a retroactive movement of resignification, the “denial of suffering”, for example, could lead to the characterization of the experience as pathologically traumatic. Thus, when considering a social discourse (or a social trauma) that is predominantly marked by disavowal, it is possible to analyze the pathogenic consequences of such and to use new lens to social analysis: ferenczian micro and macro politics (article 12).

The disavowal as the retroactive signification of the traumatic event is an agent that causes the dissolution of social relations based on recognition and trust, which has obvious implications in relation to the symbolic and the

subject's own relationship with reality and perception. This seems to corroborate the hypothesis that the contemporary social bond cannot be psychoanalyzed disregarding the action of the *Verleugnung* and the rise of such a mechanism that seems to take on a paradigmatic significance in response to the subjectivity characteristic of our era.

Also according to the Ferenczian version of trauma, the psychic defense against denial would be narcissistic self-cleavage (Ferenczi, 1913/1988, p. 77). In this sophisticated narcissic jury-rig, the part of the subject that carries the experience of the traumatic experience remains extremely fragile and injured, while the other part "matures" quickly to try to adapt to reality. Social non-recognition produces a subject with dead, inexpressive, silenced fragments. (Alencar, 2018, p.63) (article 34).

Issues present in Ferencziana's work, such as the "narcissistic self-cleavage" that would be a defense against disavowal (article 34), point again to an influential issue in the constitution of the social bond (the effects of social denial). Links with neoliberalism, of which article 36 is an example, can be drawn from these contributions.

Could there be a more paradigmatic situation of this disavowal than the beating of teachers by the police in their strikes and protest demonstrations? Teachers who complain and mobilize against the condition of exploitation in which they live are even more punished by authoritarian security policies. The discourse on "education for all", which never really takes place, takes the place of a cultural fetish. (Montes & Arreguy, 2019, p.250) [article 36].

The mentioned article elaborates with regard to disavowal while active in the educational sphere and the issue of lack of recognition. Based on Ferenczi, it is possible to recognize the indisputable influence of the current (capitalist) system in the perpetuation of social denial.

Fetishism

It is noteworthy, in the discussion that follows, that the background of the logic of consumption corroborates the theory of the fetishist disavowal as a paradigm of the modern social bond and its inconsistencies, being present in 12 of the analyzed articles (6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 18, 21, 31, 32, 35, and 36).

The change in the social bond brought to light by the rise of mercantile logic with its new forms of symptomatology, frantic demand and unrestricted *jouissance*, seems to point to the symbolic transfiguration recognized by the different authors that compose our present analysis, and guides again to the Freudian contributions related to the clinic of perversion. Such logic, resembling the perverse response to castration, would disavow the distressing reality of lack in a refusal to abdicate the form of total *jouissance*. The Freudian proposal of the refusal of castration operated by the pervert is thus updated and revisited in the light of the aspiration to unrestricted *jouissance*, of the transgression

in contemporaneity that would culminate in a possible dissolution of the oedipal pact.

Perversion is inseparable from the social sphere and as such, in the vast majority of articles, it is taken beyond the clinic and its purely structural bias. We are also dealing here with neurotics who present perverse traits and mechanisms (mainly disavowal), which can again point to contemporary social trends. The two opposing positions of the pervert (knowing and not knowing the maternal phallus, which finds its pseudo-reconciliation in the fetish object) are taken as a support for social analysis. The disavowal is taken from its close association - as an exclusive defense of the "structural perverts - and is, in a certain way, "generalized" for neurotic subjects, under a new metapsychological understanding. Following the openings proposed by the Freudian work, some authors (Article 13) observe the *Verleugnung* as being considered as stripped of the strict "pathology", now taken as a fundamental process of all mental functioning: "Freud's phrase 'I then began to suspect that similar phenomena are not uncommon in childhood' reveals his intuition that he was addressing a mechanism of wider occurrence, in addition to cases of fetishism and the onset of psychoses." (Cintra, 2004, p.46) (Article 1).

Still regarding the intrinsic approximation of the concept of perversion and disavowal, there are themes such as neoliberal capitalist discourse and religious discourse as associated with the "social uses of perversion" (articles: 1, 5, 22, 25, 27, 31, and 35). The studies, see in the fetish the support to a transgressive position of insubordination to the paternal interdict of castration / establishment of lack. In a single movement, the fetish establishes itself as a recognition and challenge to the threat. The perverse tendencies related to the disavowal of the lack of castration and the fetishistic impulse related to the object and its forms of unveiling are found in the contemporary core and feed theories such as Lebrun's "common perversion". The fetishist disavowal of castration (primarily associated with the perception of sexual difference and lack), which can be traced back to a mythical stage of childhood, works to assuage the anguish caused by the terrifying presence of lack in the perceptual field. In this process, the perverse through *Verleugnung* generates the fetish object that makes up the unbearable of female castration, hiding the lack even if it is recognized (in the union of contradictory propositions).

In contemporary times, the theme of fetishist disavowal was closely linked to neoliberal discourse and consumer capitalism. Marx's "commodity fetishism" marked some of these discussions. The neoliberal background of contemporary society is loaded with a fetishist bias that aims to cover the lack and preaches for unrestricted *jouissance*. Since the fetishist disavowal is the answer to the subjectivity that would characterize the current stage of capitalist societies, the articulations between Marxist theory and psychoanalysis emphasize the intimate connection between "psychic subjectivity", clinic and politics. The fetish-objects are exalted

in the appeal to consumerist proto-completeness of consumer capitalism and in the superegoic imperatives of the social injunction that summons us (thus, performatively building new modes of subjective experience): “Enjoy!” (Zizek, 2009).

With the disavowal, in the split position between knowing and not knowing about castration represented by the veil that hides and points out the lack simultaneously - a lack that is supplanted by the substitute of the maternal phallus, the fetish - the subject assumes the phallic place, thus dethroning the figure of paternal authority. The unbearable of castration and the law (while being a symbolic instance) are circumvented by the perverse subject. Here, we can see the approximations with the previous theme (paternal function). Such dialogue was developed by three of the analyzed articles [6, 21, 32].

The supposed triumph that obliterates the lack and veils the threat and castration can be found in the contemporary capitalist discourse that covers the lack with the commodity and, with its discourse, covers the conflicts and divisions inherent to society as it is organized contemporaneously. It is found in the intersubjective functioning of the subjects (not necessarily perverse in structure) the so-called coexistence of the two positions contradictory by nature: the recognition and non-recognition of lack. Neoliberalism is invariably fetishistic when it corroborates the transmission of a discourse that founds an understanding of the world guided by the absence of lack, by a “completeness” that nullifies any castration (and fetishizes the objects of consumption that become superegoic imperatives), exponentially increasing the unbearable lack in the other.

The concealing function of the object, even in the case of commodity, can be used to understand the social bond founded in our era that has its support and perpetuation in the fetishist disavowal. Article 35, for example, in an articulation between Freud and Marx (and consequently between Freudian Fetishism and Marx’s commodity fetishism) points to the fact that capitalism uses fetishism to “conceal” or “obscure” the work that constituted the commodity itself, and explains that the promise of capitalism lies in the suture of the subject’s own constitutive lack (which would be supplanted by the commodity).

In a complementary way to the social pact that includes and excludes, we have the denial of castration, by the imperative of *jouissance*, promise of the current world, deriving from capitalism. These two aspects are complementary because the imperative of *jouissance* leads to a perverse bond. Capitalist society places the commodity as a fetish, which plugs the lack, leads to the illusion of completeness, of immediate satisfaction. This fetishist position is a denial of subordination to symbolic law, which compromises the social pact. (Sequeira, 2009, p. 226) (article 6).

Among the themes that dialogued with the theme of fetishism are: Crime, Prison, queer theory, compulsory

heterosexuality, nihilism, civilization, addiction, virtualism, Market, neoliberalism, class division, consumer capitalism, environmental preservation, social bond, morality, submission, cinema, faith, belief, epistemology, sociology, anorexia, policy, commodity fetishism, revolution and education.

Gaps and approximations: the scientific production on disavowal.

Taking into account what was exposed in the previous items and the division between categories, we were able to pay attention to certain gaps. The articulation between Ferenczi’s theory of trauma and “declinologist” authors (such as Lebrun) is almost non-existent, being restricted to a single article [12]. This would be a fertile field for critical analysis, even if it culminated in irreconcilable antagonisms (which, at first glance, does not seem to be the case). The disavowal as “disauthorization of experience” as well as the psychoanalysis of “horizontality” proposed by Ferenczi can undoubtedly be discussed in the light of concepts such as “the paternal function and its decline/alteration”.

There are also few articles that work with the Ferenczian theory of trauma and the fetishist logic in dialogue (we only find such articulation in article 36), while the dialogues between the fetishist logic and the paternal function are a little more recurrent (articles: 6, 21 and 32).

The lack of consistent proposals for intervention at the clinical and political level also stands out. The recognition of the ills of the new structuring of the social bond and the changes in subjectivity found in the clinic demand an analysis consistent with political ambition and revisitations to psychoanalytic praxis: the decline or alteration of the paternal function, the new social bond, the economic system in perpetual feedback with the disavowal/fetishist logic, the disavowal in the discourse, the blurring of the “lines” of structural division, the “annihilation” of the lack, the push towards “completeness”, the transgressive bias, etc. With all these topics in mind, what would be the strategies for a clinic of the “contemporary subject”? Investigations concerning the analyst as entangled in a logic crossed by a “cultural disavowal” are necessary: are there changes in the analytical position?

As for a theoretical repositioning, most of the articles indicate and seem to account for the need to study the concept and its incidence in the current context, in a conceptual revival. Finally, it is also noteworthy that the introduction of some “neologisms” and hypotheses such as the *Urverleugnung* or “Primordial Disavowal” (ARTICLE 3) points us to a fecundity of new explorations of the term. Some relatively unexplored concepts rescued from Freud’s work - such as the “repudiation of femininity” (article 4) that brings Freud’s *Ablehnung* closer to *Verleugnung* - suggest deeper research on the subject.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

During the article, we were able to turn many times to the question of the extension of psychoanalysis as an epistemic territory and its updates that are inseparable from the transmutations of human culture and, consequently, from the oscillating social configurations. It is notorious the look at contemporaneity that privileges the analysis of the social bond and the discursive modalities that constitute it. Interdiscursive revolutions, dialogic crossings – both seem to point to an interdisciplinarity that cannot be thought of as detached from the ethical-political facet of psychoanalysis. In addition to the recognition of the ills that constitute the structuring of the social, changes begin to be outlined in the analytical perspective itself and in the intervention processes. The disavowal, threatening the privileged position of repression in psychoanalysis, opens the way for an extrapolation of

the conceptualization of Verleugnung beyond its use as inseparable from perverse subjects.

The considerable number of themes linked to the concept in the contemporary revival of the Freudian and Ferenczian contribution is a notable point in the research. This point makes us think first of the analytical potential of the said expansion/extrapolation of the analytical field that the concept previously seemed to encompass (circumscribed to the clinic of perversions and the perverse subject). In Freud, we saw that in a way we can already find the concept as not restricted to “strict pathology”. With this, we are led to think about the need to expand the hypotheses that still appear in a germinal way in the analyzed articles considering that their densification can contribute even more to future investigations.

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