

The experience and the time during the passage to the contemporary adolescence

Rose Gurski^{*a}
Marcelo Ricardo Pereira^b

^aFederal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Institute of Psychology, Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil

^bFederal University of Minas Gerais, College of Education, Department of Applied Sciences to Education, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil

Abstract: This article, written as an essay, is the result of a theoretical research that questioned the categories of experience and time in the psyches of adolescent. Through the articulation of the psychoanalysis of the adolescent with the theme of time and the concept of experience in Walter Benjamin's theory, we seek to problematize the adolescent passage in the time settings in the current social bonding. The article suggests that we should not rush into diagnosis, because the current symptomatology of adolescence might be an expression of youth suffering and a resistance mechanism when facing the culture's conditions. Such conditions can produce an expansion of the time for understanding, as a delay of the encounter with the moment of conclusion. So, in order to produce conditions for the subject towards a self-interpretation, besides the instant, the time and the moment, it could be possible an extra time called interval. That interval could be an effect of the expansion of the time for understanding.

Keywords: adolescence, experience, psychoanalysis, time.

Preciso ser um outro para ser eu mesmo
Sou grão de rocha, sou o vento que a desgasta
Sou pólen sem inseto

Sou areia sustentando o sexo das árvores
Existo onde me desconheço aguardando para o
meu passado

Ansiando a esperança de futuro
No mundo que combato, morro
No mundo que luto, nasço
(Poema Identidade, Mia Couto, 2001)

Discuss the adolescent passage amidst the configurations of time in the current social context is also a way of thinking the effects of temporality on the psychic operation of adolescence. In the words of Kehl (2009), this is not to say that the subject of the unconscious is not produced in the contemporary subjectivities, but that the intermediate forms of psychic activity between the repressed unconscious and the work of the perception-consciousness system have been impoverished because of the excessive demands that burden the consciousness, making the perception of lived time empty and urgent.

Such interpretation about the psychic functioning can also be considered one of the possible effects of the

so-called demoralization of experience – thus identified by Benjamin (1936/1994) in his writings on the archeology of Modernity. The emptying of the experience dimension, referred to by the author, would be associated with the way that there is transmission of memory, from the past and from the own experience – often turned into tradition. In this sense, we have asked ourselves about the way the current conditions of social bond may predispose the young to a constraint with the links of past and memory, impacting the modes of representation, the impressions and, therefore, the subject's psychic constitution, especially in the adolescent passage.

Our concern is unravelling such issues in conjunction with the theme of time, since this is a key element in the psychic constitution. Lacan (1944/1998), in the text about logical time, reinforces the idea that the subject of the unconscious comes from an interval, not a place; that is, it is not associated with spatial logic, but with temporal logic, which necessarily relates the subjective experience of time to the possible knowledge of the subject of the unconscious. According to Kehl (2009, p. 188), time is one of the dimensions of the lack, since “. . . the same waiting time that institutes the formation of the psychic apparatus, time that runs at a pace that is distended and oblivious to the urgency of the demands of the Other, introduces the lack into the psyche.”

In addition to issues of psychic nature, time has always been a difficult theme to approach; in addressing the matter of time, there seems to be no theoretical framework that can support its definition, its apprehension always seems to elude us. Saint Augustine, in his *Confessions*, questions:

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* Corresponding address: rosegurski@ufrgs.br

What is, then, time? Who could explain it clearly and objectively? Who could comprehend, even if only in thought, to then translate into words its concept? (Saint Augustine, 1973)

It is interesting to realize that Augustine's question remains extremely up to date, because despite the velocity and acceleration – typical of our time – being topics of intense reflections, concerns regarding time have already been expressed in social moments that were very different from the current one.

Discuss cultural issues in addressing contemporary adolescence is important, especially because, as suggests Soler (2009), when a subject walks into the psychoanalyst's office, with this subject also comes that which Freud called "the uneasiness in culture" and Lacan called "the subjectivity of the time" (Soler, 2009). That is, we cannot ponder the psychic constitution while disregarding the social bond that allow it; subjects produce and build their modes of constitution and psychic suffering in a close relation with the principles of each epoch.

We may think that, with adolescence, the conditions of the social bond become even more impacting, as the whole process of transition from the familiar to the social is fundamental in this moment of the constitution. The subject needs to deal with the issues of origin in another way rather than by means of puerile sexual theories, neither by family romance. One will have to seek – outside the family sphere – new traces that can represent and support oneself in a new psychic place in the relation with the Other².

Thus, one of the questions that guides this text refers to the reflection on effects from the widespread acceleration of the lived experience of time on the subjectivities of the contemporary youth. Are today's adolescents absorbing in a different way the dimension of experience in human and social relations because of the superficiality resulting from the excessive velocity produced in current daily life?

Freitas (2008), when working on the "time to become a man" – necessary, according to the author, to some boys during the adolescent passage – questions the cases of phobia, increasingly frequent, that are observed in young men. According to the psychoanalyst, it is as if the social isolation and discontinuity in the everyday life of these subjects showed the need for increase in the so-called "time to understand", when, then, the subject requires – from a structural point of view – a longer interval to respond to the phallic appeals typical of this period.

Since Psychoanalysis, we know that adolescence – while psychic operation – occurs to the extent that the subject can make the transition from childhood to *sinthome*. Such passage occurs when the subject can transition

from of the condition of "indecision" (Jerusalinsky, 2004) – generally present in the adolescent passage – and "take the reins" of the task of finding the Names-of-the-father in the plural, "choosing" one's *sinthome* and inscribing the dimension of the *new* in one's life.

French psychoanalyst Jean Jacques Rassial (1997) suggests that the concept of borderline state, term present in the psychopathology of contemporary adolescence, can also be assumed as an effect from the conditions of the present social bond. Such concept refers to the moment of passage in structure, in which, often, an endless adolescence is constituted, establishing a vacuum in lieu of the moment of conclusion, as the subject is remains paralyzed in "a state of suspension, a moment of no choice" (p. 87) between taking the *sinthome*³ and not taking it.

Therefore, when reflecting on the present uneasiness of the youth, we question: can the obsession with accelerated time – widespread in our culture – foster ~~constitute~~ obstacles to the establishment of conditions of representation of the subject? Or: does any form of impoverishment of the dimension of experience affect the possibilities of impression and, therefore, the psychic constitution of today's youth? Could it be that some conditions of the contemporary social bond can constitute obstacle to the necessary density of the *time to understand*, that, above all, enables the transition to the moment of conclusion – a very necessary step for the success of the psychic operation of adolescence?

To discuss these and other issues, we will start from a brief review about time as sociohistorical concept, then we analyze the conditions of the present social bond, founded especially on Walter Benjamin and his concept about the impoverishment of the experience dimension. These aspects will be articulated with the theme of adolescence as psychoanalytic concept in order to think about aspects of contemporary adolescence, considering the times in the psychic constitution in adolescence and the concept of *sinthome* in Lacan.

Time as sociohistorical concept

The type of experience of time is an element that varies according to each culture and each moment. The mode of temporal perception shows many underlying trends of life in society, being a very impressive representation of the different cultural models (Gourevich, 1975). It can be said that such impressions remain as if imprinted on the subjectivities, especially with regard to the regulation of pulsional life.

According to Kehl (2009), temporality as subjectively organized and perceived phenomenon is one of the manners of socially regulating the pulsions, not by means of pulsional circuit – that marks the different parts of the

2 In order to address the psychic constitution, Lacan distinguishes two instances: the "small other", that would be the peer, the imaginary partner, and the "Other" (great Other), which he conceptualizes as the symbolic instance and, therefore, of language, that determines the subject, being of anterior and exterior nature in relation to this subject; place of the word, place of the treasure of the signifiers (see Lacan, 1954–55/1985, p. 297).

3 According to Freud, the symptom is the expression of an unconscious conflict, of that which is repressed. According to Lacan, *sinthome*, written with h, would be the attempt to constitute a minimum of subjectivity considering the imperative of the Other (Chemama, 1995). We will return to the theme in the final considerations of this article.

body – but by the paces imposed on the “modalities of satisfaction, procrastination, and jouissance” (p. 122).

The whole issue of time matters, as well, as the notion of wait marks the very origin of the constitution of the psyche. It is the space of lack, in the postponing of satisfaction, that the subject is forged. Moreover, the possibilities of time passage are structured differently according to the mental spheres. The linearity that is characteristic of our conscious temporal perception comes exactly from this pulsional regulation that adapted the psyche to secondary processes, for improved interaction with the external environment; differently from that which occurs in the sphere of the unconscious, in which mental events are simultaneous and not excluding, even if antagonistic.

As aforementioned, it is certain that different cultures in diverse sociohistorical moments provide distinct modes of satisfaction for pulsional necessities – an issue that determines the very sensation of duration of time or *durée*, according to Bergson’s teaching (1999). That is, even if the old experiences of temporal perception have been lost due to lack of register, in the references we have of the lived experience of time in societies of oral tradition we find descriptions of a relation fraught with affective valor, as: “it [time] can be good or bad, favorable to certain forms of activity and unfavorable to others. . .” (Gourevitch, 1975, p. 265).

Among many other social events and phenomena in history, it should be noted the importance of a socio-political movement that has great significance in modern man’s relation with the lived experience of time: industrial revolution, exactly due to the proliferation of mechanical watches. Time as a means of measuring output, productivity time that was now determined by capital.

This is our position in relation to time since the Modernity, a time that is emptied of its subjective dimension, a sequence of events which must be dealt with efficiently and decisively. In this arid context, there is no time so subjects can elaborate their lived experiences, so they become knowledge (Gurski, 2012).

That occurs because the sociocultural transformations also modify the modes of experiencing even the passage of one day. Experiences with the notion of time, for example, considering the epoch that time passage was not measure and contemporary times – in which “each minute requires a decision and promises some quick form of satisfaction” – are utterly dissimilar. The urgent temporality, able to measure even tenths of seconds, dominated us in such a way that it is practically impossible to think of other forms of living that do not include the dimension of acceleration.

Prior to the 13th century, time was determined not by watches but by cycles of nature and by the Church. In addition to measuring time through natural events resulting from the work of God, such as seasons, the Church also controlled the use of their believers’ life time by means of rites, duties, and by the way of experiencing sexuality (Kehl, 2009, p. 124). According to Kehl (2009, p. 123), even under new social conditions, time still does not belong to man.

The very life in the countryside, far from urban areas, enables a lived experience determined by another pace. Rural activity involves the subject differently in its performance. The transition from rural life to urban life produced important effects, as man now was guided by self-imposed paces, rather than by natural rhythms, “and since then human time would never again cease to be measured in capital” (Kehl, 2009, p. 126). Thus, religious time gradually lost space to commercial and productive time, which evolved from the importance of the difference in hours and minutes for revenue to the present situation, in which even seconds count and are counted.

Hence, more and more we face an immediacy that approximates us to a cog, as in an assembly line, in which the technique supersedes the organic dimension of relations, with rare situations of deep experience of time. According to Kehl (2009), what she calls shortening of the time to understand leads the subject to produce little knowledge about himself or herself. Therefore, we deduce that this little knowledge of “oneself” would also be responsible for the erasure of the subject of Desire, as well as for a manner of superficiality that multiplies in the bonds of contemporary subjects.

Benjamin (1936/1994) calls this movement the impoverishment of experience and points, in a way, to the effects from the fact we live in an epoch in which time is counted in numbers, as index of productivity, leaving no space for tedium. According to him, the dimension of experience is incompatible both with the fast temporality and with the overload of requests that burden the consciousness. That is, the condition of Benjamin’s experience is the opposite of the accelerated activity. We may think that it is as if experience and transmission, to be forged, required tedium a little, that is, the distension of time.

If sleep is the highest point of physical distension, tedium is the highest point of psychic distension. Tedium is the bird of sleep that hatches the eggs of experience (Benjamin, 1936/1994, p. 204).

Importantly, this is not a quantitative view because of time measuring, but an observation that varied conditions of the contemporary times hinder the subjects’ predisposition to a state of psychic distension, a state that enables that which Benjamin (p. 204) calls “the process of assimilation in very deep levels . . . requires a state of distension that is increasingly rare.”

To follow the path we propose, we suggest we take Benjamin based on his proposition in this excerpt. The author continues to address time and its variations, saying that the more the one who speaks forgets oneself the more that which is heard is impressed on oneself, proposing there a state of psychic distension. This state at the same time alert and empty, in which the subject makes himself/herself available for different inscriptions, approximates the concept of floating attention in Psychoanalysis.

Tedium, evoked by Benjamin “as a particular state of mind between sleep and wakefulness that alternate and overlap as in one of the oldest sources of poetry, the dream” (Lages, 2002, p. 128) appears as a possibility of the subject tasting lived experiences and events in the cadence of an experience. This cadence is proper to the old narrator who can, by transmission of lived stories, transport past time into the present.

It is important to note that, in this text, we work with the hypothesis that this condition allows the possibility that something becomes experience. Well, it is not hard to associate this argument with the figure of Baudelaire’s *flâneur*, “the one who irreverently strolled with his turtles making this action a clear counterpoint to the velocity and acceleration imposed by industrial pace” (Benjamin, 1989, p. 158). According to Kehl, “nothing is so shocking, in our time, as empty time. We need to seize time, make the best of life, with no laziness and no rest” (Kehl, 2009, p. 125).

As Larrosa (2002) says: “for the subject of the stimulus, of the particular lived experience, everything pervades, everything excites, everything upsets, everything shocks, but nothing happens to this subject. That is why velocity and what it causes, lack of silence and memory, is also a deadly enemy of experience.” Thus, our interest is to think how the adolescent passage occurs amidst such conditions. More specifically, what is the effect – on the contemporary adolescent’s psychic life – of losing the possibility of elaborating lived experiences through narratives and other movements of elaboration?

Narrative, Experience, and Temporality

With the letters of Walter Benjamin, the poet-philosopher, the collector of remnants and lover of margins we seek to outline a portion of this research path. In the words of Arendt (1987), Benjamin was an alchemist, a true hunter of pearls, especially for having the merits of thinking the developments of his time from within and from outside. In studying the experience, he was – with his colleagues from Frankfurt – one of the protagonists of the criticism of the new modes of subjectivation. He eventually produced an innovative concept in attempting to understand the impact generated by the conditions of Modernity.

Since the juvenile texts, compelled by the title of *Metafísica de la Juventud* (Benjamin, 1993), which comprise the period from 1911-1918, he became interested in the subject experience and its developments. In them, stimulated by the juvenile ideals, he contested the trivialization of the youth’s enthusiasm because of the alleged superior experience of adults. Philosopher of the aura, as he was called, his interest was to elaborate a concept of experience articulated with the construction of new categories of temporality, related to valorization of the present and to criticism of the conception of an immobilized past (Benjamin, 1913; Muricy, 2009).

In this sense, we need to point out that the concept of experience – of early 20th century texts, which

oppose adult sovereignty to the juvenile world – are based on an idea of individual experience and not collective. Later, in the 1930s writings, *Erfahrung* (experience) is coined as a concept based on a collective and historical dimension, being then proposed as the wisdom that accumulates historically and extends by transmission of tradition.

Throughout the 1930s, Benjamin – imbued with concepts such as tradition, memory, narrative, and transmission – discussed the impoverishment of experience as a result of the disintegration of the social. Such question was related to the conditions of cities and to the new modes of production. Thus, Benjamin opposed *Erfahrung*, traditional experience, to *Erlebnis* – that would have the sense of an emptied experience and, therefore, called lived experience. The modern subject, hit by the shock of crowds and by the industrial pace, would have no time to live a denser experience, “such that it is no longer possible to live the present without having to ‘cover the tracks’ of the recent past, as in the poem of Brecht” (Kehl, 2009, p. 181). *Erlebnis* would then be a form of isolated experience, establishing no bonds, that neither bears nor provides any collective value. It is the lived experience of the private individual, the strong impression that needs to be assimilated hurriedly and produces immediate effects (Benjamin, 1989).

The new conditions of life in metropolises, inspired by the industrial pace, lead to changes in how man deal with time and space, which inevitably ended up affecting the structure of experience. This is the point in which Benjamin apprehends the notion of tedium as condition of inactivity that can produce another relation with the impression, with the memory and, therefore, with the experience. This idea is echoed in the conceptual notations of Marcel Proust about memory: voluntary memory and involuntary memory.

Based on Proust, Benjamin understands as voluntary memory all sort of past lived experiences that could be accessed arbitrarily by the intellect; therefore, voluntary memory would refer more to a capacity of disaggregation rather than a capacity of conservation. This explains why, to Benjamin, this type of memory is precarious, since it assigns to remembrance the function of recovering the past (Pereira, 2007). According to Benjamin, voluntary memory is uniform, limited, restricted, and subject “to the appeals of attention.” “Information about the past, transmitted by voluntary memory, keep no trace of this past” (Benjamin, 1989, p. 106). Nevertheless, Benjamin understands involuntary memory as the manner of memory that reintegrates the individual to a sort of denser experience; it casts the subject into another space-temporal dimension, broad and indeterminate, in which the past can indeed be contemplated (Pereira, 2007).

It seems that Benjamin, amidst the dissolution of the aura he denounced, sought an experience able to evoke a certain interval, as a space of elaboration for lived experiences, amidst a bond impregnated by the capitalism “reifier

of subjectivities.” He also sought experiences in which subjects could still be represented by creations that dialogued with the culture and with the cultural heritage.

What is the value of all our cultural heritage, if experience no longer bonds it to us? The horrible mish-mash of styles and conceptions of the world of the prior century showed us with such clarity where these cultural values may lead us, when experience is subtracted from us, in a hypocrite or surreptitious manner, which nowadays is a proof of honor to admit our impoverishment Thus arises a new barbarism. (Benjamin, 1933, p. 115)

The concept of barbarism had a paradoxical and ambiguous dimension to Benjamin (Rouanet, 1990). Despite acknowledging the demoralization of experience and the impoverishment of narrativity as effects of the conditions produced by Modernity, Benjamin also saw in barbarism a prospect of liberty (Rouanet, 1990, p. 52). He said the new barbarians, with no past and no experience, would have over the civilized at least the advantage of being content with little, of always starting again, despite their internal and external impoverishment.

From Benjamin’s perspective, the new barbarism presented, above all, as refrainment from the possibility of transmitting experiences, especially by the impersonal force of technique, by the silence produced by the horrors of War, and by the social anonymity forged by the new modes of production of capitalism. However, unlike other Frankfurtians, he refused the determinism in the becoming of history and left openings in his reading of barbarism that lead us to understand art – even if massified – still as a motto for reflection, for criticism, and for the possible social changes.

The postwar period, in his view, had produced generations with no stories to tell, prey to an intense feeling of bleakness; silent subjects unable to narrate the horrible experience. According to him, amidst the lived experience of the Great War – as World War I came to be known – had died, along with the corpses, the already declining capacity to communicate the experience.

Such questions, proposed by Benjamin, approach the discourse of Psychoanalysis, since, in its fundaments, there is the subversion of the subject of reason. If, according to Psychoanalysis, it is always about seeking the cyphered sense in the symptom presented by the subject, pointing with that the way of the unconscious as producer of acts, Benjamin’s reading also aims to seek the subject of the experience, the one that allows oneself to be led by the organic time rather than by the time of the machine. The one who – as Baudelaire’s *flâneur* – let the marks of one’s Desire⁴ imprinted on the path through which one walked (Gurski, 2014).

4 According to Psychoanalysis, the Desire is not the will. The Desire structures the subject’s relation with the object and with the Other. According to Freud, the subject’s Desire always refers to sexual Desire; to him, ignorance of Desire by operation of repression is the cause of the symptom. According to Lacan, the subject’s Desire is always the Desire of the Other, as it is the condition of alienation in the Desire of the parental and social Other that will constitute a subject in the psychoanalytic sense

It is convenient to reflect on how – in Benjamin’s criticism of the new social conditions – is implied a reflection on time and the barriers to the acceptance of its marks in Modernity. In his writings, Benjamin clearly points out the evidence of a passage; the passage from artisanal, organic time, *Kairos*, to mechanical time, *Cronos*, the devourer time⁵. He also exalts the concept of *durée* of Bergson (1999) as the counterpoint to the time of science. The time that has its indicator in quality and not in quantity. The passage of time in the *durée* would be linked to how the subject fills and feels time. A quarter of an hour can be an infinity or a fleeting instant; the variation depends on the subject and not on the clock. Thus, in the words of Benjamin (1989, p. 131), “the human soul is released from the obsession of time.”

Anyway, although *Matter and Memory*, by Bergson⁶, is a fundamental reference in building texts such as “On topics in Baudelaire,” especially for being a rich source about the decisive character of memory for the philosophical structure of experience, we cannot overlook that it is only in Baudelaire’s poetry, through the concept of *Correspondances*, that Benjamin will mold the encounter between individual past and collective past (Muricy, 2009).

The reading of the ruins and fragments of history, in counterpoint to historiography or the unity of facts, leads Benjamin to explode with the homogeneous continuity of an empty time, with the linearity of events. As in Nietzsche, there is no fidelity to facts (Muricy, 2009). In this vein, there arises the concept of *Jetztzeit*, or here-and-now, the immobilized time, in which the historian builds the history taking the object from the linearity of time to serve the present (Benjamin, 1940/1994).

Such issues also compose the framework termed as shock of Modernity. Benjamin observes that it is based on this *shock* that Baudelaire would elaborate the loose lived experiences of Modernity into an authentic experience. According to Muricy (2009, p. 208):

To this end, he would build a very precise poetic strategy in *Les Fleurs du mal*. The themes there are no longer those of traditional lyric: its poems demonstrate how Baudelaire was fully aware of the profound transformations of artistic production that would determine the decay of lyric poetry.

(Chemama, 1995).

5 There is a difference between the Greek concept of *Kairos*, which refers to sophist philosophy and to a denser time that bears the notion of seizing a moment of opening. According to Kehl (2009, p. 115), *Kairos* would be “an opportune moment, different from linear time *Kronos* . . . which originated, in Roman mythology, the concept of chronological time, extensive and linear, which leads the things to their maturation and also to their end.”

6 Benjamin (1989) clarified, as well, the distance which separated his search for an authentic experience from the “philosophies of life” from the late 19th century. Above all, the fact that Bergson had virtually ignored the historical conditions of experience, and had limited the reading of the *durée* to the sphere of private experience.

In this vein, Baudelaire's *flâneur* also yielded important considerations by Benjamin on the subject of time. Obsession with the theme of time seems to be the symptom that awakens the *flâneur's* vagrancy. In a footnote, Benjamin (1989, p. 122) explains that, circa 1840, it was polite to take turtles for walks in the Parisian galleries and, with good will, the *flâneur* would let the turtles determine the pace, in clear opposition to Taylorism, preponderant at that time. According to Benjamin, the man of crowds is utterly dissimilar from the *flâneur*, as in him the peaceful behavior was replaced by the so-called manic behaviors. This issue is of paramount importance for this study, as many symptoms of contemporary adolescence seem to have a certain identity with paces called "manic."

Updating the discussion, maybe we can say that "time" in our time is at the service of consumer objects. Benjamin clearly managed to identify this deception, when he referred to a crisis of perception⁷ suffered by contemporary man. Several decades after these critical essays, even today we can harness his teachings, his notes show the marks of a certain weakness of the social fabric also present today.

We believe that the experience of living and working in a pace not determined by productivity enabled a lived experience of time closer to the dream, led by another experience that was also lost, the experience of "tedium lived with no anguish, as pure empty time to be filled with fantasy." (Kehl, 2009, p. 164). Currently, it seems that the lived experience of time as possibility of profit does not comprise this dimension that is closer to reverie, dream, experience. Some contemporary analysts suggest that even the narratives about dreams in psychotherapy are no longer much present as if there were a decreased importance in "deciphering" the subject through dreams; the surprise and the unusual of the oniric material seem to no longer instigate today's subject⁸.

In the text "the Narrator," Benjamin (1936/1994) reflects deeper about the possible erasure of the dimension of experience starting from the Modernity. According to the author, the key element for the experience – that changed with the rise of technique – is the perception and its relation with temporality. It ceased to belong and be marked collectively, assigning to the individual the lonely responsibility for this individual's life and for the events. That is, the same gadgets designed to spare us the manual tasks and increase the idle time have been producing a growing feeling of shortening of temporality.

We point out that one of the main ideas from Benjamin's work with the theme of transmission and experience comes anchored to the notion of connection between

the different times, that is, to the notion of continuity of the human production. Transmission is the thin thread that connects, interconnects, and enables past, present, and future to be nested, providing us with the much cherished notion that something of our deeds continues in the upcoming generation (Gurski, 2014, p. 173). Nevertheless, the current conditions lead to a sort of planned obsolescence of the past and memory, producing

as effect a permanently willing subject, ready to get rid of references in exchange for novelties available. Disconnected from the fragile thread that binds the present to past experience, avidly turned to the future with fear of being left behind, the so-called "consumer" suffers with the shortening of duration. Thus are devalued the lived time and the knowledge that sustains the significant acts of existence (Kehl, 2009, p. 168).

That is, the current social time has been profuse in the disposability and fleeting character of relations. In this vein, Bauman (2002), from the analysis of the social bond, says that disposing is the true passion of our world. Duration, in many senses, no longer constitutes any appeal; to the contrary, the new – as novelty – is more important than any tradition of thought.

Furthermore, overestimation of the value of objects in our bond inevitably produces the increasing erasure of the dimension of experience and, therefore, of the subject and of his/her history. Jerusalinsky (2004) says that we suffer from a kind of fading of the social Other, in which the fellow peer is replaced by the object, the wisdom by technique, and the "ruse" by power. We think that these are descriptors that show some simulacra of the contemporary subject's bonds.

Maria Rita Kehl (2004), reflecting on the effects of these conditions on the psyche says that the more vigilant, the more absorbed by stimuli that take our consciousness, the greater the notion of passage of time; while, on the other hand, the contemplative time, which goes unnoticed, is lived fully. Such notion is worked by the psychoanalyst in the light of the ideas of Benjamin (1936/1994):

If the psychic life, pressed by the need to react to fast and violent external stimuli, is restricted to the work (protective) of conscious attention, what knowledge would be produced from a lived experience like that? (Kehl, 2004, p. 155).

Based on these reflections, which also include the ideas of Bergson on the conscious attention, Benjamin concludes that the excess of consciousness prevents the activation of mnemonic marks. As aforementioned, this is the direction of the notion of a new "barbarism" in the words of the poet-philosopher (Benjamin, 1933, p. 115). From the "monstrous development of technique" advances a new form of misery, the impoverishment of a fundamental dimension

7 In turning to the radical changes of the structure of experience in Modernity, Benjamin collected, like a true collector of minutiae, the lyric poetry of Baudelaire. He saw, in the damned poet's production, the possibility of transforming the shock of Modernity into symbolic matter. To him, Baudelaire would have succeeded, through his poetry, in mitigating the shocks and impoverishment of experience, produced by the conditions of Modernity and thus give form to the erratic character of the events that marked the Paris of the early 19th century (Benjamin, 1935).

8 Accessed on August 2, 2015. <http://www.redepsi.com.br/2005/07/13/o-sonho-perde-importancia-e-presenca-na-pratica-psicanalica/>

of knowledge and memory that escapes all technical and scientific competences, the transmission of experience.

We aim, therefore, to analyze the effects of all these conditions discussed above on the times of the psychic constitution of contemporary adolescence. This, specially as to the way the impoverishment of the transmission of experience and the restriction of bonds with the past, with the tradition, and with the memory impact the representation and the times of the psychic constitution in the adolescent passage.

Adolescence and Social Bond

The problem of every subject is finding ways to represent oneself in the social bond. This question becomes more acute for the adolescents who, fresh out of the world of childhood, need references that indicate the value of their actions and of their words in relation to the social Other (Jerusalinsky, 2004). We know that the dose of that security depends both on the history of the subject's childhood relations and on the way the culture in which the subject is involved deals with the symbolic values. That is because the senses are built from the codes that each cultural time indicates as production place.

Well, in the last few decades, Lacanian psychoanalysis has forged a conceptual framework about adolescence, especially the dear notion of adolescence as psychic operation (Rassial, 1995; Ruffino, 1995). In this way, adolescence is no longer a sequence of chronological and organic events, related to the hormonal boom, and now came to be understood as a social and psychic construction. This is the conception according to which the adolescent process shows both the inadequacy of childhood references and the dose of urgency that the imperative of social inscription acquires in the adolescent passage. The lack of initiation rites – which were present in another social bond –, in addition to the questioning look of the Other regarding the effects of the new body, produces in the contemporary adolescent an insufficiency of references to deal with the new positions necessary for the difficult passage from the family sphere to the social sphere (Ruffino, 1995).

Thus, it is necessary to emphasize that the way the social Other's configurations are presented is very important for the constructions in the adolescence passage. We know, for example, that youth, in recent decades, has become an icon, an ideal of the adult world. This situation shows a sort of constriction of time: aging, formerly a sign of accumulated experience, symbol of the subject's wisdom and highest value, seems to have turned into a great suffering. The current discourse makes the centrality of the young body and image the indices of the subject's value and success. In this vein, many paradoxes coexist.

Kehl (2004), in "A Juventude como sintoma da cultura" (Youth as a symptom of culture), suggests that the ideal of perfection of our time lies in the quantum of corporal and emotional youthfulness the subject bears. We think that this situation produces in the young a state of helplessness as to how to minimally orient oneself in life and in

the world, since this ideal points to an excess of present, not trivializing a prospect of future. The dissemination of being young ends up putting everyone in the same position, which seems to remove the dose of generational alterity that is much needed by those who, recently out of childhood and of pubertal mutations, have their first inscriptions in the public and social sphere.

Therefore, aside from the adolescent moratorium – which casts the subject into a sort of social limbo –, the young individual eventually realizes that the older people around, dreaming of eternal youth, in addition to leaving the position of adult vacant have no concern about erasing the marks of time and origin, thus breaking the bond that connects past, present, and future. Hence, added to the difficulties related to adolescence, if we have been a "culture of youth for more than 40 years" (Kehl, 2004), what today's adolescents do to differentiate themselves from their parents and formulate something that is new and their own?

The idealization of adolescence has constituted a strong mark of our time, to be young is to have the world in the "hands," according to a famous expression It is disseminated, along with the image of youth, the young, the idea of full jouissance, achieved by physical vigor, by agitation in the social and sexual life, by the power of consumption, among many other characteristics that pose to the young an imperative: enjoy!

Slavoj Žižek (2009)⁹, when talking about the relation between the morality of enjoyment and the generalized guilt caused by it, says that one of the questions propounded nowadays refers to the fact that the subject cannot enjoy enough given the demand directed to him/her. It seems predominant, today, the pleasure as duty. Žižek points out, in the interview analyzed, that Lacan was correct in saying that the uttermost significance of the superego would be to have pleasure. That is, today's expectation is that the subject enjoy a pleasant life; thus, paradoxically, pleasure itself turns into a duty.

In this context, youth is then considered as an idealized age, and the demand for unlimited jouissance is very significant for the young; they must enjoy the freedom and all the possibilities provided by this hedonistic model of society and, practically, with no prohibitions. This obviously constitutes an inexhaustible source of unease, as the jouissance will never be complete.

Such considerations about the imperative of unlimited jouissance interest us, above all, because we have seen in the expressions of the adolescents and youth that the aforementioned juvenilization of culture, in addition to producing a good dose of helplessness in the young, often precludes the distance that is necessary for creating the *new* in subjective terms.

Hannah Arendt (2001), in the text *The Crisis in Education*, ponders that all education requires a dose of tradition. That is, it will be only in meeting the old that the

9 Slovenian psychoanalyst and philosopher, in the *Roda Viva* tv program, Cultura channel, Sao Paulo, February 2009.

upcoming generation can build the *new*. When the adults of a society juvenilize through conduct and behaviors and the ideals of the cultural imagination start valuing youth and its attributes, it is as if all individuals constituted a community of equals (Gurski, 2012b).

Well, the place of the impoverished experience, also an effect of the acceleration of our time, mentioned by Benjamin, is the place where the word transmitted should be. The word, polysemic in its structure, brings the possibility of lending multiple senses to the lived experience, drawing a symbolic horizon of representations. We point out that it is in the transmission of this plurality of senses that can operate the intertwining between act and culture, whose effect is also the revelation of the power of language as constructor of the social bond in lieu of barbarism.

In this sense, the impoverishment of experience and the unfathomable haste, denounced by Benjamin, constitute a new barbarism: being devoid of past means not only to see the impoverishment of the present, but also to signal the urgent need of inventing, of building the *new*¹⁰.

In terms of psychic constitution, perhaps adolescence can be assumed as the greatest moment of encounter with the demand to make the *new*; the adolescent subject would be the one who, through the destruction and reconstruction of that which was received, witnesses a heritage, both in personal and generational spheres, as it is in adolescence that arises the necessity of forging one's own place of expression (Gurski, 2012a).

As the passage from the parental Other to the social Other takes place, the youth struggles, destroying and rebuilding references and concepts of self and of the world; it is in the transitionality from the family Other to the Social Other that the adolescent forges his/her place of expression. In addition to these movements being associated with the psychic movement of adolescence, they also dialogue with questions opened by Benjamin, with regard to the matter of transmission. Among other issues, this reflection evokes an important question related to adolescence: how to deal with heritage so as to allow the emergence of the *new*? What to do so we have no dead past, only stories that are as alive as to allow being rewritten with the letters of present?

Amid the increasing erasure of the dimension of experience in our social bond and in seeking a place of expression outside the family, the adolescent suffers the effects of demoralization of experience, of the lack of generational difference, and of the various foldings of time. Let us see how this whole problem of contemporary adolescence interrelates with the categories of experience, transmission, and time.

Final considerations: intertwining adolescence, experience, transmission, and time

In order to advance a little further on the interrelations concerning the physiology of the social bond and of the current issues of adolescence, we are interested in taking the sophistry which Lacan utilized for his conceptualizations about the logical time (Lacan, 1944/1998). We aim to unravel its effects for the reflection on the psychic operation of adolescence.

In the aforementioned article, Lacan indicates that the subject's signification occurs by a retroactive logical effect that obeys three times: *the instant of seeing, the time of understanding, and the moment of concluding*. These three timeframes advance hastefully, building, in the third time, the subject's assumption about self. In other words, Lacan demonstrates, through the sophistry, that it will be through the hasteful advancements and scissions that the effects of significance of the subject will be produced and that such symbolic times are constituted in the subject's relation with the Other.

He is founded on a logical problem, in which the warden of a prison exposes three prisoners to a challenge, whose resolution ensures the freedom of only one of them. For the challenge, the warden has five disks, two black ones and three white ones; each prisoner will have a disc attached to his back so that he will not be able to see it, having visual access only to the disks of his competitors. The prisoner who can deduce the color of his disk based on the vision of the other two and advance to the correct conclusion, will be beneficiary of freedom. It is clear in the problem of logic that the assumption of certainty beforehand only comes by the vision of two black disks or by the consideration of the hesitations and movements of the other two. Lacan proposes thus the dependency of the three times, *the instant of seeing, the time of understanding, and the moment of concluding*.

Kehl (2009, p. 114), taking the best consequences of the analysis of the sophistry for the times of subjectivation, will say that ". . . of these three intervals, the first and the third are instantaneous. Only the second 'presupposes the duration of a 'time of meditation' which is indispensable to advance the subject toward the third moment, of conclusion." In other words, duration, as distension of time, will allow the passage to the moment of conclusion.

Interrelating the issues about the sophistry of logical time with that which we addressed about the acceleration of time and the demoralization of experience today, we think there is – indeed – such a psychic impoverishment that makes the stimuli received by the perception-awareness system be similar to minor traumata, detached from the network of representations that confers value and meaning (imagination) to life (Kehl, 2009). Well, such associations lead us to think that the network of representations, weakened by the excess of awareness, shatters the

10 We assume the *new*, according to Benjamin, as production of the subject, that which becomes mark of the one who authorizes oneself as author/producer of a movement-experience that is fundamental in the adolescent passage.

symbolic content of the adolescent's place, who, invaded by the demand of the Other, runs towards the real¹¹. Thus is configured the context that intensifies the so-called "natural" tendency of the young to seek new, intense experiences. In this context, there also seems to reside the much-talked-about excess of *real*, that which remains with no symbolization and that is transformed, quickly, into actions and incidents that are bizarre and dangerous in the eyes of the adult world.

As already stated, in the context of criticism of the conditions of the social bond, Benjamin (1989) was the protagonist in a relevant discussion on the possibilities of memory, indicating that the more the memory is subjected to the appeals of attention the less intense is the impression. It is as if, between event, perception, and impression, we had to rely on one or another work of elaboration, another impression that is apprehended to the extent that, as said by Benjamin (1994/1936, p. 204), the subject may distend psychically: ". . . this process of assimilation occurs in much deep layers and requires a state of distension that has become increasingly rare . . ."

Benjamin seems to point to some sort of indulgence of the subject; indulgence which we interpret as an operation that can elaborate the lived experience, a mode through which the event can become experience. In this sense, we ask: could the aridity of experience, in our social time, be weakening the conditions needed by the adolescent to operate the necessary distension of the time of understanding into the moment of conclusion?

We think that one of the most acute necessities, with regard to the adolescent passage, consists exactly in the construction and sharing of experiences. The possibility of narrating oneself and being included in a story, through the interlacing of different times, is what ensures for the youth the construction of new senses and consolidates the possibility of other modes of representation of self.

Some manifestations of adolescence seem exactly to reveal certain emptying of the conditions of the time of understanding and, consequently, of the passage from this to the moment of conclusion, often showing the non-advancement of that which – along with Lacan – we call assumption of self or of the construction of a new place of expression of the subject. One of the examples that illustrate this "anxiety for advancement" is in the state of permanent anguish that we witness in the clinic with adolescents. According to Jerusalinsky (2004), such anguish would be the effect of feeling that life in general no longer has a provisional character, as it had been in childhood; everything becomes definitive in terms of sustaining a place of own discourse.

Hassoun (1998), working the three times of the constitution of the signifier, also contributes to the reflection about the times of the psychic constitution in the adolescent passage. He says that in the *first time* there is the inscription of the signifier, the emergence of the trace, in the *second* there is the repression, the erasure of this mark, while in the *third* there would be what he called the moment of interpretation, when there is the assumption of self. That is, it will be in the third time that will emerge the "time to make oneself" a subject, as argued by Rassial (1999) with respect to adolescence.

Bernardino (1999), based on this proposition of Hassoun, suggests we think the subject's structuration by employing the three moments of the logical time proposed by Lacan (1944/1998): *the instant of seeing*, that would feature the time of childhood, the first time of the inscription of the signifier; *the time of understanding*, that would install the repression, the erasure that would be the second time of the inscription of the signifier and that is replaced by the time of latency and, finally, *the moment of concluding*, the time that would feature the injunction that introduces the subject into the adolescence crisis and advances this subject towards an interpretation, which we could call an interpretation of self. Therefore, it is in this third time of the inscription of the signifier that is completed the constitution of the *sinthome*. Somehow, that is what we see happen in adolescence; the youth's confrontation with the demand of action and decision, with the need to position oneself, especially in issues related to establishing the sexual place. In this sense, we question what relation there may be between the position of sexuation of the subject – in the case, the young one – and the construction of the *sinthome* in adolescence?

In one of his recent seminars, *The sinthome*, Lacan (1975–76/2008) alters his traditional concept in Psychoanalysis, writes it with *h*, reminiscing part of the old French, and expanding the eminently symbolic Freudian notion of a symptom only as formation of the unconscious. If, with Freud, the symptom (no *h*) had already ceased to be something of the medical sphere to be a "pantomime of desire" (Freud, 1926/1980), becoming a formidable part of the analytical experience, with Lacan (1974/2005, p. 55) it becomes "that which individual have of most real." The symptom loses the organicist matrix of sign of an illness to acquire that of real structure in the constitution of the subject. It is not the *real*, but what comes from the *real*. In the seminar *The sinthome*, the author elucidates, among other things, that it is not a truth that depends on signification and interpretation, as Freud wanted, but has a structural function of prosthesis. The *sinthome* would provide the subject with a substitute Self, a prosthesis, which is exactly what the subject would have of most *real*. It does not necessarily serve to codify truths of this subject, but rather serves as a prosthesis to inscribe the subject in the sphere of sexuation. Thus, *sinthome* would be the fourth term (or fourth link)

11 An instance that constitutes one of the three impression that, along with the symbolic and the imaginary, found what Lacan called RSI – inseparable impressions linked by the Borromean chain, which deal with the subject's relation with the dimension of lack. To Lacan, the real is what cannot be symbolized fully in word or in writing, that which "does not cease to not being written."

that would bind the other three terms of the topology that Lacan himself created: Real, Symbolic, Imaginary¹².

Based on the writing of Joyce, Lacan (1975/2003; 1975–76/2008) proposes the novel notion of *sinthome* as function of prosthesis, which, in this case, would be Joyce's own activity as writer. His *sinthome*-writing, as can be said, is not to be decoded, but to inscribe Joyce himself in a decidedly unique way in the sphere of sexualization, connecting the three links.

If so, in accepting the hypothesis of *sinthome* as the fourth term we risk considering that, as Joyce, the adolescent must constitute a *sinthome*, a prosthesis or a very own way of inscribing oneself sexually; inscribe one's own condition of sexualized subject. And this is not a simple operation: he will need the *moment of concluding*, a fundamental time so the adolescent come to position himself/herself in the sphere of sexualization.

Lacan (1944/1998) will say the trajectory of this logical time does not occur as a purely individual construction, but has the Other involved in the organizations of its structuration. Agreeing with the author in that which he takes from the sophistry he proposes, we would say that the "anticipated assertion of certainty" occurs through the bond with the Other: "no one achieves it except by the others" (Lacan, 1944/1998, p. 212).

Benjamin, on the other hand, when calling "warmth" that which modern man sought in novels, pointed out the difference between that which can be narratable and transmissible, in counterpoint to the "coldness" of knowledge and information. The possibility that the lived experiences yield knowledge, narratives, and testimonies seems to be what "warms" the human's bond and life. The narrative is one of the necessary conditions for producing experiences and, therefore, inscriptions and representations. The narrative, by disseminating the word, the stories, and their versions enables the production of polysemy, which makes the senses flexible and creates conditions for producing expressions.

In this vein, the theme of representation in adolescence acquires intense significance. Costa (2001) uses the metaphor of exile to talk about adolescent passage. It is as if, from the place of exiled, the adolescent were allowed to test the traces that will represent self, thus exercising the attempts to inscribe a style of his/her own, creating and inventing a psychic and social place for self. As it will be in the lands of this exile that the youth will come across that which may be the most important for their psychic constructions, the encounter with sex and death – the *real* that tolls a high price of elaboration.

In seeking a place for self, similar to a new birth, the adolescent suffers the effects from the demoralization of experience, from the impoverishment of narrativities,

from the lack of generational difference, responding to these conditions with the symptomatic colors that we already know. Such context requires intense reflection, making it necessary that we do not rush into casting our youth into the bonfire of the contemporary diagnosis. We believe that their current ways of suffering perhaps are nothing but a "time of psychic resistance" that comes, exactly, in the place of the emptiness of experience, a mode of interval that is necessary so as to elaborate the current conditions so this passage happens.

One of the issues pointed out as fundamental in the psychic operation of adolescence is the necessity of constitution of the *sinthome* as a sort of prosthesis, or even as a proper form of inscription in the sphere of sexualization. This movement of advancing towards the choice of taking the *sinthome* in the hands, escaping the state of suspension, is exactly what occurs in the *moment of concluding* (Bernardino, 1999; Rassial, 1997). Our hypothesis concerning the extension of the *time of understanding* may be working, for today's youth, as a way to replace the emptiness of experience.

While Kehl (2009) associates the shortening of the *time of understanding* with the contemporary subject's symbolic impoverishment, Freitas (2008), in the clinical work with adolescents, ponders that it has been common, in the clinic with young boys, to find the extension of the *time of understanding* as a response to the structural need of dealing phallically with the typical appeals of the phase. Amid these different readings, our hypothesis is that the contemporary symptom of the "endless adolescence" refers to the extension of the *time of understanding* as a way to supply for the lack of experience and, by consequence, extend the time of "making oneself a subject." However, the extension of the *time of understanding* inevitably leads to a postponement of the *moment of concluding*, thus putting the youth in a position of nonchoice regarding the *sinthome*. In this case, we would be dealing with subjects whose psychic operation of adolescence did not occur, or, to put it more colloquially, young individuals sometimes referred to as *adulescents*.

In this sense, we think that with the significant escansions of the logical time of the psychic constitution in adolescence, a fourth term should be added which is necessary to the elaboration of this passage. In addition to the *instant*, to the *time*, and to the *moment*, maybe the *interval* arises as the possibility of not only expanding but also of evoking the space of experience as space of elaboration of self. Such movement could be taken as a distension of the *time of understanding that can lead* the subject to advance, or rather, allow oneself towards an interpretation of self, finally inscribing oneself in a proper and singular place and making a "choice" in the sphere of sexualization.

12 See note 10.

A experiência e o tempo na passagem da adolescência contemporânea

Resumo: Este artigo, na forma de ensaio, resulta de uma pesquisa teórica que discutiu as categorias da experiência e do tempo para a constituição psíquica do adolescente. Articulando a psicanálise do adolescente com o tema do tempo e o conceito de experiência em Walter Benjamin, problematizamos a passagem adolescente em meio às configurações do tempo no laço social. O artigo sugere que não nos precipitemos na ciranda de diagnósticos, pois a sintomatologia da adolescência atual pode ser tomada como um modo de expressão do sofrimento juvenil quando do encontro com as condições da cultura. Tais condições podem produzir uma *dilatação do tempo de compreender*, adiando o encontro com o *momento de concluir*. Assim, a fim de que se construam condições para o sujeito se precipitar em uma interpretação de si, além do *instante*, do *tempo* e do *momento*, surgiria uma espécie de *intervalo* como efeito de dilatação do *tempo de compreender*.

Palavras-chave: adolescência, experiência, psicanálise, tempo.

L'expérience et le temps dans l'adolescence contemporaine

Résumé: Cet article, sous forme d'essai, résulte d'une recherche théorique qui met en question les catégories de l'expérience et du temps pour la constitution psychique de l'adolescent. Par l'articulation de la psychanalyse de l'adolescent avec le thème du temps et avec le concept d'expérience chez Walter Benjamin, nous soulevons le problème du passage adolescent au milieu des configurations du temps dans le lien social actuel. L'article suggère de ne pas nous précipiter sur l'amas de diagnostics car les signes de l'adolescence contemporaine peuvent être pris comme un mode d'expression de la souffrance juvénile lors de sa rencontre avec les conditions actuelles de la culture. Telles conditions peuvent produire une sorte de *dilatation du temps de comprendre* de façon à reporter la rencontre avec le *moment de conclure*. Ainsi, pour que le sujet construise des conditions pour se jeter vers une interprétation de soi-même, en dehors de l'*instant*, du *temps* et du *moment*, il y aurait une sorte de temps, un *intervalle*, comme effet de dilatation du *temps de comprendre*.

Mots-clés: adolescence, expérience, psychanalyse, temps.

La experiencia y el tiempo en el pasaje de la adolescencia contemporánea

Resumen: Este artículo, en forma de ensayo, resulta de una investigación teórica que ha problematizado las categorías de la experiencia y del tiempo para la constitución psíquica del adolescente. Articulando la psicoanálisis del adolescente con el tema del tiempo y con el concepto de experiencia en Walter Benjamin, problematizamos el pasaje adolescente entre las configuraciones del tiempo en el lazo social actual. El artículo sugiere que no apresurémonos en la "danza en rueda" de los diagnósticos, debido a que los síntomas de la adolescencia actual pueden ser tomados como un modo de expresión del sufrimiento juvenil cuando de su encuentro con las condiciones de la cultura. Tales condiciones pueden producir una *dilatación del tiempo de comprender* como una forma de posponer el encuentro con el *momento de concluir*. Así, con el fin de que se construya las condiciones para el sujeto precipitarse hacia una interpretación de sí, más allá del *instante*, del *tiempo* y del *momento*, se puede creer que viene una especie de *intervalo* como efecto de dilatación del *tiempo de comprender*.

Palabras clave: adolescencia, experiencia, psicoanálisis, tiempo.

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