

THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF MALE AND FEMALE ROLES,
PATRIARCHY, CAPITALISM AND ESTABLISHED INEQUALITIES¹

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ABSTRACT

THE PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER IS TO PROPOSE SOME ANALYTICAL ELEMENTS FOUND IN THE SPECIFIC INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PATRIARCHY AND CAPITALISM IN ORDER TO FRAME THE SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF MALE AND FEMALE ROLES AND ENRICH THE ANALYSIS OF THE INSTALLED INEQUALITY. FOLLOWING THE ProCC (COMMUNITY CORRECTING PROCESSES) CONCEPT, BASED ON THE SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF SUBJECTIVITY, WE MUST ESSENTIALLY INCLUDE SOME ANGLES OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PATRIARCHAL CATEGORIES AND LOGICS—AS A SCHEME OF SYMBOLIC AND PRACTICAL EFFICACY—AND CAPITALISM, WHICH IS TODAY THE HEGEMONIC PRODUCTION SYSTEM IN THE ECONOMY AND IN THE PRODUCTION OF BOTH SUBJECTIVITY AND SOCIAL RELATIONS. THIS COULD ELUCIDATE HOW CAPITALISM DEPENDS ON AND SUBSUMES THESE CATEGORIES PROVIDING THEM WITH A NEW

MEANING. THE FALSE ASSUMPTIONS, DEVISED BY DR. CUCCO AS A POWERFUL CONCEPTUAL TOOL ARTICULATING THESE LOGICS BY PROVIDING THE MICROMECHANISMS INTERVENING IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE "EFFICIENT WORKING MAN AND THE HOUSEWIFE WOMAN," ARE RECOVERED. SPECIAL EMPHASIS IS MADE ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WOMAN'S ROLE, WHICH HAS ACHIEVED IMPORTANT TRANSFORMATIONS, THOUGH NOT IN THE CASE OF MALE CONSTRUCTION WHICH IS STILL SUBJECTED TO THE "SILENCED PROBLEMS," LEADING TO DEEP SUFFERINGS OF BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, MAKING ITS VISIBILITY AND TREATMENT A MUST. LIKEWISE, THE PAPER SHOWS HOW THESE ELEMENTS ARTICULATED BY THE PROCC PROGRAMS ALLOW EFFICIENT INTERVENTIONS IN GENDER-TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES.

KEY WORDS: PATRIARCHY, CAPITALISM, COMMUNITY CORRECTING PROCESSES, FALSE ASSUMPTIONS, SILENCED PROBLEMS OF MAN

1. PATRIARCHY, CAPITALISM AND CONSTRUCTION OF SUBJECTIVITY

When speaking about gender or the relationship between men and women, the concept of patriarchy is an indispensable tool to understand and explain inequality in the history of our society. Many writings address this issue from different perspectives. Our intention, when revisiting some of its characteristics, is to conduct an in-depth study of conceptual and methodological articulations that might allow us to continue working towards the transformation of this reality by developing a practice that has been consolidated throughout the last thirty years.

Based on the concept of Community Correcting Processes (ProCC) devised by Mirtha Cucco, and in order to achieve this transformation, it is indispensable to establish a relationship between patriarchy, as a symbolic and practical efficient scheme, and capitalism, which is nowadays the hegemonic production system, not only in relation to economic production, which is perhaps the most commonly known and questioned, but also as producer of subjectivity and social relations. Any social system, based on social imaginary meanings, structures and determines the kind of subjectivity that better suits and reproduces it.

Capitalism is not only a form of economic production, but also a form of social and subjective production. We agree with Izquierdo, when he states that:

The capitalist revolution is much more than a revolution in productive forces; it is a thorough revolution, because it does not limit itself to radically transform the form of producing goods and services, labor relations and distribution of products. It also implies radical transformations in the form it establishes power relations, promotes obedience and accepts social standards, meets the need to love and being loved, provides death with a meaning, conceives relations between generations, and constructs age categories [1].

If the emergence of capitalism implies a radical subversion of relations between individuals, between individuals and objects, and with institutions which, in turn, induce radical changes in subjectivity construction, isn't it reasonable to think that it will also have a fundamental impact on regulating the masculine and the feminine?

Although, inside capitalism, patriarchy is still “doing as it pleases,” what toll does it pay to remain steady within it? What transformation did it undergo to remain efficient inside a system imposing radical transformations such as humane construction and preservation? What categories are constructed in capitalism that subsume and transform patriarchal relations?

Understanding this particular mutual interaction and construction between capitalism and patriarchy will allow us to devise theoretical concepts and methodological tools to efficiently intervene in the transformation of power and inequality relations prevailing in this social historical moment.

Bearing in mind the ProCC concept, we understand that the construction of subjectivity is a socio-historical process and, therefore, the way in which we are constructed is broadly influenced and determined by the social formation we inhabit and inhabits in us. Each social formation is supported by a flow of meanings stating how things are; that is, a material reality is not so in itself, but is constructed by a symbolic reality stating how things are, thus hindering the possibility of questioning the hegemonic viewpoint of the meaning of reality.

For example, these social imaginary formations determine the discipline of material and symbolic realities, since they state, in an hegemonic fashion, “how things are,” thus imposing and hindering the possibility and multiplicity of forms of being of individuals, of relations between persons, and between persons and objects. So, in this way, constructed subjectivity approaches what we call the “wanted ideological subject” (2).

The form in which subjectivity is constructed in a woman or a man, the way they are, what they enjoy, what they suffer from, what they say and what they don't say, is a socio-historical construction written as a script including discourses and practices about the material reality of their bodies.

We are interested in abounding in this aspect, so as to understand the mechanisms through which these social discourses and practices materialize in concrete persons, how they are expressed in daily life, and how they are expressed in being a man or being a woman thus generating a lot of discomfort, suffering and pain; mechanisms which are associated with the support and reproduction of the system conditions. Hence, they both will be assigned and, in turn, assume different determined and determinant roles in a script that undermines subjectivity and impoverishes the life of individuals.

A lot has been thought, written and made about women's role. The categories that have confined and forced them began to be visualized and, consequently, we have been able to address its transformation. Women's struggle to free themselves from the assigned role and the resulting constructed subjectivity has been strenuous, painful and effective. But, what happens with the man's role?

Seemingly, when speaking about gender, based on the socio-historical construction of a symbolic place, it would seem that we are simply speaking about the female gender construction, and we are "taking for granted" that man "is like that," thus neglecting the construction conditions of a role which is as socio-historical as that of woman. In this process, something is once again "naturalized" and invisible and, throughout

mankind's history, we have learned that it is very difficult to do science with something that is invisible or is not spoken about. It belongs to the realm of the unthinkable.

Based on our conception, we believe that such "unthinkable" place plays an extremely important role in preserving the hegemonic conditions of the capitalist system, and we are referring to the "silenced problems of men." We believe it is crucial to work from this perspective in order to put an end to a conception which swallows up both men and women so as to construct the conditions leading to more equitable relations.

It is indispensable to understand the patriarchal categories in order to comprehend how capitalism nourishes from them and subsumes them with a new meaning. The socio-historical forms through which subjectivity expresses itself are deeply rooted in the form of material and symbolic production establishing practices. If we want to transform this reality, then we cannot ignore the forms in which the instituted is transformed and preserve these practices; a logic implying gender inequalities though, at the same time, embracing and including them in a different set of inequalities.

Unveiling the social script constructed from the hegemonic logic of capitalism implies to stand back from the cruel and violent expressions interfering in the social body as a whole, as well as in the sexed bodies in their daily practices. The task is to dismantle this script without changing the actors, so as to play the same roles.

2. SOME ANGLES OF THE PATRIARCHAL LOGIC. CONSTRUCTING THE "DIFFERENCE"

Among the several viewpoints constructed within the historical development of feminism, the concept of patriarchy or inequality has had different meanings and weight throughout their development.

According to radical feminism, patriarchy is a systematic domination in which particular men become active agents of the oppression endured by women.

In conformity with this approach, Alicia Puleo refers to what she considers the main patriarchal aspects:

Men have specific interests leading them to play that role: sexuality (seen as attaining pleasure) and reproduction (as the production of children). But not because these two are considered the main ones, they drift apart from other patriarchal domination aspects like labor (exploitation of unpaid household tasks), withdrawal of emotional support reinforcing the masculine ego, etc. [3].

When in *Política sexual* (4), Kate Millet revolutionized the conception of public and private spaces stating that “the personal is political,” she is saying that domination and power acts are exerted as alleged daily private and personal acts. Revisiting what was stated before, on the basis of our conception, the relationship between the macro-social and micro-social—between the hegemonic social formation and the effective practices determined by that social formation in daily life of persons and in the intimacy of subjectivities—is of interdependence and interdetermination.

Considering it as a “policy” means that it depends on a socio-historical construction process and, therefore, there is nothing about unquestionable essence (masculine or feminine) or foundation to legitimate inequality situations.

Then, we are speaking of categories which, in their flow of meanings, determine an imaginary sense of what things are. That is, a way of thinking of the continuum of reality with discreet constructions of it. It is never seen from a naïve perspective, though that same perspective is naturalized, so much so that it becomes automatic and non-reflexive.

What is the logic behind gender differences? Which is the reality attributes used by patriarchy to construct the difference? From an “attributive, binary and hierarchical” logic, Ana María Fernández states:

a) “Attributive, insofar as it grants, attributes the human model (man = man) to the predicates of the male sex; therefore, the other gender is constituted in terms of negativity” (5).

This exercise has two very important consequences:

- The humane will be “essentially” the masculine; men will be the yardstick for everything and the positive model of what is valuable. Masculine will mean healthy, desirable, and ethical. Everything that can be expected from the humane is equal to masculine. This generates androcentrism. Everything will be assessed under these parameters; everything that falls into these categories will be positive, otherwise it will be excluded.

- If one of the poles has the monopoly over the humane characteristics, the other pole will be defined as negative, as a margin. The other pole is almost excluded from humane characteristics. What is not masculine will be margin or negativity. The masculine look is the center in the interpretation of reality.
- b) "Binary, since it really alternates only two values, so necessarily one is true and the other one is false (it is not A and B, but A and not A" (5). What does it mean that this logic has only two real values where one is true and the other one is false?
- If we speak about letters in our language, we say that they are A, B, C, D and so on throughout the whole alphabet. If we consider this as the universe of discourses, then we would be speaking about the order of diversity, a diversity of letters. But, being binary, there are only two places; these two values cannot be A and B or A and C, for we will still be in the line of diversity, so they must be A and -A—the positive and the negative.
- There is no possibility for a difference; it has or has not the attribute. If it has all the attributive characteristics we mentioned, then it will be A, otherwise, it will be -A. As we said before, it will be negativity. There are only two places to keep things, no more. From the patriarchal viewpoint, this has many expressions: the active and the passive, the strong and the weak, the emotional and the rational, the public and the private, the subject of law and the object of law, the sexual subject and the sexual object...
- If the masculine value and definition is the positive, every difference will be based on that definition; that is, the feminine will be measured against the masculine.
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If it does not fall in one, then it will fall in the other; if it does not fall in the strong—following A, of course—it will fall in the weak; if it does not fall in the rational, it will fall in the emotional. Diversity crumbles and a two-value difference prevails, though only one will have the truth value. Thus, things are particularly ready to examine the following characteristic of the patriarchal logic.

- c) This is also a hierarchical logic “since one of the two terms becomes inferior, complement or supplement, the negative of what the hegemonic qualifies as false and, therefore, as inferior, inasmuch as they are so” (5). As a first step, and from the attributive point of view, human values are identified as those of men; in the following step, their attributes are given a truth value developed in the masculine who monopolizes the truth value; and the third step is a short step to say that one is better and the other one is worse.

Everything falling in A (in the masculine) will be superior; and, consequently, everything left in $-A$, will be inferior.

If the truth value is given by the man’s being, since man = Man, the binary characteristics pertaining to the man will have a higher hierarchy. The other one becomes a complement or supplement.

This is the starting point to construct the “concept of inferiority” leading to misogyny and the illusion of a complementariness which, based on the abovementioned situation, states that there are just two places. Following the same reasoning, it is “homophobic,” for there is no truth value for those not falling into the category of the male hegemony.

Based on what A. M. Fernández proposed, the opposition between the public and the private was included in the list of polarities, together with reason-feelings, intelligence-intuition, word-emotion, power-affection, production-consumption, and efficacy-donation. Every last term included in these polarities would be governed by the constitutive principle of modern private life: women's attachment to the family, through the incorporation of men to the production of the public, either through labor, power or language. In turn, women will be in charge of producing a private world and the space rationality, namely, that of feelings.

3. THE DIFFERENCE HIDDEN IN THE DIFFERENCE

But, let's set our eyes, once again, on the logic with which we look, naturalize or question this. In that same construction of differences, while there are several paths for the feminine and the masculine, represented by real men and women, something becomes invisible again and, therefore, left out from questioning. In the case of the attributive man = Man, the masculine construction is attached to what should be ("the positive characteristic"); in here, the man is forbidden to question his way of being and to think about his condition. His being is naturalized and the construction of the masculine gender is neglected.

However, despite being "taken for granted," it seems that the man has to prove, once and again, that he is a man; he has to bring his being to bear and put it at risk in order to uphold a condition.

Based on the binary logic, in which, as we said, there are only two truth values, if he does not fall in one of them with all his qualities, he will inevitably fall in the other. This

entails a constant "vigilant attitude" to be able to uphold "what is expected from him" without losing the alleged privilege granted to him by this logic, thus maintaining all the attributes with which the social imaginary has built his identity. If so many hurdles have to be faced to prove that "he is a man," is because there is also a risk that might prevent him from being a man. Paradox: something that is taken for granted (value: he is supposed to, as it used to be said in the militia), something that is never questioned in his genesis, can be lost.

And if we add the hierarchical structuring, in which everything not falling within the hegemonic masculinity is feminine and, therefore, inferior, the man should take good care in hiding any feeling, passivity, emotion, naivety... leaving him in the place of feminine and inferior.

What man's role is constructed on the basis of these premises? What silences and stains are generated from these epistemological movements? What problems and sufferings are generated and, at the same time, silenced in "someone who is always making the grade"?

4. OVERCOMING DICOTOMIES. THE FALSE ASSUMPTIONS

The emergence of capitalism brought about an ideological context to construct sexed bodies too and devised a new order in the construction of relations between sexes, transforming them into unequal relations between genders in a functional way. The new social order assigned very specific functions to each role. In this regard, Dr. Mirtha Cucco provides a conceptual set known as False Assumptions. The False Assumptions are a powerful conceptual tool articulating the patriarchal logic with the hegemonic

capitalist logic. "False" to the extent in which they could be different and not based on blocking the different, though efficient, meanings, since they determine the "material nature" of daily conducts.

Although it is not the objective of this article to deal in depth with this powerful conceptual tool, we will provide some elements to understand and get acquainted with it.

Following the False Assumptions (6) and its application and research from the ProCC methodological practice, we find the construction of man as an efficient worker, expropriated from the capacity to learn by recognizing risk and danger, useless in keeping up with daily movements, having difficulties to establish a connection with his feelings, expropriated from paternity, incapable of experiencing the enriching contact with his couple and constructed as a functional dependent man. He is supportive with the woman's construction as the housewife who considers her home as her domain, her children as her private property, and her husband as something that belongs to her; a woman who was also expropriated from the possibility of enjoying her sexuality, among other things, thus transforming "the W of woman into the M of mother" and, consequently, the possibility of enjoying all the dimensions of being a woman. So spaces are then distributed: the man working "outside home," sold to the market as labor force, as a merchandise; and the woman "inside home," ensuring that her man thinks only about what he has to do, taking care of him, feeding him and satisfying him for his return to his workplace next day. The woman, burdened with the household tasks and her children, complains. The burden is visible, but this burden also hides her

power of action and legislation that would compensate her constructed place of "inferiority."

We are not implying that this power is tantamount to and symmetric with the man's power, since the man, when fulfilling his role, still has many of the power attributes derived from patriarchy to compensate the burden of his role. The structural violence of this social system entails another important element between the man's hegemonic role and the woman's role. But, its visibility is important to achieve changes in the struggle against inequality.

Apparently, the man has not the burden of the children and the house, he has no visible burden. Therefore, he is privileged; the man is "superior and powerful." Being a worker and out of home is a privilege; the man has no burden. Consequently, if he is privileged, he cannot denounce any discomfort, otherwise he will be "attempting" against his privileges.

The man is a being involving a what-should-be characteristic that leaves no room for discussion: being a man is equal to be suddenly installed in a position of power and privileges, and duties too—the masculine privilege is also a trap.

All these conditions generate, as we previously said, unthinkable and, therefore, unspoken problems. But these "silenced problems of the man" generate great suffering in men and women, so their visibility and approach are indispensable.

The man's subjectivity is imprisoned in his "efficient worker" and family provider jail and, from there, he will be a better father and man depending on what he takes home. That will be his main task and one of the most preponderant signs of his identity.

Today, wage labor is the heir of all that violence involving all the above-mentioned expropriations of men and the invisibility of the construction conditions of that "worker." But, anyway, as this is invisible, he cannot go against the alleged privileges that men have "as of right," he cannot complain, he cannot express his discomfort or emotions. The lack of affection becomes an indispensable requirement to endure all this "civilized horrors" since any complaint will attempt against his privileged position, as stated in the False Assumptions.

This complex architecture becomes more evident from the woman's liberation movements. Based on the Operational and Referential Concept Scheme (ECRO, its acronym in Spanish) of the False Assumptions, we can see the subtle construction involving the reality in the collective imagination. The man has no visible burden and, from this "trap" concept of reality, the woman constructs her new place by conquering the man's old "privileges." Going out to work becomes a "liberation" model, though it also means the man's burden of expropriations and pain, and the incapability to recover everything that was expropriated from her feminine condition. Recently, many former diseases of high prevalence in men are now equally reported in men and women.

Consequently, women's wishes focus on doing what she "envied before of men," overlooking, for example, that her involvement in the social protagonism does not imply a work equal to that of men, but an independence from the kind of work (wage earner versus household chores) that has turned the man, as a worker, into the slave of a machine crushing his life force, thus subsuming his "being a man" under "being a

worker" with a heavily idealized abstract value based on the hegemonic imaginary meanings (7).

This is the violence found at the bottom of the construction of the two binary logic poles. The dominant is also dominated but through his domination, which is, obviously, not insignificant at all.

This is a man constructed, from the logics we mentioned before: an omnipotent, active, and strong being capable of facing the public sphere in a privileged fashion, having the adequate codes for learning, competitive, hierarchical and with precarious social bonds. A man who, based on the man = Man equation, is associated with the healthy, good and normal and, from there, has no possibility to think about, question or connect himself with any discomfort. A man who has naturalized his power so, isn't he ideal for the construction of a new category, that of the wage earning worker man who has to sell his labor force to the market?

A woman constructed as negative, as complement, as fragile, as mother and caretaker, having the affective and caring codes, who turned her being a mother and caretaker into her identity, replacing her sexuality with maternity, setting aside her right to pleasure, and subordinating her enhancement to the social enhancement of her husband so, isn't she ideal as the reproducer of new wage earners and support for that man to return next morning to the market to work his butt off?

The patriarchal unequal conditions are still internally present and should be addressed in all its dimensions. But there is an oppressing system which determines, with real

and symbolic violence, new forms of dehumanized and alienated subjectivities to achieve the economic benefits for the logic of capital.

5. SOME AXES OF THE LOGIC OF CAPITAL

As we all know, the main objective of capitalism is capital production in the form of money or wealth; that is, in this social organization model production is not moved by needs and common good, but by the logic of capital which is to increase surplus value. Everything is aimed at increasing capital.

María J. Izquierdo states that "if a human being attains happiness, or at least wellbeing, under capitalist production conditions, that would be an unwanted result, since capitalist activity is not moved by happiness or wellbeing" (8). Based on this logic, for this to materialize a set of conditions is indispensable (a type of subject, a work conception, a certain organization of time...). We will only address some of them.

a) Dimensions of human activity. We will refer to the categorization provided by Agustín Morán:

... the activity that makes a human being humane is the result of several activities (labor, politics, language and passion) which are not produced in isolation one from another, but synthesized and integrated in human life. For the purpose of analysis, we can separate and try to define them in relation to their specificities, but without forgetting that there is no affection without work, no work without affection; there is no work without language, passion and politics, and there is no politics without work, passion and language [9].

Work. "Work is the activity aimed at producing the material living means of individuals through a social division and a metabolic relation with nature. During the last two hundred years, wage labor is the form adopted by labor under the social capitalist domination. Wage labor also hides other labor forms, as for example, the caring labor" (9).

The culture-language-intersubjectivity. It is the development of symbols and artistic expressions, especially speech, as a mediating structure between reality and our consciousness of the real. This is the converging place of the objective (what exists outside each one) and the intersubjectivity (the significant having an analogous meaning for all of us). What we create for our development.

Politics. The activity of weaving the social fabric. The action of thinking of your community, the commitment with everything that takes place in that community, the decision-making to live... (deliberation on the forms and aims of production, distribution, allocation of resources, caring and be cared, political forms of coordination and social representation). "They are all interconnected, based on social places and not on isolated places estranged from society. The sexual division of labor and the disconnection from social life in the public sphere of men (the market) and the private sphere of women (the family) constitute a first-magnitude political fact conditioning the set of social relations" (9).

Passion. "Human beings, besides being rational and social beings, are also a piece of matter and nature whose movements are conditioned not only by reason, but also by

the laws of physics and chemistry. This will be the activity characterizing persons closely associated with nature. In the eyes of reason this is a blurred territory" (9).

The capitalist work subsumes these dimensions and capacities and organizes life time in accordance with the profitability logic. Life times are uniformly set (care, social participation, pleasure, cultural activity and creation) under the time regulation of labor to produce capital, that is, the surplus value. This subordination of life, work and caring time to wage labor time is naturalized; it is not seen as the cause of the degradation of labor and human relations. The foundation of the life of the salaried population is not social existence but, in the best case scenario, survival. The social participation and self-esteem of people depend on their participation in the production and consumption of goods (and all this is attached to our imaginary and wish).

b) Work conception. The fact that some human beings are turned into merchandises—that is, being forced to sell their labor force to earn a salary that will allow them to survive—has several meanings. One meaning is that not all human beings are included because, otherwise, what will we do with that time of our existence in which we need to be cared? Consequently, males account for most of the wage earners and, at the same time, for the emergence of a new figure soon after—the housewife. In capitalism, the activities of both, the wage earner and the caretaker woman, are subsumed by the capital movement. The work performed by men is visible but, in the case of women, as they are not merchandises—and we should remember that in the capitalist system the mercantile relation is what really counts, the rest is not important—their work is not visible, though this is now being modified.

The "housewife" construction began its materialization through social imaginary meanings such as her idealization as mother (providentially gifted for education, self-sacrifice, devotion...), her identity is founded on feelings, devotion to others, docile...; women are dignified when they are given a place, but a place of subjugation (thus becoming a social structuring agent too: to discipline her couple, to act as an internal police of privacy...).

The construction of the "efficient wage earner" (the provider) is associated with being strong, tough and devoid of feelings, an identity constructed on the basis of taking, possessing and reaffirming himself using force if necessary, drifting the man apart from the family setting and, therefore, from his children. The father's value has to do with the money he earns and, later on, with success too. With his wage he attains an objective position of power, though alienated.

Thus, the individuals' life is organized in conformity with this logic, so their human and social dimensions are subordinated to the needs of the always increasing reproduction of capital.

As Cucco points out:

It is essential to restore the importance of the analysis of male and female roles from a structural perspective, assuming these roles in accordance with the social and economic formation that brings them about. This allows us to decode the fine engineering involved in the male and female assigned-assumed roles, taking as a paradigmatic example

what we call the "efficient working man" and the "housewife woman" roles.

As a starting point, we do not assume that persons or things incorporate qualities just for being within the capitalist system, but that the capitalist relationship exists because it is mediated by capitalist persons and things. Therefore, the capitalists' mythicized consciousness is a premise for the capitalist economy to function [6].

c) Wage labor. The construction of a social class (the wage earners) is a mandatory condition of capitalism because it needs human beings behaving as merchandises, that is, selling their labor force and becoming wage earners. This did not exist before; it emerged at the end of the 15th century in the midst of a "blood and fire" process which began detaching workers from their means of livelihood.

This was the starting point: detaching a large number of people from their means of livelihood and production, thus forcing them to join the labor market. This expropriation was disguised as the "freedom" of the serfs and, when their rights over the land were not ensured, they were again subdued to different "masters" (the capitalist, the market). In many cases, it was a brutal process. In *The Capital*, Marx refers to the so-called original accumulation:

The proletariat created by the breaking up of the bands of feudal retainers and by the forcible expropriation of the people from the soil, this "free-as-air" proletariat, could not possibly be absorbed by the nascent manufactures as fast as it was thrown upon the world. On the

other hand, these men, suddenly dragged from their wonted mode of life, could not as suddenly adapt themselves to the discipline of their new condition. They were turned en masse into beggars, robbers, vagabonds, partly from inclination, in most cases from stress of circumstances. Hence at the end of the 15th and during the whole of the 16th century, throughout Western Europe a bloody legislation against vagabondage proliferated.

d) Methodological individualism. An indispensable condition we want to address is that, for all this to be possible, there must be a kind of subjectivity, a subject with certain characteristics. This was achieved by developing the methodological individualism as a philosophical category that, later on, was included in psychological and other categories, since capitalism needs an individualistic subject. We are referring to a set of theories which advance the conception of the human beings as an individual "free" from ties, estranged from the community, the rising of the "individual" over the ruins of the human being as a social being, as Agustín Morán stated (10). For capitalism to develop, individuals cannot form part of a social fabric ensuring them some protection. They cannot be serfs protected by their master (though under servitude). The idea of an isolated, "free" and pre-social human being is developed, thus explaining society by his/her actions. The individual is the cell providing society with an explanation. He/she is an individual deprived of social decisions, with restricted desires, who will use his/her reasoning not to restrict desire (recognition of others), but as a tool to attain his/her unrestricted desires.

By nature, the human being is considered as someone who pursues his/her desires per se and cannot resort to reason to master them. These theories are based on the concept of an isolated individual preceding the social or political event. The methodological individualism describes—and prescribes—the individual who brought about the construction of society. In this paradigm, the freedom of individuals has to do with pursuing their individual interest; therefore, they try to remove the obstacles preventing its achievement.

Subjectivity is presented as an impoverished self in most of its dimensions, with a narcissist fragility which determines the encounter with otherness and difference, and makes the recognition of the other—as peer and different—difficult.

This kind of relation with others hinders the construction of an identifying project, since the other, a potential facilitator or colleague, turns into an awkward threat that paralyzes us, or a “functional” object tailored to my own desires. This precarious sociability only supports the construction of subjectivities included in the False Assumptions.

In this kind of sociability (the capitalist sociability), links are somehow functional, something we exert though we do not experience as constituents, but something which is threatening. Within this framework, just one link promises us the eternity and completeness of the self. Only one kind of link provides us with the possibility of attaining an ideal and immutable self and the promise of complete satisfaction: the link with the market. According to Marx, relations among persons turn into relations among things, and relation with things becomes anthropomorphic. The market seems a living

and providing entity that, through consumption, promises the possibility of achieving a complete satisfaction. Such a precariously constructed psyche determines the social and historical emergence of a subject eager for social imaginary.

However, there will be no human being without the social reality, without society. Neither will be a society without persons, without social individuals who can only be individualized on the basis of their former social dimension. The human being is a social condition and consequence, and what states that all human beings are equal (for example, workers and employers) is false. There is no rationality without social life.

If the social and historical nature of man is set aside, psychology is deprived of its historical reality, thus becoming the psychic science of a man "in general," naturalizing the hegemonic concept of individual-individualistic—a sort of "privatized individual"—as healthy, whose sociability is realized in the market through indirect and mediated relations where cooperation and social bonds are established after being expropriated from him [11].

Therefore, a more brutal paradigm was created, and which is still in place: the paradigm of an individual pursuing his exclusively individual desires and interests and whose aim is to maximize pleasure, in the understanding that individual freedom implies the elimination of obstacles to meet his own individual desires. This is quite different from understanding that individual freedom lies in the "capacity to choose between what is right (considering, beside my desires, others' needs by providing security for all) and wrong (exclusively considering my desires, and not others' desires,

thus leading to competition and insecurity)" (12). This is the construction of individuals who are willing to live a life based on the production and consumption of goods.

Currently, this is the wildest category of methodological individualism. Cucco points out:

... we are dealing with the proposal of a clumsily alive man vulnerable to narcissist wounds, incapable of recognizing the other, of handling conflicts, and of establishing a link, whose primitive defenses and deep emptiness or unconsciousness prevail [13].

Even today, there is still an original accumulation, a subject who is still merchandise and has to sell his labor force in a market characterized by economic globalization which is also what has been offered and is still offered as women's liberation, the organization of life associated with capital-generating labor (surplus value).

6. OF ALL THIS, WHERE IS OUR SIGHT SET ON?

Within the installed (structural) gender-oriented inequalities, we set our sights on the subjectivity construction and, from there, we address some questions which are common to men and women, though we also focus on the specificity of male and female identities constructed on the basis of capitalism and changes taking place.

The patriarchal conditions of inequalities and inequities are still internally present and should be addressed in all their dimensions. But there is an oppressing system determining, with real and symbolic violence, a dehumanized and alienated subjectivity in the attainment of economic benefits.

This is reflected in the construction of False Assumptions, conceptualized by Dr. Mirtha Cucco as part of the Community Correcting Processes (ProCC), a theoretical tool constructed after many years of experience in the field of research and intervention. This construction allows us to devise programs with a high transformation power, since it dialectically deals with relations between the constituted (the male and female subjectivity) and the constituting, namely, the hegemonic social formation based on the social imaginary. It is a powerful explanatory model allowing us to work with what we have inside us, to surface the traps or difficulties and pains of men and women, misunderstandings, overburden, loneliness, lack of affection, lack of projects...

In order to work with this construction process of the individualistic subject common to the system, in order to unveil the micro-processes and micro-mechanisms which are still leaving us with a capitalist structure, we resorted to the Formative Group Method. Based on this method, we address the subjectivity construction as men and women, as well as the opening to the instituting capacity for new male and female constructions.

Our ProCC programs are aimed at having a bearing on discourses and practices, the effective crystallization of the imaginary in behaviors. What we intend to do with this intervention is to unveil invisible aspects in the Health Alleged Normality, which is the main cause of discomfort, generating a certain degree of independence from the instituted, thus leading to changes in everyday behaviors. For example, understanding, "from inside," that certain questions of women's role are not "natural," but assigned by the instituted social hegemony, places them in a different position when faced with a change, and not only from a rational perspective. However, unveiling this is not so

simple, since in the instituted the pressure exerted by the degree of social consensus, besides the efficacy of mechanisms used, must be emphasized.

For example, as Cucco states: How can a woman stop being a good and indispensably efficient mother, as instituted, even when this entails suffering, sacrifice and abnegation to give her own life? Or how can she not respond based on current liberated woman canons even if she has to face some sort of fraud from certain statements of change implying the emptiness of herself, leaving out man and children? (14).

In the case of men, unveiling this is not simple either. Based on what has been said throughout this work, and due to the construction of the men's role, we also insist on saying that there are silenced problems in men that we must unveil, expose and address. Problems that shut the man's mouth and institute a stagnant role supporting through silence a whole domination structure.

How, even though his own life is subsumed under work, can he stop believing that "if you are a worker, you are a good man"? This meets the needs of a system always demanding available labor force in the market and engaging in free competition, and constitutes one of the best articulated social agreements. Similarly, how, for example, can he stop being strong when assuming another role—namely, taking care of affection, paternity and household tasks—is considered as acting "like a woman" at home and as a sign of weakness based on what has been established?

Therefore, there are some issues that women should address by their own in order to escape from the androcentrism and domination of the patriarchal system. Women have

managed to make the pain and de-subjectivity—derived from their constructed roles, the pain of negativity and marginalization—visible.

The man should begin questioning an identity offering both privileges as pains. He should be aware that recovering what has been expropriated from him will allow him to drift away from the hegemonic social imaginary and travel through spaces always alien to him. There is a task that they both have to accomplish to visualize an enemy who crushes human subjectivity and forcefully orients the needs of persons to its own preservation and reproduction.

The inclusion of the man's problems in our paradigm enriches our perspective and our intervention. We do not limit ourselves to dilemmas and the reductionist analysis in which one is "the agent dominating the other"; we agree on the fact that the woman has been, and still is, dominated by the man, but to this we must add that he has been, and still is, dominated; and that is why we include in our analysis and study the way in which the masculine identity was constructed and the changes that have taken place in this construction process.

Intervening in the man's silenced problems allows us to strategically influence and address the transformation processes of the gender problems. We can appreciate the changes achieved in the struggle for women's liberation; but the incorporation of a conception including the social construction of the man's role will also allow us to see, more clearly, where old inequalities still prevail and new alienations are created in daily life, as well as to increase the instituting capacity to find ways for our healthier construction.

Notes

1. Work based on communications made by A. Waisblat and A. Sáenz at the round table on "La construcción socio-histórica de la existencia. Patriarcado, capitalismo y desigualdades instaladas," at the Meeting on "Roles femenino y masculino a debate," held in Bilbao, January 28 and 29, 2011.

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13. Ob. cit. 7:76.

14. Ob. cit. 7:81.

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