

* **New writings and mediations in health**

Love sights: in honor of Doralice Araújo

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To dream the impossible dream
To fight the unbeatable foe
To bear with unbearable sorrow
To run where the brave dare not go
(The impossible dream – Mitch Leigh / lyrics by Joe Darion)

It still hurts a lot when I remember how I felt when I first came to “Pinel”. As stated in the wise words of the philosopher Wittgenstein, pain is the only feeling that cannot be translated into words.

But what I really found in that psychiatric institution was joy. After the Psychiatric Reform, a process of renovation started by psychiatrist Ricardo Peret, the Philippe Pinel Institute became, in the mental health field, a place of real possibilities for many people who had suffered the terrible experience of psychological pain. The word that inspired most users, or the patients at IPP, was dream. Many dreamed of returning to their daily lives after an interruption in their trajectories.

I went there for the first time in 1996. The psychiatric reform consisted of an effort to end the isolation insane people were submitted to and find ways to give them a chance to regain an active although limited life. At that time, very significant changes took place at IPP. The one people paid most attention to and was even broadcast in the news, was the substitution of metal cutlery for plastic ones at meals, the first of many other radical modifications the psychiatric reform would provoke.

Among them was the opening of the innovative Cais, a name given by the users who saw it as calm place where they could anchor their feelings and feel balanced, and also a place where people with more serious mental disorders who had shown any sign of recuperation could participate in the communitarian elaboration of the Cais Newspaper and take part in music therapy and art therapy sessions or other activities instead of having to face restraint. Other modifications were the elimination of more aggressive approaches as the electroshock therapy or the straitjacket; the improvement in the quality of food for the interns; the establishment of a more humanized treatment where the whole team of the Institute would be involved, together with the medical staff, in a demonstration of what later would become the Therapeutic Community.

Moreover, by the initiative of the psychologist Doralice Araújo, a TV was inaugurated, a community TV, the community TV of the Philippe Pinel Institute. Many may have asked, a TV for insane people? That was it! A TV for the insane!



A photographer and active admirer of artistic expressions, Doralice Araújo was used to film activities in progress in the Cais, repeating the process of taking pictures she had adopted in a former work with children and adolescents. While engaged in the Cais activities, Doralice Araújo noticed that the users enjoyed interacting with the camera. And the communication so established between the two sides made her decide to suggest the creation of a TV for the institution. The director listened to the proposal and after necessary steps were taken to materialize the project, TV Pinel was inaugurated in February 1996.

To help assist the project from scratch, the Popular Image Creation Center (CECIP) was invited through two eminent participants, the cartoonist Claudius Ceccon, well known for his partnership in the "O Pasquim" resistance newspaper and Eduardo Coutinho, one of the biggest Brazilian film makers. CECIP had already produced the TV Maxambomba¹ and had large experience in communitarian TVs. Nevertheless, Doralice Araújo presented some requirements: Some of the users should be contracted as workers for the new TV. After successful negotiations, some users were trained and began to receive scholarships for their work with the camera, production, journalism or administrative support.

These little actions were able to elicit profound transformations. People considered mad were transformed in workers, overcoming the restricted place of madness, as defined by Paulo Amarante (2009), and gaining a possibility to be creative.

Let's try not to delve into the details that outline the state of madness. Descartes compared madness to a great misunderstanding. He thought that human beings have a limited understanding capacity in parallel with an unlimited willpower. If the forces liberated by willpower exceed the understanding capacity, misinterpretation will be on the way.

For TV Pinel, willpower came ahead of an understanding capacity, a dialectic stand that considered both features equally productive. A well-balanced combination between professionals' understanding and users' deepest expectations transformed TV Pinel in a creative will to power, as Nietzsche has taught us. Its shows received national and international awards what represented real possibilities of better lives to the so-called "mad". TV Pinel slogan translated such force: *to show a renovated image of madness*. And the hostess of this spirited adventure was Doralice Araújo.

Pain is a private issue

The TV Pinel creation was also surrounded by a lot of questioning. The mad will freak out! It is not ethic to show peoples' images on TV! So many questions could make one think that the initiative was not being taken into great account by the people involved in the project. But the truth is that in a dynamic equalization of forces, professionals and users used to discuss every show, daily tasks and the working process. Doralice insisted on weekly meetings with the team to solve anything at issue.

Decisions and solutions were a collective production that solved every problem while reminding everybody of the common determination of doing the best to show the world a *new image of madness*.

To put it in words, we could mention Deleuze's theory on affection. Love moved TV Pinel. The need to

be touched or removed from a place, the joy felt at the end of another day of successful group work. Dora kept a bookcase where there were some books, Winnicott among them, to teach us how playing can be productive.

And so TV Pinel became a source of admiration. Why people were so happy in TV Pinel? Besides all her dedication to her work, Doralice Araújo would now and then invite a user into her office to chat and ask about his feelings, his treatment outside TV Pinel, his capacity of organizing his life, and so on. At times when TV Pinel was transported to exhibitions in open and public spaces, Doralice would be among the production crowd, inside cars and kombis helping prepare the show and never caught without her photo camera.

Pain was slowly left behind; the potential child of Nietzsche could look into the future. If anybody would occasionally break away, Dora or other professionals would provide psychological support. Evidence pointed toward success. The TV Pinel users' confinement periods became less and less frequent after they started participating in the project. Besides, people who took part in TV Pinel are now trying to live a more organized life outside the Psychiatric Asylum, trying to face common life and its hardships.

I see myself in your eyes

Each of the insane who had a contact with Doralice Araújo experimented a singular feeling when looking into her eyes. I'm proud to say I had the privilege of spending some more time in the company of Doralice Araújo during the ten next years after she left. Always concerned with the people who worked for TV Pinel, she used to ask about all of them. So I used to call her up and transmit updated news about progress in the work. I even filmed and edited birthday parties for her daughter. It happened in her daughter's, Julia, sixth and fifteenth birthdays.



The first article Dora and I wrote together was called: "No Espelho do Olhar do Outro: a TV Pinel e a Construção Coletiva da Auto Imagem em Vídeo" (*I See Myself in Your Eyes: TV Pinel and a Collective Construction of a Self-image in Video*). It was included in the Revista Comunicação & Informação (*Communication & Information Magazine*) for the Federal University of Goiás, in 2004; an awesome experience. As a journalist, I had lost my writing inspiration but I loved writing the TV Pinel periodic reports. When she invited me to share the article I felt quite insecure but the affection, love and respect they had had for me pushed me on and I decided to face the challenge without the pretension of sounding like a journalist. When it was published we rejoiced. Doralice chose texts to be read live in TV Pinel and they not only helped but stimulated my desire to go back to studies.

Despite the dynamic life I was leading at TV Pinel (studying and working) I went back to the university to study Philosophy at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. My time was all taken by TV Pinel and the Philosophy and Social Sciences Institute. Dora was always by my side and thanks to her I started the process of leaving the institution and returning to the struggles of daily life.

Philosophy carries me through life

Knowing about Doralice Araújo's death, as once said by one of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, was like losing a friend for the second time. She spent her last days fighting a serious disease but her affectionate heart remained the same. In the middle of her health problems she invited me for a last project: a work to show images of the Benjamin Constant Institute. The proposal was based on the blind photographer Evgen Bavcar and the idea for the film was to work with the blind adolescents studying at Benjamin Constant Institute.

After some activities at the IBC we began to have meetings with the adolescents. An important work based on love. Our friendship was as good as ever and I liked to see her well. After the activities we used to discuss the best ways to obtain the best results, how to influence and stimulate the youth. That's when we had the idea of filming a blind boy, among others, that had created a blog.

Far from Doralice Araújo's care, friendship and joy of living I had to open up to my own creative forces. I had been inspired by the spirit of TV Pinel and their feeling of unity. A team that had worked together to free themselves from pain transforming it in a spirit of fight, or in the words of user Milton Freire, learning again how to smile, play, dance and be happy.

While I wrote this essay, I just let the images come out without restraint in a flow of thoughts. I let myself be taken by this feeling that made me live and surpass pain. And I own it to Doralice Araújo. When we, psychologically ill people, saw ourselves on the screen we saw ourselves as people like everybody else, laughing, singing, playing. That was the TV Pinel mission. Doralice had this great idea and was able to offer Rio de Janeiro a beautiful sight of mad people art and creativity inspired by their intense will to power.

Reference

AMARANTE, P. **Saúde mental e atenção psicossocial**. Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2011.

Note

1 Maxambomba is Nova Iguaçu county former name