

Reflection Article/Essay

The structures of everyday life and occupational therapy: tensioning limits and possibilities in/of¹ the professional practice

As estruturas da vida cotidiana e a terapia ocupacional: tensionando limites e possibilidades no/do exercício profissional

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Abstract

This essay aims to reflect on the professional practice of occupational therapists taking as a theoretical reference the conception of everyday life by Agnes Heller. In occupational therapy, the discussion about everyday life and everyday life reveals an emphasis on its use as a key to reading and intervention to think about the lives of people, groups or populations that are recipients of professional actions; thus, the focus has always been the daily life of the other. We propose, in this article, a reflexive shift and we problematize the daily life of the professional himself, understanding that the limits and possibilities in/of work are tensioned in the space of everyday life in which professional practice takes place and is crossed by the structures of everyday life. We discuss daily life itself as a locus of resistance to alienation and the possibility of temporary suspensions of daily life through critical work, capable of articulating the technical, ethical and political dimensions of professional practice, of moving between the individual and collective spheres in reading and intervention on professional demands, to overcome the theory and practice dichotomy and, thus, reaffirm the commitment to the transformation of society, in which struggles for redistribution and recognition produce justice and social participation.

Keywords: Occupational Therapy/Trends, Activities of Daily Living, Professional Practice.

¹In this text, we chose to use the combination “in/of” to refer to two things that happen at the same time: we understand that “in” refers to work processes and contexts, while “of” refers to the purpose of work as a whole, being, therefore, two constitutive and inseparable dimensions of professional practice.

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Resumo

Este ensaio objetiva refletir sobre o exercício profissional de terapeutas ocupacionais tomando como referencial teórico a concepção de cotidiano com base em Agnes Heller. Na terapia ocupacional, a discussão sobre cotidiano e vida cotidiana revela uma ênfase no seu uso como uma chave de leitura e de intervenção para pensar a vida das pessoas, grupos ou populações destinatárias das ações profissionais; assim, o foco tem sido sempre o cotidiano do outro. Propomos, neste artigo, um deslocamento reflexivo e problematizamos o cotidiano do profissional em si, entendendo que os limites e possibilidades no/do trabalho são tensionados no espaço da vida cotidiana em que o exercício profissional acontece e é atravessado pelas estruturas da cotidianidade. Discutimos o próprio cotidiano como *locus* de resistência à alienação e à possibilidade de suspensões temporárias da cotidianidade por meio de um trabalho crítico, capaz de articular as dimensões técnica, ética e política do exercício profissional, de transitar entre as esferas individual e coletiva na leitura e intervenção sobre as demandas profissionais, de superar a dicotomia teoria e prática e, assim, reafirmar o compromisso com a transformação da sociedade, em que lutas por redistribuição e reconhecimento produzam justiça e participação social.

Palavras-chave: Terapia Ocupacional/Tendências, Atividades Cotidianas, Prática Profissional.

Introduction

The homogenization towards the generic-human, the complete suspension of the particular-individual, the transformation into “entirely man”, is something totally exceptional in most human beings (Agnes Heller, O cotidiano e a história, 2016, p. 50).

The discussion about everyday life has aroused the interest of Brazilian occupational therapists in recent decades, through different approaches: everyday life as a concept in a theoretical position to interpret reality; as a concept to reflect on how the illness processes transform the subjects' daily lives; as a concept to support the analysis of everyday life; and as a concept that supports practice (Galheigo, 2003; Salles & Matsukura, 2015).

The incorporation of the concept in the profession was linked to the criticism of what was defined as something sufficient and quite specific to inform the occupational-therapeutic practice of “activities of daily living”, a predominant expression on professional actions, and, consequently, the search for other references that would allow us to think, critically and contextually, about the life that unfolds on a daily basis, the common life of people. Still in the 1980s, Francisco (2001) defended everyday life as a socio-historical construction that carries the concreteness of life in its multiple manifestations, resulting from historical, economic, political and cultural determinations. In the 1990s, everyday life is taken in occupational therapy as an articulating axis of what Galheigo et al. (2018) called emancipatory practices in different fields of professional activity. For Galheigo (2020, p. 7-8), those who turn to everyday studies move to:

[...] the everyday scenes [that] serve as a testimony of space and time shaped by culture, life stories and social relationships. Through everyday life, it is possible to access the experience, the real, the imaginary, memory, dreams, feelings, needs and affections [...] of subjects and collectives.

Such displacements, in theoretical and practical dimensions:

[...] present the hard layers of repetition and suffering in everyday life; they show the delicacy of affection and the enchantment of small gestures and actions; they make difference, discrimination, prejudice and injustice visible; and they offer testimony to the possibilities of creation, reinvention, cooperation and transformation of oneself and the world (Galheigo, 2020, p. 8).

The productions that articulate the concept of daily life with occupational therapy reveal an emphasis on its use as a key to reading and intervention to think about the lives of people, groups or populations that are recipients of professional actions, always focusing on the daily life of the other. However, our questions focus on the daily life of the professional themselves, in their performance, understanding that the limits and possibilities of work are tensioned in the space of daily life in which professional practice takes place and is crossed by the structures of everyday life. The structures that determine daily life, as discussed below, are also expressed in the organization of social policies and in the institutions that mediate professional insertion in the labor market.

We understand that, when exercising their professional activity intervening in people's daily lives, occupational therapists are experiencing, as social beings, one of the activities and dimensions of their daily lives: work. In this way, professional practice, as well as any other activity inserted in daily life, is subject to the typical alienations of the daily life of capitalist society. For Heller (1987), the phenomenon of alienation is expressed as an individual's inability to overcome the naturalization of social life in terms of thought and action, preventing them from performing a critical reading of phenomena and acting critically on their reality.

Considering these premises, this essay reflects on the professional practice of occupational therapists, taking as a theoretical reference the conception of everyday life by Agnes Heller (2016), since the historical and concrete determinations of professional practice are placed and replaced by the structures of everyday life, founded on the capitalist mode of production. We seek to discuss, dialectically, daily life itself as a locus of resistance to alienation and the creation of possibilities for critical, ethical and political professional work.

Everyday Life and Its Structures: the Suspension of Everyday Life and the Elevation to the Human-Generic

“Everyday life is the life of every human being²”. It is with this phrase that Agnes Heller begins her chapter on the structure of everyday life in her book “*O cotidiano e a*

²In the book, Heller uses the term man starting from her philosophical conception of human race, focusing on the humanization of man in the course of the historical process, opposing a perspective of man who humanizes himself to fulfill the dictates of nature ((Patto, 1993). Currently, this term is not in line with the linguistic constructions that face the naturalization of the masculine as a synthesis of genders. We chose the expression human being to speak of the human race.

história”(Everyday Life) (Heller, 2016, p. 35). For her, no one is outside everyday life, and no one is able to disconnect from it and identify with its human-generic activity all the time; therefore, no one would be able to completely disconnect from everyday life. It is pointed out that human-generic activity is one that connects the particular-individual to the human race and whose existence and content can be “[...] useful for expressing and transmitting the human substance” (Heller, 2016, p. 40).

Everyday life is the routine of all people, composed of routine gestures, relationships and activities; by the space of the banal, the private, social relations, by alienation, but also by the space of resistance and the possibility of social transformation (Carvalho, 2011).

Heller (2016) points out that there are characteristics around which everyday life is structured; and among them, we can mention that: it is heterogeneous, hierarchical, unique and unrepeatable, spontaneous and pragmatic.

Everyday life is heterogeneous in its content and hierarchical in terms of the importance that activities have in people's lives. This hierarchy is not immutable, changing “[...] depending on the different economic and social structures” (Heller, 2016, p. 36). People have their jobs, their private and public lives, their leisures; the diversity of activities, as well as their importance, which is what characterizes this heterogeneity and hierarchy.

For Heller, there would be pragmatism and economy in everyday life. Faced with the heterogeneity of things we do in our daily lives, there is a need for an immediate articulation between thinking and acting, which demands pragmatism in decisions and actions, with few possibilities for critical reflection, leading us to an economism in the everyday life; after all, “[...] in everyday life, it is not possible to focus all energies on each decision” (Heller, 2016, p. 46).

There is also a spontaneity in everyday life: it is a tendency to carry out our activities without having to constantly reflect on all these actions, because we would not be able to reflect on the entire content of all the things we do in the banality of everyday life; if that were the case, the production and reproduction of life in society would be impossible (Heller, 2016).

With these characteristics, carrying out the activities of everyday life requires the construction of ultrageneralizing judgments, which are provisional judgments confirmed by everyday practices throughout the subject's experiences (Heller, 2016, p. 59-60).

We always react to unique situations, respond to unique stimuli, and solve unique problems. In order to react, we have to subsume the singular, as quickly as possible, under some universality; we have to organize it in our daily activity [...], we have to solve the problem. But we do not have time to examine all aspects of the single case [...]. We have to situate it as quickly as possible from the point of view of the task at hand. And this is only possible thanks to the help of the various types of ultrageneralization.

In the process of ultrageneralization, analogy and precedents are used: we need to use our previous experiences as guides to guide us in everyday activities. Another feature of everyday life is mimesis, which refers to the ability we have to learn, incorporate habits and reproduce them (Heller, 2016). In summary:

There is no everyday life without spontaneity, pragmatism, economism, analogy, precedents, provisional judgment, ultrageneralization, mimesis [...]. But the

necessary forms of the structure and thought of everyday life must not crystallize into absolutes, [...] they must leave a margin of movement and possibilities for explanation to the individual. [...] If these forms become absolute, leaving no room for movement, we are faced with the alienation of everyday life (Heller, 2016, p. 62).

Heller (2016, p. 63) states that everyday life is the one “that most lends itself to alienation” and that the way to suspend everyday life to achieve praxis and the transformation of reality is through the reach of subjects to the human-generic activity. There is a difference between proper human activity and activity in general. Vázquez (2007, p. 219) explains that “all praxis is activity, but not all activity is praxis”; praxis is characterized as a human activity, constituted by the relationship between conscious thought and action, with the purpose of transforming the reality of the natural or social world, to satisfy human needs. Activity in general, on the other hand, can dispense with this articulation between thought and action, not necessarily being praxis.

According to Heller (2016), there is an inseparability between the individual and the collective, and the individual is always, simultaneously, a particular being and a generic being. It is to be particular in the way you constitute your needs, become aware of them and satisfy them, as well as stamp your mark on the world. It is being generic in the way it constitutes the world and, through its existence, expresses and transmits the substance of what it is to be human:

As an individual, therefore, the human being is a generic being, since he/she is the product and expression of his/her social relations, heir and preserver of human development; but the representative of the generic-human is never a single [human being], but always an integration (tribe, demos, estate, class, nation, humanity) – as well as often several integrations – whose conscious part is the [being] human and in which his “consciousness of us” is formed (Heller, 2016, p. 40).

The human-generic is oriented towards the “us” and it is based on it that we suspend everyday life and reach praxis. Heller (2016) states that everyday life is not praxis and that it is through the suspension of everyday life, with conscious human-generic activity, that we rise to the level of praxis and transform reality, which happens through homogenization.

Homogenization is about directing all our attention to a single activity; however, it is not enough to suspend ourselves from everyday life and reach the human-generic. For that, in addition to homogenization, it is necessary to employ “our entire human individuality in solving this task” (Heller, 2016, p. 49). The homogenization that can lead to praxis is one that focuses all attention on a task, but it must also be one in which “our entire individuality acted” (Heller, 2016, p. 50). In this sense, the conditions for homogenization are the focus of all individuality in an activity, in a reflexive and conscious way, without the interference of the structures of everyday life, such as pragmatism, economism, overgeneralizing judgments and mimesis.

Heller discusses some paths that would allow for a more lasting suspension of everyday life in the direction of the human-generic: art, science, revolutionary professional practice and political activity. However, this elevation to the human-generic does not mean the

non-return to everyday life and its alienation. Even in these activities, there is no rigid separation from everyday life and thinking.

Furthermore, the author emphasizes that everyday life is not necessarily alienated due to its structure, but only in certain social circumstances. It is possible for the individual to consciously find margins of movement in everyday life, a notion that is related to Heller's concept of "conducting life" (2016, p. 67). Thus, the conduct of life refers to a possibility for the individual to consciously order the various day-to-day activities, imprinting their personality, even while the general economic and social conditions still favor alienation. The concept refers, therefore, to the rupture of everyday alienation, because, despite the limitations posed by reality, it creates space to make choices and establish a conscious relationship between the individual and society, between being particular and being generic.

Taking these elaborations by Agnes Heller, we are interested in problematizing the professional practice of occupational therapists as an activity inserted in everyday life and crossed by its structures, lending itself to the alienations of everyday life, as well as reflecting on the possibility of, in their professional practice, performing actions that suspend daily life, producing human-generic activity, having as a horizon the transformation of reality and the lives of the people they deal with. In this way, we question: what are the margins of movement for the "conduction of life" in the professional practice of occupational therapists, considering the limits and contradictions posed by social reality?

The Professional Practice of Occupational Therapists: from Everyday life to Human-Generic Activity

With the recognition of a set of social needs on the part of the State, the result of the class struggle in capitalism, a new relationship between the State and civil society is established, in which the expressions of the social question become the target of social political actions. This process provided a concrete basis for the creation of a labor market and the professionalization of various social practices, which found in social policies and services their main spaces for professional intervention and the necessary conditions for their reproduction as professions in bourgeois sociability (Bezerra, 2011).

Thus, the origin and expansion of a set of professions, here called social professions³, are closely related to the monopoly phase of capitalism, having been demanded and socially recognized in this period. Among these professions, occupational therapy is included, as already discussed by Soares (1987), Lopes (1991) and Bezerra (2011).

Given the importance of professional activities for the maintenance and development of capitalism since the 20th century, and for the reproduction of life in an unequal society, social services have expanded, changing the contours of the social division of labor and boosting the expansion of professions. Occupying a place in this division, occupational therapists, with a performance focused on the daily lives of people, groups and communities, play an important role in the process of regulating relationships and social reproduction, operationalizing social policies and services.

³We call social professions the set of professions that participate in the production and viability of services and social rights (health, education, social assistance, culture, etc.) in response to the needs socially posed by individuals, groups and social classes in their social reproduction process.

In Brazil, the expansion of social rights and services, enshrined in the 1988 Constitution, occurred, contradictorily, in the context of the structural crisis of capitalism, which had been expressed worldwide since the 1970s. Therefore, at the end of the 1980s, the implementation of what was established in the Constitution encountered enormous challenges in the face of the restructuring process of capitalism (Bezerra, 2011).

In this context, if, on the one hand, the expansion of policies and actions resulted in the expansion of the job market for occupational therapists, on the other hand, this took place in the context of changes in the State, via a managerial logic (privatization and/or underfunding of public services, access targeting, productivity goals, etc.), reaching not only users, but also workers. For Borges (2015), this management logic almost always results in the loss of quality of services and, consequently, in the lowering of the levels of service to the needs they should meet.

For Raichelis (2018), as an expression of conservative modernization in the field of social policies, managerialism introduces models of work and information management whose emphasis is on technique, a situation that favors the daily alienation of professionals who are unable to discern and recognize, in the social forms in which they are inserted, the contents and the effects of their work. This scenario restructures the exercise of social professions, highlighting the limits of professional autonomy under wage relations, as well as intensifying the alienating determinations that structure the daily life of this exercise.

The expansion of formal-abstract rationality in the management of work in social services has led to the routinization and disqualification of professional work, minimizing the importance of its creative and critical dimensions through the use of standardized instruments, which must be incorporated. According to Guerra (2016, p. 105), it is in this logic that formal-abstract rationality operates:

It is formal, as it is restricted to the forms of the current standardization of social policies and the logic of the systems; it is abstract because it takes from the professions their concrete content, [...] which responds to a set of socio-professional and political demands, making a blank slate of training, the cultural universe of each profession, professional projects and the project of society of each one.

We observe, then, in contemporary times, a broad process of precariousness of working conditions and relations, unfolding in forms of unprotected work, job insecurity, low pay, moral harassment, and illness, in a process of general precariousness not only of work, but also of life.

It is important to highlight that the historical development of social policies results from the contradictory relations arising from the class struggle. At the same time that they are configured as a means for the State to manage class conflicts, without threatening the reproduction of the system or actually solving the problems that demanded its existence, they represent and meet the demands of the working class for basic rights, as well as configure means/spaces/services for professional performance.

Despite the conservative nature of these policies, depending on the historical and political moment of how they are conceived and managed by the State, it is possible to notice different impacts in their operationalization, either for the population served or for

workers who work in social services; after all, they also result from the correlation of forces between capital and labor (Lopes, 2016).

Thus, even the neoliberal managerial state can assume different features. In Brazil, the radicality of neoliberal measures after the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016 has made these distinctions explicit, since the social-liberal clothing⁴ that marked the governments of Lula and Dilma, even without breaking with the dictates of [neo] liberalism allowed for some social advances, such as an increase in the Human Development Index (HDI), investments in the fight against poverty, improvement in educational indexes, among others. This scenario allowed greater margins of movement for the demands of the work of social policies.

The neoliberal context of retraction of social rights, precariousness of work and life in society, to a greater or lesser extent over the last decades, draws a greater diversity of demands to be answered by occupational therapists, as it has caused an increase in situations of vulnerability of the population. This heterogeneity of demands, in the daily routine of precarious services, favors a superficial and fragmented reading of the social issue, with the offer of immediate and emergency professional responses. This scenario requires greater critical awareness of professionals in relation to the alienating processes that cross the daily life of their professional practice, as well as the search for strategies to face them.

As a result, the determinations that structure everyday life, as stated by Heller (2016), tend to be strongly expressed in the daily professional practice. Hierarchical heterogeneity, translated into the diversity and increase in demands that need to be answered, often leads professionals to select the most urgent ones; economism and pragmatism, expressed in the need to respond quickly to demands and pressures for productivity; the reinforcement of provisional and overgeneralizing judgments, leading to a professional exercise impregnated with analogies and mimesis, with an uncritical reproduction of actions.

Nevertheless, such characteristics are not conferred only by professionals, but emerge from determinations that, in most cases, are beyond their individual control. These conditions under which the work of occupational therapists takes place contribute to a professional practice based on the alienating determinations of everyday life, to the detriment of a practice that walks in the direction of human-generic, practical, reality-transforming activity.

We indicate, as an example, some of the limits set by the dynamics of daily life for the realization of professional actions: the underfunding of policies, which leads to the scrapping of social equipment through the insufficiency of material and human resources; the retraction of rights and the loosening of labor ties; an institutional bureaucracy⁵ parameterized by inaction.

Now, if, according to Heller (2016), conscious human activity is one that is capable of detaching itself from the alienation of everyday life towards genericity, these conditions

⁴Conception of State based on the neo-developmental perspective that it is possible to change the privatization of the State from within and in business and expand its public intervention through the strengthening of social policies, assuming that the guidelines of the already consolidated neoliberal reforms are still in dispute. However, for Castelo (2013, p. 122), the social-liberal state “only changes aspects of neoliberalism to preserve its [liberal] essence”; because despite the positive indicators placed as a result of the performance of the economy, the pillars that support the expanded reproduction of capital remain intact.

⁵It is a rational tool for meeting the needs of mass administration, based on subjection to norms and rules. Its excess, with the aim of responding more immediately to the typical demands of neoliberal social institutions and policies, contributes to the framing of professional work, through pressure to achieve productivity goals, transforming social work into procedural and bureaucratic work ((Faermann & Silva, 2015).

under which the professional practice of occupational therapists takes place transform the exercise of occupational therapists practices into a challenge for a profession that is intended to be praxis, as Francisco (2001), Caníglio (1994) and Soares (1987) bring. For Francisco (2001, p. 66), occupational therapy as praxis is one that:

[...] proposes the use of activity as a therapeutic resource, one of the possibilities for it to become a space to transform itself and thus contribute to the most significant social transformation [...] through its doing. A doing that seeks to make [human beings] aware of the oppression to which they are subjected as members of a class society. A work that reveals the lived social determinations, seeks to discover revolutionary forms, shows the contradiction and conflict of health in a class society.

Caníglio (1994), adopting Vázquez's (2007) conception of praxis, when discussing the specificity of the profession in the set of professions that work in the health sector, defends what she calls practical health as the object of intervention of occupational therapists, even suggesting that the most appropriate name for the profession would be "Praxitherapy". Soares (1987) uses the term unitary praxis to refer to a therapeutic-occupational practice that overcomes dichotomies and reductionism, capable of promoting transformative actions in social reality.

Galheigo (2003), reflecting on the potential of the work of occupational therapists on daily life, states that the profession occupies a privileged position and can contribute to the critical elaboration of daily life by the subject. For her, "the power to reflect everyday life and its determinations, this foreign look at what seems to be an immutable routine, contributes significantly to the self-determination of the subject, the reorganization of the collective and the resignification of everyday life" (Galheigo, 2003, p. 108).

There is a horizon, in the professional practice of occupational therapists, of construction of a practice aimed at transforming reality, in tune with the concept of praxis defended in this text. The everyday construct, in Agnes Heller (2016), warns us that the transformation of reality is mediated by the lasting suspension of everyday life towards human-generic activity, reaching praxis. However, Heller (2016, p. 48) states that it is not possible to carry out praxis and permanently suspend daily life; however, "every significant work returns to everyday life and its effect survives in the everyday life of others".

In this sense, Guerra (2007) reinforces the importance of critical professional projects that, when elucidating their ethical and political commitments, parameterize possibilities of professional choices, strategies and tactics, within the limits of everyday life. Despite these limits, professionals have:

[...] of relative autonomy in their field of work, to carry out social and complex work, saturated with political and intellectual content and the theoretical and technical skills required to formulate proposals and negotiate with institutional, private or state contractors, their professional attributions and prerogatives, the objects on which their professional activity falls and their own rights as a salaried worker (Raichelis, 2018, p. 37).

We defend, then, that, despite the structures of everyday life crossing professional practice, social policies and institutional dynamics, and placing limits on work as an action

that reaches the human-generic, it is possible to find margins of movement in this same everyday life.

The professional condition of occupational therapists, characterized by a specialized knowledge base that requires long-term higher education, constitutes what Larson (1980) calls a barrier to technical alienation, which makes it difficult to lose professional control over the execution of their activity, although salaried work imposes economic (formal subjection to the employer) and organizational alienation (subject to institutional bureaucratic criteria and norms) on professionals. This author points out that imposing technical alienation on professionals would imply that employers would have control over the process of professional activity through the domain of the professional's expertise, which normally does not occur. In this way, professionals, although subordinated to the employing institutions, have their technical and ethical autonomy, both protected by regulatory laws and professional codes of ethics.

This allows us to affirm that there is a possibility of conducting life, as defined by Heller (2016), in the professional practice of occupational therapists. That is, despite the impossibility of abolishing the alienating structures of everyday life and the fact that life becomes dealienated all the time, occupational therapists can appropriate, “in their own way[,] reality and impose on it the mark of their personality” (Heller, 2016, p. 67). We affirm that this mark can be achieved through the inseparability of the technical, ethical and political dimensions of professional practice, in articulation with societal projects that advance the struggle of workers in general.

The emphasis on these dimensions, as a condition for a professional practice that can suspend daily life and transform lives and realities, stems from the recognition that scientific and technological development, provided by contemporary society, has eliminated the technical barriers to solving numerous problems (poverty, hunger, unemployment, homelessness, etc.) that afflict individuals who demand the work of occupational therapists. As stated by Nosella (2008), if the technical conditions exist to solve various problems of humanity, solving them becomes a choice, an ethical duty, a political option.

Still on the ethical-political commitment in occupational therapy, Galheigo (2016, p. 65) states that it is:

An ethical commitment, for intervening in the plane of life, in its movements of resistance and affirmation; a political commitment, for the continuous explanation of the existin macro and micropolitical forces, for the defense of autonomy, citizenship and rights and for the search for new strategies for building and/or strengthening collectives.

Final Considerations

Daily life and everyday life have become topics of discussion, reflection and research in occupational therapy in recent decades, occupying a privileged place as a locus of intervention, seeking to transform the reality of the populations monitored, with the daily life of the other as central. In this essay, we carry out a reflexive shift, based on the thinking of Agnes Heller, focusing the discussion on the daily life of professional practice, also

crossed by the structures of everyday life (hierarchical heterogeneity, spontaneity, pragmatism, economism, ultrageneralization and mimicry) that establish limits.

Despite the tendency to alienate everyday life, we also argue that it is possible to temporarily suspend everyday life in professional practice towards the human-generic, enabling therapeutic-occupational actions as a practical action, because:

Homogenization towards the generic-human only ceases to be exceptional, a singular case, in those individuals whose dominant passion is oriented towards the generic-human and, moreover, when they have the capacity to realize such passion. This is the case of the great and exemplary moralists of (revolutionary) statesmen, of artists and of scientists. In addition, regarding the professional revolutionary, [...] it must be said that not only their main passion, but also their main work, their basic activity, promote the elevation to the human-generic and imply it in themselves. [...] But it must not be forgotten that [they possess] [...] also, like all other [human beings], an everyday life; the particular-individual manifests itself in them, as in others [...]. Only during the productive phases is this particularity suspended; and, when this occurs, such individuals become, through the mediation of their individualities, representatives of the human race, appearing as protagonists of the global historical process (Heller, 2016, p. 51).

Homogenization is a movement from “I” to “we”, in which men and women become representatives of the human race (Heller, 2016). This leads us to reflect on the importance of this process in current times of extreme individualization, whether in relation to human values or the way we decode the needs of the people we deal with. It seems correct to say that a way to overcome this individualism lies in the understanding that professional practice can be one of the ways to some suspension of everyday alienation.

For this, we consider the need to articulate the technical, ethical and political dimensions of professional practice, to move between the individual and collective spheres in reading and intervening on professional demands, overcoming the theory and practice dichotomy, in addition to reaffirming the commitment to transformation. society, where struggles for redistribution and recognition produce justice and social participation (Fraser, 2004).

Still, occupational therapists cannot limit their practice to institutional limits, limiting it to meeting immediate and emergency demands. It seems necessary for us to build partnerships with other workers in the perspective of confronting the neoliberal processes of precariousness and alienation of work, promoting collective organization; re-signify institutional requests, reversing the logic of uncritical responses and not conforming to the molds of institutional productivism and merely bureaucratic demands, which involves a critical reading of institutional relations and work processes in the contexts in which it operates, among other strategies found in the particularities of each workspace. Nevertheless, it is important that they are clear about the intention of their actions, aligning their professional projects with intentional corporate projects aimed at the necessary transformation of the status quo.

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Author's Contributions

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