

# Psychotherapeutic intervention in Latin America

**Autor:** Mauricio Gómez Salazar — [¿Cómo citar este artículo?](#)

Latin America is composed of a "discursive cultural mosaic". A type of dominant culture that practices a narrative of "double standards," generating a "phony" self, and a "self-pitying" self. Both are part of the same scenario and construct each other, and that is where symptomatology finds its nature and meaning.

The goal in this cultural and psychological setting is to move toward a "critical" narrative that allows the self to "unmask" the phony and self-pitying self in order to understand even self-tolerant, critical and responsible. The intervention is aimed at exploring and recognising in people the diversity of narratives that have lived and live in different settings (White and Epston, 1993).

For this purpose, the "critical narrative" is proposed as a method of intervention that will lead therapist clients to see themselves from another perspective in their representation in the different scenarios where it is practiced from another perspective. In other words, it seeks, through critical narrative, to strengthen a responsible self and agent.

## What is the way to build a self agent?

Spears (1997) points out that "it is politically important to preserve the conceptual distinction of agency (the intentionality of the subject), although it is equally important the external or contextual elements that help this agency to appear and develop, as Freire and Martín-Baró add that:

"people are capable of resisting or having a more active participation, collective work invokes a real social power beyond individuality, it shows itself as an agency of a social nature".

On the other hand, I will stop to analyze in detail the proposal of the philosopher Sennett (2012) who in his work "together" suggests us a way to construct a therapeutic scenario where the responsible self is empowered. For this author "Mutual Support" is in the genes of all social animals, and he defines Cooperation as "an exchange in which the participants benefit from the encounter.

For this author cooperation is a value in itself in rituals, and his greatest virtue is to put into practice the abstract notions of mutual respect. He points out that there are many forms of

cooperation, distinguishing between spontaneous cooperation and deliberate cooperation.

The first is a spontaneous act of coming together for mutual pleasure, like people hanging out in a corner or drinking together in a bar exchanging gossip and maintaining the fluidity of a conversation without the awareness of cooperating.

On the other hand, there is deliberate cooperation, which he describes as a difficult social activity because it tries to bring together people with different or even conflicting interests.

The challenge is to respond to others as they are. This form of cooperation has a direct link with what Maturana (1997) defines as love by accepting the other, unconditionally, as legitimate.

Sennett emphasizes the ethical sense as the exercise to be developed for deliberate cooperation to succeed, because it is necessary to mediate between different groups and interests, and ethics leads people to build a dialogue where those groups can observe the consequences of their own actions in relation to people who do not resemble them but live together.

This dialogue of "observing oneself in consequences" leads, according to this author, to a greater awareness of ourselves: "an agent, cooperative and loving self".

Although he clarifies that to arrive at such an exercise of cooperation certain degrees of skill are required, in particular he points out "the dialogical skill", which he describes as knowing how to listen, behave with tact, concentrate points of agreement and manage disagreements or avoid the frustration of a difficult discussion.

This concept has a certain resemblance to what Goleman (1995) calls "*emotional intelligence*". For Sennett, dialogue is the art of attention and sensitivity with other people. Knowing how to listen is a high level skill that involves paying attention to what others say; appreciating the sense of gestures and silence as in statements.

Although to observe well we have to concentrate, the resulting conversation will be a richer exchange, of a more cooperative nature, more dialogic.

It therefore implies projecting oneself outwards, which produces the ego... the immersion of the "I" in a broader whole that encompasses it. This skill is certainly difficult, but basic to psychotherapy.

A distinction is made between two types of listening that are practiced in conversation: dialectics and dialogics. In the first; the verbal game of opposites must gradually build a synthesis; the goal is finally to arrive at a common understanding.

This type of listening or dialogue takes place between parents and adolescent children, where

there is a dialogue of tension, which can lead to new agreements and relationships. The important thing in such a close relationship, emotionally, speaking, is never to lose the dialogue.

It is possible to add a complexity to the dialogic exercise that impacts the self: even if they have not come to share agreements, in the exchange process the interlocutors may have become more aware of their own points of view and have increased their mutual understanding. If the therapist brings this type of dialogue into play, psychotherapy will continue from the family, exploring various scenarios where the person finds other, healthier narratives about themselves.

Dialogical conversion to include sympathy and empathy as tools of dialogue. Returns to Adam Smith and the theory of moral feelings (1997), to define sympathy as putting oneself in the place of the other, and assimilate each circumstance of anguish that may affect the sufferer; even in its most insignificant incidences.

Empathy is considered to be of greater complexity; one person should see himself in the other not only as a human neighbor, but in the most insignificant incidents.

Given the cooperation with these characteristics, it represents a great resource for therapy, as a mediator of encounters, to generate an organized social framework that revolves around an open dialogue between people. This path of mutual cooperation ultimately promotes a narrative of the self that is more proactive and responsible than the final goal, within the Latin American framework.

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## Author:

Degree in Psychology: **Mauricio Gómez Salazar.**

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