

Being a woman - A possible metaphor? In: Semiotic analysis of the representative function of discursive reality



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ABSTRACT

The (re)representative function of discursive reality analyzes the path of construction of the girl-woman's destiny as a possible metaphor. Step by step, it reveals how a mother seeks psychological help for her daughter and through it reveals herself. It deals with the restlessness arising from a real

difficulty of a mother who is distressed by her daughter who repeats the second year of primary school, but this is just the driving/pain fact that launches her on a journey to the past and to her imagination, A understanding of the human ties specifically of the girl and her representations thought up by the mother in the search for self-understanding through the biases of what is said and what is not said. It deals with an inverted demand in which the mother speaks through the daughter. She reflects on fragments of her origin and her story that appears little by little and incomplete. A reality composed of beliefs, fantasies, anguish, dreams and hopes of happiness that so torment a mother who begs to understand herself as a person and subject of her existence based on what she imagines to be her son's castration.

Keywords: Human psyche, Representative analysis of the feminine, Construction of the girl's destiny, Imaginary discourse.

1 INTRODUCTION

"... Over thy mouth and thy eyes, may the name of the Trinity protect thee. On the mark of the dress: ships. All sailing. The journey I would take would revolve around me." Adélia Prado

Is being a woman a possible metaphor? The research deals with mental health, psychic construction, women, a specific case of real and imaginary, ontographic and phylogenetic suffering and mutilation. The semiotic analysis is based on the anguished discourse of a mother who seeks psychological care for her mutilated daughter/son and through this conflict, she speaks to herself.

The objective of thinking about the metaphor of the possible structure of the female girl who anguishes a mother, is treated with the purpose of analyzing the representative function of the discursive reality, which constitutes a being as a subject. To deal with the path of the metaphorical construction of the feminine universe in its complexity that opens up possibilities and reflections.

The problem that leads a mother to seek psychological help for her daughter, who step by step unveils herself in anguish, speaks of her afflictions and impossibilities in the face of the world and of



concrete and abstract problems. The mother's restlessness that is spoken of from the daughter's point of view and through her is a journey through the structure of the meaning of the 'human being' in the diverse world of challenges and possibilities.

The justification for thinking about women's restlessness in understanding themselves as a constructor of their history is based on the real difficulty of a mother, from the vulnerable group in the 80s, who is distressed by her daughter who repeats the second year of basic education. The demand is only the fact that drives it/pain that launches it on a journey into the real and imaginary past.

The Methodology for the understanding of human ties, specifically the female psychic structure in its representations, uses bibliography, electronic references, clinical/semiotic laboratories, thought and reflected in teams and study groups.

The theoretical framework involved authors and analyses of psychological concepts: existential, behavioral and psychoanalytic, medical semiotics. Among them, the analysis of the meaning of the feminine treated by Serge André (1990) stands out. The concepts of semiotics of culture in reflections on the human animal by Norval Baitello (2003) and Ivan. Bystrina (1995). Metadialogues use Gregory's concepts. Bateson (1989). From Ernst. Cassirer (1978) and Malena Contrera (2002) come the understanding of language and myth, the imaginary and disenchantment of the world. Eibl Eibesfeldt (1973) deals with human programming, Fiorin (1994) and Greimas (1979) assists with the elements of discourse analysis. Flusser's philosophical fictions help to perceive human transformation in the return to reflection. Freud (1925) contributes to the analysis of what is said and what is not said, among many other authors, who have helped in the search to understand the biases of an inverted demand in which a mother, through her daughter, reflects on her origin and history.

A complex human reality composed of hopelessness in the midst of beliefs, fantasies, anxieties, dreams and hopes of happiness that so torment human beings in search of themselves as the subject of their existence leads a mother to the doctor's office.

1.1 THE METAPHOR OF THE POSSIBLE STRUCTURE OF THE GIRL WOMAN – ANGUISH OF A MOTHER

"My 9 (nine) year old daughter repeats the second year of elementary school, in a municipal school", this is the speech with which a mother enters the door to ask for help. She takes her daughter for treatment, but leaves her in the waiting room and enters alone saying: "I brought my 9-year-old daughter who repeats the second year, but I need to talk to you first, in private, without the presence of the little one."

In this afflicted discourse of a mother who sneaks in closing the door behind her, as if she wants to hide from the outside world, it can be reflected that: the elements within the discursive reality have



a representative function. The figures are active under and on which the text is built. And it is from them that the theme discussed by the enunciator emerges.

The enunciator's life is an arena of cultural confrontation and in it human bonds are built and rearranged. These bonds are established in the interrelationship and as communication is learned in social coexistence, its constitution is complex and diverse. What structure is the construction of social bonds, both from an ontogenetic and phylogenetic point of view, is as fragile as a veil. Although, in the opinion of Eibesfeldt (1973), there is a human pre-programming, there is no guarantee of perfection in the process of the structure. Each human being has his or her fragment to rearrange and adjust. These discoveries, brought to light by Ethology, make it clear that bonds allow both human and animal constitution in relation to other beings of the same species. A child or animal is born into a web of bonds that shape its society (H. Harlow, 1972).

As the bonds have onto and phylogenetic roots, they are marked by myths and beliefs that feed the mental health of men in the real world, - the first reality - which in the conception of Ivan Bystrina (1995) is composed of basic survival needs, and in the symbolic world - the second reality. Bystrina's concept of the "First Reality" involves survival and the reality of needs. The universe of civilization, the education of the body and habits for sociability. For communication, the "First Reality" is the place where space and time intersect with mythology. Therefore, the "First Reality" and the "Second Reality" contaminate each other to give rise to the abstract concept of time/space.

This second reality is composed of beliefs, fantasies, anxieties, dreams and hopes of happiness, the real possible for Cassirer (1994), which torment this mother who seeks help so much. About the second reality, Baitello Jr. (1999:38) explains in his book "The Animal That Stopped the Clocks", that it is a symbolic universe, which constitutes the set of information generated and accumulated by man over time. This is due to their imaginative ability to narrativize that which is not explicitly chained. How to invent relationships and create texts whether in verbal, visual, musical, performative-gestural, or olfactory language. Thus, the smaller set of these associations, called the "text," constitutes the minimum unit of culture. And this is the metaphor that D'Ilda tries to rescue when she seeks help for herself in order to raise real and abstract resources to signify a daughter who repeats her.

Thus, the question "Is the fate of the girl-woman a possible metaphor"? It deals with the real and imaginary restlessness of a mother who is distressed by her daughter who repeats the second year in elementary school, but this is only the driving fact/pain that launches her, from the present, on a journey to the past - the second reality and to her future. In this journey she denounces anguish, guilt and altered states of consciousness, related to her own representation as a woman, as a mother and as a daughter. And here the roots of Bystrina's (1995) culture are intertwined. He classifies the roots of culture into four ways: the first is altered states of consciousness. The second is the dream. The third is gambling, and the fourth is psychopathology, a terrain that many people slip into in their mental



suffering. These are the paths that D'Ilda travels throughout her life and that appear in her inverted analysis.

The analysis of this mother refers to what Bystrina calls altered states of consciousness, Flusser (1979:69, 135) calls it alienation, and psychiatrists call it alteration or deviation from socially designated behavior as a standard of normality. They then raise some questions: - What normality? What is normality? What normality is being talked about here? Social? Professional? Cultural? Academic? Regional? Marginal? Nun? Real or symbolic?

1.2 WHEN THE REAL AND THE SYMBOLIC ARE CONFUSED

Man is a being of symbols, and these symbols are representations of the real object. They accompany man throughout his existence. Thanks to symbolic transitions, he plays roles and acts in the social and professional sphere, and thanks to acting, he travels from heaven to hell, according to Bystrina (1995:11).

Tormented, the mother relates the story of her life that *repeats* her mother's life. Roles and feelings that mixed and mingled leading her to despair when she said between sobs: "It's all my fault, I let it cut. What now? What do I do?"

Semiotics classifies discourses into two broad classes: figurative and non-figurative. While the former are predominantly concrete, because they are constructed with concrete figures or terms, the latter are elaborated with abstract themes or denominations. For this reason, the former are called figurative texts (linked to figurativeness) and the latter, thematic texts (linked to abstraction). When D'Ilda sought treatment for her daughter Daniela, she said it was because she was already 9 (nine) years old and repeating the second year of elementary school. The mother took advantage of her daughter's repetition as a justification to seek help for herself. She cried as she said: "Me, Daniela and her two younger brothers, her brothers on my mother's side, live with my mother. The mother says that Daniela doesn't know her origin and her history, but how do you tell her that?" What we have here is an inverted demand. Is it through Daniela D'Ilda that we speak?

She related fragments of a story that appeared incompletely and partially, as if she feared to hear herself, and the information in its entirety.

"She was born with both of them and I let her take it off." Figurative texts "produce an effect of reality", create an image of the world; Scientists, in turn, explain, order, classify, interpret, establish relationships with the things of the world and elaborate concepts. It is from there that the levels of concretion of textual meaning are established and "the figurative text has an underlying thematic level" (Fiorin, 1998). Her mother repeats: "Daniela was born with both sexes - female and male. Since the internal organs were female, the penis was excised." D'Ilda feels guilty for authorizing the plucking of the penis. No matter how hard you try to forget, you can't help but ask, "How am I going to tell her



that?" An insistent question that makes her return to the analysis, leaving her daughter in the waiting room.

She returns to the next meeting with the same sentence:

"She was born with both of them and I let her take it off." Daniela was born with both sexes - female and male. Since the internal organs were female, the penis was excised. - "How am I going to tell her that? And if when she grows up she likes women, how am I supposed to say she had it and I let her take it away? She's going to hate me."

Here the penis is the subject of "being able to do". Her lack prevents the other from doing it - "if she likes a woman she doesn't have it anymore, and it's my fault because I let her take it away". It transits in prospectations, on the stage of symbolic representations - the roles marked by culture, myths and beliefs.

She tries to relate her dilemma interspersed with compulsive crying:

"She was born with both. I didn't know what to do. The internal organs were female. What could I do? The doctors said I had to decide yes or no. That's not fair, they said they had to remove the penis before six months. But I'm not a doctor. And I had to authorize to 'rip her penis off' because they said it was the best for her."

The mother's discourse refers to the observation of FLOCH (2001) when he says that "... Textual structures are those where meanings are concretized." Faced with the emerging fantasy, D'Ilda asks: "... The doctors said the internal organs were female, but she also had male hormone, what if the penis grows?"

D'Ilda's anguish refers to Freud (1908, V.IX: 219) "on the sexual theories of children" who speaks of a boy who refers to the absence of a penis in his little sister with the following comment – "Hers is still very small, but it will increase when she grows up". Hans testifies to this and Freud explains in the article "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy" (Freud, 1909, V.X: 13). The logic of the afflicted mother's discourse takes up the infantile sexual theories with Daniela's problematic. She torments herself, with fantasies and imaginary possibilities. "Then the ghost puts its foot down." D'Ilda anguishes - "I let it take away." "She's going to hate me." She supposes she has castrated "her son." And when it brings up the question "what if she likes women"? She believes in this possibility because she believes she mutilated her son's body.

This mother "constructs previous and progressive scenarios and stories", based on the theory of Baitello Jr. (2003) she ignores that "the body of man is a body loaded with myths, beliefs, ideologies, games and utopias linked to the imaginary. A body of memory and history, a psychosomatic body of temporality that appropriates time and space." Considering here that time and space are timeless, and that concepts and truths change their values and possibilities along the way, in time.



The body is the first and primary media of culture. It is the text sign with the greatest communicative proliferation in cultural identity. The first instrument of inscription, the cultural practice, which provides the identity of the subject (...) a text composed of many beliefs, convictions and bearer of meanings that, as a media, are permanently resignified. Pross classifies media into three categories: primary, secondary, and tertiary. The primary media is the body, the secondary is writing, and the tertiary is that of the technological apparatuses that involves electricity and technology (HARRY PROSS, in "Atrapados en la diversidad, actualizada", 1999). The meetings were composed of the cries and screams of a mother who, in her simplicity, confronted with existential complexity.

The subject's identity is manifested in the next meeting that D'Ilda arrives confused and while talking about Daniela asks: - "is she feminine"? and repeats - "But isn't feminine a minino"? And when he did, he understood, he got angry, and he took the anger and delegated to the other the blame for the confusion, he exploded crying and crying:

- "It's your fault, you drive me crazy with your questions. I should answer myself, explain myself and not question myself. Why do you answer me with new questions that confuse me even more?" - How can I help my daughter if I'm the one who needs help?

According to the ethologist Eibl Eibesfeldt (1973: 179), author of the work "El hombre pre-programado", these tense situations are part of the ontogenetic and phylogenetic roots of the dichotomous friendly/aggressive instinct of the human being. In blind interaction, he himself seeks to deny the dichotomy of the friendly/aggressive impulse - sociability. This is how D'Ilda gradually recounts the fragments of her story and Daniela's prehistory, through which she speaks.

- "I am a single mother, the daughter of a single mother, a cleaning assistant, at the age of 15 I became pregnant. I was in love. My boyfriend was the son of a military man and his parents didn't approve of dating, but we dated in secret. Upon learning of the pregnancy, my boyfriend suggested an abortion and said that "if I didn't do it, he would abandon me."

She is faced with the imperative: Choice. But she scratches her and says, "I wanted to keep both of them." Isn't that what is repeated? Stick with both? Daniela was born with both of them and her mother, unable to stand them, had them cut up. She claims that she wanted a daughter who would report her to her *father*. The daughter responds to this desire by also bringing what is her father's: "the penis". And the desolate mother drags out her lament:

"When the pregnancy was discovered, my mother wanted to force him to marry, I was a minor and he was 19 years old, but my boyfriend refused. He claimed that he could not afford it and that his father would kill him if he got married." He said I could have an abortion and continue dating, but I didn't want to.



She was abandoned for the second time. The first time she was abandoned was in her mother's womb. And still a girl, at the age of 15, dazed and confused, the girl Ilda repeats twice and tells her story in tears, sobbing:

"My mother said that when she found out she was pregnant at the age of 15 and told my father, he abandoned her because she didn't want to have an abortion. He was married, he just disappeared and didn't take me over." The return marks D'Ilda's life. And she repeats it in life as Daniela repeats it at school. The girl woman experiences a troubled moment of suffering, frustration and anguish. She is forced to deal with the pain of her great love shattered, her dream of happiness shattered, and she finds herself alone with a child of two sexes in her arms. Her mother had always warned her, "Don't date married man, I was abandoned with you in my belly because your father was married and I was alone with you in my arms."

She dated a young bachelor, the son of a military man, but also because of him she was abandoned with a child in her belly, because she did not want to have an abortion - she repeats the mother. She is forced to repress - like the nomad who sought new territories to provide for her needs and be happy - pregnant and abandoned, with no way out, she returns to her mother who takes her in. Daniela really brings the return. It has an organ a/mais. As if that weren't enough, it's up to her to decide which sex to let rule your baby's life. She relives her despair as she murmurs lost between the past and the present. The internal struggle between power and not being able to keep both and the decision to cut off the penis establishes the creation of narrativity.

"I talked to the doctors - My child has already been abandoned by his father, he was born without a home and without a family and I am still going to cut off his penis? But they told her she couldn't keep both. I tried to buy time. But the doctors were in a hurry, they said - "Mom, you have to take one of them out before 6 months. Even though the child has male hormones, the internal organs are female. Faced with this situation, they opted for the cutting of the penis, I had to sign it."

In the 80s, more precisely in 1983, in Minas Gerais, the mother sees her child mutilated. She tried to leave the child with the two of them to see what time and nature would decide, but the doctors didn't have time - "you have to take one of the sexes before six months, she can't have both". And between sobs, the mother groans in pain for an invisible wound that does not bleed physically, but mutilates her psychically forever.

- "I wanted to die, but I couldn't even do that, I had a mutilated daughter to support and I needed to work, but I went into depression." Contrera (2002) says that: "Every collective archetype, when it comes into action, causes a natural lowering of the critical and intellectual capacity of the man that immobilizes him". She was hostage - of lovelessness, of hopelessness, of uncertainty, of the power of the other, of poverty, of ignorance and sadness, but she had a child with both sexes and had to make decisions - only with her permission could the surgery be performed.

He tried to buy time, but he couldn't. The doctors determined, "after the six months, you can't keep both." Here dysphoria appears; The doctors want to rip the penis out, but the mother wants to



preserve it. The authorization is hers, but they are the ones who give the coordinates. The child has male hormones, but the internal organs are female - you have to take out the penis. The mother is told that she needs to sign the authorization, but she has no authority to stop it. It was imperative. It was the doctors' decision, but she had to sign the authorization. The penis was excised.

This organ, D'Ilda supposes, having been torn off, leaves Daniela at an anatomical disadvantage. The plastic surgery and the textual manifestation that this organ represents for the mother "summon and gather meanings together" (OLIVEIRA, 2000) in a contemplative act of power, the power of the penis, the power of the doctors, the power of the mother because without the mother's authorization nothing could be done - the obligation of authorization, and the mother's non-power to leave the penis. Her lament is painful: "I let it be cut," and she faints in tears, but then revolts and says, "And what else could I do? Answer me, what could I do?" She begs the other for a consoling answer, because she believes she has let her son castrate.

What would this body represent to D'Ilda? Would it come in the place of the lack of the signifier of the Woman? The sign "penis" plays the role of a screen for the girl that conceals the nature of her own lack (ANDRE, 1990:174) in "What Does a Woman Want"? When children notice the absence of a penis, they reject the fact and believe that they see a penis there. Then they contradict themselves by making a remark, "Her penis is there, only it's tiny, but it's going to grow when she grows up." They then conclude that 'it had been there' and was taken according to the castration complex, in the "Infantile genital organization - an interpolation in the theory of sexuality" (FREUD, 1923:181). The boys then conclude that the girl is castrated and unconsciously they begin to fear castration.

Lacan systematizes the dialectic of presence and absence around the "phallus" through the concepts of the lack of signifier. Castration in the Lacanian conception is not limited to the boy's anguish at losing his penis, nor to the girl's envy when she sees the lack of it. But by the separation of the child from his first object of love, the mother, with whom he had hitherto had an immediate relation, without the interdiction of the third in the relation, the father's name. Castration is the cutting produced by an act that splits and dissociates the imaginary and narcissistic bond between mother and child and not the actual penis.

The woman desires the phallus and as a mother, she puts the child in the place of the imaginary phallus. The son responds from this place, identifying himself with the phallus, fulfilling the mother's wish. The two live in an imaginary relationship of temporary completeness - as David Nasio (1990) understands in "The Seven Concepts of Psychoanalysis". When this relationship is interdicted, the phallus is replaced by other equivalent objects in a commutative series (penis = feces, = gifts...), thus guaranteeing the possibility of successive substitutions of objects, throughout the life of the desiring subject, who becomes desiring from the lack.



Why does D'Ilda insist on this? It repeats, in the circle of the eternal return, of the always the same. The girl does not lose herself in ruminations, she has seen it, she knows that she does not have a penis, and she wants to have it, as can be seen in "Some Psychic Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes", treated by Freud (Vol. XIX, 1925:314). But D'Ilda does not conform, guilt consumes her, she suffers and cries when she says: - "Life was cruel to me, but I could not spare my child"?

1.3 A DAUGHTER WHO HAS DA(NI)ELA

What is D'Ilda looking for? Is it to fill the void of the lack of the signifier of the woman? The woman is a signifier that everyone talks about her. It's a conundrum. It is equivalent to the signifier God, whose existence is indefinite, symptomatic. Woman, as God, means itself. It does not presentify, it symbolizes itself because identification with the feminine is complex by its very nature. The word that designates a woman - feminine - is masculine. The first identification comes with the first name and this comes from the paternal surname, and there is no trace of identification possible for the woman. There is also no trace of identification with the mother, since she is primarily phallic. As if that wasn't enough, Daniela is born with a penis. "Textual structures are those where meanings are concretized" (FLOCH, 2001). The surface of textual structures and the layers of semi-narrative and discursive structures represent three modes of semiotic existence: virtuality, actualization and realization.

How, then, to identify the signifier of the woman? D'Ilda does not understand that identification is a significant operation. That the phenomenon that occurs in it is imaginary. For the woman there is no adequate term to signify herself. There is no ready-made recipe. It is constituted from the lack of a signifier. In the face of the "absence of foundation", the woman does not have an identification, but the "possibility of several identifications", based on successive substitutions and meanings, according to (POMMIER, 1992:44) in "Feminine Identity".

"If it is indeed the phallus that the boy and the girl discover respectively in the anatomically opposite sex, this discovery is inscribed in the register of fault for the boy and in the register of the veil for the girl" (ANDRE, 1990:173). DANE/HER. The veil was taken off.

As you can see, through Daniela, D'Ilda speaks to herself. She wants to keep both. Reporting the complexity of the D'Ilda and Daniela case and trying to understand it in the light of semiotics refers to a reflection by Morin in his work "The Lost Paradigm", 2000. "In everything I write ... There are only partial, relative, and temporary truths. Immersed in complexity, all that remains is to distinguish certain aspects of situations, analyze them locally, and simplify them in order to be able to apprehend them. This is a fact that requires maximum decentralization." Which D'Ilda couldn't, so she suffered. Driven by guilt, she couldn't dis/place to trans/form and sublimate.



2 FINAL THOUGHTS

The exercise of analysis of D'Ilda and Daniela's complex story was done in order to lead her to find her own meaning. Not only as an example among the many that are found on every corner, but to lead her to reflection through semiotic and existential analysis, minimizing her anguish. Faced with the inevitable he felt - the mutilation of his son's body. Speaking and listening, but above all reflecting, alleviates the affliction of the nomadic human being in permanent transformation and adaptation. An animal lost in its resignifications, breaking and reconstructing paradigms. Existential truths are in their essence partial, relative and temporary because, in the face of human anguish, their structure is fragile and indistinct, the real is confused with the imaginary.

A real story with fictional characters in the 80s is more common than one might think, because the greatest mutilation in the constitution of the human psyche is not the concrete, but the abstract. The psychic structure is so fragile that when constructing its meanings it can become fragmented. The being spends its existence in rehearsals, trying between analysis and self-analysis to complete a puzzle by joining the mental, imaginary and real, concrete and abstract, hereditary, environmental, infantile and spiritual fragments. The representative function of discursive reality is the destination in a possible metaphor, a journey around itself.

The mother who anguishes over her daughter who repeats the second year in elementary school is only the driving fact/pain that launched her on a journey to the past and to her imaginary - the possible reality. The possibility transits between the real and symbolic roles interpreted and thanks to the representation, this mother in analysis travels from heaven to hell, in search of herself, to signify the mutilated daughter/son.



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