

Colégio de Psicanálise da Bahia

Borders: Psychoanalysis and Displacements

In this International Colloquium of Convergencia Lacanian Movement for Freudian Psychoanalysis, we decided to devote our talk to the idea of Borders. We start from the thought developed by Jerusa Pires Ferreira¹ in her book *Culture of Borders*. Bringing to reflection what [it?] is and isn't [...] by considering the permanent displacement of what comes under consideration. It's about the difficulty in setting limits, a multiple belonging.

The author focuses on what she calls cultural borders: the diversity based on the observation of relations that take place between layers of imaginary production, consumption, specificity of living and being able to express outside the central systems.

We could add: an existence within and without. Productions that somehow escape the canons, intending to cross references and move away from stagnant niches. It is a type of thought and practice (Ferreira, pp.11- 12).

It wasn't hard to bring psychoanalysis to this marginal universe. For instance, at the beginning of psychoanalysis Freud struggling with established knowledge had to face acid criticism, such as that which arose against the idea of hysteria among men. Psychoanalysis still maintains its link to the borders even though it has won its space of recognition by defining its position through the proof of its practice. A space of undefined limits, a border between science and art, but which defines its space within the richness of plurality.

Ferreira undertook her research aiming to give consistency to the notion of cultural borders by going through various spaces of popular production. The field of literature that proved to be the richest in

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the book: *The Interpretation of Dreams*. It is important to remember that Freud attempted an exhaustive reading of everything that had been published so far when writing the germinal book of psychoanalysis. He never left aside this so-called border culture.

"Thus, in an interesting search, we were taken to Freud's own texts and we discovered how decisive his incursion into popular dream books was for his elaboration of the interpretation of dreams. He tells us that he discovered the profane conception there, the one that remains half imprisoned in what is called superstition and seems to approach the truth" (Ferreira, p.74).

Regarding the working classes, *The Book of Dreams* is most penetrating. We can also say

that Freud has not abandoned popular knowledge, legends, the culture of magic, telepathy and so on, in constructing his theoretical corpus.

Placing dreams and jokes at the foundation of psychoanalysis was surely the great stroke of intelligence that led him to build our central concept: the unconscious. And, this was achieved incorporating a popular culture, a culture of borders.

It is important to remark that the canonical books of psychoanalysis deal with dreams and jokes. The psychopathology of everyday life is transposed to the domain of new knowledge, which emerges and leads to the central point on which the idea of the unconscious is based. The germinal point of a theory is what we can't forget.

We can say that Academic knowledge was somehow abandoned. Freud tried to read everyone and everything. Yet somehow in the popular spontaneity, in what circulates through speech, is where psychoanalysis should be located because it is a matter of speech.

In relation to dreams, he placed himself as the protagonist and it was a dream of his, the "dream of Irma," that ushered in the singularity of psychoanalytic interpretation. In relation to jokes, a speech shared among his peers: the Jewish community. Freud searched among the anecdotes in circulation and found the master key to our doings: in three-ness.

In 1922 Freud writes "*Seventeenth-Century Demonic Neurosis*." It reveals his interest in witchcraft and possession, a legacy perhaps of Charcot's studies on hysteria during Freud's time at the Salpêtrière. The theme appears in the correspondence with Fliess. Freud even suggested a relationship between the father figure and the Devil (Freud, p. 88). I am writing, he says, for readers who do not believe in devils although they believe in psychoanalysis. The phrase is a warning to psychoanalysts not to be daunted by the themes that life offers, whatever they may be, and to be free to go beyond the preconceptions in which words imprison us. In truth we are symbolically confronted with love and hate: love-hate, *haine-amoration*.

We build our knowledge between belief and knowledge. The first is immutable and fixed. Knowledge, scientific knowledge, is in a permanent process of conquests and overcoming(s). The enigma of life marks its immutable existence.

The unconscious is a belief. It escapes the possibility of proof and experiments, yet it accompanies us as a guide, as a star to illuminate us. Psychoanalysis draws our attention to the importance of forgetting, which allows us to open a door to the conquest of the new. We have to be alert and walk along the borders of a knowledge whose great wealth is to warn us against the immutability of a truth.

At the end of his theoretical production, of contemplating the human, Freud questions the origin of the father. The father who constitutes himself as the first sublimation, a given of the spirit. To question the father is to question the world of certainties born out of the word, the name, the symbolic.

Lacan calls us to poetry, the immutable confrontation of the word and the senses. Poetry is the possible freedom from the imprisonment of words.

"Bordering" is a word at once important and frightening because it confronts us with the impossibility of certainty. Borders can hide eloquent discoveries and unsuspected dangers.

I'll finish by saying that Brazil at this moment is passing through frightening borders of unpredictable returns.