Iberê’s Spools, Freud’s Fort-Da

Psychoanalytic act | Act of creation

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Untitle | Iberê Camargo | 1975

“I have always sought transposition from reality, until the time when I took a spool as an object of my pictures, because it was the affectively charged object from my childhood“ Berg, Evelyn. Art above all.

"Art is using one thing to make another thing." Alice Tessler de Sousa

The image reproduced above illustrates the material to disseminate the **V Congresso Internacional de Convergência (5th International Congress on Convergence)** which APPOA will be hosting in June 2012. It is part of a picture by Iberê Camargo in the The Spools collection.

The theme of the Congress is "The Psychoanalytic Act: its clinical, political and social incidences". One of the four lines of work is about "Act and Creation of the new in culture".

What do analytic act and Act of Creation have in common, and what distinguishes them from each other?

The spools have become a recurrent character-element throughout Iberê Camargo's work. And Freud's grandson's spool has also become a reference in Psychoanalysis.

Iberê tells that one day, in the bottom of a drawer, he found again this object that had been part of his world as a child (Kossovitch and Laudanna, 2000, p. 21), when he played with the spools that were left from his mother's sewing.

As we can read from the epigraph above, spools were affectively charged objects of his childhood. For Iberê, a work of art is worth what it can express. In the continuation of the epigraph the artist says: "Any painter has their element. And this becomes a character that has their own universality, that can live in the world of arts. Because every author has their character and this character lives their dramas and metaphors."

When he was interviewed by Lisette Lagnado (1994, p.33), he said: "Maybe I am seeking the first image, without realizing it, the image of the mother. Then, when this presents itself, it is satisfactory. I cannot say beforehand how she is, but I can recognize her. It is her, I know."

The thread on the spools that wrap around the work and life of the artist are invisible, even to

himself, but he can recognize when "the thing presents itself in the work", and then "is satisfactory". The imaginary re-encounter with the lost object of the hallucinatory experiences of satisfaction as a child, formerly connected to his mother, in the artist's work mark the nostalgia of possible metaphorized re-encounters. Based on the element of the spool, the artist creates characters that live, establish metaphors and displace life's dramas, dramas of a life that acquire universal value, since they speak of the human condition.

"Alls works of art are a dressing on the void", says René Passeron (2001, p.11). A structural void around which the subject and civilization is raised in each era and culture, in their own way. In his act of creation the artist seeks to express what cannot be expressed, to make what is invisible visible, what is inaudible audible, and give shape to what is amorphous. In visual arts the artist seeks to situate, in the work, a certain gaze that will make the onlooker put down the arms of the scopic drive. (Lacan, 1979).

In Iberê's work reproduced above, we see something that looks back at us. Some of his spools, just as certain pictures by Picasso, have their orifices transposed from the extremities to the sides, and they appear to look at us like time tunnels where we lose ourselves in daydreams.

Iberê once remarked that: "I do not paint models, I paint emotions". (http://www.bolsadearte.com/iberecamargo/critica.htm em 01-10-2011). The emotions inscribed in the picture by the artist through the traits of the spool element/character are conjugated when approaching the enjoyment of the spectator who contemplates and reflects these inscriptions in himself.

In this sense, one of the simplest and at the same time profound definitions of art was imparted to me by Élida Tessler, referring to the statement by her daughter Alice, who, once said that "art is using one thing to make another thing". Iberê was able to paint emotions because he knew to make something else from the spools of his childhood". From his lines inscribed in the work, the spools found their place as a character in the world of art.

Freud's grandson's spool also has a thread connecting him to his mother. In Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920) Freud tells about his grandson Ernst's playing. In the absence of his mother he would throw the spool out of his cradle at the same time as he uttered a sound "oooohhh ". Then he pulled it merrily back to himself using the string tied to it, uttering "dah". Freud interprets these sounds uttered by Ernst as gone away/here (fort/da in the German language). He also mentions that the repetition and satisfaction appeared to be more intense when the spool was thrown away (fort), compared to pulling it back here (da).

This game with the spool is notorious, because it marks the constitution of the subject by his entry into the symbolic order, since the child can play actively with the appearance/disappearance of his mother, putting the fundamental significants, fort/da in its place. In this sense, the symbol is the death of the thing (lost object) and source of wishing.

The product of the analytic act is the fundamental significant that marks the borders of the subject's structuring void. Marking the borders of the void, of the lost primordial object, allows the subject to desire and do something more interesting with these significants. When the significants are opened to polysemia by the psychoanalytic act, it becomes possible for the subject to reposition himself and lead a creative life. It becomes possible for the subject to act to create something new in his life and, possibly also in the culture.

In other words, the product of the analytic act is significant S1 in a new ´position (or a new S1). In this sense the analytic act constitutes " a real beginning, an act of creation that establishes that that is where the beginning lies" (Lacan, 1967-68). A beginning where the master's significant (S1) does not represent the figure of the master who establishes the certainties to which the subject can hold onto, symptomatically, as in the case of religious discourse.

In the act of creating a work of art, in turn, the artist creates from a renewed place of enunciation, as long as he does not fall into the compulsion of repeating it, a situation in which the process of creation is exhausted. In art, the act re-creates at the same time the symbolic death of what is real, but, on the other hand, relieves the subject of directly confronting this unbearable void through the canvas, interposed by the work.

The analytic act unveils the void, delimiting its significant borders, and the act of creation, which is curative, veils(velar) and reveals the void.

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