



## **A semiotic reading of the feminine condition, in the short story "Reverie and drunkenness of a girl", by Clarice Lispector**

### **Uma leitura semiótica da condição feminina, no conto "Devaneio e embriaguez duma rapariga", de Clarice Lispector**

**Brenda Cristine Galatti**

Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho" (Unesp); Faculdade de Ciências e Letras  
(FCLAR)

E-mail: [brenda.galatti@unesp.br](mailto:brenda.galatti@unesp.br)

#### **ABSTRACT**

Women have always been subjected to the domestic space and the maternal condition, obtaining, consequently, an annulment of their subjectivity and also a restriction of other human spheres, such as work and leisure. In the midst of this panorama, literature, as a mode of representation and identification, is of fundamental importance for the reflection of female submission to the home space and the subjective restrictions imposed on it, as well as for the questioning of the denial of women to the environment outside the domestic and maternal environment.

**Keywords:** Women, Domestic, Maternal.

#### **RESUMO**

A mulher sempre foi submetida ao espaço doméstico e à condição materna, obtendo, por consequência, uma anulação de sua subjetividade e também uma restrição de outras esferas humanas, como o trabalho e o lazer. Em meio a esse panorama, a literatura, como um modo de representação e de identificação, é de fundamental importância para a reflexão da submissão feminina ao espaço do lar e às restrições subjetivas que a ela são impostas, bem como para o questionamento da negação da mulher ao ambiente fora do meio doméstico e materno.

**Palavras-chave:** Mulher, Doméstico, Materno.

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Women have always been subjected to the domestic space and the maternal condition, obtaining, consequently, an annulment of their subjectivity and also a restriction of other human spheres, such as work and leisure. In the midst of this panorama, literature, as a mode of representation and identification, is of fundamental importance for the reflection of female submission to the home space and the subjective restrictions imposed on it, as well as for the questioning of the denial of women to the environment outside the domestic and maternal environment. Thus, in order to demonstrate how women are represented in the internal and external spheres of the domestic environment, the short story "Devaneio e inebriaguez duma



rapariga", belonging to the work *Laços de família* (1960), by Clarice Lispector, will be analyzed through a Semiotic perspective.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

For this analytical study, the objective is to produce a semiotic reading of the female condition of the protagonist of the narrative, through an analysis of the Greimasian generative path (1979), a theoretical model that was developed by Greimas, in order to reveal how the production of meaning is determined in the content plane. According to Fiorin (2008, p. 18), such a generative path is defined as a methodological simulacrum of the abstractions that the reader performs when reading a text, being divided into three levels: the Fundamental Level, the simplest and most abstract where the semantic traits that are in reciprocal opposition are; the Narrative Level, in which, according to Fiorin (2000, p. 21), the states and transformations are inserted. 21) the states and transformations assumed by the narrative subject; and the Discursive Level, the most concrete and superficial in which the figures, themes and enunciation are found. All these generative stages have, each one, a semantics and a syntax, which will be analyzed in the short story that will be presented.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Considering the plot of the short story, it is clear that the protagonist is narrated, right at the beginning, the tiredness that she finds herself facing her charges at home. She, a married woman with children, although not named, is described from the beginning to the end of the narrative, having, throughout the narrative development, her mood changed. The character, at the beginning, is tired and while her husband was working and the children were absent from home, she decided to rest in her room, an attitude that made the man suspicious of his wife's health, claiming that she was sick. However, even if this fatigue had influenced the woman to retire and dedicate herself to rest, she, on a Saturday afternoon, goes out for dinner and thus keeps company for her husband, who would be that day with a trader. Thus, from the female condition in the two spaces (internal and external to the home), it was possible to analyze the fundamental level, through the semantic traits linked to leisure and domestic routine that also appear throughout the narrative level, through the state statements with the relations of conjunction and disjunction and the statements of doing (the desire not to do domestic activities is oppressed by the duty to do the return of the protagonist's domestic daily life; and the power-to-do and the knowledge-to-do her sensuality away from the domestic environment) that connect with the Discursive Level, through images that sometimes thematize the violent and animalistic way that female entertainment is perceived, such as "big cow"; "pregnant"; "low



and revolutionary life"; "relaxed"; "lazy" and "bitch"; and sometimes belittle female leisure time, through some connotations of nobility and disease, such as "lazy"; "slut" and "shallow".

#### **4 CONCLUSION/FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

After demonstrating the levels that will be analyzed in the narrative, it is possible to see that the analysis of the three generative axes is crucial for the establishment of a semiotic reading around the female condition and its submission to the domestic space. It is through the semantic dichotomies leisure versus domestic routine (fundamental level) that the modal transformations (narrative level) that the protagonist undergoes are noted, as well as modifications in the way she is represented (discursive level) throughout the narrative, being characterized as sick and "princess" when she does not dedicate herself diligently to the activities of the home, and also with animalistic and censorious attributes that elucidate the various misogynistic languages to the female figure. Thus, a semiotic look at the three levels of the story is of fundamental relevance to understand not only the judgments submitted to women, but also Clarice's literariness and engagement in the production of this narrative, which in addition to contributing to giving voice to the female universe and its various challenges, also builds throughout the text, semantic elements, images and themes that are associated with the critical content of the story.



## REFERENCES

A.J.GREIMAS. Dicionário de Semiótica. São Paulo: Cultrix, 1979.

AMARAL, Emilia. Para amar Clarice: como descobrir e apreciar os aspectos mais inovadores de sua obra. Barueri: Faro Editorial, 2017.

BARROS, Diana Luz Pessoa de. Teoria Semiótica do texto. São Paulo: Ática S.A., 1994.

BERTRAND, Denis. Caminhos da Semiótica literária. Bauru: Edusc, 2003.

FIORIN, José Luiz. Elementos de Análise do Discurso. São Paulo: Contexto, 2000.

FIORIN, José Luiz. Em busca do sentido: estudos discursivos. São Paulo: Contexto, 2019.

LISPECTOR, Clarice. Laços de família. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 2009.