Libidinal intelligence: cinema and literature

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1. Introduction

This work intends to analyse the interactions, convergences and conflicts between the imbrications of literature, cinema and psychoanalysis starting from the term 'intelligence': artificial, emotional, collective, libidinal. Literature and psychoanalysis have very close relations. The basic material of both is the language element. There is a speech and an interpretation that permeate them. There is a cure, through psychoanalysis, of a symptomatic real that can no longer be supported by the imaginary pathways. How does this happen? Through the symbolic. If speaking, it can be cured. Just using language. Thus, literature – bythe poet – isexpressed in the symbolic: in the text. Text speaks. Since Freud introduced psychoanalysis, it has permeated the analysis of literary texts, and literature has given generous contributions to psychoanalysts. And the relations between cinema and psychoanalysis already begin with the unlit area of the cinema: all images are great metonymic metaphors. Just as in the dream: metaphorical flashes point to an endless decondensing of possibilities of analysis. Perhaps cinema can be the possibility of the dream of open eyes. Here is the sum of relations: literature, cinema and psychoanalysis. In this relation, the study of the psychoanalytic semiotics that points, as a research line, the manifestations of the unconscious in the contemporaneity. Its object of study is the symptoms of culture, as pointed out according to Lucia Santaella in her 2004 article *O Corpo como Sintoma da Cultura* (*The Body as a Symptom of Culture*), which comprises the processes of production, circulation and consumption of meanings in everyday life, according to style of repression, proper to the present historical epoch. The symptoms would be the contradictory aspects of global capitalism, which can be read, listened to and interpreted with the aid of applied semiotics and extension psychoanalysis. The omnipresence of media affects subjectivity in an individual and collective way.

The present "being-in-the-world" derives from the mediatization of existence, to be understood as an irreversible phenomenon, where technology allows structuring the social, cultural, political, economic and psychic processes of a large part of the population. Thus, the social reality constructed by the media defines a privileged field of investigation, because the symbolic and imaginary aspects of ideology intersect. Within the productions of the cultural industry, a broad but specific theme is of particular importance. Sexuality and its representations, until recently censored in the West, are part of the urban landscape today, openly. Such visibility, quickly integrated into everyday life, in literature, in advertising, on television, in the cinema, on the internet, presents itself as a consummate fact, to the point of seeming banal. But it never was, nor could it be. In this cultural industry, cinema is inserted as a hybrid production and, from *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang 1927) to the recent *Fragmented* (M. Night Shyamalan, 2017) or *Blade Runner 2049* (Denis Villeneuve 2017), has worked on issues not only of sexuality, but the technology now seen as artificial intelligence. The triadic relations of literature, cinema and psychoanalysis are very well worked out in the first *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott 1982). In this film we come across the literary base of Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968). This is not a literary transposition for the cinema, but a basis – in fact – for Scott's film. It is enough to look at the title of Dick's work for the perception of how the dream, the main Freudian referent, runs from the question of human intelligence to robotic perception. How these dreams come about, surely, it is psychoanalytic analysis work.

A similar case is that of the film *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* (*Inteligência Artificial*, title in Brazil and Portugal), a science fiction by Steven Spielberg released in 2001, from a project by Stanley Kubrick, on the possibility of creating machines with feelings. The script created by Spielberg was based on a tale of Brian Aldiss called *Supertoys Last All Summer Long* (2001). Thus, the aims of this work are the fruitful relations that literature generates in other codes, in other languages, providing what we know as comparative literature. In this case, specifically, the relations between literature, cinema and psychoanalysis interspersed by the symptoms of contemporary culture, notably that of Artificial Intelligence. Authors such as Yuval Noah Harari, in their recent works, *Homo Deus* (2015) and *Homo Sapiens* (2016), point to the ethical thinking that becomes necessary at this time. Within this objective of relations that the literature proposes, this work marks the presence of the Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, as well as the work cinema involving the questions of intelligence, especially, the emotional, libidinal and artificial intelligence. All of them fit into science fiction films without necessarily departing from literary works of this genre.

The present study begins by searching for the concepts of what intelligence is, going through to observe more deeply what libidinal intelligence is, by pointing out the relations between libidinal intelligence in the cinema, and then to interweave cinema, psychoanalysis and fiction literature and, finally, to try to construct a conclusion.

2. Understanding what intelligence is

Discussing the term intelligence in the educational and learning sense, it is possible to work with the theories of Piaget (1958). For Piaget, intelligence exists only in action. Intelligence is a property of action that maximizes your adaptive power.

For Vygotsky (1994), there are concepts that have become unavoidable in the area of learning development. One of the most important concepts is the Proximal Development Zone, which relates to the difference between what the child can do alone (Real Development Zone) and what they are able to learn and do with the help of a more experienced person (Potential Development Zone), represented by: adult, older or more easily learnable child, etc.

And,for Chomsky (2006), language is like an instinct. He is the first linguist to reveal the complexity of the system and perhaps the most responsible for the modern revolution in cognitive science and the science of language. Before, the social sciences were dominated by behaviorism, the school of Watson and Skinner, who did not study mental processes and rejected the existence of innate ideas.

Discussing the issue of emotional intelligence, just to understand the concept, the classic theories of Daniel Goleman (1995), considered the father of Emotional Intelligence. He is a psychologist, writer and PhD at Harvard University in the United States. The specialist was responsible for popularizing the Emotional Intelligence concept around the world through the book *Emotional Intelligence*, published in 1986. Goleman teaches that controlling emotions is essential for the development of an individual's intelligence.

Discussing the issue of artificial intelligence, the theories of John Searle (1991 [1984]) and Marvin Minsky (2006) are interesting. Artificial intelligence is of particular interest to us because most of the films analysed deal with the theme. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a branch of Computer Science that proposes to devise devices that simulate the human capacity to reason, perceive, make decisions and solve problems, in short, the ability to be intelligent.

Considering the interest of this work, the theory about libidinal intelligence, however, is what interests us.

3. Libidinal intelligence

In the question of psychoanalysis in relation to intelligence, the psychoanalytic theories of Freud (1975) and Lacan (1983) are the focus of this work. Freud was, in fact, one of the first researchers in the cognitive sciences and a consequent cognitivist. The ignorance of Freud's interest in thought and cognitive phenomena led his successors to seek, in different authors, complements to what was lacking in him. Attempts to articulate or integrate Piaget's theory to psychoanalysis lie within this horizon. They are intended to remain as artificial and eclectic syntheses as long as they avoid clearing the question of the initial relations of Piaget's psychology with psychoanalysis. These relations have been quite confirmed, but they are as if they were repressed.

Particularly, the question of having a libidinal intelligence is to study the works of Freud and Lacan – cited – on the subject of libido. What is libido? The word libido is of Latin origin and means desire or yearning. Libido is characterized as a usable energy for the instincts of life. According to Freud's studies, the human being possesses a distinct source of energy for each of the general instincts. For Freud, the production, increase, decrease, distribution or displacement of the libido provides the possibility of explaining the psychosexual phenomena. Mobility is an important feature of libido, understood as the ease of switching from one area of attention to another. In the area of sexual desire the libido is linked to psychological and emotional aspects. The energy related to the instincts of aggression or death does not have a specific denomination like the libido (instinct of life). This energy supposedly has the same attributes of the libido, but Freud failed to elucidate this question. In studying and defining the concept of libido, Freud also defined cathexis. To clarify what the libido is, Lacan, at a certain point in his teaching, resorts to the creation of the said "myth of the blade". It is in these terms that he specifies the problem: the libido is not something fleeting, fluid, it does not divide, nor accumulate, like magnetism, in the centres of focus that the subject offers him; the libido must be conceived as an organ, in both senses of the term, organ-part of the organism and organ-instrument. Considering the libido as an organ, even in reference to the signification of the phallus, obliges to take some precautions. Lacan will say that it is an inapprehensible organ or a false organ, but essential to understand the nature of the drive. As an organ, the libido is unreal. Unreal, Lacan warns, it is by no means imaginary. The unreal is defined by articulating the real in a way that escapes us, and this is precisely what demands that its representation may be mythical, as we do it.

Considering the relations between intelligence and libido, the work follows – in spite of explaining that the libidinal intelligence would require theoretical deepening to specify the relations between the libidinal intelligence and the cinema, cinematographic objects that we study here.

4. Libidinal Intelligence and the cinema

For the analysis of the films *Blade Runner* and *Artificial Intelligence*, we observe the semiotics and psychoanalysis, taking into account the work of Lucia Santaella (2001), Christian Dunker and Ana Lucília Rodrigues (2016), Christian Dunker, Ana Lucília Rodrigues and Henrique Senhorini (2016). Santaella says that just as in daily life we commonly find signs in which there are mixtures between the categories of firstness, secondness and thirdness – the genuine sign being rare with a clear delimitation of a single category – hybrid languages are also predominant to the detriment of purely sound, visual and verbal languages. Ana Lucília explains that if there is an analogy between what happens in life and what happens in the films, there is a homology between what happens in the constructions of the films and what happens in the psychoanalytic session. A homology in the production relationship. It is the comparative biology that has the concept of homology that means something equal, but different; equal because it shares a common evolutionary origin, different because it went through a process of evolution. In short, homology means structure and origin similarity. The problems represented by editing, setting, script, choice of frames, plans and sequences, definition of tracks and filters are not only one as analog or allegorical, which would allow us to say that the experience of psychoanalytic treatment is like a film, in the sense in which one could say that it is as a journey, as a game of chess or bridget or as a theatre.

One cannot forget that the language of cinema is contemporary to the language of psychoanalysis, both are children of the twentieth century. Cinema is understood as a field of formation of formal problems about subjectivity and as language, narrative and discourse about its modes of suffering. Psychoanalysis is understood not only as a theory of psychic functioning, but as a clinical method of treatment and an ethical experience of transformation. The articulation between cinema and psychoanalysis leads to clinical procedures inherent in psychoanalytic listening. The historical contemporaneity of these languages has specific characteristics that allow us to think critically about their concepts.

Cinema and psychoanalysis would have much to say. Psychoanalysis uses cinematographic fiction. Cinema critically thinks of psychoanalytic language. Therefore, it means that cinema in its relation to psychoanalysis also works on intelligence, the signs of language, in this case, libidinal intelligence.

The films studied here lead us to think of libidinal intelligence. Both are works of fiction, in the sense of science fiction. Undoubtedly, they deal with themes of our time, in the case of artificial intelligence. We live in a world with refrigerator doors with artificial intelligence. With lights that light up at voice commands. Systems that work by retinas. What we call the Internet of Things (IoT), a network of physical objects, vehicles, buildings and others that have embedded technology, sensors and a network connection capable of collecting

and transmitting data. It is worth saying that the films we studied are about themes studied by science, but not totally proven at the time of its elaboration and practiced in daily life. Internet of Things (IoT) is an everyday reality, but when these films were made, they were still themes treated utopically and also based on literary works of science fiction. We know that science fiction anticipates many of the practices that are in the near future. In this sense, *Blade Runner* is from 1982 and points out human beings in search of replicants, or synthetic beings, created in human resemblance that rebel at any given moment. In the 1980s, artificial intelligence had been studied for at least thirty years, but it did not mean that replicants were real. Although Spielberg's *Artificial Intelligence* is from 2001, much more recent, it approaches the creation of robots to the human likeness. Yes, they existed in the 2000s, but not endowed with intelligence, we would say libidinal, and emotion as humans are.

5. Libidinal intelligence, cinema and fiction literature

If we return to the above concepts, it is possible to establish a triadic relationship: psychoanalytic semiotics (signs – language), cinema (objects of filmic study) and fiction literature. Assuming that we have already approached the term intelligence and its relation to psychoanalysis and cinema, we now try to relate both to literature. In this case, the fiction literature.

Semiotics, it seems evident here, is the science of signs and, therefore, analysing a film means analysing a cinematic language, a sign. This sign is perceived by the communication, by symptoms that it provokes, by the sensation of being, in a projection room, a psychoanalytic session. This unlit area of the cinema and this dark place of analysis. In this analysis, the investigation of the intelligence of the libido, the intelligence involved with the desire.

Particularly, they are science fiction films, but they work on the question of who we are, what is made of us in the gaze of another. This one a replicant or a robot. What wishes do they speak about? Isn't this science fiction literature craving? A future project of exploring our desires? A symptom of the culture of our times, of all times. These two films depart from literary works as well as science fiction. After all, what is a science fiction? Carl Freedman (2000) traces the fundamental and mostly unexamined relations between discourses of science fiction and critical theory, arguing that science fiction is (or should be) a privileged genre for critical theory. He states that it is not by chance that the rise of academic interest in science fiction since the 1970s coincides with the heyday of literary theory and that, likewise, science fiction is one of the most theoretically informed areas of the literary profession. The expanded readings of novels of the five mostimportant modern science fiction writers illustrate the affinity between science fiction and critical theory, focusing in each case on a great novel that resonates with concerns of critical theory. We have already

said that science fiction relies heavily on writing about possible, rational worlds and futures and alternative scenarios. Unlike fantasy, in the narrative context of science fiction we find imaginary elements, inspired by real or past facts, which are scientifically established or postulated by scientific laws and principles, even though the plot remains imaginative.

The film *Blade Runner* (1982) is inspired, based on Dick's novel *Do Androids dream of EletricSheeps* (1968). The author has put to the work the subtitle *Blade Runner* – imminent danger that immediately refers to the title of Scott'sfilm. It is, almost as in the film, a hunter of androids in moral crisis. It is a science fiction novel by American writer Philip K. Dick, first published in 1968. The novel is set in a post-apocalyptic San Francisco where Earth life was greatly undermined by global nuclear war. Most animal species are threatened or extinguished by extreme radiation poisoning, so that owning an animal is now a sign of status and empathy, an encouraged attitude toward animals. The main plot follows Rick Deckard, a bounty hunter, who is in charge of retiring, killing, six Nexus-6 model androids who escaped. A minor plot follows John Isidore, a man who assists fugitive androids. In connection with Deckard's mission, the novel explores the question of what it is to be human. Unlike humans, androids are said to lack empathy. Much has been speculated about the character (Deckard) in the sense that he would fall in love with the replicant with whom he works suggesting to the new *Blade Runner 2049* – also based on the book of Denis Villeneuve (2017), this idea of a son of the couple. The child born of human and nonhuman who survives as the chosen one that must be hunted because it proves the failure of the system.

Spielberg's *Artificial Intelligence* (2001) is also based on Brian Aldiss's *Supertoys Last Summer Long and Other Stories* (2001), first published in 1969, contemporary to Dick's work. Aldiss's work occurs in a dystopian future where only one fourth of the world's overcrowded population is nurtured and lives comfortably, and families should ask permission to have children. Monica Swinton lives with her husband Henry and her son David, with whom she strives to relate. She seeks help from Teddy, a kind of toy robot companion, to try to understand why she feels unable to communicate with David, much less feel compassion for him. David also asks Teddy if his mother really loves him and wonders if he is really real. He tries to write letters to explain how he feels about the mother and the inner conflict he faces, but all his letters remain unfinished. Meanwhile, the story jumps to Henry Swinton, who is in a meeting with a company he is affiliated with, known as Synthtank. They are discussing artificial life forms and bio-electronic beings for future developments. He argues that the new AI (Artificial Intelligence) under production will finally solve humanity's problems with the experience of personal isolation and solitude. Monica Swinton uncovers David's unfinished letters depicting lovemaking and a

jealousy of contempt for Teddy, whom Monica always seemed to connect more than with David himself. Monica is horrified by the letters, but happy when Henry comes home and she is able to share with him that the family was chosen by the Ministry of Population to give birth to a child. At this point it is revealed that David is an artificial human, used as a substitute for a real child. Monica confidentially tells Henry that David is having verbal malfunction problems and should be sent back to the factory immediately. The story ends with David thinking about the love and warmth of his mother, unaware of what will happen next. The boy – robot – isabandoned and the natural brother begins to have the love of his mother, love that is David's greatest desire.

The two works, like the two films, point in the direction of a beloved theme: desire. In both, there are characters seeking the desire. No matter if it is the desire of the robot boy David to be loved, or the desire to find the lost morality that also reveals itself in the search for love. David and Deckard do not care about the artificial intelligence that is provided or that people the replicants. Both desire another intelligence that leads to love: libidinal intelligence. Humanornot.

6. Final considerations

As Harari (2016) advocates, if human beings will seek deity, happiness and immortality, thus, the human being, in the likeness of God, wants to become God, not just be in the likeness. Moments of happiness are not enough for human beings; they want to be always and eternally happy. They think this will be possible being a god. The immortality of mirroring themselves in the creation of works, of having children, or of planting a tree, no longer satisfies the human being. They want exactly the immortality of their bodies – they want to escape from death. They search for these three things, those desires, based on intelligence. The human being is intelligent to create the impossible. The impossible, avoid death, be happy, be a god. Ancient people tried to be gods, like the Egyptians, who have designated themselves with all happiness of which the gods possess. Material goods, everything you can get. Immortality in tombs that covered them. But their bodies perished, though they considered that there would be continuity of life in the aftermath, and for this very reason they carried to their last earthly home many material goods and their slaves that would serve them in this other life. However, to the science of hitherto, their mummified bodies perished. Here is present-day Egypt to show that these gods did not return and the wealth they held turned to dust. So their intelligence did not give them the result that their desires sought. But in the twenty-first century, can the intelligence – nowtaken as artificial – beable to account for this desire for real immortality, deity, and happiness?

If we take science fiction, which is always based on the knowledge – or intelligence – of our time, we turn our eyes to the cinema, specifically, that cinema of fiction that seeks these desires of immortality, deity and happiness– canwe think that artificial intelligence may provide us with all this? Even the earliest films based on the fiction comics that created the super heroes are in this quest. But something always escapes, fails. Let's see, the superman is immortal as long as he does not clash with kryptonite. He is a god capable of everything. And happiness? He does not have it because he only gets it in a few moments in the figure of his human namesake, Clark Kent. He is god, he is immortal, but he is unhappy in his solitude. To complete the trinity, all others would have to be immortal and gods, but oneness is also somewhat the happiness of knowing the only one in the species. How much artificial intelligence will be needed? For all? If it is true that by means of machines we can transform any water into drinking water; if we can build vertical fields with intelligent agronomy; if preventive medicine will save us with nano robots from all evils, which advantage of being extremely happy will we have if all the others are so? Finally, wouldn't it be interesting that emotional or artificial intelligence turned to libidinal intelligence? What would this intelligence be if it were so? If, in fact, it was necessary to do so, how would it account ofour desires for deity, immortality, and happiness? How would a robot with its artificial intelligence be if a libidinal intelligence were conceived in it? The film *AI Artificial Intelligence* gives us a small sample when it presents a boy –a toymachine that exactly suffers when he comes across so many others like him in his creator's laboratory. He says, "I'm a boy!". Everyone else says the same thing. The charm, however fleeting, will be given as a magic touch of the blue fairy. A tiny moment of pleasure with the mother who takes him as her child and says, "I love you." This is the energy of the libido. How to have it? How to have this libidinal intelligence?

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