

NORMALITY VS. ABNORMALITY IN A CHILD’S BEHAVIOR (A SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE)

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Abstract

Taking a child’s behavior as an example (out of my own experience), I shall try to consider a theoretical framework on which a semiotic model can be established. This can, in my opinion, be performed owing to the fact that semiotics initially establishes a relation between two (or more than two) phenomena, which can then be subordinated to a process of signification. My aim in this paper shall be to establish a theoretical limit to such oppositional relations in terms of a child’s behavior (such as: normality vs. abnormality, intentionality vs. unintentionality, etc.), which may emerge from various states of a mental disorders such as Autism presents. Such states can gain their transformability through procedures such as: transformation in semiotics, and new behavior acquisition in psychology, so as to become moveable from one state to another. The questions I am trying to answer are: are such phenomena treatable in terms of their becoming passionate? If an abnormal behavior comes into existence, how is it expressed through the incapacity of the “symbolic representation,” as Piaget claims? And finally, which is the way to understand such a child’s’ requests and complaints?

Keywords: Semiotics, autism, passionate, behavior, signification

Introduction – On some semiotic concepts as an interactional process

Treating human behavior generally, and states of mental disorders specifically, as a special kind of a relationship, (among individuals, intended in a social context, or in certain social groups), and its respective meaningfulness (in the sense of an appropriate inter-communicational process in growth), gives me a scientific and methodological reason to discuss such a phenomenon within semiotics as a discipline. If semiotics treats dichotomies among other issues, especially in the frames of *linguistically-minded* and/or *psychologically minded* semiotics, (taking into account its cognitive part as well), then one should consider it as a starting point. Instances of such an analysis—and/or theoretical paradigm—can by

all means be found within the Structural and Post-structural periods within the general evolutionary linguistics of science's developmental and historical periods. Such dichotomies or dualities have been overcome today in the frames of the growth flow of general signs, as we shall try to explicate, creating thus various analytical levels of the semiotic method, which are able to provide for a decent deduction of meaning, generally, as one of the principal goals of the process of semiosis.

We all behave in determined ways: some ways are well-known, accepted and socially acceptable on one hand, whereas others are not. They may simply be specific, or a characteristic of certain individuals who might be an exception to the external social reality surrounding them. If such a dichotomy comes into existence, then one should be firm in claiming that it by all means represents a semiotic discourse.

Establishing such a duality as a starting point, as to whether one acts normally or not in turn, represents a firm ground for the known semiotic systems which should be communicating, so as to process signs. The question one has to pose is this: how can one make such systems (which may represent contradictoriness, disjunction, conjunction, etc.) represent an accomplished interactional process?

Besides the so-called equivocal and/or proportionally accomplished communicational and/or informational process (Shannon & Weaver, 1948), which in turn is seen as an idealistic process, an unequivocal one may exist. This is the one which does not simply comply in an equal proportion with the transmitted material (from the source to the destination). In other words, the messages transmitted from one side of the communicational channel to the other do not represent equality in proportion.³²

Semiotics has argued about artistic categories and expressions which may represent such transmitted unequivocal messages. In such a case, the results become multifold and poly-semantic, and then are ready for optional choices. A reader, viewer, or a critic can then choose as a consequence which meaning or meanings shall be useful for him or her, so as to be able to interpret a work of art individually.

Our next question then is: how should the processing of such messages appear within inter- and intra- human behavior? What if such behavior is not regarded as normal? Can it then create relations so as to become a part of a system and /or a structure which may be semiotically treatable? It is in conclusion true that such a disproportionality (except for the mentioned semiotically treatable spheres, in terms of their precision of

³² The notion of unequivocal messages has been widely treated by Eco. See: (Eco, 1975). It is to note however, that such an unequivocal message can be realistically transmitted either verbally or non-verbally. One may exemplify Jakobson's contribution in this context. See: (Innis, 1985)

results), can belong to social surroundings or, seen in another semiotic sense, to the text/context relationship.

My aim in this paper is to establish a theoretical framework to such oppositional or relational components of a child's behavior, which are likely to emerge from various states of a mental disorder, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder Syndrome. Such states, which are *seemingly* intended as a physiological state (due to their organic order) can gain a changeability of their status through procedures (such as transformation in semiotics, and a gradual or a procedural acquisition of new behavior in psychology), to the extent that they become "moveable" from one state to another. If such a thesis is taken to be true, then, besides the formal analysis of *determined semiotic objects*, semiotics can present such phenomena on epistemological grounds (initially based on hypotheses aimed at their manifestation), in an attempt to make such mentioned states applicable into various analytical levels. Abstract notions then can obtain the possibility of their optionality, so as to become concrete: at least, according to semiotic preconditions such as are applied by *the semiotics of passions* (A. J. Greimas and Fontanille, 1993). The issues that semiotics should raise in such a context are of the following kind: how should such relational attitudes (among which, *a strange kind of child's behavior*), become passionate in their final manifestation status, and why? Or, on another level: is the contradiction between such taxonomic entities as normality and abnormality (thus, attempting to exemplify autism, and/ or other similar phenomena or syndromes) based on its clear-cut limits, or is a transformational process in the semiotic sense of the word competent and necessary for the gradualness of procedures? One of my methodological aims, as I hope will be evident, is the applicability of the theoretical postulates I shall try to present.

Out of my own experience: a child's strange behavior

It is a firmly established fact that each one of us lives in a determined social context. Such a context should, in turn, be culturally understandable, adoptable, so as to be ready to create relations and correlations which are a part of a semiotic discourse. Each such exception can be noticeable, therefore even semiotically treatable, in the sense, as we shall soon see, of creating *different kinds of semiotically transformable units*.³³

Exceptional or extraordinary behavior can be noticed since early childhood. A frequent problem however is that a parent would not know what it is. Questions of the following kind may arise: "Why doesn't my child

³³ The term *transformation* and/or *transformational* shall have two kinds of its conceptualizing here: one shall belong to the procedures used in the semiotic procedures, and the next the process of gradualness, aimed at a behavioral change in terms of different discussed items.

speak? Why does he/she walk on the top of his/her toes? Why doesn't he/she make or maintain eye-contact?" Such an *exceptional reality*, as I may be encouraged to name it, creates a new reality, a brand new one, such as science may attempt to create. Semiotically speaking, when one finds oneself at the stage of signification (adding meaning to a given form), one should talk of the *world of possibilities, or a possible world* (Eco, 1994). Even though Eco here speaks of different contexts taken from the artistic and/or fictive reality, is it not then true that such a circumstance can realistically occur? Is it not then true that a child with mental disorders can live or be in a context of his or her *own world*? Both "worlds" mentioned, understandably, lie in different contexts, one of them being of a scientific nature, and the next being subject to a metaphorical usage. Let me try to exemplify this: a *possible world or a world of possibilities* can, for Eco, be a flow of events and actions happening in a work of art. What he wishes to say is, that the *real author of the work* (Eco, 1994) wished that a certain story be taken from external reality and be put his own way, an *aesthetic way, which gives to him openness within its interpretation* (Eco, 1962). A child, who lives in his or her own world, lives another context, which as we have said is exceptional, extraordinary and unusual. In conclusion, a *child's own world* is a concept of a metaphorical usage, so as to indicate his or her behavior, simply, which may not seem normal. A child's being a part of such a world is defined in the following way:

Autistic disorder or autism is a severe developmental disorder characterized by abnormalities in social functioning, language and communication, and unusual behaviors and interests. It touches every aspect of the child's interaction with his or her world, involves many parts of the brain, and undermines the traits that make us human – our social responsiveness, ability to communicate, and feelings for other people. (Mash, Eric J., Wolfe 2004, 284)

In such a context, being aware of *another context*, which may not comply with the "text," both a child's parent and indeed the semiotician would have to ask: is such children are acting a part of their normal behavior or not? Initially, a twofold complex answer can be offered. A parent might react as follows: "My child is a quiet child, never makes noise, or does the other things like other children do. I feel it is just all right. What, though, is happening now?"

The next answer should lie on the semiotic level, posing questions of the following kind: why doesn't such a subject—taken as a *semiotic object of analysis*—at this instance comply with its context? Should it have a relational attitude so that the necessary binary opposition as a starting point is created, thus becoming a part of the semiotic discourse? Such a vision, which semiotically speaking aims at attributing signification (or at least,

performing such a process), should create a system similar to the child's gradual acquisition and developmental stages. Later in this paper I shall try to present both aspects simultaneously, so as to reach the necessary preconditions for the mentioned application and signification process.

Noticing such differences (in comparison to other children) as I have mentioned above, the fear starts growing to the extent that new emotional statuses start to prevail within parents. The de-socialization process, sometimes gradually, and other times instantly, is what a parent can notice: the unusual playing with his/her toys; stereotypical and or repetitive behavior; the lack of imaginative games; or a medication which may be suspected for causing such a behavior; etc., cause despair and disappointment within parents to the extent of emotional passion. Such a situation (which, as we have said, is definitely semiotically treatable), shall cause a specialist of the field to mediate a communication process between the parent and the child. And, finally, what does a parent do to the child so as to behave abnormally instead of normally?

The relationship between text and context, as mentioned above, is one of the problems. It is even for us—who are at least considered normal—true: why there is a certain amount of fear in us prior to our contextualization, or adapting to brand new circumstances? This question naturally applies to the *uncertainty problem* (Griffin, 2003) in the occurrence of new circumstances.

The next problem is the mentioned semiotic process of oppositional relations. This is definitely due to some of the necessary “*automatic processes occurring in the human brain*”, which are biologically, linguistically, psychologically and philosophically conditioned. Let us examine now each posed problem separately.

On the binary oppositions of the semiotic process

Owing to the fact that *binary oppositions* have been used widely (either theoretically or within their practical applicability) in the frames of the Structural approach to linguistics, we shall refer to them in this part of this contribution, in order to be able to exemplify such notions as communicating and speech abilities within a child's development . Such issues (especially studied in linguistics and psychology) shall help us reach the level of a possible applicability and manifestation of meaningful units within semiotics as a discipline.

Saussure's contribution, for instance, gives us one of semiotics' definitions. (Saussure, 2011) Defining semiotics as a “science of signs” (paraphrase mine), in Saussurian terms makes it a *part of social psychology*,

*and consequently of general psychology.*³⁴ One issue needs to be clarified here: why does Saussure make semiotics a part of psychology? For a simple reason: semiotics has to do with *on-going processes*, either communicational or linguistic (at least, during Structuralism), in the same way as does psychology. Another problem which Saussure addressed is the *double articulation* as, for instance, explained by Martine. Such a phenomenon, naturally, belongs to linguistics only. In such a context, the first articulation belongs to phonology (the shapes of the sounds of language and their usage), and the second one to meaning. As can be observed, one of such dichotomies gets disclosed at this instance.

Another of Saussure's theses, which we consider important for this part of our contribution, is the dichotomy between language and speech. One may conclude with confidence that the first one considers linguistic norms and the next pronunciation, which is due to our psycho-physic abilities; or, better expressed, the first phenomenon is an abstract and the next a concrete phenomenon. Both concepts should act within their *complementariness*, so as to function as one. After all, Saussure comprehends language as a social phenomenon, or indeed as a brand new reality (containing in itself the known linguistic norms, which are applied in a determined language's system). Saussure's claim that *language is only one of the semiotic systems* (my paraphrase) is a firm argument in relation to such an issue.

Another dichotomy considered by Saussure (and many other scholars) is *the signifier* and *the signified*. This, as can be logically concluded, implies another important issue in semiotics: *the representation itself, and the representational issues.*³⁵

The sign should signify and/or represent something else. In other words, this dichotomy is also a part of the communicational process. The sign can further be motivated or chaotic, in terms of its intentionality or unintentionality. If it is motivated, it is designed to motivate something else, in order to make it understandable, or add a meaning to it. In sum, this is the beginning of the signification process in semiotics as such. The question one has to advance now is the following: what do such dichotomies have to do with behavioral impairments in a child's development? It is immediately apparent that more than one answer can be given.

First, the compounding or uniting of *external reality with mental reality* (visually, receptively, non-verbally or verbally), is always a problem in terms of individuals with mental disorders (such as is ASD). Second, semiotics' binary oppositions allow a comprehension of the gradualness of

³⁴ The paraphrasing is mine. See: (Saussure, 2011) .

³⁵ See: (Peirce, 1960)

such a union, which in conclusion should create what we call language usage today. If such complex processes as perception of the external reality, its reception, comprehension, and finally its expressivity (or, semiotically speaking, its signification), are seen as separate units, they make up the universe of signs, which gradually in semiotics (and procedurally and/or developmentally in psychology), obtains a manifestation level, or its expression, becoming thus meaningful. This would, in other words, be part of *a normal social context*.

Finally, reference, symbolic reference, reception and feed-back information are clue concepts either for a normal or an abnormal child's behavior. Indeed, it is here that semiotics is important for a child's development:

At the end of the sensori-motor period, at about one and half to two years, there appears a function that is fundamental to the development of later behavioral patterns. It consists in the ability to represent something (a signified something: object, event, conceptual scheme, etc.) by means of a "signifier" which is differentiated and which serves only a representative purpose: language, mental image, symbolic gesture, and so on. (Piaget 1969, Chapter 3, n.p.)

One can see the dichotomy in the text. What Piaget intends here, as a matter of fact, is exactly the semiotic process which is going on in the developmental stages of the child. The ability to represent *what ones sees, as well as to manifest it within on-going biological processes through verbal or non-verbal communication*, is as what a child has to do at this stage, although, as Piaget says (ibid.), still without a clear signification. The semiotic process, as we have seen, is exactly this: conceptualizing or thinking in other realities as well, such as illusionary, imagined ones, and/or artistic ones. Here is why Piaget calls this function, in fact, a semiotic function.

However, since linguists distinguish between "symbols" and "signs", we would do better to adopt their term "semiotic function" to designate those activities having to do with differentiated signifiers as a whole.(Piaget 1969, Chapter 3, n.p.)

There is no doubt that we may state that the differences between the concepts in question belong to the semiotic discourse. In the wider understanding of the sign concept in semiotics for instance, the smallest or most basic unit of analysis can be intended. The sign, however, as is generally known, can have various shapes, and definitively be a subject to a multifold deduction of meaning. It can, further, indicate meaning, as in the case of hearing a rumor and guessing what it is. If one (for instance) sees smoke, one can think of a cigarette, even without visualizing it, etc. Further

processes of adding meaning to a given object/ subject, naturally overcome the *perception stage and may be a part of cognition as well.*³⁶

Children with ASD syndrome usually have a delay within such processes, which can be instanced in terms of the delay of speech, perception and especially cognition processes. A child with autism might cognize the objects around him/her, but not essentially. As we have seen in Saussure and Piaget, something may be indicative to him/her as representing something else, but not in terms of its function. Taking (for instance) objects and putting them into his/her mouth indicates that there is some kind of representation, but not yet a symbolic one. As one could further observe in Piaget's explanation (Piaget, 1969), the uniting and compounding (with notions such as imitation game, image, movements, etc.) happens somewhat later than the stages he names "representational". The delay in children with ASD syndrome lies in their incapacity of performing such "tasks" at the due biological age.

On some passions of the children with ASD Syndrome

As we have stated above, instead of acquiring the basic knowledge of the world around, and the various objects in terms of their conceptualizing and differentiating in various categories and states, in short, of the social surroundings, a child with mental disorders can acquire only some of them. Advancing in some spheres, but not in all of them, is usually a characteristic of a child living with autism. Repetitive actions and/or habits (for instance, playing with one toy only, and purposing it to unusual aims in the manifestation status) make such a child's symptoms visible to the rest of the world. Such actions may then become passionate, and can express emotionality such as happiness, anger, disagreement etc. Prior to their becoming passionate they express their needs and complaints, in an attempt to initiate a normal functioning. I call them *passionate*, because of the mentioned repetitions (as if wanting to say, wanting to wish, wanting to utter)³⁷ which, as we said, would not look normal to the rest of the world. If such actions do contain their meaning—either hypothetically imagined in the child's brain and/or in his/her realistically perceived context—then one can definitely provide a semiotic model to present them. Such a kind of a child's expressivity (or, pretended expressivity, or attempt of expressing

³⁶ We have to remind ourselves here that semiotics in turn, does not only regard its processes as psychological. The vision I have exemplified here, applies by all means to the initial steps of signification. By all means, differing from such a claim, one can infer meaning through semiotics, as rightfully shown in Peirce. See: (Peirce, 1960). In terms of the ASD syndrome, such a representational status can be applicable to the later developmental behavior patterns of a child and/or an individual.

³⁷ After all, Greimas's and Fontanille's concept of modality is a proof to that.

himself/herself), at least in terms of presenting his/her necessities to the rest of the world, is by all means semiotically treatable. The way of their compensation of the normal actions with abnormal ones can also be made visible and understandable through the signs he/she is processing in a special way. It should be emphasized in turn that such a procedure must rely on paradigmatic and syntagmatic juxtaposition at the semio-narrative level.

The semiotics of passions (A. J. Greimas and Fontanille, 1993) bases human activity, human creation, social phenomena etc., on discursive and epistemological grounds. Greimas himself (A. J. Greimas, 1987), above all, has introduced *the subject* as a part of the semiotic process. This would justify introducing the *semiotics of action*:

It is therefore not surprising that the best-explored, and perhaps the most efficient, level of the generative trajectory is, in fact, situated in the middle area between its discursive and epistemological components. We are referring above all to the modeling of narrativity and to its actantial organization. The concept of an actant, freed from its psychological frame and defined only by its doing is the sine qua non condition for developing a semiotics of action.(A. J. Greimas and Fontanille 1993, XVII-XVIII)

The questions we have to pose now are the following: can a child with an ASD Syndrome have (possess) narration within his brain, even though not manifesting it expressively? ³⁸ Or: if a child with an ASD Syndrome cannot speak (or does not hold the verbal component) and perform other psychological processes, can he/she express himself/herself otherwise, in terms of the mentioned biological and psychological processes? Here is one such possibility:

One of the most profound mysteries of autism has been the remarkable ability of most autistic people to excel at visual spatial skills while performing so poorly verbal skills. When I was a child and a teenager I thought everybody thought in pictures. I had no idea that my thought processes were different. In fact, I did not realize the full extent of the difference until very recently. At meetings and at work I started asking other people detailed questions about how they accessed information from their memories. From their answers I learned that my visualization exceeded those of other people. (Grandin 2008, n.p.)

If such is the visualization process of an autistic person, it means that such visualization is ready to create narrative structures. The question is of a semiotic nature. It should express relations. In terms of a possible *passionate taxonomy*, it would require that ready-given narrative structures are manifested, either to the deep or surface structures. Such taxonomic notion transformability is possible within the mentioned model, with the aim of

³⁸ They don't because of the impossibility to use oral communication.

changeability or “movement” from one state to another. If the passions of a child with ASD Syndrome are placed within their *state of affairs*, the procedure within the manifestation level produces their *transformability into the state of feelings*. This, in conclusion, is one of the ways to make such a child’s actions meaningful (at least in the frames of their “physiologically intended” context).

The questions we have to resolve now are of a twofold nature: which would be related to the creation of such mentioned narrative structures, which would be related to a passionate taxonomy, and which would finally emerge as a result? The second part of the question can also otherwise be formed: why should such stereotypical actions of a child having (or, suspected to have) a mental disorder, be considered passionate? The answers to such questions naturally, require a procedural approach and applicability within the semiotic method.

The clue question the parent often poses, however, is the following: “which is the way to understand such a child’s needs and complaints so as to be able to properly provide him/her with due interaction?” It is understandable that in normal surroundings such an interaction represents a developmental process (either biologically or psychologically) which a parent is able to comprehend. In order to be able to see how an interaction should be processed within an autistic child, one should examine some ways of treating autism.

On some possibilities to treat autism

If one wishes to perform an application model, based on an autistic child’s passions, with the aim of its semiotic relevance, one has to be aware of some of the possibilities to treat such a phenomenon. This is, in my view, due to several reasons:

- 1) A child with autism is considered to show abnormal behavior, as generally known, instead of normal behavior.
- 2) Such a child produces repetitive actions (which may be due to several processes occurring within his/her brain, such as perception and cognition capabilities).
- 3) Such habits, and/or interactional relations, can finally become passionate, in the way of inadequate information processing.

If such a situation is taken to be true, then a key question is posed: how should such an interactional process become possible, taking such issues into account? Or, perhaps better expressed: if such biological and psychological processes are not regarded as normal, what would then be their semiotic status? It is understandable I hope that a semiotic process requires a fundamental processing on both sides of the communication channel (in case one takes the communicative level as a fundamental one). Due to such

reasons, it is the therapist who intervenes in terms of the *learning and acquiring process*, thus mediating and/or assisting the child's developmental progress.³⁹ In an attempt to exemplify possibilities of treating a child living with autism, I shall mention only some of them, especially those which have to do with behavioral impairments. This is due to the following reasons:

The picture of autism treatment is further complicated by the fact that there are very different perspectives from which to view treatment: developmental, behavioral, educational, cognitive, and medical. These perspectives overlap, but each emphasizes different things. Practitioners from these different perspectives often don't understand one another's vocabularies. It is like blind men feeling the elephant from different parts of the animal and getting very different impressions of the creature. What we will do here is cross disciplinary boundaries and integrate different perspectives by stripping away terminology that delineates and separates perspectives and instead focus on the mechanics of what to do to carry out treatment, based on research, theory, and clinical experience (Siegel 2003, 3)

Owing to the fact that the ASD problem is multi-dimensional (either in terms of the child's developmental stages or within his/her organic, i.e. bio-neurological context), I shall mention here only some of the treatment possibilities in close relation to such a child's behavior. *The initial stage* (Mash, Eric J., Wolfe, 2004) would comprise the following:

Initially, treatment focuses on building rapport and teaching the child learning-readiness skills. Various procedures help the child feel comfortable being physically close to the therapist and to identify rewards to strengthen the child's social behavior, affection, and play. Imitating the child's use to toys may increase eye contact, touching, vocalizations directed toward the therapist. Prompting the child to engage in play with a preferred toy may decrease social avoidance. (Mash, Eric J., Wolfe 2004, 306)

Here basic behavioral treatment is necessary, as we have previously noted, because of the lack of "social responsiveness."⁴⁰ Including the therapist in a possible *establishing an interactional process with the child* is by all means semiotically relevant. In terms of establishing actantial relations in this sense (between parents and children), I shall call the therapist an *active subject and/ or a knowable subject*, who, in terms of the transformability of the semiotic process itself towards a manifestation status, may procedurally change its shape. In such a fashion, the epistemological grounds of a semiotics of passions can render the process possible and applicable. (A. J. Greimas and Fontanille, 1993)

³⁹ In this case, as can be noticed, due to the child's impairments, an interactional process shall be achieved through the therapist. We insist on this scheme because of the participants in such a process: this would finally make the process semiotically possible.

⁴⁰ See:(Mash, Eric J., Wolfe, 2004)

Instancing such an action, in this specific case performed by the therapist, can provide for establishing a *communicational process* with the child. The mediating of the *active subject* (which in other semiotic context may be of an imagined nature) enables such a process. If such a process is already started (preferably in an early age of the child), not only psychologically, but also semiotically, one can speak of the manifestation status applied. Logically, the next question is how to make such passionate actions or activities of the child identifiable, so as to start *the aspectualization process of his interests as a starting point for their transformability into a state of feelings*.

Towards a conclusion: a developmental passionate taxonomy within a child's behavior

Instead of instancing a child's typical behavior, which certainly should be in accordance to his biological age, one has to think of his/her atypical and /or stereotypical behavior. Certain movements, wishes and desires, ways of requesting and complaining, become repetitive and pervasive for such children. This can be explained by the fact of their ability to compensate actions with *other actions which normally they would wish to perform*. If certain actions of such children are repetitive, it means they can be substitutable: this can definitely justify the syntagmatic axis in terms of the application method. The problem of the applicability of the semiotic method here then appears within the nature of compensating for such a disability (or such determined atypical and/or stereotypical) behavior of the child. This foreseen difficulty in various analyzed social contexts represents, among other issues, the skeptical component in this sense of the word. This definitely arguments the epistemological ground of such a method. [See: (A. J. Greimas and Fontanille, 1993) and (Goldman, 1986)]

For instance, instead of performing a simple game, an imaginative game (which as we said is characteristic within a certain developmental stage of the child), he/she compensates by another *similar interest and /or ability*, or an ability which might have another nature (such as, physical capabilities which might overcome the appropriate biological age of the child). In applying a semiotic style in such a fashion, one should bear in mind as well the unequivocal messages mentioned or, otherwise stated: the tensitivity component needs certain actions done or performed by the *active subject*, so as to reach the aspectualization possibility, instanced in Greimas and Fotanille (1993) by their *modality in action*. In terms of such a procedural

transformability (as we stated gradually, instead of instantly), one should exemplify the semiotic squares.⁴¹

Initially, one should be aware of the fact, that the *interpersonal communication process* between a parent and a child with ASD is either incomplete, partial, or from time to time, even impossible. Otherwise, based on the parents' experience, one should *learn* some of such children's requests and complaints. In such a case, a *lack of meaning* is what occurs; simply because of the fact that a *mutual process of acquisition should occur: either by the side of the child or of the parent*. One should conclude then, that the relation between the child and the parent represents a disjunction. The inclusion of the therapist, as we said, attempts an establishing of a communication process between the two. He or she is therefore in a relation of conjunction with the child. Out of such a situation, the first concept the parent faces, is despair. It should be understandable that the concept of "despair" as a possible passionate taxonomy in this sense of the word can be further replaced or substituted by other concepts (in case one talks of the syntagmatic axis), emerging thus as a consequence of the tensitivity occurring in the meantime (which is constantly moveable, because of the existence of the *subject of doing*).

If such a situation represents a lack of meaning at the level of the deep structure, an action must be undertaken by the *active subject*. This is so for the following reasons: first, treating a child with autism, in terms of the initial stages, is not a process which can offer an immediate result, but a process that must undergo difficult states of acquiring basic knowledge and habits by the child. It is therefore justified to state that *the signification process in this respect should be comprehended in a gradual and speculative basis*. A semiotician should at this instance exemplify one (or some) of the therapist's actions, so as to prove the taxonomic notions, which finally contain determined and meaningful feelings as a result. Prior to our exemplifying such special "techniques" by the side of the therapist, one should notice that parents' despair and anxiety—or helplessness—starts undergoing a process of a changeability.

For instance, developing *relational attitudes and feelings about other people*, is always a good practice on the part of the therapist. This would include attempting to hand toys to one another, repetitively, to the extent that the child gets accustomed to the action performed. This process, naturally, doesn't look as simple as described. First, it is advisable that two communicators exist: one of which should be *silent*. The silent

⁴¹ The first mentioned process here obviously belongs to the informational processing, whereas the other, in accordance with the semiotics of passions, the epistemological, therefore hypothetical status of issues.

communicator in this respect should semiotically represent *the active subject*, who definitely *pushes the child into action*. The other communicator (the first one, as a matter of fact), should speak to the child, such as “Give me the toy!” If the child, holding the toy in his hands, does not give the toy to the therapist, the silent communicator should push him. This action is repeated three times. In case the patient performs the action successfully, he or she should without doubt be rewarded.

As can be seen, the *modality notion* in such instances (where a child with an ASD syndrome is taken as an example) cannot occur instantly, in comparison to other semiotically covered social contexts. The results of meaningful units can be noticed at *various developmental stages of the child: therefore they cannot be permanent*. They are instead changeable. Instancing the aforementioned example, one can notice the inter-relational attitude within the child, such as: recognizing the participants in the game, the giving and taking process, and above all socializing, which is fundamental for such individuals. Semiotically speaking, all such stages (regarded as developmental and/or progressive in terms of such a child’s advancing), are regarded as meaningful. (For instance, the child recognizes the toy, the therapist, and can relate to them.) The process of semiosis in this sense of the word undergoes different phases of transformability which, being similar one to another cannot be intended as final in such a context. In such a fashion, one might instance a child’s cry might replace his or her wishing to request; or he or she may take a parent’s hand and move it somewhere, or towards a certain action; etc. These actions, as a matter of fact, for each such action, represent an already applied semiotic process for each such kind of passion, respectively. In conclusion, his/her passions, emerging from a modality in action, *assisted by the active subject*, are already disclosed: *want to play, want to walk, etc.* (but obviously expressed non-verbally, instead of verbally). The *impassioned subject* in this case the parent), having seen such a situation (in terms of his/her progressing in the developmental process) obtains other attitudes, which transform thus themselves into a *state of feelings*. This can be explained in the following way: first, a parent (now, *the impassionate subject*), starts understanding the child’s actions, - therefore the interactional process starts getting applied. Second, owing to the inadequate information processing, as we said earlier, another such an attitude respectfully gets performed by the parent. *He/she starts performing similar actions to the child’s one, thus enabling a communication between him/her.*

To conclude: Such a state of feelings (rendering different taxonomies in terms of understanding the child’s wishes, requests and complaints), remains within stages of the child’s development. Such kind of a process of semiosis *obtains meaningful units only at determined behavioral patterns, due to the fact they are permanently changeable.*

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