

The Coherent Narration in the Construction of a Movie – Specific Case – Feature Movie „Illegitimate”

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Abstract

The endeavor of this study starts from the depiction of the characteristics of a familial construction that shape the existence of certain people in a feature film. Besides the reality of a person and of his or her life story, there is a subtle influence of the family in which this person grew up and in which he or she was shaped. Along the construction of the film, the study brought to light the multi-faceted characters and how they could exist in the space built by the film. Furthermore, the study of the central themes of the family direct the action of the characters towards reparatory solutions of their life scenarios. The study is thus centered on realizing the coherent narration of the life story that is depicted in the Romanian long movie "Illegitimate".

Keywords: transgenerational, narrative coherence, film, character

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I. Introduction

Our life events determine, along our development in between the two bench marks, birth - death, an effort of understanding and organization which is coherent, but also a life story that represents each of us. This story is intertwined with the story of other members of our families in a balance of reciprocal determination and self-determination. "We are less free than we think we are. Because we are tied by personal, familial and transgenerational experiences, by our family secrets, by death, losses or unfinished mourning, by the yard that our ancestors left for us, and by the cannon ball that we have to carry after us due to the drama they lived or due to their reaction to this drama, due to their fragility, their anxieties, due to social influence and due to the unsaid, or even due to their lack of thinking with which they have burdened our shoulders, more often than not without being conscious about it" (Schutzenberger, D., 2015, p. 160).

The depiction in personal existence of the family influences makes any of us understand his or her choices, as a person, makes us build our own reality, live our own life and not that of our ancestors. But as people, we function as physical systems and we interact after certain laws. This interaction is in part visible - when we realistically go through in the space of our reality, but it is, in the same time, invisible, but perceptible when we do not see it in reality, but we feel, and mostly understand its consequences. In physics, this last part of the construction of our personal reality is postulated through the Einstein - Podolski - Rosen paradox, which sustains the idea that particles and their characteristics immersed in a spatial volume are and stay in contact no matter what how long the distance that separates them and no matter the time from their separation. In other words, what happens to one of them undoubtedly influences what happens with the other (Schutzenberger, D., 2015).

The quantic physics theory thus brings evidence of the experience of the familial influences upon us. Another theory, which comes from psychology this time, representing Moreno and Sheldrake, supports the influence of the ancestors upon us through the existence of the energy of morphogenetic ripples (Schutzenberger, Devroede, 2015).

In our morphogenetic field, there is energy stored which memorizes the imprints of the emotional or physical experiences of our ancestors and which activates in us certain conditions, to certain events. Thus we can explain the anniversary syndrome. It is hence possible to analyze how the significance and reality of a family is built starting from a present result

(from the point of view of the current family) and towards the existence and influence of the predecessors.

In the construction of a film, even if it is based on a real case, there is the possibility that the director, the art director and the team could catch the essence of the character, but also not to catch it as a whole, if the motivations of the character in its own construction are not fully understood. In order to build a character, a part of the research is hence done by the actors, research that reveals the dimensions of the character with the role of its understanding in order to have a depiction of it that is as authentic as possible in the acting. Even so, there are chances that certain dimensions of the character will not be concretely understood as subtle messages in the end. The construction of each personality in itself belongs to the field of psychology.

Which is precisely what started my collaboration with the team that created the Romanian feature film "Illegitimate". The movie brings our decisions as humans in different life contexts to the forefront and the sight is thrown not over the answers that are offered, but over the fact that the answers can be true or not, and also over whom they are directed for. The central themes of the family in the movie are abandonment - loss, weakness - power and in this context we have the problematic of legitimacy, correctness, life and death, decision, assuming the consequences of our actions, the construction of the proper sense brought in the film's discourse.

Starting from building a world that raises questions without necessarily including the answers, the movie allows each of us to have an inner survey into finding the meaning and our own answers. Furthermore, the film attracts the attention upon what is happening inside a family and how fragile its balance can be. "The unsaid things, the family secrets, the distorted, mystified, falsified, confused, problematic identity fragments; all these can be the ineffable underlay of serious somatic illnesses, that are invalidating, and have a somber prognostic..." (Benescu, M., 2010, p. 11).

In creating the investigative endeavor of the possibility of the existence of such a family and of the issues brought up in the movie, we have also started from what narrative psychology sustains, i.e. that we exist, that we live through the creation and the change of our narrations. Narration is defined as an organized interpretation of the sequences of events lived by each one of us. One of the aspects that offer the possibility to meet the person, but also makes the psychotherapy intervention possible is the narrative coherence, which

is our way of giving the experience a meaning. Our life story brings experiences into the conscious plan. In each moment in time, the meaning of things such as the connotation of the inner self is a result of our subjective implication in the world. Personal narrations mediate this implication and express the way in which the events influence the way we feel, the way we choose and the way we give meaning to the experience.

Thus, in narrative psychology, the emphasis falls upon the constitution of the identity and of the inner self in the shape of the story. Our experiences along life need an understanding and organization in order for them to form a personal conception about the world and about life, but also about our own being. This understanding and construction of the meaning reclaims understanding, reflection and interpretation from each of us. Our stories are temporally immersed and this signifies a direction of our evolution or of our personal development, but they also represent coherence, as they explain for the narrator, and also for any listener, exactly how the narrator became the person he or she is today.

This endeavor of personal construction is set out by the profound understanding of what is happening to us by the attribution of meaning - in which way do the fortuities in my life explain my next steps in a larger context, in which way does my experience of today give me as a human a meaning I will use in the future (to understand why this happened and how this fortuity influences my future). Hence, in the movie's narration, the characters get substance and entwine coherently in the depicted family and in their own choices and actions, which constitute together the action of the movie. The study thus brings to light every character separately, the central themes of the family, the transgenerational messages, the possibilities of existence of such issues as the ones depicted in the movie, as well as their options and solutions.

"We must be conscious that when we take upon a theme that can be individual, it is synchronized with a familial one and with another, more profoundly transgenerational..." (Mitrofan & Stoica, 2005, p. 96). Starting precisely from this point with the analysis of the characters, the study also brings their family to light, as well as the way in which the central themes of this family influence the movie's discourse.

II. Objectives

1. The depiction of the narrative themes of the family, which brings to the construction of characters as close to reality as possible.
2. The emphasis of the "chance symptoms"

of maturing/ healing of the characters and family from the movie.

III. Method

The method used in the construction of the characters in the movie and of the film's central family is the character's interview (for the central characters of the movie), together with the analysis of the interview, the life scenarios of the actors that are activated in the acting of the characters, the rewriting of the character construction pieces (where needed) and the analysis and clarification of the transgenerational messages which could drift towards the existence of such problematics that the movie takes upon.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. The existence of the central theme in the family determines the construction of the characters that participate and of their life scenarios.

Hypothesis 2. The apparition of the symptoms in the family represents a possibility of healing for the family.

Observation: Being a feature movie, this study presents only a few of the characters and a small part of the central themes and only for the main family in the movie.

IV. Results:

Hypothesis I

The central theme of the family is the nucleus around which the metaphor events of this family's history gravitates. (Godeanu, Godeanu, coord. Mitrofan, 2009)

The central themes of the family in the movie are:

- abandonment - loss vs dependency,
- weakness - strength.

The abandonment - loss theme is brought to light by the family's father who lives in a monastery, being abandoned by his parents. In the families with such a scenario as their central theme, the abandonment receives the meaning of family preservation, and the descendants receive the life story in which such a theme generates behaviors of dependence and control.

The weakness - power theme generally refers to the ratio of power in the family, and it also refers to control, submission, emotional dependence, definitive choices, status and authority.

The family depicted in the movie is a family made up of the father and the four children, all of an adult age. The mother has died beforehand, little before the start of the movie's action. The abandonment theme is thus depicted first from the perspective of the

father as an abandoned child, and also from the perspective of the mother who, through her disappearance abandons her husband and her family to this world. For this family, the acceptance of the loss of an important member of the family, the integration of the emotions that come with the loss would represent their return towards the present of their life, and thus a restructuring of the relations and the responsibilities of each for their own life. (Stoica, 2012).

But the movie does not represent the family from this perspective, but from one of suffering that is not vocalized concretely, of a mourning that has not been fully finished. In the power ratio, the father holds absolute control, and this brings the division of the family - the eldest brother leaves home and the family's relations are disturbed - the brothers don't know anything about each other because they don't have a profound relationship. Raised in a monastery, with a strong male model, the father assumes as behavioral components masculinity, control, authority, thus not leaving place to live it to the fullest - thus building in his family several types of abandonment. The eldest son leaves home after a scandal.

The second born, a daughter, chooses a job that borders death (flight) and in this manner she can leave anytime, or at least she can distance herself enough (at a symbolic level) and can seriously reflect upon her own death and the outing of this scene of life. The other two born of the family - the twins - live in incest, and though this, they break the control of their father and abandon in a symbolic plan the family through their leave in the sphere of the illegitimacy of their love. One of the themes that derives from the issue of abandonment is in this family - the identity theme. For the family's father, who was raised without parents, this theme is tied to their absence, to the impossibility of finding certain information tied to their space to become as a person, to his appearance on this world, or information related to his genetic heritage.

Thus, this character has an unclear identity and is confused by having the only model as one of the priests he was more attached to in the space of the monastery in which he grows. At the adult age he gives a meaning to his identity (claimed identity) through the choice of his job - gynecologist, bringing in a symbolic plan children into their families. Another feature of his identity built space is given by the fact that, being a gynecologist he does not perform abortions and he does not agree with them, but even discourages his colleagues who do this, and through this he saves in a symbolic plan the babies from their disappearance through abortion. This built scenario brings to the

repairing of his own life scenario tied to the theme of his own abandonment (in the symbolic plan he does not allow the abandonment of other children).

The dare looking at the confirmation of identity brings the rejected identity theme mirrored in this family through - the rejection of family support by the eldest, the hideout in loneliness of the second born and it all culminates with the appearance of a pregnancy in an incestuous relationship as the one the twins have. This final aspect attracts by itself another big theme of the movie - the one of personal choices and of their correctness and introduces the issue of the controversial identity (even the movie's characters put to question and reflect upon the valences of love).

We can determine thus an interconnectivity of the events tied to the identity space - the father who saves the children from abortion is put in the posture of understanding that this decision is not "simple" nor "correct" - life puts him in a context tied to his children who reclaim the existence of an abortion, but in such way, if he were to pick the ending, he steps over his principle that governed him his whole life, which is to not make abortions.

This family with its disturbed identity space reclaims a definition and a redefinition of the space - in the end all the four children of the family have difficulty in remaining in the family's space (with an identity membership) and in an adequate relationship for their age, looking for a viable partner with whom they can build a space that does not fuel the fight for power and that does not bestir disquietude by waking up certain parts forbidden by them (Hendrix, 2008).

Hypothesis 2

Bertalanffy (1968) launched the idea according to which a system is more than just the sum of its components, in other words, applied to the family, it is more than the sum of its composing members (Berthelanffy, 1968). This means that what matters in the approach of a family is also the interaction between its members, which is realized according to certain rules, having certain functions and looking to maintain a certain balance inside it. (Mitrofan & Vasile, 2001). Looking at the family communication this way, from its symptomatology we understand why things are possible exactly in this manner, and to what kind of solution (to heal the family) this could lead to.

A few of Bateson's ideas are relevant for the construction of the characters (Konya & Konya, 2012)

- Schismogenesis - in human relations, there are ideas or behaviors that lead to conflict. Two basic patterns are grasped by Bateson - symmetrical

interactions - "you are annoyed (the father), I become even more annoyed (the eldest son)" and complementary interactions - "I criticize you (the father), you justify yourself (the incestuous brothers)". In the family from this movie, these interactions appear constantly, but are not always presented in this manner. They are thought about in a way to get us to this result or only the consequences of these discussions are depicted in this way.

- Circular causality - A causes an effect over B and B causes an effect over A (he, the eldest brother retreats, and they, the other brothers are saddened and their sadness makes him retreat even more).

- The homeostasis of the system - familial systems function in states of balance. This is in relation with the feedback received - if it was negative, the system will do everything in its power to modify the results or the effects so that the feedback becomes positive (the actions of the four children of the family are, most of them, oriented towards finding solutions for the authority unjustly manifested by the father). If the feedback is positive, the system will do in such way that the effects and behaviors that lead to this are strengthened (the research of positive solutions is defined for each character separately).

- Biological metaphor - autonomy. The family from the movie reproduces several patterns out of loyalty towards the parental models. For example, the absence of the grandparents – the paternal grandparents are missing, and in the father's plan, this absence can be found through his absence in his own family, which is reproduced at such a level that it is impossible for him to develop warm relations from an authority and power position. Also, he is hiding himself in his work. The absence of the grandparents can also be found at the level of the next generation through the ambiguity of the roles detained – the twins are brothers, but also the parents of their child and thus the child does not have the parents he or she should socially have.

The theme of the absence of parents is resumed from generation to generation culminating with the last one in which the roles lose their meaning and importance socially determined. Autonomy refers to the fact that live systems answer to the external disturbances in accordance to their interior structure. In the family, we have described the methods of reaction - the answer is silence, leaving, retreating or hiding in a "secret" world.

The solutions in contouring the characters came from a glance over the function of the symptom(s) that appeared in this family and the communication inside it. "The symptomatology

behavior can be conceptualized as a digital or analogue communication". (Madanes, 2011, p. 21). A simple way to describe a behavior is to look at it as being what it is - this would be a digital description. Another one, the analogue, would be to start from the premises that any activity has more than a single referent. Starting from here, "the behavior is always communication on several levels". (Madanes, 2011, p. 21).

The key characters of the movie are built through approaching the familial issues at one specific point:

- The example of the incestuous twins. The expression "take someone with you" refers to the attention that the members of a family concentrate towards one single member of the family (the twins, in our case). The symptom manifests itself in this case as an accident - to have a child together, something that cannot be admitted in public, something that is conceived to become the family's secret. This is a metaphor event - it offers the family the chance to start a change, to heal all the wounds left open from several generations back. (Godeanu, Godeanu, coord. Mitrofan, 2009).

In this family, the father had always made the decisions and had manifested his authority, and now, through this pregnancy the two brothers even out the balance of power - they chose what to do with their life. Power can have a negative or a positive role depending on how it is used (e.g. if used to offer help it is considered positive). Narrative therapy for families, emits the hypothesis that family members help each other in unfortunate manners: instead of solving a problem, they shift their attention from it, blocking its solving and creating a new problem (Madanes, 2011). E.g. the appearance of a problem to one of the children focalizes the parent's attention to him or her little ones, postponing thus the solving of their own problem and giving a reason to bear down his or her own difficulties (Madanes, 2011). In the case of the movie the power held by the father has, through its manifestations, negative connotations.

- Another example of reestablishing the power balance is the authoritative husband (the father of this family). He decides for his wife to stay at home, thus breaking her university career, she gets ill and through this, his attention will be focalized on the illness, treatment, annealing, and so she will detain the power. The life of the husband is thus organized around the symptomatology of his wife. (I mention that at the moment of the action actually happening, the wife was already deceased - the construction of this story was realized for the understanding and construction

of the other characters, while she does not explicitly appear in the movie).

V. Conclusion

From the analysis of several examples from the construction of the characters we can find the coherence of speech of the family and of the characters built in the movie. Punctuating these narrative construction elements underlines the way in which this work was realized and offers feedback referring to the unfolding and the finalization of the creation process of a life scenario that is possible for each character separately, but it also emphasizes the narrative coherence in the construction of the film's story.

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