

# The Structure of Hysteria in Madame Bovary: The (Deviation) of Femininity

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**Abstract**

The present article is part of the Freudian understanding on the hysteria and causes psychoanalytic discussion about the literary work written by Gustave Flaubert, whose protagonist is Madame Bovary. It is a work that brings up several questions about hysteria and femininity that can be understood in the light of Psychoanalysis. To elucidate this understanding, it starts from the theory of Freud and contemporary authors to better understand the relation of hysteria and the deviation/path of femininity. This work caused a great impact at the time it was written, because it brought many questions related to the role of woman in the 19th century and to female desires. As result many female readers identified themselves with the character. It is clearly a timeless work, as well as the definitions of unconscious and hysteria, which refer to the enigma of femininity and hysteria.

**Keywords:** Woman, Freud, Hysteria, Femininity and Deviation.

**1. Introduction**

This article focuses on hysteria and discusses the deviation of femininity, and has as complement the analysis of the book Madame Bovary and her relationship with psychoanalysis studies. We conducted a theoretical bibliographic research, through the studies that started in the psychoanalysis to address the issue, developed from the material produced and published in books and scientific articles from 1996 to 2014 and building on the descriptors Hysteria, Femininity and deviation.

Hysteria is present in the culture of mankind for many centuries and has been following the changes that have occurred in the society. Because of these changes, the interpretations of hysteria also changed over time. These are given in accordance with the culture, with the time and the current values throughout history. However, think about the changes that occurred in their treatment and diagnosis at different historical moments allows reflection on the values that surround this disease and still feminine character assigned to it, making it possible to reflect on the role of women in this society and counting through its history, how is the vision of the subject and the woman at different times (Roudinesco, 1998) Since the beginning of psychoanalysis, Freud always sought to understand the hysteria and femininity. In the beginning of his work, he constantly faced this thematic, in which he searches, from clinical observations and their theories, to elucidate the concept of hysteria and outline an answer to this enigma. The possibilities to tread a path and to emerge in a new insight into this phenomenon arise from the female body suffering transposition in the form of the language is presented by hysterical treated by Freud (Freud, 1888/1996).

However, Freud connects the definition of activity and passivity to the female character thought about Bovary, which carries with it the concept of being hysterical and which relegates the different ways that lead to evasion of femininity.

Thus, making a relationship between femininity and hysteria, the book Madame Bovary gives visibility for discussion, and in view of the social representatives about the idea of being a female and psychoanalytic ideas on this subject, thought is led to new perspectives. Thus, new possibilities of thinking about this issue and how Flaubert has located Bovary in his text leading to think the operation of hysteria can take the woman not to be a dimension of the female (Scotti, 2003).

It has the purpose of, through the works of Freud, understand the hysteria and how his psychoanalytic history has evolved through the ages. Seeking to understand what femininity is and what Freud wanted to express with "what does a woman want?" Based on the literary work of Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary was written in 1856. You can mark a mismatch with femininity, since the work of Flaubert shows that hysteria is not synonymous with femininity.

## 2. From Hysteria to Femininity

Neuroses in the Middle Ages played a very significant role in the history of civilization, because hysteria was linked to diseases of the female reproductive system. That means, to society of that time, as well as for art of medicine, hysterical women were considered as a case unworthy of clinical observation. Just since the Charcot and the Salpêtrière school a new insight into the disease started, no longer it is seen as a simulation and exaggeration (Freud, 1888/1996).

It shows that manifestations of hysterical style are human culture from Greece, but it has undergone several interpretations depending on the historical moment of society. In the same way its characteristic symptoms were suffering different interpretations. Thinking of hysteria at different times, is thinking of the changes the diagnostics have passed, as well as the treatment given in accordance with the culture and organization of current society (Avila; Earth, 2010).

The name "hysteria" comes from the early days of medicine and resulting prejudice, surpassed only today, which links neuroses to diseases of the female reproductive system. In the Middle Ages neuroses played a significant role in the history of civilization; appeared in the form of epidemics as a result of psychic contagion, and were the root of what was factual in the history of possession and witchcraft. Some documents of that time prove that his symptoms did not undergo modification to the present day. An appropriate approach and a better understanding of the disease only began with the work of Charcot and the Salpêtrière school, Until that time, the hysteria had been the *bête noire* of medicine. Hysterical poor, which in previous centuries had been thrown into the fire or exorcised in recent times and clarified, They were subject to ridicule curse; his condition was considered unworthy of clinical observation, like simulation and exaggeration (Freud, 1888/1996, p .29).

In human history, the first "phase" of hysteria causes a reflection on the role of women in society, being exercised strictly linked to reproduction and child care. This conception continued for centuries and was set up by brutality signs such as hysterectomy, the straitjackets, forced hospitalization and the belief that the woman who had no children would not be within the social standards being non-complying of their social tasks (Trillat, 1991).

On hysteria, Sigmund Freud (1888) benefited from the findings in studies produced by the French physician Jean-Martin Charcot (1888), which identified, through hypnosis, there is production of the characteristic syndrome, surfacing off the conscious memories. Charcot explained that the patient had a psychic trauma that must be located in his life story (Ferreira and Motta, 2014).

From this, Freud was able to compose his theory, stating that hysterical symptoms are suppressed affective motion, designed by the body through the hysterics and the origin of the disease is referred to traumatic childhood sexual experiences. According to Freud, hysterical symptoms has the function to hide the traumatic experience, which operates as an indelible mark on the constitution of the subject (Ferreira and Motta, 2014).

[...] Freud received for treatment Frau Emmy von N., whom decides to apply Breuer's technical research in hypnosis. Breuer had called her "cathartic" method (of *kátharsis* = purge), for what occurred during treatment was a "puragação" or a discharge from the affection that was originally connected to the traumatic experience. The role of hypnosis was the suggestion to refer the patient to their past, so that he himself found the traumatic fact, producing, as a result, the "ab-reaction", ie the release of the quota of affect (Garcia-Roza, 2009, p. 37- 38).

In the work on the psychic mechanism of hysterical phenomena: Preliminary Communication, Breuer (1893) it states that: "... the hysteric suffers mostly from reminiscences" (Freud and Breuer, 1893/1895, p.3), that means, if there is abreaction, certain memories renew the original affection and generate other reactions that would be converted into physical phenomena. However, it is the affection of charge corresponding to the representation that produces the symptom and not the content. Therefore, there is impossibility to discharged such affection, giving the hysterical conversion.

The hysterical phenomenon comes from the affection and not the representational conscious process, namely the representation that acted was drained into the unconscious, remaining unnoticed by the subject. In this way, the symptom appears to prevent movement to the desire, the memories have not lost their affection and they still vivid, becoming pathogenic and occupying an exceptional position as regards the wearing process. These injuries were not abreacted, or fully treated (Freud, 1893/1895).

Among the preliminary Communication (1893) and Studies on Hysteria (1895). Freud published The Defense Article neuropsychoses [...] the term "defense" only appears in the article in 1894 and that is where the problem is dealt with more extensively. Freud only had full access to the defense phenomenon when he abandoned the technique of hypnosis. Until then, a number of indications would suggest to you that there is something that you were forbidden by the very method employed, but that evidence alone would become evidence after the abandonment of this method. So the hypnotic procedure was, unbeknownst to him, the biggest obstacle to the phenomenon that will become a cornerstone of psychoanalytic theory: the defense (or, as he will later call, repression) (Garcia-Roza, 2009, p. 37).

Freud (1893/1895) states that everyone experiences pleasure and displeasure, of which a part of displeasure is always lost, and depending on their relationship with the world, it requires meaning. It can be placed in the field of neurosis as a pressurizing mechanism, which is not yet configured pathology, because pathology is configured in a way the person understood this experience and lived through it. In the case of hysterical, affection remains strangled and the memory of the experience is attached and isolated from consciousness.

Through the history of hysteria we saw that their symptoms have exaggerated features that, according to Roudiesco (1998), happen theatrically and in the form of symbolization of unconscious psychic conflicts, which are expressed through the paroxysmal bodily symptoms (seizures, convulsions epileptic appearance) or durable (paralysis, contractures, blindness) that is unrelated to the organic part of which the subject is not clear.

[..] Freud came to the conclusion that all ideas were distressing nature, capable of awakening of self-censorship ashamed of emotions and psychic pain. "From all this, it came as automatically defense idea" (Garcia-Roza 2009 cited Freud, p. 38). The defense thus appears as a form of censorship by the patient's ego; resistance was the outward sign of this defense. The mechanism by which the affection of load is connected to the idea (or set of ideas) and transformed into somatic symptoms is called by Freud conversion. In fact, the terms "defense" and "repression" are not synonymous. [...] "Defense" is a broader term that refers, in its first sense, the mechanism by which the ego protects itself from an unpleasant and threatening representation. Conversion is thus the specific defense mode of hysteria.

It is clear that in the case of Dora (1905), of great importance, that was reported in "Analysis Fragment of a Case of Hysteria" - in which Freud describes that it has all the characteristics of a *petite Hysterie* (Little hysterical): migraines, nervous coughs, hoarseness, and *beat taedium vitae* (boredom of life) (Ferreira; Motta, 2014).

Freud (1893/1895) explains this reason in two ways. In one, the subject is in a particular state of mental dissociation that is described as "hypnoid" and on the other, the defense appears as a form of censorship by the ego which considered the experience as incompatible with itself and therefore, it should be folded and kept out of consciousness. For him, the scene only becomes traumatic when evoked by the repetition of a similar scene, which happens when content is evoked by some of the unbearable representations that were repressed, resulting in the emergence of somatic symptoms. If the affection is discharged or "abreacted" the force that then remained stops acting and the symptom disappears.

Hysterical manifestations today may be different than hysteria produced in the 19th century. However, hysteria is a psychopathology which brings psychological distress and can be understood by the analytical process. The International Classification of Diseases version number ten of the World Health Organization, was inserted in conversion and dissociative disorders (Caetano, 1993).

For Bellemin-Noel (1978), the realization of an unconscious desire may be through literature. For him, such an object is within us, but not as a weird body but as part of the ego. This may be the effect of identification. In this way, the literature from Don Quixote to Madame Bovary is full of readers who identify with the heroes and attach to the ideal of resemble them. There are other literature and films that incite sexuality as fifty shades of gray.

(...) all dreams are liable to be "superinterpretados" and also all genuinely creative texts are the product of more than one subject, and more than a single impulse in the poet's mind, and are subject to more than one interpretation. As I wrote, I tried to interpret only the deepest layer of the psychic impulses of the creative writer (Freud, 1900/1996, p.292).

Hysteria remains a common and frequent phenomenon today. Therefore, there is the intention to make use of psychoanalytic knowledge about the hysteria in the perception of a literary work that is given, among other things, the topic of today. Madame Bovary was a character created in the 19th century by Gustave Flaubert, but that brings issues belonging to female and their movements which can be found, even today (Nobre, 2012).

It is the expression that leads psychoanalysts to immerse over the literary texts and that's how we understand one of the great imaginary trainers texts called Madame Bovary. Do not give an individual analysis of the character as if it were a patient, or applied psychoanalysis. What is sought in this process is to give visibility to the demands that show the condition of hysteria and its relationship with the concept of women described in Freud's work. In this sense (...) "all genuinely creative texts are the product of more than one subject, and more than a single impulse in the poet's mind, and are subject to more than one interpretation. As I wrote, I tried to interpret only the deepest layer of the psychic impulses of the creative writer "(Freud, 1900/1996, p. 292).

### **3. About Femininity: From Flaubert To Freud**

Ema Bovary or Madame Bovary is the character in the novel written by "Gustave Flaubert, which took five years to compose it. Its author sought, obsessively, as always, the perfect shape, the right word. Nights spent looking for an adjective, weeks after a sentence "(Noble, 2012, p. 12). He succeeded in its realism and this caused a scandal at the time. His work with this realistic aspect, explains the cultural

reality of the time in which he lived and can contribute to the understanding of hysteria mismatch with femininity, through the dreams and desires of the women who become delirious.

According to Nobre (2012), Madame Bovary presented herself as hysterical woman, who seeks in men a kind of wisdom that could give her an answer to the question: "What is it to be a woman?" The publication of the novel was held during the movement where The European Society of the 19th century was in a conservative, sexist and Parisian traditionalist period. This led to the identification of many readers and the novel became another way of femininity constitution, that is, the plot out of a standard, a role imposed by society.

Freud (1929-1930) lectures on the "*malaise in civilization*" on the issue of repression of desire by the institution of civilization. According to him, there is a force that is culture and civilization, responsible for the deprivation of the principle of the individual pleasure, to the extent that their activity will ordering and ordinary life making it possible. In this way, the existence of civilization as has implied a repression of individual desires that aims at the common good where everyone should behave according to the rules and laws laid down by society.

(...) the word "civilization" describes the full sum of the achievements and regulations that distinguish our lives of our animal ancestors, and they serve two intentions, namely to protect men against nature and to adjust their mutual relationships. The existence of civilization implies repression of individual desires (Freud, 1930/1996, p.96).

To expose the bourgeois customs and follow the conveniences of the time the author begins the story of Madame Bovary putting the lives of Charles, the future husband of the protagonist at the beginning. The main character only comes later after she marries him and it is only after marriage that the reader becomes aware of this woman. Important point to illustrate that a woman, at the point of view of a man, only exists after she is married. "It is only after marriage Emma becomes the main character in his own story." (Kehl, 1998, p.141).

For her, marriage was a way to experience all the adventures and desires which she dreamed of wandering in the desire to have another life and be happy through marriage. That's according to Freudian theory, the psychic destiny of hysterical belongs to whom recognizes the phallic position, since it is not revealed, for if discovered, falls from the realm of desire and is shattered causing her to look elsewhere to occupy this position (Kehl, 1998).

Bovary had the hope that somehow could get the phallic compensation. That would be a guarantee of being a woman and an outlet for femininity, because the answer to the hysterical question of who I am, it would be: I am the wife of "so". So here comes Charles in the life of Emma, who makes a bet to take its being by a male submission, the object for the Other (Scotti, 2003).

According to Emma, man had every chance to do what he wanted: he was free, could experience all the pleasures of life. According to Freud (1933/1932), the generation of a son means to the woman the satisfaction of an old female desire to have a penis. The protagonist shows his dissatisfaction was born in the female condition, a condition which makes her suffer the limitations that society imposes.

Thus, considering the bourgeois culture of the time in which the novel is inserted, marriage and motherhood were the only achievements. You can understand that this fate accorded to women of the nineteenth century is the result of a speech made - especially in European and American cultures - in the eighteenth century, on the differentiation between men and women (Nobre, 2012, p. 65).

However, what drives the desire to Emma Bovary is to be connected to a position that makes her the object of desire for the other. This is what drives her, which gives meaning to your life. However, it slips through her hands, she misses it and because of this lack, her relationship with Charles wither. One can not say that he was not a good husband, he was kind, considerate, the covering of pampering, but he was a very ordinary man, even remotely resembled the characters of the novels she had. Such readings caused him an ID and a shift in significant chain when it passes the other desired to relate significant (Scotti 2003).

Emma shows her dissatisfaction as an object and tries to show desiring to get out of this position and sought other partners to be the surrogate figure. The phallus that Charles could not be or represent so far in order to find their imaginary constructions. But the more she approached, the more he moves away from her, as it is in your being that housed what you were looking attest through the other in which projected their desires satisfaction possibilities. In the cultural context in question, it seemed that the fate of the woman was the submission to a male figure, phallic, seeking thereby to fill that void that was missing (Nobre, 2012).

That is why she sought the 'falo' incessantly on her husband and lovers she had come to have, and not impersonate her husband, came to hate life itself, and even herself, causing her depression. According to Mayer (1989) hysterical woman could not overcome satisfactorily his Oedipus complex and, therefore, could not light femininity, and was set in the phallic stage. Consider the throwback Bovary today:

(...) every woman in transition to modernity would be a bovarista, committed by the imaginary via in "becoming another" and at the same time, captured by a position in the symbolic plot of complete dependence on the man I could wish it. The phallic demand addressed to the people (always dissatisfied) the symptomatic forms of male impotence complaint make her a woman, attempts to maneuver the desire which made object and the subjective failure of this endeavor, they made the hysterical the most representative figure the relationship between the woman and femininity, the end of the last century (XIX century) until at least the first half of this century (XX) (Kehl, 1998, p.313).

Knowing that the male position and the position of women are constructed through the unconscious, and over the child development process, the position that the subject takes on the phallus is what will define his sexuality since the relations turns around a being and having the phallus "is to say that the figures of man and woman have been meticulously built according to the phallic logic" (Birman 1991, p.51). Thus, femininity implies the peculiarity of the subject and its specific choices, well away from the phallic posture. It is the correlate that marks the heterogeneous posture in which highlights the difference of a subject in relation to any Other.

The field of femininity corresponds to the psychic record that opposes the phallus. "While the subject speak search aggregation, universality and the domain of things and Others, the femininity that is on the agenda is a focused approach for the particular (...), no control over things" (Birman1946/2003, p. 10). Like this:

Place for the talk in sleep state would imply a loss to the subjectivity of experience contours and certainties. (...). We must recall that horror also affects men and women (...) which implies that femininity is not a psychic and erogenous record that refers immediately to the women of the universe, as opposed to men (...) the opposition between male and female, between men and women, would be made around the figure speak. Having or not having the phallus and its attributes would be the issue that divides the world of sex and gender. Or, being or not being the phallus would narcissistic original dimension of sexual difference (Birman, 1946/2003, p.11).

The guy who owns the phallus believed to be superior than to whom doesn't you own it. This makes the man feel superiority over women and, on the other hand, those who have it do not feel inferior, making them feel envy, Freud (1905) called *penisneid*. In this case, it can be said hypothetically that one of the ways found by Emma for being the speak of envy is be to bewed, so she could be recognized socially. When there is this recognition, it does not feel hysterical rechaçável nor inferiorizada, and, thus, desirable, placing on equal conditions with others (Nobre, 2012).

Why an adaptation to be the phallus could not solve the problem of female identity? Undoubtedly, such an event would be possible to consider, if this identification should stand regardless of the look of the others. Now this does not happen so, a woman is not the phallus is not to the extent that is trapped in a man's desire; it assumes that identity in the proportion of male perversion. To that extent only, the insignia of the "female" overlying an identification with the phallus that is, first, the signal fading recognition of desire (Pommier, 1987, p. 34).

Mayer (1989) adds that the hysterical uses as narcissistic compensation to the body libidinization awakening male desire. The body is used as a means of arousing male desire and keep it alive. In this way, women will seek ways to mask what it lacks, making an "investment in physical beauty, so as to make the whole body a phallus" (Kehl, 1998, p. 207), since the body is the material insignia, that means it is (in) meat Bovary drag your question about who is in fact, apart from a man, and a phallus. Since we do not have it, this covers their lack, marking a presence of absence.

So Nobre (2012) states that the confusion between hysteria and femininity is given by the fact that this would be a gift trace in the hysterical woman structure, however, is present in all women to some extent, because the way they "play" with the issue of not having the phallus attracts the gaze of the Other and puts the phallic exercise. states that: "The woman's narcissism takes its tragic dimension because it is to exist in the man's eyes an identity whose consistency is limited to this reflection. The female mystery, a lack embodied, equals the ancient mystery, the veil always released on the phallus" (Pommier, 1987, p. 34)

Thus, in the search for a return to the original pleasure that was taken from him by force of repression that took him to the scene, hysterical find satisfaction in another figure only, ie a phallus, it would be a representation of illusion completeness. However, this will not be another one for her full satisfaction since the hysterical demand an idealization.

Therefore, it is understood that Flaubert, brilliantly, giving life to a character that captures the female desire, but ends up committing excesses when in excessive way, delegates to man identificatory impossible question to answer, referring to what is a woman in whom it should turn to get the love of the Other. This character hopes to have a place for you, you want to take, where it can be recognized by its attributes, but this place is becoming unattainable for her. Thus, what we see is that the place given to this woman is only possible to be achieved by the aid of the Other, through the man who must take care of the female target. (Nobre, 2012)

#### 4. Final Considerations

From the route taken by psychoanalytic theory and Madame Bovary Book analysis it became clear that the hysteria, while a symptom of constitution, is an attempt to answer about your own being. But to answer that in a male logic point a disastrous dimension. In the case of Madame Bovary, her relations were evidenced by means of hysteria leading her to a male output.

The search of a hysterical woman to restrict, to be recognized through the male figure, leaves her without a female identity, and when she left her role of mother, wife, it leaves her in the role of an asexual, a passive person, which for Bovary was not enough, leading her to seek her speak in others which led to failures. Therefore, the failure of her quest is not only the inevitable failure of a hysterical, but also the confrontation with the order established by the society in which she lived.

What can be said is, your search was for a female identity, for something that was lacking, for someone who was in possession of a speak because the idea that something was missing was seen as something terrible, that Emma could not stand. Even if you have not been able to overcome the culturally stipulated limits for women, which did not accept the role imposed on them, Bovary was making repeatedly mistakes lover after lover, becoming superior in her own context, asserting her freedom and refusing to do that what makes no sense to her. However, femininity is as something empty and will only be incremented by a phallic attribute.

It is obvious that the hysterical woman is always dissatisfied, always in conflict to answer the question who she is, what pleases her and what can give her satisfaction. And in her search for satisfaction she did not found it in her marriage nor in her lovers. what did all the time go to the mismatch of femininity, swapping places with every man with whom was related keeping alive their desire for completeness and managing to represent what she has and what the Other does not have the phallus.

What can be concluded is that the constant search for the talk is going to the mismatch of femininity, placing it in a position of constant dissatisfaction never get to meet their expectations of what being a woman. And if put into play by way of man is a lethal way, because in the field of femininity, the psychic registration opposes the phallus. It is a focused approach to the particular and of not having control over things. Therefore, femininity has a very distant posture phallic posture. Femininity one is not necessary to speak to feel woman and have its completeness.

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