

Chapter 9

Preserved Traces of Destroyed Sign Hierarchy: From Genetic Parenting to Adoptive Parenting



Tatiana Valério and Nathaly M. Ferreira-Novae

Human lives develop and are organized semiotically, resulting in opposing interconnected processes that construct and destruct hierarchical sign systems.¹ Jaan Valsiner (Chap. 8 in this volume) argues that this destructive movement is inherent to the ambivalent nature of the human psyche and gives rise to new semiotic hierarchies whose flexibility is preadaptive to future conditions imagined in the development of human life trajectories.

In this chapter we propose to discuss and illustrate the construction-destruction semiosis of such hierarchical systems, emphasizing *preserved traces* of destroyed signs (valuation of genetic affiliation) in the emergence of the transition toward the decision to adopt and the creation of a new sign (adoptive filiation being feasible) which occur in the process. We will approach the trajectory of a heterosexual couple – from the rupture with their desire to get pregnant with their first biological child to their decision to adopt a child. The study of the process took place through the analysis of the symbolic resignifications made by the couple once facing (1) rupture with the desire to get pregnant after several unsuccessful attempts and (2) the perspective that adoption had become the only possibility for them to become parents.

According to Riley and Van Vleet (2012), in anthropological and sociological views, adoption as a cultural system reflects the various social structures and their specific forms of organization, including within private family frameworks. According to these authors, we can, through adoption, (a) gain important insight about the process individuals face and the norms they maintain or chal-

¹ On hierarchical sign systems, see Valsiner, 2007, 2014.

T. Valério (✉)

Instituto de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia de Pernambuco (IFPE),
Campus Belo Jardim, Belo Jardim, Brazil
e-mail: tatiana.valerio@belojardim.ifpe.edu.br

N. M. Ferreira-Novae (✉)

PPG de Psicologia Cognitiva, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (UFPE), Recife, Brazil

lenge in the construction of their families and (b) observe that families are not simply private entities or interpersonal relationships but are also culturally guided. We add that adoption is marked by beliefs that integrate the semiotic regulation system, which constructs personal meanings toward deciding, or not, to build a family through adoption. Throughout the human trajectories that shape this decision, dynamic sign systems undergo hierarchical reconfigurations at different levels, which allow resignifications regarding adoption and, consequently, accomplishing it.

To illustrate this phenomenon, we analyzed data gathered during the three interviews (I.1, I.2, and I.3). The interval from one interview to another was approximately 40 days, due to the availability of participants. I.1 addressed the couple's desire to have children, not considering adoption an option. I.2 and I.3 followed up addressing the couple's new outlook on adoption, once it became the only possibility for them to become parents. It was during the interview period that the interviewees faced the rupture with pregnancy, which was decisive for them to consider the decision to adopt. Meaning it was possible for us to access the destruction process of the sign hierarchy that regulated the couple toward the decision to become parents through pregnancy and the emergence of the transition process that led to the acceptance of adoption as a way to become parents in the future.

Our analysis of the case study draws on the quadratic unit proposed by Valsiner (2014, 2018). In it, it is understood that the human psyche is constantly negotiated through the process of constructing meanings, occurring in the present (semiotic border) and the intersection of two dualities (or infinities): future < > past/inner < > outer. From this perspective, from the rupture experienced by the couple in the attempt to get pregnant, we explored the tension and ambivalence in the coordination of the two infinities that promoted the change in point of view and the subsequent decision: to consider adoption as a way of becoming parents, although the decision had not yet been consolidated by the couple.

“We Do not Want to Adopt”: The Valuation of Pregnancy as a Regulating Sign of the Desire to Become Parents

Ryan (39) and Sarah (40), Brazilian, have been married for 5 years and do not have children but want to realize the dream of getting pregnant. Six months after getting married, they made several unsuccessful attempts to get pregnant naturally. After some time, they investigated what was preventing their success and underwent surgical interventions (he for varicocele and she for fallopian tube obstruction). However, still unable to become pregnant, they opted for artificial insemination, since it is the only assisted reproduction treatment allowed by the Roman Catholic Church – a religious community they participate in – leaving aside other methods that current technological advances in medicine could provide them with. At the time of I.1, they were contemplating a third artificial insemination attempt. At that

time, adoption was not yet a desired option by the couple, although the Church did present it as one of the possibilities for them to have children.

The couple shared affective fields² (Valsiner, 2007) which set the tone for their personal interpretation of human reproduction, regulated by a Christian point of view or rather the point of view of the Roman Catholic Church. Once the couple had to redefine how to get pregnant, they had to ask a religious leader, Father Tom, as representative of that cultural system, for guidance regarding assisted reproduction procedures. They sought not to contradict the teachings of that institution, indicating religiosity as an important regulator of their social practices, as shown in Excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1:

Ryan: Yeah... we researched, and... we had Father Tom's support. He did all the religious research, what could be done, what couldn't, how far it could go, how the procedure was... and we had friends who had done it, including people here in town that were successful.

The frustration of reproduction by sexual means did not prevent them from pursuing the pregnancy; it only mobilized the couple to investigate and opt for other strategies that would lead them toward it. Faced with infertility, they find in the priest's narrative two new possibilities to fulfill their desire to be parents: adoption and artificial insemination. The quote above shows that, after religious permission, directing which paths would be "correct," the success of their friends with artificial insemination appears as a sign that promotes Sarah and Ryan's choice for the method, increasing their hopes to get pregnant this way. They wanted to exhaust their chances of attempting a pregnancy before they considered adoption.

In this process, two aspects, at more abstract levels, are identified as the regulatory signs for the maintenance of the desire for pregnancy, which directed the couple to artificial insemination, instead of considering adoption:

- (a) *The value of the pregnancy for the couple*: Ryan states that "the ego... to beget a child, the fact that it came from you... it has its weight." And Sarah outlines her motivation for wanting to get pregnant and become a mother: "It's a matter of... fulfillment, because I'm a woman."
- (b) *The personal meaning of adoption as consolation prize*: the couple reports their intimate friends' adoption suggestion, as an immediate solution to infertility, since they know of the existent desire to become parents, as described below:

Excerpt 2:

Sarah: There are also people who advise us to adopt as if adoption were, you know, a consolation prize. And it is not just from this angle that we would like to adopt. 'Ah, you can't get pregnant, so... adopt.' [...] I understand their point of view, since they see our desire, and they want us to be happy, so they try and find a solution right away.

²“The notion of affective fields suggests that living situations which were attributed a specific feeling – for example, ‘adoption is a problem’ or ‘adoption is good’ – will regulate (semiotic regulation) future encounters between this person and the social environment” (Valério, 2013).

As we can see in Ryan's speech, the ability to beget a child is valued in the role of increasing his self-esteem, his "ego." For Sarah, such valorization is directly related to the feeling of "fulfillment," the completeness of "being a woman." Their speeches mark the desire to be a biological father and mother as a synthesis of the gender conceptions, the feminine and masculine internalized by individuals throughout their development.

Nascimento (2006) emphasizes that the experience of the impossibility of generating a child occurs differently for men and women due to the social roles that are culturally reserved for them. According to the author, "it is inevitably concluded that women tend to further define their identity through motherhood, while men question their potency and virility in infertility" (p. 15), it being common in married couples or in those in a stable relationship, a strong relation between the notions of fatherhood and masculinity. Thus, these meanings dialogue and strengthen each other, being a key part of the personal constructions of being man, for Ryan, and of being woman, for Sarah.

Under these conditions, such meanings are usually resistant and persistent, not unchangeable, however. Thus, although possible, the destruction of the semiotic set that structures them is more difficult to happen, even in the face of the infertility troubles experienced initially by the couple. This is shown in the continued search for pregnancy and the resistance toward adoption when sexual intercourse attempts are frustrated, thus moving toward the option of artificial insemination.

Consistent with this perspective, the way Sarah interpreted the social suggestions for adoption outlines a certain meaning that circulates in the collective culture and is also shared by the couple. The desire to exhaust all possibilities of getting pregnant, biologically, before choosing adoption, dialogues with the idea of valuing the biological child and not the adoptive child. Only when convinced that pregnancy is unattainable and, therefore, that it is impossible to give birth to a biological child, the choice to become adoptive parents comes into okay, as will be shown below.

"We Wanted to Get Pregnant, but Now Adoption Is in Our Plans": Impossible Pregnancy and the Continued Dream of Becoming Parents

In their life trajectories, people experience regularities and moments in which those are interrupted (Zittoun, 2012). To discover that a child cannot be generated biologically, for example, is a disruptive event in the life course of those who wish to become pregnant. Studies that investigate developmental processes of human life seek to identify specifically the ruptures in life trajectories (Zittoun, 2006) and, consequently, their resulting transitions, which require resignification and reorientation of that trajectory (Zittoun, 2012).

Ryan and Sarah, in I.2 and I.3, expose the anxieties and tensions present in the experience of the rupture and the initial process of transition that they now experience, culminating in considering adoption as a possibility to fulfill their desire to become parents. The transformation of the regulatory sign system of personal experiences, when it comes to the desire of having a child, was remarkable in the process. After the third attempt at artificial insemination failed, there were no more chances to become pregnant, and they understood that as a rupture in their lives. Until then the ruptures experienced had kept them looking for a pregnancy, and therefore were not perceived as such. Experienced ruptures require substantial, profound changes and adjustment processes between the individual and his/her environment (Zittoun, 2012). The way for Sarah and Ryan, then, would be to rethink what to do and how to do it to keep up with the goal of becoming parents in life. At no point during the rupture-transition experience did the couple consider the possibility of giving up being parents because of the inability to biologically generate a child. The possibilities listed by them, regulated by the Church, were artificial insemination and adoption.

As we have already discussed, the desire to be parents is socially constructed. In it are implied historical and cultural constructions of the identities of being a man and being a woman. For example, in Western society, motherhood is an established role for women, which often ends up being understood as natural. In the process of socialization of girls, their playtime is often filled with games with dolls that reproduce the role of a mother, thus defaulting motherhood to the feminine gender. The same is not usually true for boys.

These interactions that children establish in sociocultural spaces constitute subjectivities, which dialogue and readjust throughout their development, according to demands that arise in their paths. There is, therefore, a confluence of these ideas with the motivations presented by Sarah to get pregnant, as previously mentioned. In the interviewee's speech, the naturalization of motherhood merges with the idea of a fulfilled woman – an internalized cultural construction. Given the weight this carries within Sarah's self, as a unique being inside a given society, what to do before the impossibility of a pregnancy?

The frustration of the third artificial insemination, associated with the awareness of infertility, steered the couple toward adoption as the only possible alternative (which didn't go against the religious discourse) to coping with the rupture. That is, adoption would be the possibility that would allow for the maintenance and viability of the desire for parenthood. These conditions catalyzed dynamics for the resignification of such parenthood, through the necessary destruction of the hierarchical configuration of the signs that regulated personal meanings – both those related to pregnancy and those against adoption. Dialogically, a new semiotic organization was configured, able to bear new meanings, now pro-adoption, partially disengaging the desire for parenthood from pregnancy. This process, therefore, shows change but also permanence, in the coexistence of previous configurations with the most recent ones.

Below is a quotation that illustrates the tension experienced by Sarah and new way of dealing with adoption, exhibiting the process of emergence of a new sign about becoming a mother:

Excerpt 3:

Sarah (I.2): I think, of the two of us, I resisted a lot more, because of... fulfillment, for being a woman, and everything else... But from the moment I realized that he was totally open to adoption, I started opening up too. And my previous way of thinking: "I'm not adopting right now, I'm not going to think about adoption" because people would think: "Oh, she couldn't get pregnant, so she adopted" to... 'make up for it'... No, I changed my mind... I don't even want to know what people are or aren't thinking! [laughs] Let them think what they want I... What I want today, really, is... to find, embrace a child whom I will love with all my heart... [both get emotional].

It is the process of constructing meanings about lived experiences that reveal a flexibility that is crucial in the hierarchy of signs for an effective preadaptation of the imagined conditions of the future – in the case of Ryan and Sarah, becoming parents. It is in the coordination of the two dualities (inner-outer/future-past) of the semiosis of construction-destruction that borders can be crossed and exploited, since it is a human act (Marsico, 2011). In this case, the exploitation of the “future infinity” (becoming parents) hails adoption as a possibility of parental relationship. Figure 9.1, proposed by Valsiner (Chap. 8 in this volume, p. 80), helps us understand

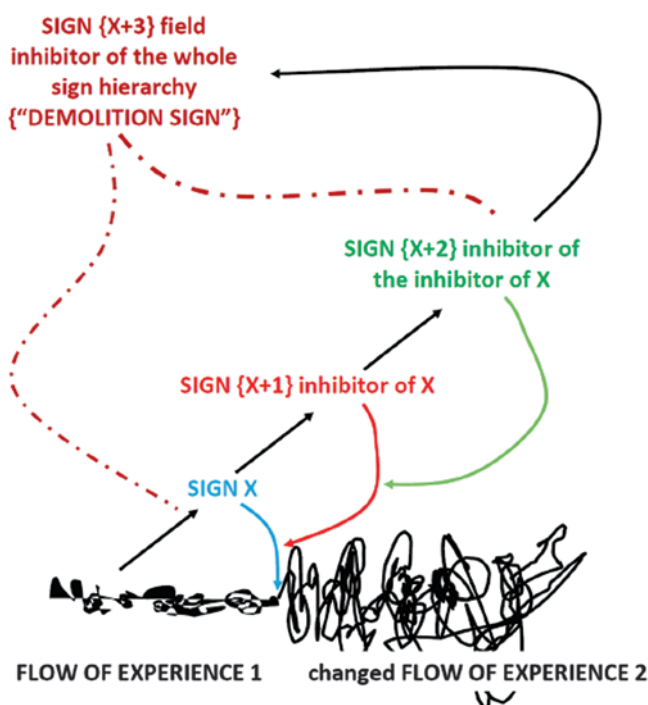


Fig. 9.1 The construction and destruction of dynamic sign hierarchies (Valsine, Chap. 8 in this volume, p. 80)

the destruction of the sign hierarchy that occurs in the dialogical relationship between the imagined future and past experiences.

For the couple, SIGN X, “becoming parents by getting pregnant naturally,” is inhibited by SIGN $\{X + 1\}$, “having physiological limitations – varicocele (him) and blocked tubes (her).” Thus, SIGN $\{X + 1\}$ generates resistance and inhibits the achievement of pregnancy (value directly linked to the idea of genetic parenting) for the couple. The couple undergoes the necessary surgical interventions, and the problem is not resolved. Thus, “not being able to conceive either naturally or through artificial insemination,” SIGN $\{X + 2\}$ acts as an inhibitor of SIGN $\{X + 1\}$ in this dynamic. Only after the third unsuccessful artificial insemination attempt does the couple accept the condition of their infertility. According to Valsiner’s proposal presented in Figure 9.1, SIGN $\{X + 3\}$, infertility, is the sign which destructs the hierarchy of SIGN X, SIGN $\{X + 1\}$, and SIGN $\{X + 2\}$, because it destroys, in semiotic terms, that which supported SIGN X – in the present case, the values, feelings, and meanings that valued genetic affiliation and the necessity of a pregnancy to become parents, as opposed to adoption as an authentic form of parenting. This process then gives rise to the construction of a new sign: “it is possible to become parents through adoption, and not only through the biological path” – SIGN Y.

In the semiotic process of building a new meaning on becoming parents, the other duality (inner-outer) is coordinated with that (future-past) which we referred to earlier. And it is in this coordination that ambivalence presents as inherently constitutive of the process, revealing that even when the couple turns to adoption, *preserved traces* of the destroyed sign – here represented by the value of genetic parenting – leave marks in the construction of the new SIGN Y (I can become a parent through adoption), as we shall see later.

From Excerpt 3 we gather that Ryan’s attitude of considering adoption as a form of parenting before Sarah seems to have acted as a sign that prompted her to also consider adopting as a possible way for them to become parents, especially now that pregnancy was a nonexistent possibility to fulfill her desire of being a mother. She claims that noticing his interest in finding a child available for adoption – even as they were waiting for the result of the second artificial insemination attempt – “kind of motivated me to seek adoption as well.”

For Ryan the feeling came over him in his parish, when he met a little boy, during the visit of a group of nuns who ran an orphanage in a neighboring city. This boy, about 18 months old, also called Ryan, lived with the nuns and was available for adoption. Ryan says that when he saw him, he imagined being the one to adopt him: “At the time, I... I kept to myself... Then I thought, well, I could adopt that child.” This event seems to have been a catalyst sign for Ryan, in that it created the necessary circumstances for something to happen – in this case, the change in his line of thought. Cabell and Valsiner (2014) point out that:

Semiotic catalyzers are a noninvasive intervention (whereas regulators are invasive). They are the conditional or contextual support within which something occurs. Any cause and effect, stimulus and response, or two associated phenomena work in so much as they have the proper conditions to do so. They provide directional flavoring and support, aid, and enablement, and without them certain meditational processes (i.e., certain semiotic regulators) cannot operate. (p. 12)

Thus, the catalyst sign for Ryan's personal dynamics seems to have been the experience he had with a child available for adoption, which made him think and consider the possibility the child being made his through adoption. During I.2, recalling this distal experience (Zittoun & Gillespie, 2014) allowed the couple to let memories, meanings, and feelings from that distant context to invade the immediate context, integrating the distal experience to the proximal experience. On the one hand, this integrative dynamic reveals the dialogicity of the human mind (Marková, 2003; Zittoun, 2013) occurring between the future-past infinities. On the other hand, this event, at the time, triggered in Ryan feelings and a process of thought and new constructions of meaning about the possibility of becoming a parent through adoption, revealing itself in the inner-outer infinities present in this dynamic. Thus, in the coordination of the dualities future (adoption) < > past (pregnancy) and inner (values connected to genetic filiation vs pro-adoption line of thought) < > outer (meanings for and against adoption existent in society), the couple opens up a semiotic passage which enables them to consider adoption as a future condition for becoming parents.

Faced with a choice that had not yet been considered, Sarah and Ryan initiate a movement to re-signify both the condition of not being able to biologically generate a child and the condition of becoming parents through adoption. In the face of successive ruptures and the realization of the impossibility of the desired pregnancy, they feel more strained, and in order to deal with that, they resort to symbolic resources (Zittoun, 2012) which assist in the distancing from the here and now and in the construction of new meanings:

Excerpt 4:

Ryan (I.2): But you also have got to understand God's project... Maybe it was not this way that we would have this child... Maybe... It was... It was difficult for me to accept that I would not be able to beget a child. [...] He (the priest) said that we... we should pay attention to what God was trying to do, and that, in fact, Sarah and I would adopt a child. And that, perhaps, now we would have understood, in our mind's eye, what God wanted from us... [...] In a way, he [the priest]... made me understand and have this desire for adoption... He led me to create, in my heart, the desire for adoption.

Excerpt 5:

Sarah (I.2): [...] I want to understand God's plans. [...] That's the way I think today. I no longer intend to pursue insemination. From today on I give up on the insemination thing. I will not seek more human help... My help will come from God's will... I will put my faith in that.

Two classes of symbolic resources (Zittoun, 2012), *institutional* (church) and *interpersonal relations* (priest), can clearly be identified in Excerpts 4. and 5, above. The meaning constructed over the infertility experience points them toward the other possibility recommended by the Church – adoption. Given the circumstances, it became possible for the couple to re-signify their desire to be parents, and adoption became a possibility for the couple. However, it is important to note that Sarah, even when she started considering adoption, never abandoned totally her desire for pregnancy. So she attributes the resolution of the impossible presented by reality to the

Divine, everything can be, if it is also His will. This fact denotes the persistence of preserved traces of destroyed signs coexisting with the emergence of other new signs, in the process of semiotic regulation that acts upon Sarah's desire to be a mother.

The two excerpts below illustrate what we call *preserved traces* of destroyed signs in the emergence of constructing a new meaning about being parents:

Excerpt 6:

Sarah (I.3): What made it change, [...] I began to [...] observe people... and see happiness, in both. In the adopting mother, who acted just *as if it were a biological child*, and also the joy of the child in treating her as a mother. So... all these thoughts started at the moment I began to observe... when things started to go wrong, you know, or could possibly go wrong... Because I started to observe before the 3rd insemination... I thought "if it works, okay, if it goes wrong"... I had to have... other views too... so I started to observe more. The issue of adoption became... closer to my heart. It became... more present in my life.

Excerpt 7:

Ryan (I.2): Today, I would love it the same way I would *if it were a child of my... a biological child*. [...] I used to think that I could love, but would have reservations... because of it not being biologically mine. He could have traits of the father, of the mother, you see?

In Excerpt 6, there is evidence of the ambivalent dynamics of the restructuring of the ideas about adoption. Observing the happiness of mothers with adoptive children, both being invested in the relationship, helped Sarah to reconsider this other way of exercising her motherhood, though strongly marked by the presence of values attributed to adoptive filiation as if it were second class or fictitious, as seen through the expression "as if it were a biological child," also identified in Excerpt 7, when mentioned by Ryan. Here, we identify the preserved traces of the destroyed sign, which is linked to biological or genetic parenthood.

This data corroborates with Modell (1997) when affirming that biological parenthood is viewed as superior to adoptive in Western society. According to the author, the first is perceived as real, while the latter is understood as fictitious. Valério and Lyra (2014) also found discourses based on biological factors to legitimize adoptive filiation. The ambivalence identified both by the authors and by us in this study signals the elimination of that which is "unfavorable" – adoptive parenthood – which is then replaced by factors linked to biological affiliation, exclusively (Valério & Lyra, 2014, p. 721).

In Ryan's case, having a child who does not have his genetic traits means also dealing with the fear of the unknown, because he does not know where the child comes from. It seems to be distressing or threatening that the child may have the traits of the biological father and mother, which initially motivated him to think that he would love an adoptive child with "reservations" (Excerpt 7). The changing of these thoughts was prompted, according to Ryan, by the impossibility of having a biological child.

Sarah, in her speech, also brought up that her thoughts about adoption also emerged from the possibility of failure in their last attempt to conceive – a biological dysfunction – as suggested, for example, by the expression "if it goes wrong"

(Excerpt 6). According to Schettini (2008, p.12), “for most people, the idea of adoption is based on the existence of a frustration of biological expectations. [...] Adoption therefore appears as a solution to biological or psychological failure.” Other studies (Levinzon, 2006; Schettini Filho, 1998) also point to infertility as the main motivation for adoptive parenting, representing a rupture in the life trajectory of people who wish to have children. Valério (2013), on the other hand, emphasizes that this rupture is not only of a biological nature but also, and mainly, of a cultural nature, since it symbolizes a break in society’s expectation toward procreation, as opposed to the historically agreed-upon and valued norm for families to have children.

Andrade, Costa, and Rossetti-Ferreira (2006) found that many men faced with infertility mean adoption as a barrier to be faced, which is comes into place only after the possibilities for the initially desired biological parenthood have been exhausted. Sato et al. (2007b) point out that “being made aware of infertility and considering adoption are not merely personal experiences and/or life choices, but are historically structured experiences” (p. 98). The interviewed couple posed that adoption came to be considered by them only as things started going “wrong,” when they did not go as planned:

Excerpt 8:

Sarah: If it had all gone well, maybe I’d never... have thought of adoption... but it, the possibility has been getting stronger as things aren’t going the way we dreamed and envisioned... and it becomes more established once you turn your mind’s eye... to... to this option to love.

Excerpt 9:

Ryan: I think I had to go through those insemination steps (three failed attempts) to come to that conclusion. I had to go through these losses, because it is a loss.

It is important to note that the choice for adoption was also brought forth by the dialogical relationships, as aforementioned, between what each individual had already built personally on gender conceptions and the desire to be biological parents – throughout their development – and what each individual was actually going through (not being able to get pregnant). It seems as if, in a dynamic movement of negotiation between personal culture, collective culture, and biological reality signs, as well as between the past and the future, the couple, in the period of interviews I.2 and I.3, is being invited to re-signify their present roles and desires, generating new syntheses that culminated in the decision to adopt. However, to withstand these changes, the symbolic constructions of motherhood and fatherhood are being transformed over time. The individuals have been striving for the valorization of the “biological child” to give way to the “adoptive child,” although we see, at the end of I.3, that this process was still very unstable, even after Ryan’s change in point of view when thinking about adoption (Excerpt 7).

The individuals themselves realize that their perspectives on adoption have changed. However, we note that preserved traces of destroyed signs are present in the couple’s now pro-adoption discourse. Such traces, perceived in the construction of the new meanings about becoming parents through adoption, seem to us to be a

defining feature of the transition process that begins exactly in the period of interviews (I.2 and I.3) with the couple. The construction of the data, therefore, occurred in real time in the process of rupture and transition for Ryan and Sarah.

Preservation as Part of the Hierarchical Destruction of Signs: Some Considerations

We seek to discuss and illustrate, based on a case study, the semiosis of the construction and destruction of the hierarchy of signs occurring in the experience of an unattainable pregnancy for a couple, as well as the emergence of the construction of a new sign. They experience a strong rupture during the data-building process (they cannot get pregnant through artificial inseminations), and they then begin to consider adoption as the path that will lead them to parenthood. With this event, we were able to access the rupture process while it occurred, allowing us to emphasize the tensions and ambivalence experienced by the couple. In addition, it was possible to identify the beginning of the transition process demanded by the rupture experienced. In this dynamic, we also identify a semiotic process of maintenance of what we call *preserved traces* of destroyed signs (“the value of pregnancy,” “adoption as a consolation prize,” and “biological parenthood seen as superior to adoptive parenthood”). Figure 9.2, an enlargement of Figure 9.1 – which was proposed by Jaan

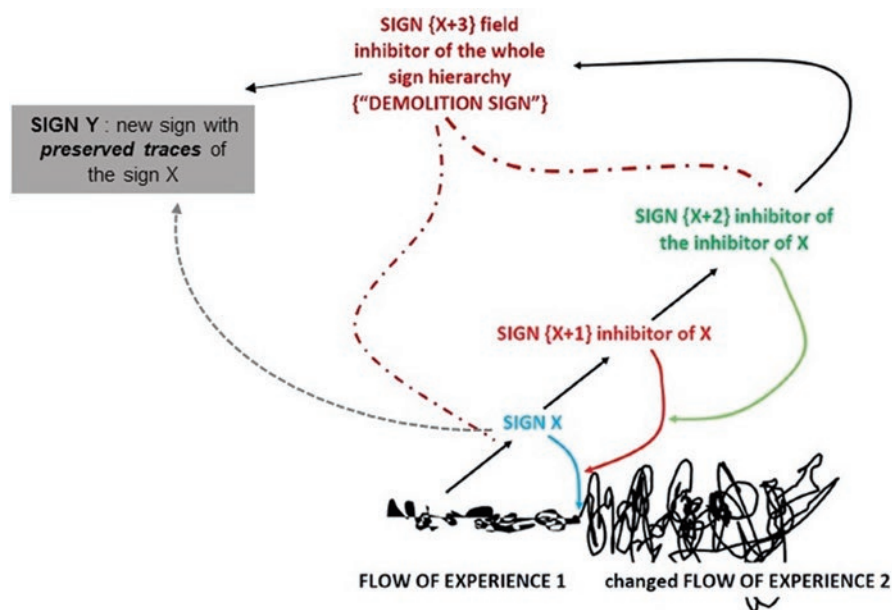


Fig. 9.2 Preserved traces of SIGN X in the emergence of SIGN Y

Valsiner, Chap. 8 in this volume – illustrates this maintenance in the emergence of a new sign, the SIGN Y.

This dynamic of destruction of hierarchy of signs to construct a new sign emerged from several ruptures experienced by the couple in their trajectories toward the realization of parenthood and involves emotions, feelings, fantasies, expectations, and mnemonic reconstructions among other things. Its organization tends to find relative stability over irreversible time, as well as temporal distance from the experiences of rupture through the successive symbolic elaborations on parenting and adoption, which contribute to support the decision to adopt and legitimize it in their experiences.

Such an organization could not be captured in this study because there was no temporal distance from the rupture phenomenon, nor can we affirm categorically that the participants were engaged in a transition (Zittoun, 2009). Thus our case study suggests that monitoring the real-time evolution of coping with rupture and transition expands the findings about the rupture experience but limits the investigation of the transition itself.

However, we emphasize that in confronting the rupture, values and meanings that previously distanced the couple from adoption and pushed them toward pregnancy as the only way to experience parenthood continue in the collective culture and in contact with the process of constructing a new sign (“we want to adopt”), which leads them to the desired and possible future (“becoming parents”). Thus, it seems to us that *preserved traces* of the destroyed signs become part of the process of the construction of new signs in the emergence of the transition process, as illustrated in this study. Further investigation monitoring the already consolidated transition, that is, considering temporal distance from the phenomenon, could confirm if such preserved traces of the destroyed signs present in the emergence of the construction of new meanings would remain or not.

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