



ISSN: 3085-6434

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.71263/x4qg3f69>

WHO AM I?

A narrative of experiences and resistances

Merivania da Silva Barros Santos¹

"My unbalanced words are the luxury of my silence." (Lispector, 1998, p. 12-13)

The month was June, the year was 1983, right there on the borders of a municipality at the time called Ouricuri in the high hinterland of the State of Pernambuco, it was winter dawn, in the midst of darkness, under the light of a gas lamp, I imagine, I was born in the groove of the song 'Brincar de Viver', a song composed by Guilherme Arantes, in this context interpreted by the consecrated Maria Bethânia in 1983. Playing

¹ Master's student in Philosophy at PROF-FILO IFSertãoPE. Email: santosmerivaniar@gmail.com

at living can mean among so many adjectives "facing life with lightness, courage and resilience", the lyrics meditate on existence, music as a way to give meaning to life, express feelings and understand things with the heart. I sprinkled the divinity of being and being in the world, and human subjectivity, connecting the imagination and the courage not to give up in the face of "no". Considered a hymn to optimism and positivity, it proposes that we face life lightly. "And since they said no, the important thing is that I'm here..." At that pace, life smiled at me. The firstborn daughter of Dona Cila and Seu Nequim was born, two young farmers, both illiterate, but in love. The hands of a woman, affectionately known as "Mother Sabina", brought me to this parallel universe, on that night of pain, in that simple little house as it still is today. Maybe in a single bed I had, in the bed of my parents I was born and, I believe that like me, my mother was reborn. I am the first granddaughter of my paternal grandparents who only had two sons, my father and my godfather his brother and also being the first granddaughter of my maternal grandparents. At an accelerated pace, permeated by misinformation about the lack of assistance and family planning, the family grew, we became eight siblings, five boys and three girls. I was the child who took care of the others to help my mother.

I grew up in an environment overcome by the lack of everything, the only thing that was not lacking was love and affection, in my memory I bring fragments of a cozy home, childish laughter echoing through the rooms and the unmistakable smell of breakfast prepared with affection by my father, who lovingly prepared coffee for my

mother and only after that left for the work. The patchwork sheets that my grandmother made for us were difficult times, much more so than in contemporary times, especially for women, children and consequently for everyone. I grew up in a humble and united family, we shared everything so that no one lacked, economic challenges among others, a quiet neighborhood, a kind of village, there were years of discoveries, learning and construction.

A new universe was presented to me through access to primary school. Although My academic trajectory has been marked by hard experiences, difficult access, lack of vacancies in school, lack of school supplies, lack of structure, class in the multigrade format, my first contact with the school was in a room at my maternal grandmother's house, classes were taught in this space. I was coveting other people's books because there were no books for everyone, I remember with affection the teacher "my godmother" when I finished reading she lent me the booklet she used, affectionately sat next to me and showed me the lyrics, every day she read to me the poems of Vinicius de Moraes, I remember it to this day.

"The Door"
 I open slowly
 To pass the little boy...
 I open up with a spur
 To pass the captain...
 I just don't open it to these people
 that says (I really care...)
 that if a person is dumb
 it's dumb as a door.
 I'm very smart!

... I close everything in this world I only live open in the sky!
(Moraes, 1991, p.26).

It is a poem that offers us reflections on the resistance of the door in the face of some premises that attack it in front of the world.

During adolescence, as for many, I experienced real storms of emotions and doubts. The certainties of childhood faded, giving way to new experiences that constituted my identity. The challenges of the first disappointments, pressure from friends, the first love, mine was tragic. A period marked by important learning, and discovery of new things, soon children's games were exchanged for meetings of friends.

The advent of adulthood marked the beginning of a whole new phase, full of responsibilities and the need to make crucial decisions. This would be the moment to choose which career to follow, which for many is possible at this moment, for me in those circumstances I was not given the power of choice, but I felt free to fight for my goals, in a way this period was marked by transformation decisions. Inserted in the social struggles based on my parents, who militated the struggles of cooperativism, unionism and associativism, motivated by the need for a place of speech, I went in the place of my mother, who was very afraid that I would win the world away from her, to occupy a space in the direction of the Union of rural workers of my municipality, It was an activity where I faced several challenges that required me to be mature enough to deal with people totally different from me, in attitudes, thoughts and

actions, I suffered a lot, estrangement, prejudice, since it was not common for young people to work in the organization, that organism was centered on a small family group, a type of structural monopoly that is practiced in the organisms, even in those who call themselves to defend the rights of certain categories. It was a path of learning and sometimes overcoming unexpected obstacles. It shouldn't be, but the young profile could be highlighted and that represented an affront, but I liked to deal with people, and here it was just an experience that taught me a lot and strengthened my determination. I remained in this common thread for a little more than ten years, I was part of the restructuring of the headquarters space, also of the reorganization of the municipal council for rural development. Was it an easy journey? No! Along this path marked by a long history, I had to constantly reinvent myself, my greatest satisfaction was to be useful to those who lived in a darkness greater than mine, there are so many memories, some not good, but of great relevance to me, here I learned a lot, for me a true school.

I established important bonds and learned from the joys and challenges of daily life, and in the midst of all this, when I realized I was in love, my boyfriend with whom I married and formed a family, our two sons Igor and Raul, they were born and I was reborn. My eldest son was born in May 2005, thus marking a new phase full of tenderness, love and great responsibilities, it brought me great discoveries and deep purpose, months after his birth, we discovered that he had been born with a severe congenital heart disease, and the possibilities of surgical treatment for correction had been

exhausted, I confess that no obstacle was greater in my life, Receiving this diagnosis from my son, it was the pain that never went away in me. My world collapsed, and the ground disappeared at my feet. I lost the north of everything, and without ground, everything I asked God, because I was the one I could ask something for, is that all that was with me, my greatest desire was to be able to take my heart and give it to live without any limitation. I have never felt so powerless, incapable, in fact I still do today, and all I did most in that period of acceptance was cry horrors, I slept crying and woke up crying too, despite so many pains that I have felt, none has ever hurt me so much. Four years later, in May 2009, our second son Raul was born, unplanned, but expected, at that time I developed a psychosis, all the time I found myself thinking about what it would be like to share my love with two children, and even more so because a first one would always depend on me for almost everything. I cried so much for fear of dying in childbirth, this is a fact that I attribute to medical negligence and obstetric violence in my first birth.

Years later, my boys were still small, and even in the face of setbacks, I resumed my studies, entered the bachelor's degree in Social Work, offered in the distance modality by the IES, I had at the time the headquarters unit in Juazeiro/BA, with an extension in the city of Ouricuri/PE. I offered face-to-face classes on weekends, I basically attended until period VI of VIII periods, after many efforts, physical, psychological, expenses with transportation, food, material and tuition, we were all students surprised by the confirmation that that course was not recognized by the MEC, I chose not to

conclude, because in addition to the costs, it was a period that my husband was working outside, which made it difficult for me to access it because of my two young children, and so it was a project that fell by the wayside. During this period I was living in Petrolina, I sought to take a professional course, SENAI offered vacancies in a course offered in partnership with the federal government, I was awarded an Administrative Assistant course, I started the course, but because it was in the afternoon and for reasons of incompatibility of my husband's service schedule and because I could not find someone who could take care of our children, I ended up not completing the course. Later, I was able to enter a technical course in public services at the Federal Institute, in the class of 2014 to 2017, the course was offered in the distance modality with face-to-face meetings every 15 days, at the Petrolina Campus. However, during the internship period of this course, I was invited to run for councilor in my city, a time when I had articulation with the social organizations of that city, I was part of child and adolescent councils, rural development and the Union. I agreed, I was a candidate because I believed in possible things, which today I know are not, at least in the way I imagine them to be, "naively"? No! But with great audacity. I need to change things, not myself. Here I communicated valuable lessons, a profoundly unusual challenge, there were reflections on contexts that place us in vulnerable situations, on that territory, on a people who live there, great lessons I took from all this. I realized that difficulties, even challenging ones, can act as drivers of personal growth and transformation.

Driven by the desire to have a degree, I did not measure the effort and took the National High School Exam (ENEM) in 2018 and this enabled me the following year to enter the Degree in Pedagogy offered by Univasf. Like so many other things in my life, this was also a challenge full of setbacks, so the course started along with the COVID-19 pandemic, a factor that destabilized the world, and consequently the most vulnerable populations. However, in the midst of so much astonishment, I survived, overcoming each day, each anxiety crisis and all the challenges. In 2024, finally that dream that could have been fulfilled in my early twenties, was only possible 20 years later, it was wonderful to be able to present the university I graduated from to my father who is illiterate, and my mother who also has no academic training, because only after she raised her children did she challenge herself to study, Both were flattered at that moment, their eyes sparkled, and infected with an immense joy, tears were the way of saying that they were proud when they watched me being awarded the degree. I remember saying: "Dad, this is a university, a public space that there are still few people who come from where I come from who can get here. I managed to make these dreams come true, he looked at me smiling, he told me it's a very beautiful place, you deserve to be here, in fact you deserve to make all dreams come true". He completed the Degree in Pedagogy, a course offered by a Federal University, an institution of great relevance for the development of our region.

Currently, I am a teacher of early childhood education in the education network of the municipality of Petrolina, before completing the Pedagogy course I was



called to take the vacancy, and here I am, recycling, learning and teaching, in the midst of the tempestuous difficulties, and in the search to understand my place in the world. It was in 2024 that I also had the opportunity to participate in the selection of the Professional Master's Degree through the PROF-FILO program taught by the IF Sertão PE nucleus, Petrolina Zona Rural Campus. I presented a pre-research project focused on studies of childhood philosophy, a proposal that, even though it lacked improvement to come to life through a final product, led me to the PROF-FILO master's degree. This boldness of mine sometimes sounds like a paradox in the face of everyday reality.

By reflecting on my past, I am able to appreciate the beauty and complexity of my journey. It was the moments of overcoming that really shaped me and pushed me to get here, the scars I carry have become symbols of learning and strength to continue on the path. I try to live with optimism, and live this wonderful feeling that nothing is ready, and that there is always something to be done, starting with ourselves, with the hope of continuing to grow and contribute to the world around me. The story of my life is a narrative in the making, and each new day is an opportunity to write a new chapter, learning from the past and looking to the future with hope and determination.

References:

BETHÂNIA, Maria. *Brincar de Viver*. In: LETRAS.MUS.BR.
Disponível em:

Re(senhas)



<https://www.lettras.mus.br/maria-bethania/47218/>. Acesso em: 23 abr. 2025.

RAMOS, Flávia Brocchetto; ESPEIORIN, Vania Marta. A metamorfose do pensamento e das palavras em a leitura de “A porta”. *Signo*, Santa Cruz do Sul, v. 34, n. 57, p. 205-218, jul.-dez. 2009. Disponível em: <http://online.unisc.br/seer/index.php/signo/index.htm> Acesso em: 13 de abril de 2025

ROCHA, Gabriel Kafure. UMA TOPO-ONTOLOGIA DE HEIDEGGER E BACHELARD. *Ideas y Valores*, Bogotá, v. 69, n. 172, p. 33-56, Apr. 2020. Available from <http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0120-00622020000100033&lng=en&nrm=iso>. access on 01 May 2025. Epub Mar 20, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.15446/ideasyvalores.v69n172.55867>.

Submitted April 2025

Approved in May 2025