

cadernos
Junguianos
n° 18-2024

Drenched Eyes: The Prophets of Rain and the imaginary of the sertão

Listening to the Voice of the Earth: an (Eco)Psychology for the Climate Emergency

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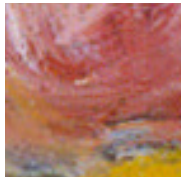
Jungians and Psychedelics: a dialogue under construction

Indigenous mythologies and Jungian psychology: the jaguar and the amplification of the myth of the Guarani twins

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**Annual journal
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*Member of the International
Association for Analytical
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Fernando Diniz, born in Aratu, Bahia, in 1918.
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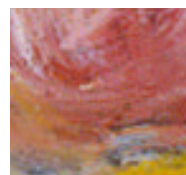
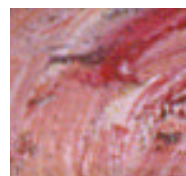
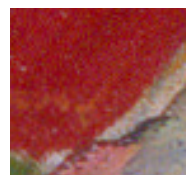
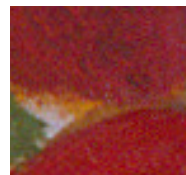
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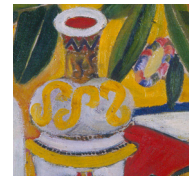
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Editorial

Patrícia Eugênio (IJUSP)

Sílvio Lopes Peres (IPABAHIA)

Editorial



This issue focuses on some of the more than ninety papers presented at the 27th Congress of the Jungian Association of Brazil (AJB), on the topic of “Crossings”, organized and held in Salvador (BA), by the Institute of Analytical Psychology of Bahia (IPABAHIA/AJB/IAAP), from September 11 to 14, 2024.

In line with the paradigmatic ideal from the first issue of our esteemed AJB magazine, in this 18th volume, we seek to broaden the “debate on Jungian ideas around psychological practice and theory on the Brazilian scene, as a renewed source for deepening the most relevant issues in humanity’s cultural and psychological adventure”.

In this sense, the city of Salvador is home to monuments that are beyond significance, as if shaping the contents of the collective unconscious of our people’s history. The Pelourinho is probably one of the most prominent, as it was remembered by one of its most famous residents, Vinicius de Moraes, in the poem “The Magician”, as: “It is perhaps the Paris of Terror [...] The magician is on the old Pelourinho or gallows or guillotine through which many generations have passed” (MORAES, 1938, p. 21), and sung by the Bahia poets Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil. 21), in verses such as: “When asked to go up to the churchyard / Of the Jorge Amado House Foundation / To see from above the line of soldiers, almost all black [. ...] / Just to show the other almost blacks / (And they are almost all blacks) / And the almost whites who are as poor as blacks / How blacks, poors, mulattos / And almost whites who are almost black because they are so poor are treated / And it doesn’t matter if the eyes of the whole world / May be turned for a moment to the square / Where the slaves were punished” (VELOSO; GIL, 1993), can be seen as a “backdrop” to the knowledge, therapeutic skills, but also to the descriptive capacity presented by the articles presented here.

Among philologists, the city of Salvador may be referred to as “São Salvador”, or “The City of Salvador da Bahia”, among other names, but having felt surrounded by its lively and dynamic artistic, anthropological, urbanistic, mystical, libertarian symbolism, and by

a people who live, fight, laugh, and will not give in to difficulties, we were embraced by the atmosphere of the mixed-race civilization of dances, gastronomy, churches and shrines, markets, and the waters of the Atlantic. According to Jorge Amado (1912-2001), one of its most emblematic writers, the city is: "Never fascist [...] revolutionary, affirmative, progressive [...] full of stories, legendary, maternal, and courageous. [...] A dense mystery flows from all this about the city that touches everyone's heart. [...] Splendid city, the bride of the sea, mistress of mystery and beauty" (AMADO, 2012, p. 22, 28, 63).

As one of the founders of Carl Gustav Jung's thought and work in the Northeast region of Brazil in 2009, IPABAHIA sought to revere the cultural roots of native and African peoples, present in ancient and contemporary Tupi-Guarani and Afro-Brazilian rituals and mythologies, celebrated in conferences, lectures on open topics, round tables, and artistic expressions, whether in music (Samba and Viola), literature (Cordel), or in the spiritual expressions of Candomblé matrices (Orixás). Once again, AJB had the opportunity to gain a rough idea of what has already been achieved in the field of analytical psychology and the direction our future research is likely to take.

The Minas Gerais poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade admitted: "I must write a poem about Bahia... But I've never been there" (ANDRADE, 2015, p. 17). We do not know the reasons that prevented him from dedicating a poem to Bahia. However, everyone who has been able to make the "crossing" has experienced the "poems" of authors who have traveled from the four corners of Brazil, providing us with a sensitivity that Complex Psychology powerfully engages us with, as if reminding us of Jorge Amado's "Captains of the Sand", for example, when he says: "The number of abandoned children increases daily. [...] Only by stopping the parents' hunger can these children without a childhood, without toys, without maternal affection, without school, without a home, and food, be torn from their wretched lives" (AMADO, 2012, p. 345), because, as Amado himself says: 'Baiano is a state of mind' (AMADO, 2012, p. 32).

Publishing the eighteenth edition of the Jungian Notes, on the theme of "Crossings", encourages us to feel the images of drought and rainy winter "as hope and anguish, relief and affliction", together with Farley Rebouças Valentim, in: "Moist Eyes: The prophets of rain and the imaginary of the sertão"; welcoming planet Earth as an interlocutor, ours and our patients', with the pioneer of Ecopsychology in Brazil, Marco Aurélio Bilíbio Carvalho, in his: "Listening to the voice of the Earth: An (Eco)psychology for the climate emergency"; the inversion of spiritual consciousness into a material consciousness, in the information age, as André Dantas points out by claiming: "The selfie is the celebration of the maximum value of individuality, it is an anti-prayer, an inverted prayer in which the individual does not ask for something for the universal, but asks for recognition for other

individuals”, in “Crossing the 21st Century: From Christianity to the Age of Spiritual Machines”.

We highlight the thought-provoking articles: “Jung’s Gnosis in the Context of the Transition of the Eons”, by Luís Paulo Brabo Lopes, on the central role of active imagination, both in the process of expanding the individual’s consciousness and in its role in the birth of the myth of the new eon in contemporary times; along the poetic path, “On the Verge: A Poetry of the Unconscious”, by Markus A. Hediger, a Swiss, on his personal search for the meaning of a birthmark on his calf in the form of the map of Brazil; “Crossings in economics and psychology: Eugen Böhler and C. G. Jung: From logos to psychology”, by Sílvio Lopes Peres and Rubens Bragarnich, who portray Böhler as the introducer of the role of unconscious factors in understanding the complexity of economic factors.

Our “Crossings” brought us to “The Psychology of C. G. Jung’s Psychology and Cultural Rootedness: Reflections on mental health in Latin America”, which provides us with psychological insights as to the cultural complexes of the Brazilian unconscious, such as slavery and racism, through intellectuals from the African diaspora, regarding the crisis of identity and psychic problems, especially among Afro-descendants and indigenous Brazilians, according to Pamela Cristina Salles da Silva; as well as male identities that are structured by the denial of other identities, from Gustavo Pessoa’s perspective, with the consequent oppression of minority populations, but which analytical psychology offers the possibility of aesthetic elaboration as a key competence aimed at ceasing violence, in “Masculinities and heteropatriarchy: Considerations on the negativity of masculine identity”; as well as the papers by Fabiana Teixeira Pithon – ‘The Jungian clinic with women in abusive relationships and post-divorce abuse: Challenges and coping’; and by Patrícia Helena Duarte da Matta – “Sexual trauma: A Jungian study on the lowering of women”, respectively, which introduce us to the ‘cis-heteropatriarchal’ cultural complex experienced in abusive relationships and post-divorce abuse and of the sexual trauma experienced by raped women, when these contemporary phenomena appear in Jungian clinical practice.

Now we come across Walter Boechat’s “Contemporary Crossings: From Modernity to Complexity”, challenging us to reflect on the current condition of humanity, in deep crisis and threatened with self-extinction, to listen to the voice of the Earth as an ontological alternative to modernity and greater respect for the planet; Gustavo Barcellos’ “Crossings, Frontiers, Transpositions”, drawing on the Tarot and the mythical crossings of Scylla and Charybdis, of the Knight Errant, we are called upon to “see through the ever-crossing soul”; by Iago Lôbo: “Jungians and psychedelics: A dialogue in the making”, brings us to the use of psychedelics in a therapeutic context, stressing the integration work of the unconscious contents accessed; and, by

Ana Luísa Teixeira Menezes: “Indigenous mythologies and Jungian psychology: The jaguar and the amplification of the myth of the Guarani twins”, brings us even closer to the relationship of communication and symbolic subjectivation for an expansion of analytical psychology.

This volume highlights the rich diversity of reflections that emerged from the “Crossings” addressed at the 27th AJB Congress, revealing the depth and complexity of Jungian thought in contemporary Brazil. Throughout the texts presented here, the importance of dialoguing with our cultural, mythological, and social roots is made clear, allowing psychological knowledge to be enriched and broadened by incorporating the multiple voices that comprise our collective unconscious. May this 18th volume of the Jungian Notes inspire not only new journeys but also new perspectives and new practices that embrace the challenge of navigating the deep waters of the human psyche and its cultural expression. May we thereby continue to expand the frontiers of analytical psychology, ever vigilant of the paths that are unfolding before us.

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Cover

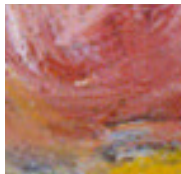


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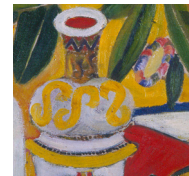
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Opening of the annual AJB Congress – Travessias – Salvador September 11, 2024

Rosa Brizola Felizardo – IJRS

Article



Good evening to all those present at this meeting.

It is an absolute joy, as president of the Jungian Association of Brazil, to have the honor of opening the XXVII AJB CONGRESS – TRAVESSIAS, in Salvador.

My greetings and thanks to my dear colleague, analyst Tereza Caribé, president of the Institute of Analytical Psychology of Bahia – Ipabahia, and to the whole untiring group of colleagues responsible for organizing this event that welcomes us with such strength and tenderness.

I also greet the Directors of the Jungian Association of Brazil; the directors of the affiliated Institutes; and the fellow members of this Association. In particular, the scholarship fellows, finally, present at this XXVII Congress. The perspectives that open up from here are extremely important. We recognize how belated this decision was, but we celebrate the step taken.

Greetings as well to the publisher Vozes, ever a partner in our projects. I wish us all a great Congress!

In this opening, I pay tribute to all those who have come before us in this place of care and construction of the Association. Today, in particular, I would like to pay tribute to all the female analysts who have been trained and are still in training, as we account for around 80% of this group that has nurtured and shaped the Jungian Association of Brazil over its 33 years of existence.

There have been so many tragedies so far... what should we choose to say at the opening of our CONGRESS?

It occurred to me to turn to the song for inspiration, so I am going to “allow my heart to speak” here in this space of folding in the images.

Today, September 11, the date forever damaged by the attack on the Twin Towers in New York (USA), we are here in Brazil, in

Bahia, in Salvador, and we can, through this image of the fall of the towers, reflect on who we are, where we are and what our voice says, this voice that imagines. What is it about us that needs to collapse, crumble, and be redone?

What work should we undertake as so-called Jungian professionals (to the dismay of Master Jung) from and in Brazil?

Could the only possibility be to follow models like that of September 11, 2001? Of death, violence, lies, and aggression, wherever they come from?

Or, bold as we are, will we be able to seal this day of ours, September 11, 2024, with a commitment in other directions?

And if, in a more profound and Brazilian way, we call the “owners” of the month of September and of the 26th and 27th (yes, because we accept more than one day for the same celebration), the Orixás Erês, the Ibejis, the twin sons of Xangô and Iansã, with the power to cheat death, and who, for us, are also (because we are multiple) the Catholic twin boys São Cosme and São Damião, who were and are both doctors and boys, who take care of children without charge. Could it be?

Could we, like the children, build circles and hand out gifts, sweets, and joys, remembering that life can still happen and be celebrated, despite the suffocating “end of the world smoke”?

Can we, like the holy children, spread faith, care, and health? And what about calling his third brother, Doum, the made-up boy of the Brazilian Umbandas: “the sugar child who subverts emptiness, the chill of enchantment on the edges of reality, the tumble of destiny, the spin of the top, the synthesis between one side Cosme and the other Damião”, in the words of Luiz Antonio Simas? (in *O corpo encantado das ruas*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2020).

We have no answers, but we are in Travessia, so anything is possible. And we must not forget: Brazil is also Bahia! We could not be in a more favorable and meaningful place to start new actions, new positions, new paradigms, new worlds. Here, in the first capital of this country, where everything throbs in colors and drums. Here, where Caetano Veloso composed “Tá Combinado” and Maria Bethânia sang it:

“Let’s open our minds so that, in the end, what is most human in us flourishes”.

Here, by opening our imaginative hearts to Brazilianness and its myths, legends, and charms, we are tapping into countless riches and deep poetic densities, discovering our founding images and their profound cultural resonances, intertwined in their complexities and contradictions.

From the Boi de Mamão of Santa Catarina to the Boi-bumbá of Parintins; from the Cavalhadas and Congadas of Paraná to the Apanijés myths of the Cerrado; from the Modas de viola and Nossa Senhora Aparecida in São Paulo; from the Bantu culture and Carnival of Rio de Janeiro to the Círio de Nazaré in Pará. From the second Sunday in January of Nosso Senhor do Bonfim and February 2nd of Iemanjá in Bahia, to São Jorge and Nossa Senhora dos Navegantes in Porto Alegre.

And it should be noted here, for our knowledge and reflection, that Rio Grande do Sul has around 65,000 Umbanda and Candomblé terreiros in operation, and that Porto Alegre is the Brazilian capital with the highest national proportion of followers of these religions of African origin.

Faced with all this history and wealth, where has our imagination been? Who cares if we are unaware of our roots and the deep ties that bind us? Can we restore meaning to our Brazilian soul, as Roberto Gambini asked us a long time ago (in *Espelho Índio*, 2000)?

In the transgressive and ravishing knowledge of a Rio de Janeiro Carnival theme in 2019, entitled: “Histórias para ninar gente grande” (Stories to lull grown-ups to sleep), by the Estação Primeira de Mangueira samba school, carnival designer Leandro Vieira wishes us to be poetic and political, between awake and lulled to sleep, singing like this:

“Brazil, my boy
 Let me tell you
 The story that history doesn’t tell
 The reverse of the same place
 It’s in the struggle that we meet.
 I want a country that isn’t in the picture!”
 But what about us, what do we want?

We are savvy and learn a great deal from outsiders. The Austrian doctor Heinz Kohut, who helped transform the modern practice of analytical and dynamic treatments, and Walter Benjamin, the German philosopher, and sociologist of Critical Theory, for example, taught us that nothing is revealed in exactly a single track; at least two or three truths are needed to untangle history and fictions backwards and forwards.

Let’s take care of our knowledge together, and in our own way, beyond, of course, the indispensable knowledge that the “old world” has given us so much. How do we feel coming from a place that has, among its visible and invisible, a wheel that turns with Betinho, Aldir

Blanc, Cartola, Nise da Silveira, Davi Kopenawa, Dona Ivone Lara, Nei Lopes, Beth Carvalho, Manoel de Barros, Clementina de Jesus, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Mãe Menininha, Nego Bispo, Conceição Evaristo, Emicida, Maria Molambo, Renato Russo, Liniker, Paulo Freire, Elis Regina, Chico Buarque, Cabocla Jurema, Gilberto Gil, Rosa Magalhães, Dom Timóteo, Milton Nascimento, Elza Soares, Ailton Krenak, Moacyr Luz, Pixinguinha, and Zé Pelintra, among many other names already mentioned here, and so many others that we could not fit into a thousand pages?

How many seminars would Jung hold around the life and work of Ariano Suassuna and the Armorial movement he founded in the 1970s, tracing back to the *sertão* the authentic Brazilian expression in this folk-rooted art, a true flood of alchemical and archetypal images?

How many others for Guimarães Rosa, for whom life is a journey and not a departure or arrival? What about Érico Veríssimo's *Time and the Wind*?

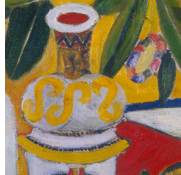
We can, in fact, picture Jung immersed in the biomes of Brazil, his eyes, legs, and heart in search of Deep Brazil, this country of charms, mandingas, prayers, and benedictions. It is our sensitive task to nurture this knowledge, it is like creating something at once old and new, with the ability to cause marvels and restore affections. With the blessings of Nise da Silveira and Leonardo Boff, we are ready to meet Jung the villager, the caboclo, and the countryman.

A friend of mine, when talking about her passion for her work as an analyst, says that she learned to imagine with the caboclos, that when they entered the houses they took off their hats because they knew how to enter the time of gentleness, to speak from the heart, from the folds of affection, to travel infinitely. I cannot remember hearing anything more beautiful about ours or any other psychological practice. I understand that this crossing, called here by Bahia, summons us to speak of the delight of being, of internal movements, of restlessness and anguish, of individual and collective searches in multiple directions, traversing people and places, toward the new, the contemporary, and toward our roots, our ancestry. So it is up to us to cross and be crossed. Why, after all, we are left with the ultimate question: is there a way for those who have not followed Olodum rocking the Pelô?

Have you ever been to Bahia? No? Then go!

Tereza Caribé

Article



When the Board of Directors of the Jungian Association of Brazil (AJB - *Associação Junguiana do Brasil*) announced that, in 2024, the Congress would be held here in Bahia, everyone was rejoiced, some would say enthusiastic, even. Throughout the day, many people made comments like “if it’s in Bahia, I’m going. I can’t miss it, that land is magical!”. It was as if everyone was following Caymmi’s imperative invitation: if you haven’t been to Bahia, then go!

With this in mind, I ask myself: Bahia, what is this place? Mãe Aninha (1869-1938), famous *Iyalorixá* founder of the *Terreiro Ilê Axé Apô Afonjá*, would answer that Bahia is the Black Rome, drawing a parallel between the center of Catholicism and the center of the *Orixá* tradition. It is in Bahia that both the Afro-Brazilian spirituality and the Black resistance movement are most intensely experienced.

The desire to come to Bahia, to live in Bahia, to feel drawn to or in love with Bahia are emotions filled with projections or maybe – who knows? – even a nostalgia for our origins, since Africa is the shared cradle of humanity. We all descended from an African population and thus share the same heritage, in other words, all people are of African origin. As Carl Jung (1875-1961) teaches us, the human psyche is indeed part of the collective psyche.

We are all rooted in the same psychic ground and, therefore, any prejudice and discrimination of any kind is a brutal assault on our own soul. Knowing, valuing, rescuing, legitimizing and caring for this African heritage that expresses itself through faith, music, dance and so many other aspects of culture is our responsibility, it is everyone’s duty.

As far as we are concerned, as the event planners, we made sure to organize this Congress inspired by the Afro-Bahian and Tupinambá Indigenous cultures. In the opening ritual, we were graced with the presence of Felipe Alves, Jungian analyst and *Babalorixá*, *Cacique* Ramon Tupinambá, Nadia Akawã Tupinambá and the group RumAlagbê from the *Terreiro Gantois*. We also had *Samba de Roda*,

Cordel and Roberto Mendes singing the *Recôncavo*, as a way to reach out to our shared cultural identity. In addition to all this, we encouraged a broad thematic axis of discussions, producing the texts that make up the content of the present journal. These works contemplate the debate addressed herein, along with several other issues that point to new perspectives and interests regarding Analytical Psychology.

We leave this journey with a flame alive in our hearts, a blazing light that shines on the commitment to our culture, to the Brazilian Afro-Indigenous legacy. Knowing where we come from makes it easier to know where we are going. By this very same flame, we are also ardent supporters of environmental preservation and against any type of discrimination or prejudice, be it from origin, race, gender, color or age.

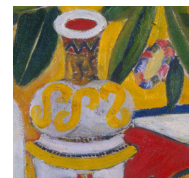
We hope that this Congress, our *Congresso Travessias*, has provided many soul experiences, multiple exchanges and plenty of joy for everyone involved. Finally, we wish to make one last appeal: there is a Brazil that needs to be known, deeply, by each one of us, and we must find it.

Tereza Caribé
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Drenched Eyes: The Prophets of Rain and the imaginary of the *sertão*

Farley Valentim

Article



Abstract

The purpose of the present work is to present the Prophets of Rain, men who dedicate themselves to observe the nature signs that they describe as “winter experiences”, as a way of predicting the coming of rain to the Northeastern *sertão* (the Brazilian backcountry), hereby demonstrating how the imaginary of the *sertanejo* (people who live in such hinterlands) is built according to time and climate, among other possibilities. Thus, it will be shown herein how the imaginary of the *sertão* is associated with two compelling images, namely the drought and the rainy winter, which are sources of ambiguous feelings, such as hope and anguish, relief and affliction. Finally, through this imaginary, this work strives to build a Jungian reading of this practice based on the notion of *Anima Mundi*, as thought by James Hillman.

Keywords: Prophets of Rain; Sertão; Imaginary; *Anima Mundi*.

1. The Drought

In his novel *Vidas Secas* (Barren Lives), Graciliano Ramos recounts the hardships of a migrant family in the torrid backlands of *sertão*. Walking along a parched riverbed, two of the main characters, Fabiano and Sinhá Vitória, look, amid a resigned sigh, at a lonely cloud forsaken in the blue sky.

Enxugaram as lágrimas, foram agachar-se pertos dos filhos, suspirando, conservaram-se encolhidos, temendo que a nuvem se tivesse desfeito, vencida pelo azul terrível, aquele azul que deslumbrava e endoidecia a gente (RAMOS, 2019, p. 9).

In this quote, Graciliano describes how the characters dry their tears, fearing that the cloud would melt away and leave them overpowered by this terrifyingly blue sky that awes and drives people mad. Those familiar with such an image understand why the author tells us that their eyes are brimming with dread. The cloud

is a harbinger of rain, it's the manna of the *sertão* that bears the redemption of the suffering caused by the drought. The fear that Fabiano and *Sinhá* Vitória feel is that this frail cloud may disintegrate and disappear, vanishing and taking all hope with it, leaving only that dazzling, maddening blue sky in the thick of the arid land's suffering.

Graciliano Ramos' novel *Vidas Secas*, first published in 1938, is one of several literary works dedicated to portraying the dramas of the drought in the Brazilian backlands. Graciliano tells the story of a family at the heart of the dry season, narrating their degradation into a subhuman condition of survival and their transformation into *retirantes* (climate refugees), a word used to designate those who, in the midst of *sertão's* inhospitable climate, are forced to leave their homes in the Northeastern hinterlands in search of better conditions elsewhere, on the coast or in other states. Throughout the pages of the novel, we are confronted with the desolation of this poor family, subjugated by the weather and the scorched soil, hoping and dreaming with a full and happy life marked by the return of the rains, with which the strength of the land could reawaken once again, and the lush green would take over the horizon.

This same reality is depicted in the expressionist work *Os Retirantes (Migrants)*, by the Brazilian painter Cândido Portinari. Painted in 1944, it epitomizes the rural exodus from the Northeast and portrays a family fleeing from the drought. The nine people who make up the painting, four adults and five children, are haggardly rendered amid a barren and desolated landscape. The work presents the conflict against a world that can become cruel, aggressive and filled with imminent death. Their scrawny bodies, the sad, frightened, wraithlike features, with vacant and hopeless stares, seem to burst out of the canvas. The poverty is evident through the character's bare feet, their thinness, and even the sickly body of one of the children. Upon the desiccated earth, carcasses of dead animals are scattered, hunted by the black birds, vultures, heralds of death, flying high in the same blue sky as Graciliano, this blue sky that makes us mad. The historical context of this work dates back to 1944, a period in which the stereotypical image of the Northeast as a region of hunger and death was still closely related to the dry periods, mainly associated with the great drought of 1877, in which almost 500 thousand lives were lost during the Empire (TAMANINI; SILVA, 2019), as well as the great droughts of 1915, portrayed in the novel *O Quinze (The Fifteen)* by Rachel de Queiroz, an author from Ceará, and the drought of 1932, already during the Republic (QUEIROZ, 2012).

Therefore, the concern regarding the deleterious effects of these extreme weather events predates Graciliano and Portinari by centuries. There are records from 1605, still in colonial Brazil, of the general apprehension about the problems caused by the adversity of the semi-arid Northeastern climate. The drought of 1932, particularly,

produced a perverse phenomenon that is now almost erased from history: the concentration camps or “government corrals”. Instituted in six cities of Ceará - Fortaleza, Crato, Ipu, Quixeramobim, Cariús and Senador Pompeu – in the vicinity of the railway tracks, these concentration camps aimed to prevent the *retirantes* fleeing the drought from reaching the capital, Fortaleza. The climate refugees accepted to remain in the camps, attracted by job offers and promises of medical assistance only, however, to be retained in unhealthy conditions, relying on the food sent by the government. The objective then was to avoid the episode that occurred during the drought of 1877, when over 100,000 *retirantes* migrated to the capital, which at the time had only 30,000 inhabitants. The refugees thus became a social problem associated with chaos, considered to bring poverty and disease to the coastal cities, creating a collective fear that businesses would be looted by the starving migrants (BARBALHO, 2005).

The abovementioned intense periods of drought, among many others that followed later, in addition to the occurrence of the “government corrals” coupled with the images of people and animals killed by hunger, helped to consolidate the stereotype of the Northeastern semi-arid region as a place of inhospitable, cruel nature, difficult to deal with, where the *sertanejo*, regardless of their strength, as Euclides da Cunha stated in *Os Sertões (The Backlands)*, was always destined to lose their battle against nature.

It was this impression of a cruel nature, which demands from men a resilience and an almost superhuman strength in order to survive, that instituted this climate issue as the main root of the evils faced by the *sertanejo*. The drought began to characterize the Northeastern identity through the representation of misery, suffering, underdevelopment, being related to the constant confrontation with nature, despite the fact that climate related problems are usually symptoms of the lack of public policies to aptly face such conditions (DANTAS, 2007).

Apart from the literature, music is equally devoted to conveying the northeasternner’s distress when confronted with the dry season. The composition *Asa Branca (White Wings)* (1947), by Luiz Gonzaga and Humberto Teixeira, the former from Pernambuco and the latter from Ceará, both knowledgeable about the effects of the drought in the backlands of the Northeast, masterfully portray this imagery in their lyrics:

Quando oiei’ a terra ardendo

Qual fogueira de São João

Eu perguntei’ a Deus do céu, uai

Por que tamanha judiação?

Que braseiro, que fornaia'

Nenhum pé de prantação'

Por farta' d'água perdi meu gado

Morreu de sede meu alazão

In this section of the music, the composers describe how the earth burns like a bonfire, where plants wither and horses die of thirst, as men look up in prayer, supplicating and asking why there is so much pain. It's the earth blazing under the sun, becoming a furnace, preying on the northeasterner. Surrounded by such woes, the men cannot farm; that which is sown dies. The sun kills the cattle as well, bringing hunger and misery, leading the *sertanejo* to raise their hands to the sky, silently questioning the reason for so much suffering.

This desolate image only finds parallel in another that is so characteristic of the *sertanejo*: the request for a blessing and the prayer for a good winter. For if the greatest evil that can afflict this region is the drought, then the arrival of the rain is understood as a redemption.

Other Northeastern composers also identify this cruel dichotomy. In the song *Último Pau de Arara* (homonym with no direct equivalent translation, an expression that simultaneously refers to a type of plant of the *Parkia* family, a type of informal and precarious refugee transportation, and a type of torture frequently used by the Brazilian dictatorship that dates back to slavery punishments), the composer from Ceará, Fagner, conveys this difficulty, saying how the hardships of life are bound to the drought:

A vida aqui só é ruim

Quando não chove no chão

Mas se chover dá de tudo

Fatura tem de porção

The rain is the counterpart of the drought. Everything grows in moist earth. It is bountiful. It is fertile soil.

These two great images compose the landscapes of this Northeastern *sertão* which, comprising an extensive strip of land that spreads across the states of Alagoas, Bahia, Ceará, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte and Sergipe, is characterized by the predominance of only two seasons: one dry and the other rainy, which makes up for about three or four months of the first half of the year.

The scarcity of the short period of the rainy season compared to the many months of the year where the sun prevails, accompanied by the memory of the difficult times coping with the drought, makes the always uncertain wait for the rain happen with a mixture of anguish and hope. Even today, when large reservoirs such as Castanhão or Oros – or with the transposition of the São Francisco River - are able to marginally reduce the hardships of the previously experienced drought periods, the fear of water shortages still haunts the population of the *sertão*. Notwithstanding the fact that the construction of these reservoirs may mitigate the effects of drought, they still reach mainly city people, not being enough to save the crops and grazing animals.

The approach of the end of the year leads to the proximity of winter and the first signs of redemption by the rains or punishment by the sun are already there, available to the eyes that know how to see. Therefore, every beginning of the year carries with it the hope for a good winter, longing for a better weather to sow, waiting for the fattening of the livestock, for the greenness of the fields, yearning to be once again reunited with the fertile land where everything grows, given that, for the small farmer and the small rancher, a bad winter produces only poverty and scarceness.

It is not difficult to realize how important this wait is, given the extreme imagery and the triggered impacts, let alone how much the beginning of the year and the proximity of the rainy season is loaded with expectation by the *sertanejo*. In scenarios like these, any forecasting possibility, for better or for worse, becomes vital. It is in this environment that we find the figure of the Prophet of Rain and their so-called “winter experiences” (CÂMARA, 2021).

2. The Rain

It is hard to determine when the custom of winter-related prophecies began. Forecasting or the practice of prediction has existed since time immemorial, after all, inspired by the gods or divinatory practices, men have always tried to draw the future closer, reducing the effects of its unpredictability. In the specific case of the Rain Prophets, it is very likely that the predictions are a mixture of the cultural traits brought by Europeans with the culture of the native people, eventually enriched by the African culture, deriving from the slavery period.

That being said, two disclaimers must be made regarding this issue. First, although it bears the name of “prophecy”, the word of the Prophet of Rain cannot be precisely understood as a divinatory practice. The Prophet, as we will see in more detail later, does not guess whether there will be a good winter or not, but rather observes and reads the signs offered by nature that, in their understanding,

can indicate the possibility of having a good winter or not. Second, although currently presenting the characteristics of an oral tradition, the prophecies have been historically published in newspapers, small books or *cordel* leaflets (a type of troubadoursque-like literature, traditionally Northeastern, similar to a chapbook) while still in the Empire, undergoing a great expansion from the 1930s on, as radio and other dissemination media emerged.

It is believed that the figure of the Prophet itself came into being, most likely, from the amalgamation of the countryman's experience united with the cultural traditions. Given their needs as small farmers or ranchers, the rural individual would always be concerned about the coming of rainfall, which is decisive for planting season and productivity. In the very act of always being attentive to the changes of nature, to the signs that point to this or that prognosis, the *sertanejo* learned to predict the weather through their daily experiences. Their predictions would be then gradually exchanged with other people, so that, over time and with the forecasts' confirmation, their word would be heard and valued. In this process of perceiving the world and sharing the experience, the word became "prophecy" and, its enunciator, a "prophet" (PENNESI; BRAGA, 2012).

Given that they often are humble men from the countryside, although many live today in urban settings, the Prophet tends to be a rustic person, and, in most cases, with no formal education. Hence, their mindset and perspective are not based on academic schooling, which is well exemplified by the speech of one of the Prophets, Chico Leiteiro: "I understand almost nothing by letter, no... but by nature... that's another open book. Sometimes the lads say, 'How do you understand this?' My friend, seeing is one thing, knowing is another" (BRUNO; MARTINS, 2008, p. 7, my translation).

The Prophets of Rain are not considered to be a cultural heritage of a specific place and do exist throughout the Northeast, however, we chose to highlight herein one of the Prophets' meeting, held in the city of Quixadá, in the central hinterland of Ceará. This event, which always takes place on the second Saturday of January, happens in the period prior to the beginning of the rainy season, which is equivalent to the four months of the year in which winter is expected. The meeting was formalized in 1996 and is supported by the Shopkeepers Association (CDL - *Centro de Diretores Lojistas*) of Quixadá, bringing together farmers from various states of the Northeast and also counting on the presence of meteorological technicians from the Meteorology and Water Resources Foundation of Ceará (Funceme - *Fundação Cearense de Meteorologia e Recursos Hídricos*), as well as amateur meteorologists. During this event, each participant presents their predictions regarding the upcoming winter: whether there will be rain or not, whether it will be a little or a lot, or if it will be a year of drought (PENNESI; BRAGA, 2012). Meteorologists

deliver their statements centered on science, while the Prophets, for the most part, follow different criteria of naturalistic observation, systematically reinforced by experiences and readings of signs such as the star position of stars, the wind, the mating of animals, the singing of birds, the way they build their nests, the body's humours and temperament, etc. Furthermore, it should be also pointed out that when the event began in 1996 it had only six Prophets, and in 2024 this number reached almost thirty.

It is possible to observe in this meeting's formalization a clear clash between scientific assessments and popular culture. The meteorologists tend to devalue the Prophets of Rain, considering them of less importance since their forecasts are not scientific in nature. The Prophets of Rain, in turn, tend to be suspicious of the meteorologists, as they consider that sometimes scientific predictions contradict nature's signs.

This quarrel recalls a similar situation recounted by Jung when he visited Africa and realized that the arrival of the European colonizer elicited a confrontation between the European and the African cultures. The quote can be found in the book *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*:

We once talked to *laibon*, the old medicine-man chief. He appeared dressed in a gorgeous blue monkey skin robe: it was a sumptuous ceremonial garb. When I questioned him about his dreams, he explained to me with tears in his eyes: "Once, the *laibons* had dreams and knew when there would be war or disease, if the rain would come and where the herds should be taken." His grandfather still dreamed. But since the white people arrived in Africa, no one else had dreamed. There was no more need for dreams, because now the English men knew everything (JUNG, 2016, p. 175, my translation).

It is a conflict between the word of science and the word of tradition, of the countryman who build their outlook based on their daily work with nature. Another interesting feature is visible in this rivalry: while larger producers always give preference to what Funceme's technical representatives say, the small producer, who represents the majority of those who go to the event, tend to believe more in the predictions made by the Prophets of Rain, always looking with mistrust at the scientists' predictions. This means that the Prophet's words have quite a relevance in their communities, despite the existence of scientific methods for weather forecasting, showing, as stated above, that their words go beyond the mere transmission of knowledge.

What is seen here is not only the opposition between two discourses, but the fact that, in the formalization and application of a scientific method, the distance between the subject and the object to be known is reenacted. In the search for a more reliable predictions, science seeks to make an objective reading of nature, bestowing them with more credible attributes, while the Prophet reads this same nature based on their intimacy with the world. Being largely made

up of farmers, the Prophets of Rain tend to build their knowledge not only from the tradition that was passed on to them, but also through the daily work with the land, with the animals, with the observation of the phenomena which they call “winter experiences”.

It is worth reminding that the Prophet’s word is not a divinatory practice that eliminates the unpredictability of the future, because in the *sertanejo*’s perspective, as a deeply religious individual, it belongs only to God. The prophecy is not a certainty, but a possibility. Their speech, therefore, is halfway between religion and science, between popular belief and scientific knowledge, expressing the ancestry of so many experienced accounts spread out through the *sertão*, full of hope for the confirmation of nature’s signs. Thus, the predictions are not the result of a scientific method, calculated from objectively collected data, nor are they a divine revelation made to the the Prophet’s eyes, as if they were chosen by God to lead the mission of showing the way and guiding their people to the blessings. Instead, their word is an utterance that coordinates the present around the possibilities shared with all of those who listen to it and who are part of that same horizon in which the *sertanejo* lives. Here, “prophecy” is the word that organizes and unites those who listen, as they also wish to believe in the the Prophet’s words, meaning that it generates social cohesion - their experience becomes therefore useful, as a way of building an identity related to the social group of which the Prophets and so many other farmers are part of (BRUNO; MARTINS, 2008).

As such, the prophecy is the force that maintains a functioning social identity among the Prophet and the small farmer, providing a proximity with the future, reducing the distress of its uncertainty and allowing it to presentiate itself so that an action can be implemented accordingly. Ergo, a prophecy deeply defies the powerlessness of the *sertanejo* when faced with such forces of nature and the world.

3. Anima Mundi

For the Prophet of Rain, nature is an open book waiting to be read. There are no secrets to be deciphered or rituals to be performed, there are just signs that only an attentive ear and a trained look can recognize, because this listenable word is born connected to another sense: it is birthed from the gaze. The Prophet’s perception differs from the contemporary view that always seeks to see everything all the time; at this point, it is not a matter of seeing more than others, of seeing everything. It is an intimate visibility, especially concerning the way the individual reacts to the world. Unlike the scientific approach, which perceives the world as a supposedly objective field that one must scrutinize and grasp, the Prophet’s gaze requires the world’s subjectivity, the awareness of how this world affects their body, letting

themselves be filled by the world in order to be able to recognize the near future that this world carries embedded in the present.

In other words, it is not only the outside nature that attracts the Prophet's gaze. The "winter experiences" are also about reading how your own body responds to the world. Headaches, bone pains, neuralgias, sleep alterations and, of course, dreams are all signs that must be considered, in anticipation of realizing what the coming time holds. The Prophet reads both nature and the way nature affects their body, considering the world outside, but also the world inside themselves - the flight of the bees, the paths built by the ants on the ground, the way certain birds build their nests, the brightness of the full moon; all this coupled with the small pains of the body, the neuralgias, the night sweats, in short, with this body that reacts to the rhythms of the world (SILVA et al., 2014).

This way, men's body is no longer separated from nature, they infiltrate this world to build their visions and substantiate their words. Nature does not pertain solely the outside world, from which individuals distance themselves to see it from afar, but dialogues with another one, with which one lives in communion (VIEIRA, 2006). The world is first felt, perceived, and only then signified. The Prophet is the one who unites imagination with feeling once more, circumventing the notion of a separation between the Self and the World, rescuing the world's ability to provoke us imaginatively, embodying the imagination and fusing it with matter again, be it either from the earth around them or from their own body.

As stated by Hillman (1993), in order to feel we must imagine, and to imagine we must let ourselves be permeated by the world. Being open to the world, looking at it properly, as the Prophet does, implies letting ourselves be affected by it, allowing it to provoke our imagination, which then becomes filled with hope, fear or other feelings, leading us to observe more and more carefully the world that is presented before us. The world has something to communicate to us in its images - for the Prophet, nature is a being who exists insofar as it is perceived, also granting existence to the individual to the extent as they perceive themselves in nature (HILLMAN, 1997). Moreover, it is possible to conclude that the Prophet has an aesthetic reaction to the world, given that whenever we let ourselves be affected by the presence of a phenomenon, we can say that we are facing the idea of aesthetics, meaning that we are affected in an aesthetic way:

The Greek word for perception or sensation was *aisthesis*, which originally meant to inspire or lead the world inward, the breath interrupted (...) in the face of surprise, fright, amazement, an aesthetic reaction to the image (*eidolon*) presented (HILLMAN, 1993, p. 17, my translation).

The world that reveals itself to the Prophet through its signs is aesthetic, it is therefore an aphrodisiac world, since one of Aphrodite's

epithets was precisely “the one who reveals secrets” (SCHENK, 1992). Aphrodite is the representation of the way we understand the world, the nakedness of things as they reveal themselves to an aesthetically affected imagination.

The world of the *sertão*, consequently, communicates something to the Prophet, it affects them. The world becomes a *pathos*; not suffering itself, but affectation. The very adjectives used by writers, musicians and farmers demonstrate this *pathos* of the land: sometimes it is a furnace that burns, sometimes it is a form of Judgment Day, a punishment or pain, the madness of the *sertanejo*, but it can also be abundance, wealth, happiness, redemption. In these various images, the Hillmanian notion of *Anima Mundi* is rescued, and the world is recognized as that which provokes us in our imagination.

Let us imagine the *Anima Mundi* not above the world that surrounds it, as a divine and remote emanation of the spirit, a world of powers, archetypes and principles transcendent to things, somewhat within the material world as its unifying panpsychic life principle. Instead, let us imagine the *Anima Mundi* as that special soul gleam, that seminal image that presents itself, in its visible form, through everything. So *Anima Mundi* points out the animated possibilities offered in each event as it is, its sensory presentation as a face revealing its inner image - in short, its availability to the imagination, its presence as a psychic reality (HILLMAN, 1993, p. 14, my translation).

What is enunciated from this aesthetic reaction is the very existence of oneself and the world: to be is to be perceived. The word's power lies in the evocation of what it represents and, as such, the individual announces nature itself, the world itself, as the perception of the world's presence evokes the affections that will be enunciated in the their word.

The Prophet seeks, in a way, to speak of that which, in the end, does not belong to the sphere of man, but far surpasses him, entering the field of the transcendent. They seek, with their words, to appease the anguish engendered by so many years of built up fear, in a world where a bad prognosis can severely affect people's lives. The reading of the signs and the prophecy of a good winter contributes not only to social cohesion, but also to the maintenance of hope and to the support of an ever-changing tradition, that, regardless of the scientific knowledge development, is constantly being enriched over the years, as it is modified by new “winter experiences” in a world that remains aesthetic, brought in, provoking us while revealing itself aesthetically. At last, a beautiful world comes into view before our eyes in an aphrodisiac way, coming into existence as it gives us existence, sometimes in the form of redemption, rain and abundance, sometimes amid the always present possibility of drought, death and this “blue that dazzles, but maddens us”.

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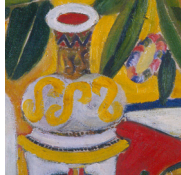
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Listening to the Voice of the Earth: an (Eco) Psychology for the Climate Emergency

Marco Aurélio Bilibio Carvalho

Article



Abstract

This article examines the ecological roots of Jungian thought. Bringing Jung, Hillman, and Merrit's perceptions of the relationship between the psyche and the living world to which it belongs into focus is crucial in our time when human action has caused perhaps irreversible disturbances to the balance of the planet. The Jungian clinical approach, in embracing the massive environmental challenge, is moving towards an (Eco)Psychology. There is no shortage of elements for tackling such an urgent challenge.

Keywords: Climate emergency; Ecopsychology; Deep Ecology; Ecocide; Arrogance.

Introduction

Back when Hillman (1995a) said that after 100 years of psychotherapy, the world was getting worse and worse, he had considered the ecological disaster that Western society had left in its wake. However, the information he knew about climate emergencies, which mark a potentially irreversible phase of disaster, had come from reading and talking about scientific reports. Hillman also lived in a time of regular seasons, without the frequent extreme weather episodes that we are beginning to experience and witness more and more regularly. What Hillman knew – and what science warned about – came to be called “the new normal”.

Now, because we are experiencing the effects of climate change, the still-reluctant denialist talk about its non-existence is bordering on irresponsible and even ridiculous. Hillman's work implied that the field of psychotherapy needed to rethink itself. Yet one aspect of this rethinking has quickly become urgent: our relationship with the planet that has mothered us all through our individual and collective existence. Von Franz showed how this revisionist agenda

was embedded in Jung's heart. He claimed that in the later decades of his life:

"Personal injuries... did not affect him as much as the suffering in the contemporary world, the devastation of nature, the problems of overpopulation, war, the rape of still flourishing non-Christian cultures by the brutality of modern technology. For Jung, these problems were an agony that kept him constantly and tirelessly searching for any possibility of a healing transformation that could emerge from the depths of the psyche." (von Franz, 1998).

Jung died on June 6, 1961, and never got to witness what he knew was coming: a powerful collective ecological consciousness, which erupted just a year after his death. In 1962, an American biologist, who had become famous for her popular articles and radio programs on marine life that delighted audiences, published a work on the effects of pesticides, one of the pillars of agricultural monoculture, on the food chain. Rachel Carson's (2010) research showed that the toxic substances accumulated in the organisms that encountered them, passing from poisoned insects into the bodies of birds, weakening the chemical structure of their eggs and preventing the safe development of their offspring. These substances were also found in breast milk and were associated with various health problems. This 1962 work marks the dawn of the contemporary ecological movement.

Jung's ecological awareness, featured in many of his writings, spawned works and articles that highlighted a strand of Jungian thought, called by Dennis Merrit (2012) a Jungian ecopsychology. Jung recognized the deep connection between inner and outer nature. He viewed the rootedness of the psyche in the world of nature as key to his conception of the human being, and he did so not just through an intellectual delving into the foundations of being, but through direct experience. His gaze on nature was that of an old man full of ecological wisdom, with deep insights into the unity between psyche and nature.

The article entitled *The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary* (Naess, 1973) is an influential milestone in the development of the ecological movement. The Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess describes the activist position that attempts to reduce the impact of consumer society on ecosystems – shallow ecology – and the activist position that dares a radical philosophical exercise to find in the human mind the causes of the behaviors that destroy these ecosystems - deep ecology. Following this article and a series of other publications, the Deep Ecology movement emerged, at once an area of environmental philosophy and a social movement that proposed a change in the way we think about the planet. One of its ideas was to assume that all species of living beings have an inherent value that is not linked to our economic interests in them. He also proposed that we should reduce our presence on the planet

if our excessive existence implies a reduction in the rights of other species to also exist. Naess saw the anthropocentric perspective as the root of environmentally dysfunctional thinking.

A deep ecology calls for a deep psychology and it is within this conceptual framework that I see Jungian thought entering the arena of ecological thinking. Firstly, by pointing out that, at the root of the ecological crisis, there is a psychic structure marked by a deep cultural complex, which makes us beings who think of themselves as disconnected from the natural world. Secondly, by realizing, as Hillman (1995a) did, that our ways of working may be re-enacting the anthropocentric cultural complex that disconnects us from the web of life. There is a deep urgency for Jungian (eco)psychology and (eco)psychotherapy to care for the wound of disconnection. This wound is mirrored in the political and economic relationships with which our species relates to the web of life, which ends up transferring our inner wound to it, intoxicating it with products, extinguishing species, disrupting ecosystems, and ultimately even climate stability.

The idea that the wounds inflicted on the planet are closely linked to the wounds of the soul is the core argument for Jungian ecopsychotherapy. Not only are they associated, but in an almost synchronistic fashion, these wounds mirror each other. The scenes of environmental devastation, the burning of tropical forests, savannahs, and wetlands, and extinctions, which are worsening while the psychiatric symptoms of human populations increase, are all sides of the same coin. However, it seems rather difficult to assimilate such a notion at present. Not that there is anything wrong with it. It is just that the cultural complex of patriarchal anthropocentrism has conditioned our perception to overlook the link that connects us to the living world, making us desensitized while keeping the way open for the destructive exploitation of the web of life.

It would be a professional disaster if, at such a critical moment in history, any Jungian analyst were to remain unaware of this link between the human psyche, embodied in an organic system comprised of the same compounds as the planet, and the very planet that gave us motherhood by endowing us with its biochemistry and a peculiar expression of its psyche that we call the human mind. Within the urban-industrial-and-consumer society, we are enduring an unfair relationship of abuse with this great mother, which affects us all. It is shaped as a disintegration of the omnipresent biotic family by the ecocidal arrogance of a species that, no longer guided by instinct, is capable of ecologically unwise choices, since its knowledge is nowhere near the ancestral ecological wisdom that has allowed our species to safely reach this moment in history. A Jungian analyst is as much a product of his time as his patient unless he has stripped himself of misconceptions, and beliefs in dissonance with the movements of the soul or with the courses of action of the web of life. In the former

case, Jungian analysts who embody ecological alienation in their work, unaware of it, will work from an anthropocentric perspective and in favor of the urban-industrial-and-consumption perspective, unconcerned about the self-destructive course of this approach.

In the second case, the picture is quite different. The analyst who manages to bridge the gap between the individual psyche and the collective psyche, and adds to this bond their belonging to the great mother and the ethical demands of this belonging, will become a revolutionary force for the preservation of the biosphere. The delicate web of life is embedded in his thinking, his living, and his professional work. Not only his practical choices in daily life but also his professional performance convey Jung's own awareness of our psychic connection to the world of nature. The potential tragic outcome of the climate crisis, for example, is encapsulated in the following statement: "Nature may not win the game, but it cannot lose." (JUNG, OC XIII, § 229).

Aligned with the ecological wisdom laid out in the well-known Letter from Chief Seattle (Perry, 2007), a classic of ecological literature, which claims that whatever happens to the Earth will happen to Earth's children, Jung makes it clear that we are not living in a game in which either the exploitative mentality wins or nature wins. If nature loses, it is simply the end of life. In other words, it is the suicide of the tormented mind that pursues the goals of superiority, greed, and domination that Zoja (2000) referred to as arrogance, our tale of loss of limits. Pressured by its pain, its emptiness, its inner sense of smallness replaced by the external trappings of supposed greatness, the tormented contemporary mind is unconsciously arranging its end of the line.

Western humans no longer need superiority over nature, be it outside them or inside them. For they already have both to an almost demonic perfection. What they lack is the conscious acknowledgment of their inferiority to the nature around them and within themselves. They must learn that they cannot do exactly as they wish. If they fail to learn this, their own nature will destroy them. They are unaware that their own soul is rebelling against them in a suicidal way. (JUNG, OC XI/5, § 870).

The ecological crisis must be understood as a symptom. Roszak (2001) asked what Freud, Jung, or Sullivan would think of a CEO who kicks himself to make another million, whilst sweeping away the rainforests. He added to this the idea that we live in a so-called normal madness, which is the result of the repression of what he called the ecological unconscious. For him, this is a dimension of the psyche that holds the history of the evolution of life and, therefore, the source of our sense of belonging, loyalty, and reciprocity towards the great mother. In the tormented mentality that seeks its self-dissolution, both the sense of belonging and those of loyalty and reciprocity

are absent. It is dramatic to think that it is this mentality that is, at this very moment, making the political and economic decisions that affect us all.

A Jungian ecopsychotherapy must acknowledge that there is a serious collective illness in progress that is not restricted to anyone but stems from certain traits of the dominant culture. Therefore, it is urgent to take a critical look at this cultural complex of ecological disconnection, heir to the patriarchal-imperial-colonial-capitalist-modernist tradition focused on competition and power, starting from what this complex suppresses. The analyst must first recognize the subtleties of the disconnection complex itself, for it is in all of us to some degree, as it could not be otherwise since we are children of this tradition. However, this is only the first step towards restoring health, a concept that must be broadened and understood as a reflection of the quality of relationships. Understanding health as associated with the quality of relationships, if stripped of its anthropocentric bias, will reveal multiple layers of relationships that are full of meaning, but which have been left in the shadows in the era of the climate emergency: relationships with the planet.

As is well known, relationships arise between entities, but when it comes to a non-human entity like the planet, we could easily think that this is a one-way relationship. After all, a planet is an astrophysical entity that does not belong to the field of human relationships. Because of our tradition of knowledge inspired by patriarchal lineage, there is no psyche outside the human mind. Hillman (1995b) reminds us that 19th-century physiologists believed that animals did not feel pain, since such sensitivity is inherent only to psychic functioning. Not by chance, slaves and indigenous people were also denied the status of beings with souls. The cultural complex of disconnection with nature runs deeper and extends to disconnecting with whatever is perceived as different and a potential target for power, control, and exploitation. Since the 19th century, much has evolved in terms of recognizing animals as sentient beings (Low et al., 2012); however, human sensitivity to animal sentience is conveniently dampened and ridiculed in the arena of livestock farming, for example. These animals are also denied the status of sentient beings, allowing the abusive and brutal relationship we witnessed with humans in the Holocaust, slavery, and Indigenous extermination to be reenacted daily with a species different from us. Clearly, the mentality at the root of climate collapse is just the latest and current example of its approach to what is perceived only as something exploitable and devoid of any rights. The image of the blue planet captured by astronaut William Anders' camera in 1968 objectified yet another body that suffers the consequences of unhealthy relationships: that blue body dancing in dark space, while bringing everything to life, is the last stronghold of the war that the tormented mentality is waging against its own destiny.

It was once believed that our ancestors were members of their village, their family, and their territory, and only in their own little realm of life did they believe they could leave their mark. However, the findings of science have shown that nothing could be further from the truth. Everything influences everything. This field perspective remains absent in the mindset tormented by the pursuit of gain and power. Hence the seemingly unbridgeable conflict between the economy and the ecological. The former does not fit into the latter, its natural place, due to the lack of understanding that there is nothing outside the relationships of the web of life. Jung expressed this understanding as follows:

The soul suicidal turning is a self-regulating mechanism attempting to restore that sensitive perception that recognizes the soul of what we relate to. This sensitive perception is torn apart by the brutality arising from the inflation of the ego at war with its inner nature and outer nature, the core trait of the patriarchal-imperial-colonial-consumerist mindset. The objectification of the magnificent web of life and consciousness that we call nature walks hand *in* hand with the objectification of the human soul, whose inability to be listened to is the source of authoritarianism of all kinds and, more recently, the exploitation of people's time and vital energy in the service of an economic system that operates objectification.

The history of the objectification of people and nature dates back a long way. No matter how many movements – such as the ecological movement, organic farming, biophilic cities, and respect for animals – the slow movement proposes a life spent with more time, such as eating more calmly as opposed to *fast food*, or slow travel, to experience places as opposed to seeing many places in a short time but not experiencing any, and the minimalist movement or voluntary simplicity – are counteracting the objectification of oneself or nature, objectification is still the norm. The efforts of psychotherapies may not achieve a radical existential repositioning, as Hillman (1995a) highlights, but they do pave the way for sensitivity. Its scope is associated with the extent to which analysts have repositioned themselves, bearing in mind that no good psychotherapy creates models of how others should be. The existential repositioning that an analyst can inspire does not stem from giving advice, much less from setting a model, which would be nothing more than vanity. Rather, it stems from offering moments of self-perception that recognize the expressions of the soul, listening carefully to its subtle movements.

Yet the other half of the equation can still be overlooked: the de-objectification of nature and the planet as a living entity. How far is this an office issue? It would not be if the analysts had not yet sought to decontaminate themselves from the patriarchal-imperial-colonial-and-consumption lineage that transforms life into a product. Nor if the analyst is living in denial, like the average person, about the

climate tragedy that has been announced, not to mention the many ecocides and species that have become extinct precisely because of their objectification. It is this cultural complex of disconnection with nature that vows to lead us to extinction too. As we can see, its absence from the therapist's work portfolio will cost us dearly, as it is already costing the species that share this planet with us. It seems too much to ask of an analyst to look critically at the mentality in which we live, but no good analyst is trained otherwise, especially in the environmentally bleak times we are living in.

As Nazism exploded in Europe, many insightful analysts, artists, scientists, and thinkers fled to other continents to escape persecution. Many of those who stayed, for lack of critical reading, loyalty to those who would stay, or any other reason, paid with their lives for the choice they made. In the climate holocaust, there will be nowhere to run. There is no escaping it. However, it takes the same degree of perspicacity as those who saw the dangers of Nazism to do what you have to do as a citizen. The escape now is towards breaking out of denial, assuming citizen positions for the radical defense of the right to life, and not just our life, but the life of all species. The much-needed escape is also in the opposite direction of apathy and impotence, faced with the scale of the problem and the unpreparedness of our political and economic leaders to solve it in time. Inaction will cost us dearly.

So much for the need for Jungian ecopsychology and ecopsychotherapy. Fortunately, it already exists, pioneered by Jung himself. If he was not more explicit in his decision to treat relationships with nature as a symptom, I believe it was because this was not an urgent issue in his lifetime, even more so in the beautiful Swiss countryside in which he grew up and lived. However, it is worth recalling that, in many passages of his work, he was absolutely clear about the relationship between inner and outer nature. The core of Ecopsychology is Ecopsychology: Healing the Mind, Restoring the Earth. From this perspective, healing the individual implies healing the relationship with the Earth. The first step is to remove the planet from the category of thing and experience the radical sensitivity that allows us to see this celestial macro-organism as a living entity permeated with consciousness, the stage of a world that is full of consciousness. Hillman (2006) is absolutely right to evoke the idea of a new animism, for it resets our gaze. No longer that animism seen as the infancy of consciousness, as in 19th-century science, but one based on the science of animal behavior, plant behavior, the behavior of chemical elements, the behavior of atoms, and the behavior of the Planet, as described in the experiments that gave rise to the Gaia Theory (Lovelock, 2020), which portrays the Planet as a living organism. The ancient idea of *Unus Mundus* is a truth to be experienced intimately.

Final remarks

Living as active members of this living and conscious world evokes in us feelings of loyalty, belonging, and reciprocity, which are incompatible with how our societies and our economy behave. This is a revolution that must arise from a sensibility that is rescued and lived in its full depth. The image to inspire our systemic notion of health must be that of a planetary community centered on the quality of relationships, including the inevitable and necessary pains since suffering plays an essential role in both biotic and psychological renewal, of which the pains of childbirth are a universal symbol. Yet planet Earth itself is the core symbol of this major transition, the pains of which are now evident and others announced. The Earth is this biotic community in which each element fulfills its ecological function. It is a wonderful symbol of unity and interdependence, which ecologist David Suzuki (2009) has called Sacred Balance. The mentality that does not perceive such a sacredness, not viewing it in religious teachings or the teachings of science, is the greatest expression of alienation, arrogance, and ignorance, as well as being a criterion for excluding future political and economic leaders. I believe that this is one of the most significant conclusions that our heirs will reach when they look back and try to understand the choices made by their great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents if they are to have a future.

We of the present generation have no choice but to welcome planet Earth as our interlocutor and that of our patients. To listen to it as we listen to them. Let it tell us what it expects from us. Also, let it tell us what each species that still survives our presence expects from us, although it is proving to be destructive. Insofar as this planet is the great mother that brought us to life, it is also the mother of all the layers of our being. I believe that the self is its mirror and, even more so, its spokesperson.

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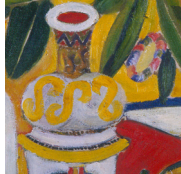
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CROSSING THE 21ST CENTURY: FROM CHRISTIANITY TO THE AGE OF SPIRITUAL MACHINES

ANDRÉ DANTAS

Article



Abstract

This article aims to show, based on the symbolism of the Age of Pisces, how the modern materialist mentality was structured based on an enantiodromia of Christian metaphysics. That enantiodromia the seeds of what it denied. The idealism denied by modern materialism then returns, at the core of what denies it, in the image sensationalism that binds us more and more to screens. Techno-imagined reality is purified of its mundane imperfections and distilled into a virtual image that re-presents it in an ideal version. Idealization appears in the process of intensifying the sensoriality of the image, which sanitizes its imperfections and asymmetries. The techno-image has an advertising form that works like an empty mold, one that works by idealizing the content, showing it not as it is, but as it should be, its ideal image.

Keywords: Age of Pisces, Christianity, Materialism, Techno-Image.

To make the journey through a century that, before completing its first quarter, has already brought so many changes and catastrophes, it would be prudent to have a map in your hands. As might be expected, a literal one would be impossible, since much of what we are about to cross has not yet been travelled, and therefore not mapped. However, a symbolic map would be psychologically useful in outlining the fantasies of the future that are already present as seeds. In his book *Aion*, Jung presents us with this map when he looks at the archetypal image of Pisces that drives the spirit of our time. In this image, we see two fish swimming in opposite directions and connected by a silver thread. One fish swims upwards and the other downwards. Jung sees in this duplicity the intrinsic link between the spiritual form of medieval consciousness and the material form of modern consciousness. Existentially, the spiritual and material forms of consciousness shaped the first and second halves of the Pisces age, respectively. In the first millennium of the Christian eon, divine existence became the central issue. The Christian scales tipped in favour of the spirit and all the qualities belonging to it had a much greater

weight in the articulation of culture, while the second millennium marked the materialistic turn of the descending fish.

The ideal of spiritualisation that aspires to the heights had to be countered by materialistic passion, attached solely to the things of the earth and occupied with dominating matter and conquering the world. This transformation became manifest at the time of the 'Renaissance'. This term means 'new birth' and was used to indicate the revival of classical antiquity. We now know, however, that this spirit was, at heart, a mask and it was not the concept of classical antiquity that was reborn; it was the Christian thinking of the Middle Ages that was transformed, adopting strange forms of pagan behaviour, exchanging heavenly destiny for earthly destiny and thus moving from the vertical line of the 'Gothic' style to the horizontal line of the discovery of the world and nature. The subsequent evolution that culminated in the French Revolution and the Enlightenment produced a state that is widespread today, which we can only describe as anti-Christian, and consequently realised the early Christian anticipation of the 'final age'. It is as if, with the advent of Christ, previously latent antinomies had become manifest, or as if a pendulum had swung more powerfully to one side, and from then on the complementary movement also pushed to the opposite side. No tree, we know, grows towards heaven if its roots do not also extend to hell. The double movement is inherent in the nature of the pendulum (JUNG, OC, vol. IX/2, §78).

As the journey proposed here is psychological and not astrological, it is not a question of which specific year we enter and which exact year we leave the sign of Pisces. Psychology is the logos of the psyche and not of the stars, so the narrative is not about the sign but about the symbol of Pisces, about the way in which the psyche self-regulates in its double swimming. The objective referent of the sign of Pisces is not quantitative time, but psychologically qualified time. Based on this psychological quality of time, we can imagine travelling through the 21st century by first taking a step backwards, reminiscing about the past in order to better understand the present and, from there, taking two steps forwards in a speculative attempt to imagine the future based on the present fantasies we already have about it.

The archetypal manifestation at work in the genesis of the Pisces age is that of the logos. We may not forget that the logos is one of the faces of the animus archetype, as well as the spirit, and that this archetype initiates this age because it ontologically opposes the spiritual fish to the material one. In the Pisces age, the animus takes the form of a logos that breaks the eros that united it to nature. In polytheism, the archetype of eros unites spirit and matter, overriding the logical opposition, so that mythical images are intellectual in themselves because they are expressions of unity in the difference between *esse in intellectu* and *esse in re*. Mystical participation with nature means that there is no dissociation between the head and the body, and so sensory images are animated by implicit thoughts.

The ontological opposition between spirit and matter in monotheistic cultures governed by the logos led to a greater separation between

essence and appearance and thus to a dissociation between the senses and the intellect, with the consequent ontological downgrading of the former in the name of the latter. The spiritual was emphasised by consciousness, making essence ontologically real and appearance a mere sensory illusion. What we are experiencing in modernity is an enantiodromia in which the body, appearance and the *esse in re* return to obsess consciousness with the same intensity with which they were denied. Modernity is an enantiodromia of Christian metaphysics, it is the age of the antichrist.

The silver thread of the dove of the Holy Spirit, which connects the spiritual to the material, was, before the age of Pisces, a soul sphere that united the opposites within itself. *Esse in intellectu* and *esse in re* were contained in *esse in anima*. As in the circle of the Tao, the continuous flow of the Yang into the Yin makes it clear that, ontologically, the opposition between the two is secondary to the union and that, for this reason, eros is in the foreground in relation to logos, so that the world is not made up of extra parts which, by definition, are separate from each other. Everything is one with the Tao, everything is part of the great path of nature.

In polytheism, there is already a logical opposition between spirit and nature, but 'erotic' complementarity predominates over it, so that the opposition is at the bottom of a unitary ontology. Mythology is polytheistic because it is organised by an ontological unity in which the spiritual appears in the most different natural phenomena. This personification of the spiritual in a natural image is what constitutes a myth-image. The polytheistic gods are not transcendent creators, but 'subtle' aspects of the world itself and therefore display their supernatural qualities through nature itself. In the fertility brought by rain, in the heat radiated by the sun, in the destructive power of a volcano, a myth-image radiates numinosity.

The monotheistic god, on the other hand, looks at nature from the outside as a tool created by him to demonstrate his power. By radically separating itself from nature, the spiritual acquired the possibility of being a unique and universal god. While remaining united with nature, the spirit shone through the phenomena, so that each natural phenomenon radiated a specific myth-image through its particular qualities.

The Hebrew God is the god of the logos, of the word, whose narrative maintains their cohesion as a people. This monotheistic religion brought the logos into consciousness with its emphasis on the word and the consequent iconoclastic relationship with the natural myth images of other deities. The walk through the desert towards the Holy Land embodies the state of being of logical consciousness, a consciousness whose affirmation denies the natural, which thus becomes a desert of life. The sword that destroys the golden calf in the

desert is the personification of the cut between the spiritual and the sensory. The golden calf is the personification of the spiritual radiating into the natural, it is an expression of the numinosity of nature, of the value it has for consciousness and is therefore a representation of the Hebrew past, of the time when the Hebrews had a land. The moment they become the people in search of a promised land, whose real location is not even on earth but in heaven, they can no longer rely on rooted nature, they need to trust in the word that holds the people together, even without a natural ground to refer to. As an expression of the natural earth that needed to be left behind in the name of the spiritual, the golden calf needed to be denied in the name of affirming the logos written on the stone tablets. The Hebrews are spiritual nomads, because the spirit is what takes away the natural place of the human.

But this *opus contra naturam* would not be complete as long as the universal god was the particular god of a specific people, whose members were linked to each other by natural ties of consanguinity, and whose descent was through the maternal line. To be truly universal, God could not be exclusively Jewish, and Christianity pushed his counter-naturalness even further.

The greater separation between God and nature meant that Christianity ceased to be a cult passed down through family lines, becoming capable of encompassing all cultures and, precisely for this reason, a cult that was too abstract. Christianity aspired to universality, the reconnection not of a specific people, but of all individuals with the true universal. That is why it needed to sever blood ties, differentiating itself from religions based on kinship. This Christian separation from the union of blood ties was compensated for by the expansionist fervour of converting other peoples. Cults based on blood ties, as was the case with Jewish monotheism, were not, in the ancient world, driven by this conversionary furore that materialised the abstract universality of Christianity. For ancient cultures, the important thing in winning a war was to plunder the enemy's wealth, capture slaves for manual labour, force the defeated culture to pay tributes over time and count on the help of their armies in battles against common enemies. For Christian cultures, this was not enough, but it was also necessary to conquer the souls of the vanquished, to convert them to the 'true' God.

Expelled from animate nature, God had to submit it to his supreme will which, in order to be supreme, could not be limited by any intrinsic teleology, even if it was one he had created at the beginning of time. Disenchanted, nature became capable of being manipulated at will by a Creator whose reason was instrumental, as he used natural entities as instruments to realise his goals. A disenchanted nature comes into existence based on the notion of

a God who looks at it from the outside, who treats it as a neutral instrument, who handles it as a tool subject to his will.

By focussing his consciousness on this image of God, by meditating on it, by concentrating on it as an ideal to be followed, man slowly developed his abstractive capacity, separating himself from nature to look at it from the outside as a *res extensa*, as an aggregate of extra parts without any intrinsic archetypal form. Just as the sacred was unified in the form of a single god by being externalised from nature, the mind was unified by externalising itself from nature and objectifying it. And since there was no longer anything spiritual in nature, it could be seen as a tool by a man who also no longer had any archetypal form to serve as his final cause. Its purposes were at the service of a will that was potentially as free as that of its creator. The monotheistic God became the archetype of the emerging modern ego.

In the Prayer to the Dignity of Man, written by the Renaissance philosopher Pico della Mirandola in 1487, we witness the Christian God incarnating in modern man.

Neither a fixed abode, nor a form that is yours alone, nor any peculiar function have I given you, Adam, so that according to your desire and according to your judgement you can have and possess the abode, the form, the functions that you yourself want. The nature of all other beings is limited and restricted by the boundaries of the laws prescribed by Me. You, who are not restricted by any limit, according to your own free will, in whose hand I have placed you, must order for yourself the limits of your nature. I have placed you at the centre of the world so that you can more easily observe everything that happens from here. I made you neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honour, as if you were the creator and moulder of yourself, you can shape yourself into the form you prefer (MIRANDOLA apud TAYLOR, 2005, p. 260).

Man, the last of the divine creations, was also the icing on the cake of creation because, unlike the other creatures, he had no archetypal form to model himself on. No archetype governed him *a priori*, because he had been created in the image and likeness of his Creator. His model was his own Being, free from any archetypal constraint, and his will mimicked the omnipotent will of his Creator. This makes him capable of recreating himself, of becoming whatever his will desires. The rational human will is a divine gift that allows man to recreate himself by choosing his own nature.

This is the moment of the crossing where I return to try to understand the present from the past and risk pointing out what today constitutes an effective prayer for the dignity of this human being capable of recreating his own nature. I stress the term 'effective' here because it is a ritualised prayer, one that is concretely acted out by people in general, just as the medieval prayer ritual was. However, firstly I would like to remind everyone that, in the present day, spiritual

consciousness has been inverted into material consciousness. The greater the height reached by a God, the greater his fall, and the Christian God, having reached the highest transcendence, has plummeted into the most mundane immanence. As we are going through the age of the descending fish, this prayer is effective because it is actually an anti-prayer, the anti-prayer of the selfie.

The selfie is a celebration of the highest value of individuality, it is an anti-prayer, *i.e.*, an inverted prayer in which the individual does not ask for something from the universal, from God, but asks for recognition from other individuals. If in prayer the individual asks God for something by praising his majesty, in the selfie the individual asks for likes from others so that, through the hearts of others, the individual narcissistically praises himself, just as God loves himself through the love of his creatures. The selfie is the ritual of hypermodern ego worship, the display of its majesty which, paradoxically, is sustained by collectivism.

In the selfie, what is apparently worshipped is the singular image of one's own face, the materiality of the face rather than the ideality of a universal god. But the materiality of the singular face that is celebrated is that of an idealised body, shaped by a collective ideal, by an abstract form that exists *a priori*. In the selfie, the face, what is most individual about it, is filtered through virtual forms that aestheticise it according to collective standards to be echoed by followers. "Spectacularised" according to the idea of beauty, the face loses its materiality through techno images, thus abstracting itself from the individuality that makes it concrete. The numinosity of individualism that makes it worshipped in selfies is because individualism is aesthetically idealised according to collective criteria, making its techno-image the expression of the current tension between the individual and the collective, the material and the ideal. It is the ideal returning symptomatically in the core of what negates it, in the bodily materiality that is 'photoshopped' by being techno-imagined.

Today's consciousness is capable of seeing the material hidden in the spiritual ideal, seeing, for example, in the higher spiritual being a copy of the secular patriarchal authority, an authority that needs to be bought with tithes and flattered with prayers begging for favours. But today's consciousness, due to the materialistic paradigm that structures it, is often blind to the idealism hidden at its mundane core. If we look through today's virtual world, we 'see' the spiritual idealising the material, because everything important and interesting is posted, and this post is converted into energy waves that circulate through the air. This shows how much life lived materially on Earth is shaped by immaterial light.

In the language of the esoteric tradition, we can say that matter here has obtained the status of a 'subtle body'. It has been alchemically refined, sublimated. In

this sense, what is digitalisation if not a total dismemberment, a pulverisation of the 'body'? Electronic media and, even more so, completely wireless transmissions via infrared rays or satellite, moving at the speed of light, are the form in which material reality comes closest to the mind or spirit. According to Schelling, light is the ideal or spiritual in nature, an analogue of the mind in the wider world. It is something intellectual, but something objectively posited. It is ideal and material at the same time. The mind or intellect does not have to be subjective, it does not have to occur exclusively as a human mental activity. With this idea in mind, we are in a position to understand, in its contradictory nature, the externalising movement we observe. By stripping itself (in the sense of kenosis, an 'emptying', Phil. 2:70) of what used to be its inalienable property and sinking into the material reality of electronics, the mind frees itself from its dependence on our personalistic subjectivity and enters a state of objective and 'autonomous' existence independent of us. But this materialisation doesn't mean that it has lost the character of mind. On the contrary, through this influx of mind, matter has been reciprocally sublimated, vaporised, distilled and thus spiritualised to a higher degree. In this way, mind and matter exchange their natures. Mind acquired the objective and independent existence of matter and matter acquired the subtlety and invisibility of mind. It is a double movement: the incarnation of the logos ('the Word became flesh') and the "logification" of matter (GIEGERICH, 2007, p. 318).

The silver thread that connects the spiritual fish to the material is also a channel in which each swims to dive into the other. And by tracing this Piscean fluidity, we can dive into the 'deep web', the shadowy depths of the net, the idealisation of essence by spiritualising appearance, dematerialising it on screens into pixels of light.

The movement away from the ground to become light takes place in the background of the narcissistic appearances that circulate on the networks. The images of bodies posted on networks are intangible lights, idealised virtual bodies. And in order to be virtualised, to permeate the air, asceticism is necessary. You must have a fit body, you have to perform to be interesting. The body is virtualised by the idea of beauty and efficiency, which in turn is embodied in the material body that is surgically modelled on the simulation of this ideal.

In what is known as the 'passage from myth to logos' in ancient Greece, we can see logical consciousness breaking the 'erotic' bond with nature through philosophical discourse, especially Platonic. In Platonic philosophy, the spiritual is no longer the radiance radiated by natural phenomena, but a light that is in a place that transcends appearances. This light, represented by the sun, is the most perfect Idea and therefore the most beautiful, the Good. For Plato, the Idea of Ideas, the hierarchically highest Idea is the Idea of the Good, which is also the Idea of the Beautiful, because the Good is the most Beautiful of all Ideas, so that the ideal form of something is the perfection of that something which we try in vain to copy in the profane world. The Idea of each thing is its good, its beauty, its perfection, and the Idea of Good itself displays the beautiful rational perfection of the whole. In

modern profane society, goodness in the metaphysical moral sense has materialised as efficiency. Good is something efficient. A good car, for example, is an efficient car, a car that does its job well. The goodness of something has become its efficiency, the perfection of its performance, so the activity that exposes goodness is no longer religious or metaphysical-philosophical, but advertising.

The advertising image was born out of the death of Platonism, the affirmation of this profane world as primary in relation to the ideal world of Platonic forms. Advertising is the fruit of the Sophist perspective in which the human being is the measure of all things and truth is defined by discursive practices and can thus be moulded rhetorically. But the negated Platonism returns at the core of what negates it, it returns so that the rhetoric created to persuade the consumer is based on the creation of idealised doubles of the advertised merchandise. Advertising has become the means by which something is communicated efficiently, an efficiency achieved through spectacularisation, aestheticisation and performative inflation that will seduce the most attention.

It is less the content of advertising that influences people's minds and more the way in which this content is shown, the advertising way of dealing with any and all content, the technique that instrumentalises the content so that it appears at its best in terms of aesthetics and performance. If the issue were content, it would be enough to do the 'right' advertising, to publicise humanitarian, ecological and politically correct actions so that we could live in a better world.

Advertising is numinous not because of what it shows, but because of the sheer act of spectacular display. It is the symptom of the inversion of the spiritual in the material, of essence in appearance. It is the cult of appearance for appearance's sake, of the image without any substantial content, without anything essential. On the internet, anyone and everyone can go viral and become a digital influencer doing the most ludicrous things, because what matters is their spectacular staging and not the content.

This appearance, which shows nothing substantial, which is not the appearance of something specific but pure and simple appearance, is appearance in its most absolute essentiality, and in this essentiality of pure appearance we see the return of essence by abstracting appearance from its own 'flesh'. In modern appearance, the negated essence returns so that what appears does not appear for its own sake, but appears according to the idea of 'beauty' and 'goodness' that, in metaphysics, shaped shapeless matter and, in advertising, spectacularises the material, idealising it as more beautiful and efficient than the referent, in such a way that the image becomes hyper-real, more real than the real by making the essential shine on the surface, thus turning it into an idealised material.

Structured in advertising, today's techno-image shadows the material body with its virtual light, so that the matter of the body is modelled by the idealised images in advertising to be seen as much as possible on the screen. In the contemporary compulsion for plastic surgery, we see idealism returning in its opposite, in the core of the body's immediate materiality, which is modified to meet the ideals of beauty displayed on screens. The model's body is an ideal model of the body, an idea of the body that denies the material body, as we see in the spread of anorexia among those who want to have the fashionable body.

In *Scoop*, Woody Allen says that, after having deluded himself with Judaism and Christianity, he was now trying the religion of narcissism. And this hypermodern religion of narcissism worships the body, but not the material body with its cellulite, its moles and scars, its wrinkles and grey hair, but an idealised body that only exists as a mental idea, the 'photoshopped' body of the model that appears on the cover of the magazine, the image of the body edited by a computer program to be displayed on social networks and which people suffer in gyms and surgery clinics to materialise. What is worshipped in hypermodern corpolatry is a platonic body, a beautiful and efficient image of the body that individuals sacrifice themselves to embody.

Life is idealised to be liked by others, because individuals perceive themselves through the echoes reflected in social networks, they see themselves based on the impact that their techno images have on others, measuring their real lives through them. Hypermoderns live lives that are increasingly individualistic and, at the same time, increasingly dependent on the likes of others. Everyone has become a paparazzi of themselves, everyone wants to appear, because the essence of being is now appearance. 'I show myself, therefore I am'.

This dynamic appeals to the narcissism of everyone who wants to be seen by others. In mythology, Narcissus was cursed with attachment to his image and so grew up deprived of mirrors by his mother. But when he went out hunting, he ended up seeing his image in the lake when he followed the echo of his voice repeated by the nymph Echo who, hidden in the forest, watched him passionately and repeated his questions when asked about his identity, because she was cursed to repeat what others said. This narrative embodies the Greek intuition that the image you have of yourself depends on how it echoes in others. The more attached you are to your self-image, the greater your dependence on its echo in others; the more Narcissus, the more Echo.

Desire is the desire of the other, because there is an echoic aspect to desire, a collective aspect hidden in singular desire that makes narcissism rely on being desired by the other, which makes individuality depend on recognition. A child's psychic development

is based on the way its parents echo it. In the 'erotic' polytheistic consciousness, this echo was at the forefront of individuality, the surname was above the name, the values of the clan took precedence over individually constructed values. Modernity is the inversion of this relationship, it is the emphasis of logical consciousness on the first person singular.

However, if the more Narcissus, the more Echo, then a culture of narcissism is also a culture imprisoned in the image echoed by the other, a culture in which the negated collectivity returns to the core of what negates it, in the narcissistic gaze at its image reflected in the gaze of the other. In the selfies posted incessantly to be liked by others, Narcissus contemplates his image. We must remember that the mirror in which Narcissus sees himself is the mirror of water, the surface of a liquid that dissolves the part into the whole. The desire for recognition of individuality is inverted in the desire to be collectivised, because to be liked you have to please others, you have to mould yourself to the tastes of others.

Everything interesting is posted, everything important is shown to be enjoyed. The fact that travellers spend less time contemplating the place they have travelled to and more time with their backs to the landscapes and monuments, taking selfies for others to see, shows how important life is lived more for others than for oneself. And through this collectivisation, the hypermodern individual is electrified, hyperactivated as if they needed to accelerate in order to reach the speed of escape from the earthly world, thus becoming part of the technical image flow, circulating at the speed of light through the air we breathe.

Techno-imagination matter becomes increasingly aestheticised, sanitised, beautiful and good, free of the imperfections that characterise materiality itself. The sensuality of the virtual image is not material but ideal, filtered by a computer programme. The virtual image is what the viewer idealises it to be. It is what the content should be and not what it actually is.

These techno images are injected into our eyes through screens. And with each passing day, we find ourselves more dependent on the stimulation felt when these images respond to the shocks of our fingers on the screens. In today's techno-image, we see how addicted we are to the physiological stimuli of the nerves. This is the materialistic aspect of modern existence. But in order to excite us, we need ever more elaborate images in terms of appearance, we need computer programs that perform and aestheticise the image, that model it according to the ideal of efficiency and beauty. The hidden ideal shines darkly in the intensification of the sensory, thus sensory hyper-realisation, making it more real than the real. The materiality that excites us, electrifies us, is ideal, it is the glow of idealism hidden

in materialism, it is the ideal shaded as the colourful, insubstantial luminescence of the image.

After this archetypal archaeology of our spirit of time, it is time to speculate about the future based on the fantasies we have of it in the present. One of the most important fantasies is an auspicious event for the journey that awaits us at the end of the century. This was the implantation of sensors in the arms of Kevin and Irena Warwick in 2002. The microchip in the nerves of one's arm communicated with the device inserted in the other's arm, and this electronic connection between nervous systems allowed each person's brain to receive pulses when the other moved their hand. When someone touched Irena's hand, the scientist felt the same sensation in his own. Kevin referred to this as an initial form of telepathy via the internet, which will be perfected to the point where we can not only convert subtle cheek movements into a computerised voice, as in Stephen Hawking, but also have this speech heard only by those we want, because it will be transmitted to the brain itself with a neurochip from the receiver. In the future, we will be able to communicate our sensations and thoughts to each other by brain.

Today it is already possible to consider the mobile phone as a kind of transitional object, a symbolic extension of our inner world. In time, smartphones will become glasses, which will become contact lenses, until they become miniaturised in the form of microchips implanted in our brains. This is the aim of brain-chips, which are already being tested today. Through them, the physical sensation recorded in one person's brain is repeated in another's brain and the aim is to make the entire brain experience of microchipped humanity accessible in a 4d virtual hologram, one that will simulate not only images and sounds, but also sensations. This 4d internet will simulate each and every lived experience by activating the same electrical pattern in the same neural networks activated in the original experience. It is a 4D simulation, not a 3d simulation, because it is not just a matter of "seeing and hearing something that jumps out of a screen", but of neurologically feeling the other person's entire neurological experience. It is a material simulation of mystical participation with the other person's mind, an immersion in the experience through technological implants.

This 'brainet' (Miguel Nicolelis) will make it possible to access sensations and experiences lived by anyone in real time. Both those that are happening at the moment and those that have been recorded in the memory of servers scattered across the Earth. It will be possible to experience all the brain reactions that, at some point, were experienced by everyone who is neuro-connected.

In our eyes it may seem unimaginable that someone would allow such an invasion of privacy, but we see today that more and

more people are displaying their private lives for anyone to see on the web. Dreams, desires, family, emotional and sexual life – it is all there. Even the most intimate details are made available. If the problem in modernity, according to Bauman (ENTREVISTA..., 2024), was the threat that the newly conquered individuality received from state totalitarianism, in hypermodernity the situation has been reversed. It is not the public sphere that threatens the private one, it is not the individual whose privacy is invaded by public interests, but the public sphere that is invaded by individual privacy. The Internet is the realisation of Big Brother and people do not fear it. On the contrary, they want to be stars, even for a measly fifteen minutes. It does not matter if companies access this content to obtain information about the private lives of their employees or potential clients. What matters is appearing, being on the surface where things happen. Everyone wants to be seen.

In the future, digital influencers will monetise their lives by allowing people to access their brains by immersing themselves in a neuronal simulation of the influencer's past and present experiences. Lives will be like films that can be accessed in a cerebral immersion of neuronally reactivated images, sounds and sensations. In the film *Strange Days*, Ralph Fiennes plays a dealer in CDs that contain the experiences of others. At one point, a snuff film falls into his hands, a CD containing a recording of an anonymous person's brain experience as he rapes and kills women. This kind of material is the hard drug that circulates in the hidden backstage of this techno and voyeur civilisation.

Byung-Chul Han (2017) talks about the impossibility of religion in today's times of total transparency, because religion implies mystery, and this mystery presupposes something that is beyond the ordinary visible. But in the satellite gaze, which roams the Earth in an electronically sealed vessel, we see how today's pornographic transparency short-circuits the total divine gaze, how techno-voyeurism materially embodies divine omniscience, omniscience that is completed with the virtual cerebral network. Denied by spiritual consciousness, the erotic surface of images has exploded with full force, seducing today's material consciousness in such a way that, enantiomorphically, the spiritual returns at the core of what denies it, in the omnipresence of telepresence, in the pornography of techno images that aim to break the fourth wall by 'resonating carnally' (PAASONEN, 2024) in the masturbatory participation of the spectator in the image.

The dissolution between observer and observed, which engages the spectator's material body in the future pornographic brain-chip, makes it clear that the promised rapture, the union with the universal One that would spiritualise our body like the resurrected body of Christ, will happen materially in an electro-orgasmic wave hyper-stimulated by the fantasy of total transparency of a soul pornography.

In this view, consciousness is physical on the one hand, a network of positively existing neurons, and meta-physical on the other, as it takes the form of a virtual reality in which everything that has been experienced can be simulated and shared, a collective consciousness with no specific spatial location, an omnipresent and immortal consciousness, embodied in materiality that is then made explicit as an idealisation. On the other hand, the spirit is materialised, experienced as electricity circulating in a neural network that occupies a specific place in the brain. But these material neural networks are dematerialised, in the sense that the spatiality that materially determines them as an extension is converted into energy, into microwaves that travel at the speed of light through the air we breathe.

This fusion of machine and organism gives birth to the cyborg and this image of the man-machine hybrid shows the ideal radiating in its material shadow because it is the image that personifies the techno-image itself. In the cyborg, external machines are internalised in the human body and, thanks to this, internal thought is experienced in a simulated virtual exteriority, whose immersion is cerebrally stimulated. If, on the one hand, the mind becomes a material extension, on the other hand, the material becomes a mental extension. When the logic of opposition is taken to the extreme, it is inverted into its opposite, dissolving the opposites into a monster (*monstrum*), a conjunction in which the opposites have lost themselves in each other. And the cyborg is the image of this techno-alchemical monster (*monstrum*).

The term 'cyborg' first appeared in an article by Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline in 1960. The term referred to the integration of cybernetic systems with the human organism to facilitate adaptation to the adversities of extraterrestrial environments. The body of the cyborg is the body of the astronaut who leaves earthly existence behind and ascends celestially. In the man-machine monstrum that looms on our horizon, it is not existence on planet Earth that is literally left behind, but fleshly life that is denied in the name of an ideal body, a body technologically rebuilt to live on a planet that, due to the intensification of global warming, has itself become an alien planet, thus reflecting the very human who has acted throughout the Christian eon as an infiltrated alien, an incarnate angel. The cyborg is the spiritual body incarnated in matter. In it, immortality ceases to be something to be achieved in the spiritual world and becomes material with the exchange of pieces of flesh organs for artificial organs and bone limbs for cybernetic limbs.

The cyborg's collective mind dematerialises individual materiality by transforming it into energy waves that circulate through the air ready to be sucked in and enjoyed by the collective. The screen that serves as a narcissistic mirror, hyper-individualisation of consciousness on the one hand, and hyper-collectivistic on the other hand, by merging with biological vision and making each individual vision a

part of a large multifaceted insectoid eye. Neurons will be elevated to the heavens looking down on the world via satellite, so that the human nervous system will swallow up the earth, immersing it in a techno-cave of simulations.

The whole brain-chip civilisation will surf on oceans raised by global warming and on electromagnetic waves that will permeate everything. This techno-hive is an electromagnetic world soul whose altar celebrates a simulated double of life in 4d, an altar that breaks the fourth wall of the Platonic techno-cave by immersing the tele-spectator in the scene through neural hyper-stimulation, an immersion that is the simulation of the negation of the sensation of spatial distance on which the positivity of today's identity is based. Called extended reality, this techno-image is a digitalisation of all solid materiality energetically vaporised and reconstructed into a techno-idealised version, a shared fantasy world that floats around the globe for the various microchips that connect each individual cog in the social machine.

Being *tele*, dissolving distance, is the negation of the experience of space that allows the experience of one's own individuality. The human is spiritualised, transmuted into electromagnetic energy flying at the speed of light, thus instantly being anywhere on Earth and having access to any part of the whole. The screen inserted into the eye itself materialises the alchemical desire for the vessel to be an equivalent of the world and for its gaze to be like the divine gaze roaming all of reality from the outside, materially simulating the vision of *sub aespice aeternitas*. This is the profane version of omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence, the materialisation of the predicates that characterise the image of God.

Could this be the end of the journey through the 21st century? Will this century end with an inverted rapture in the form of the immortal body of machine man? Will the rapture, instead of uniting us to the divine universal, instead of immersing us in spiritual oceanic feeling, immerse us all in electro-orgasmic waves of virtual voyeurism? Will we go through our century as desiring machines that enjoy immersing themselves in techno images that simulate the dissolution of the logical opposition between the imaginary and the real? Will we end up immersed in a techno-imaginal world? If so, then the journey through the 21st century will be uroboric, with the end of the Pisces age taking us back to its beginning, to the time when the mental and the material were one and the individual was a drop in an ocean of collective consciousness. Instrumental science, the material version of the logos that dissociated mind and matter, will literally reconnect the opposites, materialising the mind while dematerialising matter in an internet of things, of machines around the globe that will move according to brain-chip thought. Peter Sloterdijk reminds us that the essence of magic is tele-activity. To act magically is to act on an object

from a distance and this is exactly what technology is doing more and more.⁷ The past is not remembered symbolically, it is acted out literally and, by enabling thoughts to flow through the air like waves of energy, science will show us that at its heart it is techno-magic.

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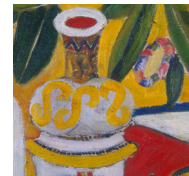
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Jung's Gnosis in the Context of the Transition of the eons

Luís Paulo Brabo Lopes

Article



Abstract

In this article, we discuss the context of the transition of the Eons as a period characterized by the modification of the constellation of dominants (the archetypes) of the collective psyche, that is, by a metamorphosis of the gods. This situation is accompanied by the death (or loss of effectiveness) of the myth that characterized the previous Eon and by the irruption of the collective unconscious into individual experience, to form the myth of the new Eon. It was not by chance that in late Antiquity, precisely in the transition from the eon of Aries to the eon of Pisces, Gnosticism flourished, and, later, Christianity crystallized. And it is precisely in the transition from the eon of Pisces to the eon of Aquarius, the period in which we find ourselves today, that Jung's gnosis is situated. Since the publication of the Red Book, the central role of active imagination in the Jungian method has become clear, as has the importance of numinous experiences in the unfolding of the process of individuation. A more in-depth discussion is needed here about the importance of this process not only in terms of expanding the individual's consciousness, but also in relation to the role it plays in the birth of the myth of the new aeon.

Keywords: Gnosticism, Gnosis, Red Book, active imagination.

Introduction

The publication of *The Red Book* by C. G. Jung brought the record of his confrontation with the unconscious to the public. As we have seen, Jung's delve took him to profound regions, traversing personal contents and arriving at the collective unconscious (the locus of the birth of the image of God). We can easily say that *The Red Book* is a book that synthesizes Jung's gnosis, that is, the understanding he acquired through the assimilation of the collective unconscious. Through the numinous experiences described in *The Red Book*, Jung found, in the first person, the personification of his soul and the figure of the wise Philemon. Jung not only allowed the unfolding of these archetypal fantasies from a mysterious mythopoetic source (the unconscious)

but also participated in this myth as a protagonist, dialoguing and living transformative experiences with the figures he encountered.

Considering this, we can now have more clarity about what Jung meant when he stated that his psychological concepts were not philosophical, but strictly empirical. This is the type of empiricism that Jung often refers: the immediate numinous experience and its unfolding into a personal myth through active imagination. Thus, Jung first came to know his *anima* through his visions and only later developed the concept of *anima* to integrate his psychology, from gnosis to episteme. If we relate the theoretical developments of Jung's psychology after his crisis of transformation with the experiences and elaborations in *The Red Book*, many of his later theoretical elaborations originated in these inner experiences, or at least were strongly influenced by them.

For example, one of Jung's important insights (which would be elaborated much later in the book *Aion*) concerning the transformation of the constellation of the dominants of the collective psyche (the archetypes) in the transitional periods between the eons (i.e., eras) already appears in a painting by Jung at the beginning of *Liber Novus* (*The Red Book*).

It is not a presumption that drives me, but rather the medical conscience that advises me to fulfill my duty to prepare those few who can listen to me for the events that are in store for humanity and that signify the end of an eon (era). As we know from the history of ancient Egypt, these are psychic phenomena of transformation that always occur at the end of a Platonic month and the beginning of the following month. Apparently, they are modifications in the constellation of psychic dominants, of the archetypes, "the gods", that cause or accompany secular transformations of the collective psyche. This transformation has been fed into historical tradition and has left its mark. First, in the transition from the era of Taurus to Aries. Then, the era of Aries to Pisces, whose beginning coincides with the Christian era. Now, we are approaching the great change that can be expected with the entry of the spring equinox in Aquarius. (JUNG, OC, vol. X/4, §589).

Jung understood that during the transition period between eons, a metamorphosis of the gods occurred, or rather, a modification in the constellation of the dominants of the collective psyche. Thus, in each eon, there is an archetypal constellation in the background and, therefore, there is a specific myth. Therefore, the end of an eon is accompanied by the loss of effectiveness of the myth (the death of the image of God) and inaugurates a moment of the greater irruption of the collective unconscious into the consciousness of individuals to give birth to the new myth, which will come to characterize the new eon. A modification of the psyche of each individual evidently accompanies such a modification of the dominants of the collective psyche. Thus, a new eon also means a new man.

1. The role of gnosis in the transition of the eons

In the image on the first page of *The Red Book* (Figure 1), Jung illustrates a serpent rising from a flaming cauldron under the sea. The serpent reaches the sky and appears crowned. In the lower region of the image, there is a chthonic/underwater scene, just above it, there is an ancient city and then the daytime sky. The detail that I would like to highlight, however, is found above this terrestrial sky, in which we can see the Moon, next to it, the planet Saturn, and some other small planets, indicating the astrological region of the planetary spheres. Further up we see the region of the fixed stars with their zodiacal constellations. On the left, there is the constellation Cancer, followed by Gemini, Taurus, Aries, Pisces, and Aquarius. Between the representation of Pisces and Aquarius, there is a bright Sun highlighted.



Figure 1. Image of the first page of C. G. Jung's *The Red Book*.

Source: *The Red Book – Liber Novus* (JUNG, 2017)

Anyone familiar with Jung's work and his later writings, especially the book *Aion*, will have no difficulty in realizing that Jung is addressing in this image the question of the transition from the current eon of Pisces to the next eon, linked to the constellation of Aquarius. The constellation of Cancer, in the upper left corner of the image, evidently

refers to the eon of Cancer (8700 BC to 6600 BC)¹ followed by the eon of Gemini (6600 BC to 4400 BC), then Taurus (4400 BC to 2300 BC), Aries (2300 BC to 150 BC), arriving at the current eon of Pisces (150 BC to the present day) and finally indicating the coming eon of Aquarius. The bright Sun highlighted between Pisces and Aquarius constellations shows our current moment of transition between these two eons.

The main figure is a representation of the Sun's precession through the zodiacal circle. Astrological observations have linked the vast history of mankind to the gradual shift of the Sun's equinoctial position relative to the fixed stars, a transposition within the zodiac marked every 2,200 years or so. At the dawn of Christianity, the Sun had entered the astrological house of the two fishes, the constellation Pisces. The solar rising point is about to transition into the zodiacal constellation Aquarius, inaugurating a new era.

In the first four words of *Liber Novus – Der Weg des kommenden*, 'The Way of the Coming One' – Jung has interwoven a graphic history of the past and a prophecy of the future. [...] The preface statement of *Liber Novus* offers, in a complex image, the mythopoetic proclamation of a new eon that is approaching: an epochal turning point in human history (OWENS, 2011, p. 256, own translation)².

For Jung, the enormous spiritual effervescence in late Antiquity that marked the historical moment of the emergence of Gnosticism did not occur by chance since it was precisely the period of transition between the eons of Aries (ending around 150 BC) and Pisces. This historical development would culminate in the emergence of Christianity, an expression of the new archetypal constellation that characterizes the eon of Pisces.

It would perhaps be more appropriate to speak of *Gnosticisms* in the plural since we are not talking about a single, structured school with a cohesive body of doctrine; on the contrary, Gnosticism is characterized by immense plurality. There were many schools and masters, each with their texts and bringing influences from distinct traditions, such as Greek, Egyptian, Jewish, and Persian, to name just the principal ones. We know, however, that the Gnostic groups were

¹ The dates of all eons presented are approximate, as there is no consensus on them.

² In the original: "The key figure is a depiction of the sun's precession through the zodiacal circle. Astrological observations linked the vast human story with the gradually shifting vernal equinoctial position of the sun relative to the fixed stars, a transposition within the zodiac marked every 2,200 years or so. At the dawn of Christianity, the sun had entered the astrological house of the two fish, the constellation of Pisces. Now the solar spring point is on the cusp of transitioning into the zodiacal constellation of Aquarius, inaugurating a new age.

Within the first four words of *Liber Novus – Der Weg des kommenden*, 'The Way of the Coming' – Jung intertwined a graphic tale of the past and a prophecy of the future. [...] The preface declaration of the *New Book* offers, in complex image, the mythopoetic proclamation of a coming new aeon: an epochal turning-point in the human story" (OWENS, 2011, p. 256).

not isolated from each other. Despite the plurality, there was a lively exchange between them because even with the differences there was something in common that united all these groups: Gnosis.

The central ideas of Christianity are rooted in Gnostic philosophy, which, following psychological laws, necessarily developed when classical religions became obsolete. This philosophy is based on the perception of symbols of the unconscious process of individuation, which is triggered when the main collective representations that dominate human life break down. In such periods there is necessarily a certain number of individuals intensely possessed by numinous archetypes; these latter are driven to the surface to form the new dominant ones. (JUNG, OC, vol. XII, §41).

Jung argues that the loss of effectiveness of the myth that characterized the Aries eon (the classical religions) meant a crisis of civilizational proportions. This fact would have created the ideal condition for the emergence of Gnosticism and, later, for the structuring of Christianity. This historical moment preceded the decline of the Roman Empire and the consequent transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, which demonstrates the undeniable transitional aspect of this period. Jung understands that the emergence of Gnosticism was not a random historical event, but something based on a specific archetypal dynamic. That is, from time to time, whenever an eon, or Platonic month, comes to an end, there is a transformation in the constellation of the dominants of the collective psyche. This implies the loss of effectiveness of the myth that characterized the previous eon (the death of the old image of God) and, as a result, a broad spiritual crisis is triggered. Without an effective image of God or a structuring myth, a transition period begins, characterized by a greater incidence of individual symbols. In other words, the process of individuation is not only favored, but also becomes necessary for the collective unconscious to be assimilated by the consciousness of individuals (i.e. gnosis) and the new myth can be born. In other words, without a living and active myth, capable of serving the population as a whole, the collective unconscious is attracted by the consciousness of individuals who have suffered the disintegration of the dominant ones, and thus a new myth can be formed.

They [the alchemists] continued the work of the Gnostics (who, to a certain extent, were more theologians than heretics) and the Church Fathers in a new era, instinctively recognizing that new wine should not be put into old wineskins. Just as the serpent changes its skin, so the myth needs new clothing in each new eon, so as not to lose its therapeutic power. (JUNG, OC, vol. IX/2, §281).

Thus, when we speak of gnosis, we are talking about religion in *statu nascendi*, that is, the moment when the new religion emerged directly from the unconscious. Currently, thanks to the discovery of important Gnostic texts, with special emphasis on the *Nag Hammadi*

Library (which took place in Egypt in 1945), we can reconstruct the spiritual context of the transition period between the eons of Aries and Pisces. For example, according to Brum et al. (2020), in the context of early Christianity, Jesus was considered an important Gnostic master (i.e., school of the Ophites), as revealed by several Gnostic texts with very different content from the well-known canonical Gospels. These texts are marked by their esoteric content and by the reserved (i.e., apocryphal) teachings of Jesus for his immediate disciples. That is, the school of the Ophites was one of several Gnostic schools that flourished during this period of transition between the eons of Aries and Pisces. Thus, in a historical sense, there is no doubt that Christianity arose from Gnosticism.

As we also know, in the centuries following the death of Jesus, a great process of standardization of Christianity began, with the formation of councils that defined the "official religion", from which the Bible emerged. This period was characterized by intense persecution of "heresies", that is, of Gnostic groups, which, due to their plurality, threatened the doctrinal intention of defining an official religion for the empire. The period of transition between the eons, characterized by Gnostic spiritual effervescence, ended, and the new myth, a new image of God (i.e., Christianity), was crystallized, reflecting the new constellation of the dominant forces of the collective psyche that came to characterize the eon of Pisces.

Not without violence and bloodshed, the Gnostic schools were eradicated; their texts were destroyed and officially refuted by the Church Fathers. We can consider that this process was carried out quite effectively since very few Gnostic texts survived this period of persecution. Thus, in Jung's time, with a few exceptions, the books of the Church Fathers were one of the greatest sources of literature on the Gnostics refuting them and affirming the doctrinal body of official Christianity.

Jung discusses this exact moment when, after a long period of Gnostic effervescence, the new myth begins to emerge and, through dogma, begins to have a protective effect on the consciousness of individuals, threatened with possession by archetypal contents due to the disintegration of the dominants. We know, thanks to psychopathology, that the irruption of the contents of the collective unconscious into consciousness is not without danger, and one of the functions of dogma is precisely to protect the consciousness of individuals from this risk. Thus, with the advent of Christian dominance, it is a matter of "believing" to relate to the collective unconscious through the mediating image of dogma and no longer through immediate numinous experience.

To the extent that the archetypal content of the Christian drama was able to express the restless and pressing unconscious of the majority satisfactorily, the

consensus omnium (consent of all) elevated it to the status of a truth binding upon all; this did not occur, however, by an act of judgment, but by a much more effective irrational possession. Jesus thus became the protective image against all the archetypal powers that threatened to take hold of people. The good news announced: "It has already happened and will never happen again if you believe in Jesus, the Son of God!" However, this could and can happen to anyone who suffers from the disintegration of the Christian dominant. (JUNG, OC, vol. XII, §41).

We can observe, in this historical period, the process of the death of the myth that characterized the Aries eon (the classical religions), the emergence of an intermediate period characterized by the irruption of individual symbols and the assimilation of the collective unconscious (i.e., gnosis) and, finally, the crystallization of a new myth (from the original experience) with its doctrinal and dogmatic body, expression of the new archetypal constellation related to the eon of Pisces.

If we return to the image on the first page of *The Red Book* (Figure 1), Jung points out that, in the current period, just as in the period of the ancient Gnostics, we are in a moment of transition between eons. Thus, we are currently also facing, before our eyes, a spiritual crisis on a civilizational scale. Nietzsche's prophetic announcement that God is dead, although it cannot be taken literally, nevertheless contains a great truth. Thus, the image of God linked to the archetypal constellation that characterized the eon of Pisces has increasingly lost its effectiveness. Once again, we are entering a period of transition in which the contents of the collective unconscious seek the consciousness of individuals to form a new myth gradually.

At the beginning of this text, we discussed the upper aspect of the opening image of *The Red Book* (Figure 1), that is, the zodiacal constellations indicating the transition of the eons; I would now like to point to the lower aspect of the same image. In the lower-left corner, the cauldron is within the chthonic/underwater region, in the unconscious from which a serpent rises. Thanks to the fire, the serpent rises to the sky, where it is crowned, rising in splendor and royalty. Thus, we understand that in this period of transition between eras (indicated in the upper part of the image), the collective unconscious approaches the consciousness of certain individuals, and its contents rise from the chthonic darkness. Thus, they are assimilated by consciousness so that the new image of God is formed. The ascending serpent is a well-known symbol linked to gnosis, present in the mystery religions of Antiquity, among the Gnostics, and even in the alchemy of the Middle Ages. So, there is no doubt that this painting by Jung illustrates his gnosis, which occurred in the transition period between the Platonic months indicated at the top of the illustration.

The fact that this image (Figure 1) is the opening illustration of *The Red Book* is quite revealing about the role of the book since it is

not a book about Jungian psychology, but a book that summarizes Jung's gnosis. In other words, we are talking about Jung's religious experiences, which took place mainly between 1913 and 1919, and which continued until the beginning of the 1920s and were more sparsely noted in his diaries until 1932 (i.e., the period in which the records of *The Black Books* ended).

First, there were six sequentially dated diaries, known as the "Black Books," which he began on November night in 1913 and continued through the early 1920s. These diaries can best be described as his primary and contemporaneous record of a journey of discovery into imaginative and visionary reality, what he called "my most difficult experiment." By 1915, as the magnitude of his experience had sunk in, he needed a more formal and elaborate record of the visions. With great artistic skill—using ancient illuminated calligraphic text and impressive artwork—Jung labored for sixteen years to translate the primary record of his Black Book experience into an elegant, folio-sized, leather-bound volume: this is the famous but long-sequestered *The Red Book*. Jung titled it *Liber Novus*, *The New Book*. (OWENS, 2010, p. 2, own translation)³.

2. Metanoia, active imagination and individuation

Em várias ocasiões posteriores, Jung mencionou a atitude dogmática de Freud não admitindo qualquer refutação dos pilares centrais da psicanálise, como a questão da centralidade da sexualidade, por exemplo. Assim, com a publicação desse livro em 1912 Jung foi rebaixado da condição de "príncipe herdeiro" da psicanálise para a posição de herege nos círculos psicanalíticos.

Jung was 38 when, in 1913, he had his first visionary experience recorded in his diary (i.e., in *The Black Books*), which would characterize the beginning of a long process of descent and assimilation of the unconscious. The previous year had a crucial importance in his life when he published the monumental work *Symbols of the Transformation of the Libido* (organized in his complete works in volume 5, under the title *Symbols of Transformation*). Jung knew that the publication of this book would cost him dearly, specifically, it would mean his definitive break with Freud. At least since 1909, the relationship between Jung and Freud had already shown important signs of wear

³ In the original: "First, there were six sequentially dated journals, known as the 'black books', which he began this night in November of 1913 and continued through the early 1920s. These journals might be best described as his primary and contemporaneous ledger of a voyage of discovery into imaginative and visionary reality, what he termed 'my most difficult experiment'. By 1915, as the magnitude of his experience penetrated him, he felt the need for a more formal and elaborate recording of the visions. With great artistic craft — employing antique illuminated calligraphic text and stunning artwork —, Jung labored for sixteen years translating the primary record of his experience from the black books into an elegant folio-sized leather-bound volume: this is the famous but long-sequestered *Red Book*. Jung titled it *Liber Novus*, '*The New Book*'" (OWENS, 2010, p. 2).

and tear, with the divergences between them becoming increasingly evident. On several subsequent occasions, Jung mentioned Freud's dogmatic attitude of not admitting any refutation of the central pillars of psychoanalysis, such as the question of the centrality of sexuality, for example. Thus, with the publication of this book in 1912, Jung was demoted from the status of "crown prince" of psychoanalysis to the position of heretic in psychoanalytic circles.

In this critical context of his personal life and also in the transition period between the first and second half of his life, Jung entered a profound crisis that would lead him to follow the fantasies that emerged from his unconscious, in what he would call his "confrontation with the unconscious". The development of active imagination played a central role in this confrontation and through it, Jung accomplished his descent, lived visionary experiences, had encounters, and carried out dialogues with archetypal figures of the collective unconscious.

It is worth mentioning here how we use the term "fantasy" because due to modern prejudice, this word has acquired a connotation of something unreal. Thus, we often see the word "fantasy" used as an antonym of reality. On several occasions, Jung discusses that for modern man, due to the growing tendency towards materialistic rationalism, the soul has become a "nothing more than", that is something with an absolutely inferior dignity to the so-called "real world", or rather, to the experience of the external world. For Jung, however, "fantasy" means reality, because "what it acts, it is true" (JUNG, OC, vol. VII/2, §353). Thus, if someone is assailed by the fantasy that his neighbor is his enemy, he will probably create animosity towards him. In this way, the so-called "real world" is constantly traversed by fantasy; and declaring it unreal only makes the consciousness ignore something that actually traverses it.

However, when we approach fantasy in the context of active imagination, it is important to make a distinction, since we are not dealing here with a fantasy that, because it is projected (mixed with the outside world), despite its undeniable reality, produces a kind of illusion, confusing the external object with the image of the unconscious projected onto it. On the contrary, in the context of active imagination, fantasy reveals the background unconscious processes, which would otherwise appear projected or imposing on consciousness in the form of possessions. This means that when fantasy is experienced in the form of visions, through active imagination, consciousness has the possibility of retracting the projection. Therefore, Jung states that "modern psychotherapy seeks to make them [the contents of the unconscious] conscious by the method of active imagination" (JUNG, OC, vol. XIV/2, §107).

In essence, active imagination consists of emptying consciousness of its contents, allowing fantasies that arise from the unconscious to

cross the threshold of consciousness and come to the surface, and the ego actively engages with these fantasies. In his 1938 seminar on *Yoga and Meditation*, Jung discusses active imagination:

I have discovered that if one keeps one's attention on these traces [of dreams or fantasies] and concentrates on them, a curious phenomenon of movement takes place, just as when one looks at a dark spot for a long time, and it then begins to animate. Suddenly one can discern the shapes of one's inner background. (JUNG, 2020, p. 75, own translation)⁴.

This would be the first stage of active imagination, which we can call "letting it happen", consisting of visualizing an image, which can be a fragment of a dream or passive fantasy, for example, and maintaining the focus of attention on it without letting it sink back into the unconscious. Thus, the image, as if fertilized by attention, begins to come to life. That is, it becomes a fantasy that is the living, imagistic expression of the unconscious processes constellated below the threshold of consciousness. "This is a meditation, that is, an impregnation of the background, which becomes animated, fructified by our attention. Through this means, contents still in development emerge clearly". (JUNG, 2020, p. 78-79, own translation)⁵.

Then, we come to the second stage of active imagination, that is, the active engagement of the ego with the fantasy that has emerged from the unconscious. At this stage, the ego must enter into the fantasy, engage, and dialogue with the images and personifications of the unconscious. Jung emphasizes the fundamental importance of the active engagement of consciousness with the fantasy that emerges from the unconscious in his text *The Technique of Differentiation between the Ego and the Figures of the Unconscious*:

The continuous awareness of fantasies (without they would remain unconscious), with active participation in the events that unfold on the fantastic plane, has several consequences, as I could observe in many cases. Firstly, there is an expansion of consciousness, because numerous unconscious contents are brought into consciousness. Secondly, there is a gradual lessening of the dominant influence of the unconscious; thirdly, there is a transformation of the personality. (JUNG, OC, vol. VII/2, §358).

For several years, during the critical period of his life, Jung was deeply involved with the fantasies that emerged from his unconscious,

⁴ In the original: "I found that if one directs attention to these traces and concentrates upon them, a curious phenomenon of movement gets going, just as when one stares at a dark spot for a long time which then begins to become animated. We are then suddenly able to discern the forms of one's own internal background" (JUNG, 2020, p. 75).

⁵ In the original: "This is a meditation, i.e., an impregnation of the background, which becomes animated, fructified by our attention. By this means, objects of still-developing circumstances emerge clearly" (JUNG, 2020, p. 78-79).

in a long and transformative process, symbolic and experiential, arising from the encounter between consciousness and the unconscious. This experience characterized the original experience that Jung elaborated theoretically through the concept of the “individuation process”. The individuation process is not restricted solely to the inner experiences of assimilation of the unconscious but also extends to the ethical developments that this assimilation implies.

Anyone who takes the trouble to reflect on this subject will arrive at an approximate idea of how the transformation of personality takes place. Through active participation, the patient immerses in the unconscious⁶ processes and, by surrendering to them, manages to master them. This is how he connects the conscious and the unconscious. The result is ascension through the flame, transmutation through alchemical heat, the genesis of the “subtle spirit”. This is the transcendent function, which arises from the union of opposites. (JUNG, OC, vol. VII/2, §358).

We call this process of assimilating the collective unconscious from individual religious experience gnosis. Jung’s gnosis was of central importance to the development of his theory, and we could say that a large part of Jung’s theoretical effort in the second half of his life was the hermeneutic task of translating his gnosis into episteme. In other words, translating his original experiences into general psychological theory.

In the end, the only events in my life worth telling are those in which the eternal world broke into this transitory world. That is why I speak mainly of inner experiences, including my dreams and visions. These constitute the primary material for my scientific work. They were the burning lava from which the stone that needed to be worked crystallized. (JUNG, 1989, p. 4, translation)⁷.

Final considerations

Considering what we discussed so far, we can conclude that Jung’s “descent” into the depths of the collective unconscious, and especially the contact he established with both the figure of the anima and that of Philemon (the wise old man), was related, on the one hand, to Jung’s process of metanoia and, on the other, was inserted in the broader context of the transition between the Platonic months, that is, between the eons of Pisces and Aquarius. In the second case, we

⁶ Allusion to active imagination.

⁷ In the original: “In the end the only events in my life worth telling are those when the imperishable world irrupted into this transitory one. That is why I speak chiefly of inner experiences, amongst which I include my dreams and visions. These form the prima materia of my scientific work. They were the fiery magma out of which the stone that had to be worked was crystallized” (JUNG, 1989, p. 4).

are dealing with a broader archetypal process, which goes far beyond Jung's personal life. In the same way that gnosis in late Antiquity played a central role in the renewal of myth and, thus, in the transformation of the collective psyche (at least throughout the Western world) in the transition from the eon of Aries to the eon of Pisces. At present, which is also a time of transition between the Platonic months, gnosis has the same role: on the one hand, the transformation of the personality (or rather, individuation) and, on the other, the preparation of the new myth that will characterize the new eon. Thus, Jung's gnosis is the same context and has the same role that Gnosticism had in the past. This fact is illustrated by a dream of Jung's:

I was in a distant English-speaking country. I had to return to my country as quickly as possible by a fast ship. I arrived home quickly. At home, I found that in the middle of the summer, a tremendous cold had broken out from the surrounding world, which had frozen every living thing. There was a tree there, full of leaves but no fruit; the leaves had been transformed by the action of the frost into sweet grape berries, full of medicinal juice. I picked the grapes and gave them as a gift to a large crowd that was waiting. (JUNG, 2019, p. 114).

We can consider that the healing fruit brought by Jung to his time was analytical psychology. The importance of his method should be highlighted, especially in active imagination, since it is a method that allows modern man to recover his soul, forgotten and despised in the face of a growing tendency towards rationalism and contempt for fantasy, as if it were something unreal, without any value or even something harmful. Thus, the great treasure brought by Jung to the present time was not only his psychological theory but mainly the method that allows modern man to live gnosis. Shamdasani even calls analytical psychology a religion in *statu nascendi*, since its deepest therapeutic method consists of healing through numinous experience, that is, by diving into the source from which religions are born (the collective unconscious).

In 1918, Jung stated that the de-Christianization of the prevailing worldview led to an extraordinary activation of the unconscious. This led to the French school of psychopathology and hypnotism, which formed the main sources of analytical psychology. Thus, the de-Christianization of the worldview formed the historical condition of possibility for the emergence of analytical psychology. This de-Christianization led to a flourishing of individual symbol-making and a sharp increase in the frequency of neuroses. The most pressing task was to come to terms with this activity. (SHAMDASANI, 1999, p. 543, own translation)⁸.

⁸ In the original: "In 1918, Jung claimed that the Dechristianization of the prevailing world view led to an extraordinary activation of the unconscious. It was this, in turn, which led to the French school of psychopathology and hypnotism, which formed the main sources of analytical psychology (JUNG, 1918, p. 21). Thus the Dechristianization of the world view formed the historical condition of possibility for the emergence of analytical psychology. This Dechristianization led to an efflorescence of individual symbol creation, and a marked increase in the frequency of neuroses. The most pressing task was that of coming to terms with this activity" (SHAMDASANI, 1999, p. 543).

The de-Christianization of the worldview mentioned above is equivalent to what we are discussing here as the loss of effectiveness of myth, which accompanies the transformation of the constellation of the dominants of the collective psyche in the final period of the eon of Pisces (the moment in which we are currently living). Thus, we can understand that the greater irruption of the collective unconscious into the individual experience that accompanies this period of transition meant at the end of the eon of Pisces, the emergence of analytical psychology. Jung's "descent" and his gnosis fit into this context, and his psychology emerges as a fruit of this historical moment of transition between the eons.

This is why, when modern psychotherapy rediscovers the activated archetypes of the collective unconscious, the phenomenon often observed in moments of great religious transformations is repeated; as we have already said, this also occurs in the individual for whom the dominant representations no longer mean anything. Faust's *descensus ad inferos* (the descent into hell) is an example of this phenomenon that consciously or unconsciously represents an *opus alchymicum* (alchemical work). (JUNG, OC, vol. XII, §42).

It is important to emphasize that, insofar as analytical psychology provides modern man with the means to experience the "original experience," it contributes significantly to the unfolding of the broader process of elaboration of the coming image of God. For the new image of God, a living expression of the transformation undergone by the dominants of the collective psyche that will serve the man of the eon of Aquarius must gradually emerge over the next centuries from the collective unconscious (the source of myth). As we have had the opportunity to observe in the past, this process of the birth of the new myth depends on the assimilation of the collective unconscious by a certain number of individuals (who have undergone the disintegration of the dominants) during the period of transition between the eons. Thus, we understand that not only does the individual, throughout his life, go through continuous periods of death and rebirth but also the same archetypal process of renewal occurs on a scale of civilizational breadth, with the death and rebirth of the image of God. This means at the same time the death of an old mode of consciousness and the birth of a new mode of consciousness; the death of the man of the past and the birth of the man of the future. We are currently in this period of transition in which the metamorphosis of the gods takes place.

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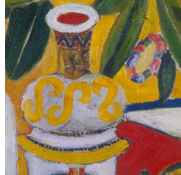
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On the verge: A poetry of the unconscious

Markus A. Hediger

Article



Abstract

The author embarks on a search for the meaning of a birthmark on his calf in the shape of the map of Brazil, interpreting it as a symbol and unfolding its effect on his life. This search leads him to reflect on his life and his non-place in the world. Finally, by following the traces he discovers in his biography, he is drawn to St. Brendan, an Irish monk from the 5th century. The study and symbolic interpretation of this saint's life introduce him to a powerful subcutaneous goddess, to whom he utters a prayer at the end of the text. It is a poetic text rather than an academic one, meant to guide the reader towards an experience rather than knowledge.

Keywords: poetry of the unconscious, incubation, symbols, St. Brendan, mirror of the soul

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My original idea had been to refer to the body as a producer of symbols. I had intended to start from an experience in which, lying down, I realized how a body in absolute stillness invariably generates visions. Ephemeral visions that disappear as soon as consciousness focuses its attention on them. In other words, I was looking to talk about the ancient practice of incubation, a technique practiced by the pre-Socratics to travel to the underworld, which inspired Carl Gustav Jung to pursue active imagination, and which Peter Kingsley describes so beautifully in "The Dark Places of Wisdom", a book soon to be published by Editora Vozes. During incubation, there is a strange sensation that it is the body itself, and not the mind, that carries me to the world of the dead. It feels as if the unconscious is on the verge

of emerging, just waiting for the right moment to hatch. The body is a producer of symbols, and the mind is just its projection screen.

But then my mother, who always calls me when I need her, picked up her phone on the other side of the Atlantic and dialed my number.

“Do you remember the birthmark on your calf? What happened to it?” asked Mom.

My mother’s question struck an old nerve. As the good nurse she is, she reminded me that you must care for what hurts.

I tried to duck the question and dodge the confrontation, I told her that my goal was to talk about the body as a producer of symbols, indeed, but not in such a literal sense.

My wife and I are about to move to Europe. I have tried to convince myself that we are leaving to be closer to my parents, who are quite elderly and need us to be more present, but my mother’s question caused a stir that calls into question the legitimacy of such a convenient justification.

That night, I went to bed tired and dreamt of an old map that showed me a place that did not exist. A splash of ink, a stain of dark pigments that the tip of a brush had left on an island traced out some night by the hand of a navigator gifted with bravery and recklessness.

When I woke up, I could not seem to find myself.

It seemed as if the night had erased all traces of myself, all the scratches left on school desks and bar tables, all the words scribbled in notebooks, on walls, and beaches.

I woke up and there was no sign of myself.

I was born in the early days of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, bound for a certain destination. As I lay in my mother’s arms, the midwife at the hospital in Schaffhausen, Switzerland, earnestly said to her: “With a head that big, your son will be a pope or a butcher. My mother, a Protestant Christian, replied: “A Pope my son shall not be”.

My head was so big that nobody paid any attention to the birthmark on the newborn’s right calf. It was only days later that my father while bathing me, called my mother and said: “It looks like the map of Brazil”.

And Mom replied: “He can be a butcher in Brazil too”.

My attempts to avoid a destiny inscribed on my skull, driven by the dread I felt at the prolonged agony of the pigs slaughtered in the backyard of our house in Campo Alegre de Lourdes, a small town in Bahia bordering Piauí, where my parents worked as evangelical missionaries, and my daily struggle to bear the weight of my head,

overshadowed for several years the message that the spot on my skin had sought to convey to me.

Once my body caught up with my head and stopped suffering from the load it was carrying when I finally had the physical resources to turn my attention to the map of Brazil printed on my skin, I never suspected that its meaning could be anything other than the obvious: my place in this world had a name that filled me with pride: Brazil.

Over more than five decades, I never questioned that Brazil was the place I should be. Not even in the 15 years I spent in my home country studying and working did I believe for a single second that I would spend the rest of my life in that little piece of land squeezed between Germany, France, Italy, and Austria. After all, I bore the mark of the country to which I belonged on my skin.

My homeland was Brazil, but I was not Brazilian.

I remember how, in high school at a bilingual school in São Paulo, I would walk around the courtyard with Andrea, a classmate from Germany, who, like me, had grown up in Brazil with a passport from another country: we dreamed of an island in the middle of the Atlantic that could provide a home for our hearts torn between two continents.

We sat on a wall next to the snack cart and I told Andrea the stories of my childhood. During the day, I ran barefoot through the caatinga, that land scoured by drought. At night, my mother would tell me in German the stories of the people of Israel on their long walk through the desert or the story of the 40 days Christ spent in the desert when he was tempted by the Devil.

During the day, I shuddered with fear whenever there was a rumor that a gunman had appeared in town. Or my eyes would widen when we were visited by the old farmer who, alone with a rifle in her youth, had fought off Lampião's gang who had come to steal the gold from her farm. In the evenings, after bathing, I would listen to the tales of the Brothers Grimm that my father read to me in German.

I was living my adventures on Brazilian soil, but it was the German language that made them into stories I could understand.

I looked at Andrea and said: "I wanted to live on an island in the middle of the Atlantic, where everything in me spoke the same language: the sun on my skin, the colors in my eyes, the madness in my heart, the judgment in my mind".

Silently, Andrea took my hand and showed me that when you hold hands with someone you love, your fingers should intertwine. And then – with her fingers intertwined with mine – she told me about the Island of Brazil, or *Hy Brazil*, or Island of St. Brendan, a floating island that traveled across the Atlantic.

We decided to seek it out once we had graduated. It seemed like the perfect destination for our dreams.

After high school, Andrea went to study in Germany, and I returned to Switzerland. When I went to visit her in Berlin, I saw her holding hands with someone else. Their fingers were intertwined. I leaned my mouth close to her ear and, hurting, asked softly: "What about the Island of Brazil, the Island of St. Brendan?"

"The island is not there. St. Brendan was a religious lunatic," she replied and said goodbye without holding my hand.

Later, I learned that the man Andrea now loved was a Marxist student who dreamed of a revolution on the continent and could never be settled for a paradise the size of an island.

The piece of land on which we seek our home in this world is an ephemeral place, a soil that slips through our fingers.

I realize now that I have always lived between worlds, not only between Brazil and Switzerland – as the son of evangelical missionaries, but also between the rugged surface of planet Earth and the streets of gold in the sky.

I say this with neither irony nor sarcasm. For a boy who, by day, imagined a treasure of gold hidden on a farm in the heart of the Bahia hinterland and, by night, dreamed of gold guarded by dragons in the mountains that rise on the banks of the Rhine in Germany, there was no more seductive image than a heavenly Jerusalem, a city made of gold whose streets reflected and mirrored the brilliance of the sun.

I now realize that my destiny was shaped not by the size of my head, nor by a heart that beat in one land and a mind that breathed the air of another. What most marked my destiny was that my body grew where my spirit was not.

Here I am in this world, yet I do not belong to it.

Saint Brendan was born in 482 A.D. in a small Irish town. He became a monk and founded several monasteries. He prayed that God would grant him the grace to find his lost paradise and understood that, for him to be granted this grace, he would have to wander to "another place", wherever "the island promised to the saints" was. Paradise would not come to him.

The oldest account of St. Brendan's travels, a text written in the 8th century, claims that 60 men accompanied him. Other later sources increase or reduce this number, depending on which trait of St. Brendan's personality they wished to highlight.

Saint Brendan's journey by sea lasted seven years. It was seven years full of adventures, just a few of which I will reproduce here.

St. Brendan leaves the Irish coast and travels west for 15 days when he and his men are pushed by a current to a rock, where they find a palace with food and are visited by the Devil.

Curiously, however, it neither attacks them nor tempts them. From there, they travel for seven months in an unknown direction, until they come across an island where sheep abound. While building a fire to roast one of the animals, the island sinks: Saint Brendan and his men discover that the island is a gigantic animal, that never minded the weight of the sailors, but could not stand the heat of the coals on its skin. Continuing their navigation, they arrive at an island whose birds turn out to be fallen angels.

Then they sail for a further six months, come across an island with a monastery, and then get stuck in a seven-month calm. Once the winds return, they are carried to an island where a white bird prevents them from eating poisonous fish. They spend Pentecost on a large sea monster, where they remain for seven weeks. They then set off for regions where the sea is asleep and the blood runs cold in their veins. They are chased by a sea serpent that breathes fire. Responding to the Saint's prayer, another monster appears and slays the serpent. On another occasion, a dragon saves them from a griffin. They later approach a coast where smoke, flames, and evil forces abound. A demon flies over their boat and dives into the sea. In the midst of this environment, they find an island with a mountain covered in clouds, home to the entrance to hell – here they come across Judas in torment. The next day, they find an island inhabited by a white-bearded hermit, who guides them to the Promised Land.

Once again, the islands emerge. One is covered in grassland and gardens. On another, the Emerald Isle, fruit trees and vineyards grow. Saint Brendan heads north. At night, "bright arches appear over the deep blue velvet of the sky". A crystal church appears on the surface of the water. Then, finally, they find the Isle of Wonders, "the land promised to the saints". Everything here is peace and joy. St. Brendan remains in paradise for 40 days before returning to his homeland.

As we look at ancient maps, it is not only striking that the continents of ancient times were different in number, size, and shape. There were also lands and islands that no longer exist. We quickly label them imaginary, products of fantasy, as they do not appear on satellite images and cannot be located by modern GPS devices. We therefore claim that they never existed. We call the navigators who sighted them centuries ago fabulists who invented the existence of lands populated by imaginary beings with unimaginable riches to excuse their nocturnal voyages by sea. We regard the missionaries who accompanied them as fanatical colonizers who, under the pretext of fighting demons, killed to conquer paradise.

We hasten to explain that the crystal church that St. Brendan sees on the surface of the water is an iceberg and that the bright arcs in the sky are the aurora borealis. Sheep Island is one of the Faroe Islands (the name conveniently means “sheep island” in Danish – and we take that as proof enough). Hell is a volcano on the island of Jan Mayen in Iceland. We even suspect that the demons spotted were polar bears.

We denounce the ignorance of our ancestors, who lacked modern science and knowledge, we laugh at the naivety of those wild adventurers who risked their lives to satisfy the longings of their hearts.

Thus, we deprive ourselves of the miracle of glimpsing an island protected by a curtain of fire in the fog, we miss the opportunity to be shipwrecked and saved by demons who cannot find their way back to hell, we no longer believe in the possibility of drinking the sweetest water of life in an oasis in the middle of the desert, because physics teaches us that although the fairy Morgana is nothing more than a fantasy figure, a story to scare children, she continues to deceive our eyes and thus tells us: do not believe in stories!

This impoverishes our souls. How rich the life of a monk was, for everything he experienced outside in the world mirrored the reality of his soul. He knew that it was absolutely crucial that his external life mirrored all that he experienced inside, for only then would he be able to know himself and, by knowing himself, know God.

The Devil's cordial visit taught St. Brendan that evil exists within him, but although it is present, it need not always manifest itself. The fallen angel birds showed him that, although they fell, they still had wings, capable of flying between heaven and earth, and that the only effect of their fall was a grammatical change, i.e. the substitution of Heaven with a capital “h” for heaven with a lower case “h”. The fights between the monsters revealed to him that not all fights need to be fought in person and that sometimes it is enough to wait for an adversary to appear who is a match for our enemy. And the seven-month-long peace certainly taught him that you should not be in a hurry to reach paradise.

What is most surprising about St. Brendan's story, though, is that once he finally reached paradise, the land of peace and joy, he remained there for only 40 days. He had devoted seven years of his life to finding paradise, but upon finding it, he only remained there for a little over a month. The number of days is striking, as it refers to the number of days Christ spent in the desert under temptation from Satan.

Allow me to ask a blasphemous question: what trial did St. Brendan have to face in paradise?

After all the adventures he had experienced, after all the dangers he had faced on his journey, St. Brendan did not know what to do in paradise. He endured 40 days of boredom and, after those 40 days, returned to his monastery in Ireland, where he lived for many more years until he died at the age of 93.

Perhaps, the theologian in me wonders, one must go through hell before learning to live in paradise. Where there is only peace and joy, where anger, hatred, cunning, bravery, and even religious fervor have nothing to do. Only love endures peace and joy. And love is learned in hell. Perhaps St. Brendan understood that there is no hell more formidable than a monastery, and so he returned to his abbey. And I say that without irony or sarcasm.

Otherwise, and this would be a more coherent explanation with the narrative of Saint Brendan's journey, he failed to see himself in the mirror that paradise offered him. Perhaps he could not find in himself the joy and peace that pervaded paradise.

What makes a simple Christian into a saint is the realization that he does not deserve paradise. St. Brendan accepted his fate and returned to the hell of monastic life, to the cell of the dark night of the soul.

I lie down in the darkness of the night and remain still. While I wait for my body to force its stillness on my mind, my thoughts return to my birthmark. I am more convinced than ever that it is time to leave Brazil.

A few years ago, the birthmark on my calf began to change shape. First, Brazil became Pangea, a shapeless, unrecognizable land mass. Then it broke like a heart. Over the last few years, the pigments have regrouped around it and given it the contours of a woman: a dress and long hair that flutters in the wind, a powerful goddess whose raised arm is the wind that breaks the waves on the high seas.

I shudder, I am overwhelmed with awe, for I can see in her the subcutaneous goddess, the catalyzing force always at my fingertips, which persists in reminding me that there is no difference, no difference at all, between the micro and the macro, between the inside and the outside, between heaven and earth, between what touches the finger and what touches the heart.

Suddenly, in the stillness of the deep night, I am overcome with dread of this ruthless goddess who will never cease to show me that the world and I are one. They call her the goddess of love, fertility, beauty, wealth, magic, war, and death because I too am ecstasy and despair, abundance and scarcity, ingenuity, and manipulation, creation and destruction, fear and love.

Embrace it, says the darkness still, and no longer flee. Wherever you run, you will always bear the world on your skin.

My breath catches, my heart stops, and in that second of utter inertia, I glimpse a world in which my dread of the goddess retreats and allows room for the fear I once had of the gods.

And then, just before being lifted by the paralyzed body into the world of those who no longer move, words like flowers from a prayer burst from the pores of my skin:

Your hand touches me under the skin

With the tip of your finger, you write stories, tales, love poems

In the vast region of the hypodermis.

Ever since I was born, you've been scribbling, sketching, erasing, drafting, writing

The story of the life you wish for me.

Whenever I bow my head to pray to You

My gaze lands on the words

Written on my chest, on my arms, on the palms of my hands

And I read.

I read it all backward.

I read it all backward.

And I live life in reverse.

As I lie down and close my eyes

I shudder, my skin crawls

In anticipation of your touch

And the nightmare you'll tell me about.

I hear it all backward.

All my life I've tried to shed my skin,

A lifetime I've tried to write my story out there in the world

All my life I've tried to convince myself that dreams aren't made or written: They are made.

All my life I've been out running around the world

Thinking I was searching for my life's dream.

In fact, it was you looking for a mirror.

The mirror reveals all things in reverse,

The mirror is the world upside down,

That's why when I saw you for the first time,

I didn't recognize myself.
I fell in love with my opposite
Through your skin, through the story you told.
Then you took the tip of my finger and placed it on your skin.
"Walk across it," you said," decipher me.
Read me from back to front,
Find the words hidden in the most secret folds of skin
And weep and shudder and recognize in my skin the story I
wrote for you."

(Perhaps you are wondering: what is this language that the goddess uses to tell us the story of our lives? Perhaps you, like me, would rather learn this divine language that reveals to us the secret of existence. A great start is to lie down, remain still, focus on your skin, and be aware of the sensations of the skin, for whenever the world touches our skin and affects us, there is a finger underneath the skin that reacts to the touch. Or hold hands with someone you love. Intertwine your fingers, and realize how your skins merge and mingle. For the language of the goddess is not language, it is touch.)

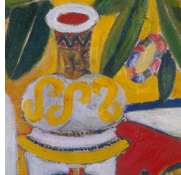
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Intersections in economics and psychology: Eugen Böhler and C. G. Jung - From Logos to Myth

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Article



Abstract

Although macroeconomic processes are present in collective and individual life, with their significant socio-historical effects and consequences, they have not received due attention from analytical psychology, remaining dissociated and on the margins of analytical elaborations. This article is the result of research since 2018 on economic topics that resulted in the discovery of the Swiss economist prof. Eugen Böhler and his partnership with C.G.Jung as early as 1938 when Jung joined the ETH and especially from 1955 to 1961 when he produced essays and books involving the myths. Critical of the abstract and rational models that still permeate economic discussions today, Böhler was the one who introduced the presence of unconscious factors to understand the complexity of economic factors. Böhler sought tirelessly move out of from Logos towards Mito (Mythos). We understand, along with M. D. Ronca and Y.Demierre, that Eugen Böhler was the first Jungian Economist.

Keywords: Logos/Mythos. Eugen Böhler. Economic Science. C.G.Jung. Unconscious.

All economic moves are the product of mythical expectations, not in the sense of economic theory, but of psychology. [...] Psychologically, every economic recovery is a myth-making process that stretches beyond actual possibilities until the discrepancy becomes apparent. Rational methods and instruments are just compensations for mythical expectations and means of control. [...] Inflation is, therefore, the obvious symptom of the myth, which also manifests itself in the fact that all those involved live in projection and do not want to see the disadvantages and their own participation in inflation (BÖHLER, 1973, p. 211).

Happiness and unhappiness depend on much deeper things than the money in one's pocket (JUNG, 2015, p. 86).

God did not die. He has become money (AGAMBEN, 2012).

Introduction

Analytical psychology has contributed to the economic sciences, and Eugen Böhler (1893-1977) was responsible for introducing it to this field. In 1933, Böhler was among the professors who supported the candidacy of C.G. Jung (1875-1961) for the General Department of Free Affairs at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), to teach Modern Psychology, which, according to Ulrich Hoerni, aimed to seek a “culture of the psyche” (FALZEDER, 2020, p. 15). Jung remained at the ETH from October 20, 1933, until July 11, 1941.

The “crossings” between Jung and Böhler progressed most profoundly between 1955 and 1961. Jung sought to reflect on the complementarity of the unconscious to consciousness, while Böhler, in the field of economics, aimed to establish rationalist guidelines and social issues. Both formed a team to address the problems of the modern crisis of the human soul.

Intersections between Böhler and Jung

Böhler began teaching at the ETH in 1923. For him, economic systems did not address the main factor with which the economic sciences should be engaged: human needs. He considered that some factors were not significant for economic reasoning, such as the inaccuracy of statistical indices, the calculations and models proposed by the economic sciences, and, of course, their highly technical understanding.

Although linked to purchasing power, consumption, profitability, and working conditions in Switzerland at the resumption of economic activity after World War I (1941-1918), the 1929 Crisis, as well as post-World War II (1939-1945), these factors were essential but not sufficient for understanding economic phenomena.

Such an insight led Böhler to delve into Jung’s analytical psychology, especially from 1955 onwards, establishing a new personal “crossing” in his economic analyses, by striving for a connection between the various economic theories and the social conditions of the real world, more precisely, about human nature itself.

His “crossings” deepened after Jung’s farewell ceremony at the ETH in 1942, recognizing the “Bollingen master’s” contributions to the sciences in general. Between 1955 and 1961, Böhler sought to combine the concepts of analytical psychology with economics, as shown in the correspondence between them and in his writings, such as two works: *Der Mythos in Wirtschaft und Wissenschaft* (The Myth in Business and Science) (1965) and *Die Zukunft als Problem des modernen Menschen* (The Future as a Problem of Modern Man) (1966).

In 1931, already an influential and prominent professor at the ETH, Böhler published the article “Technology and economy in the intellectual decisions of the present” (“*Technik und Wirtschaft in den geistigen Entscheidungen der Gegenwart*”). The article is the first to refer to Jungian tools, such as collective unconsciousness, consciousness, and polarity, but without referencing analytical psychology or Jung (DEMIERRE, 2023). It is nevertheless difficult to explain the absence of references to Jung in Böhler’s sources. Moreover, it is worth noting that, two years after publishing the article, in 1933, Böhler strongly recommended Jung for the position of professor at the ETH, which proves that the psychiatrist’s work was relevant to his academic reflections on economics.

From 1944 onwards, Böhler questioned the relevance of economic laws, formulated in the realm of politics and among economists, using only mathematical and/or statistical data in their analysis. According to Marie-Louise von Franz, in that period, “Eugen Böhler showed that even economic thinking is strongly influenced by archetypal or mythological representations” (FRANZ, 1995, p. 109).

In 1950, Böhler became even more immersed in analytical psychology and began to use the term “myth” in his economic approaches, considering it to be a term that describes the irrational beliefs that are part of economic formulations and science in general. For Böhler (1967, p. 151): “Myth is the background through exaggerated fantasy, which makes life really worth living”. And more: “Myth is the dialectical principle that oscillates in all domains between irrationality and rationality, between experience and concept, between desire and reality”.

Böhler and Jung’s “crossings” intensified from 1955 onwards, as seen in their letters, in which the former sought to deepen his scientific doubts about analytical psychology. Jung’s first letter to Böhler was dated December 14, 1955, in which the economist asked: “Describe what you do with archetypes” (JUNG, 2002, p. 448). To which Jung replied:

The problem lies with the modern individual, because only they are in a position to give the answer that is contemporary, that is, modern. As always, the answer depends on contemporary concepts, which means it is psychological-scientific as far as “theory” is concerned (JUNG, 2002, p. 449).

Jung’s response resulted in the formulation of the work *Die Zukunft als Problem des modernen Menschen* (The Future as a Problem of Modern Man), by Eugen Böhler, available in Spanish as *El Futuro, Problema del Hombre Moderno*, published by Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1967.

In 1957, Jung published *Conscious and Unconscious: Contributions from Psychology* (*Bewusstes und Unbewusstes: Beiträge zur Psychologie*).

This is a collection of Jung's essays, namely: "The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious", found in *The Self and the Unconscious* (vol. 7/2); "Introduction to the problem of the religious psychology of alchemy", found in *Psychology and Alchemy* (vol. 13); "On the phenomenology of the spirit in fairy tales", in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (vol. 9/1); and "On the psychology of Eastern meditation", in *Psychology and Religion: West and East* (vol. 11/5). Jung invited Prof. Böhler to preface the work, under the title: *Die Bedeutung der komplexen Psychologie C. G. Jungs für die Geisteswissenschaften und die Menschenbildung* (The importance of C. G. Jung's complex psychology for the humanities and human education).

His "crossings" sparked the first connections between economics and analytical psychology, which were later expanded by other Jungian authors such as James Hillman (1982, 1993); Andrew Samuels (1995); Robert Sardello (1998); Axel Capriles (2005); Waldemar Magaldi (2006); Karoline Maria da Silva Giló e Paulo Ferreira Bonfatti (2022); Gustavo Beck (2023). However, none of these works mention Eugen Böhler as the pioneer of this "crossing over", although he may have been considered intuitively by these authors, given their understanding of Jung's perceptions.

Protestant theologian Gerhard Wehr (1996), a German author with around 80 publications, four of them on Jung, introduced the approaches between Böhler's economic presuppositions and Jung's analytical psychology in his book *C. G. Jung und Eugen Böhler: Eine Begegnung in briefen* (C. G. Jung and Eugen Böhler: An encounter in letters), Zurich: *vdf Hochschulverlag AG, ETH*, published in 1996. This work contains 22 letters from Eugen Böhler to Jung and eight replies from Jung, which we can access in Portuguese; one of them can be found in *Letters: 1946-1955* (vol. 2) and the others in *Letters: 1956-1961* (vol. 3) - editions published by Editora Vozes.

Jung and Böhler met in person in Küsnacht, according to their correspondence. On three occasions, the economist reports his dreams and Jung analyzes them. As the relationship grew, the tone of the letters seemed to become increasingly intimate and friendly, as his last letter shows. Jung acknowledges: "Your friendship is so dear to me and my old age so welcome, for they bring me living proof that I have not fallen outside the realm of humanity" (JUNG, 2003, p. 237).

His scientific goals cover the following topics: "Rationalism does not understand that it only subtracts and destroys" our creativity and submits us to technologies that promise work activities without rights, controlled by bureaucracy and without individual freedoms, that is, without the possibility of a "direction towards the inner person and their vital needs" (JUNG, 2003, p. 10). In other words, the much-vaunted and prestigious technique and mathematical calculation, as

the driving forces behind economic desires, could be obstacles to the process of individuation.

The “crossings” between economics and psychology deepen even further, as Jung recognizes Böhler’s contribution to discovering and experiencing a new world that was taking shape after the Second World War. We are referring to the debates about the founding of the European Common Market and its economic and social complexities. Böhler helped Jung to take a stance on economic issues that considered affectivity, human relationships, and subjective values in the face of the socio-economic inequalities experienced by the world in the 1950s and 1960s. Jung admits that Böhler made him aware of his blind spots, distances, and disconnections about the economy and its implications for people’s lives. Jung (2003, p. 78) admits:

You have come up with several excellent formulations that have shone a light on things for me, such as the Common Market and what social ethics means in general. The latter in particular, which until now had been growing in my head as something hazy, has taken on a clear form thanks to your essay. You provide me with a highly beneficial form of psychotherapy of a peculiar kind: you give me the valuable experience of what I call “meaningful cooperation”, a collaboration in spirit and fact.

According to Demierre (2023, p. 65), Böhler preferred to “build intellectual bridges across the theories and concepts” of the founder of analytical psychology and his relevance to the economic sciences. This is why he declined Jung’s invitation to join the C. G. Jung Institute; he chose instead only to preserve the fraternal ties between them.

It was through his letters that Böhler became aware that “logical persuasion” prevailed in his studies, but he admitted that Jung, “thanks to his perceptive and comprehensive analysis and his originality, had become accustomed to considering things only (for himself)” (JUNG, 2003, p. 23). Böhler sought to bring the proposal of analytical psychology to the economic sciences in terms of the relevance of myths; he began to appreciate the need to make the “crossing from Logos to Myth”, as Jung saw it:

[...] the human being and their soul, the individual, the one and only true bearer of life, who not only works, eats, sleeps, reproduces, and dies, but who has a destiny that is full of meaning and that surpasses them. And for this we no longer have any “myths” (JUNG, 2003, p. 10).

Böhler’s “journey”, according to Ronca (2017), began when he realized that economic measures to encourage consumption might not influence the generation of new jobs and further investment, such as falling interest rates and production costs. In 1959, he began to criticize the isolation of the economy from economic factors, since, for him: “The real economy does not operate in a vacuum” (BÖHLER

apud RONCA, 2017, p. 12), but is a social factor present in human life. "Economic goods bear the fantasies and illusions that assign them their value, and so the economy must be understood in connection with psychic values" (BÖHLER apud RONCA, 2017, p. 152).

According to Böhler, economic theories cannot capture the real economic life of countries because they do not take account of the influence of the myths at work in political and economic mechanisms, instead preferring statistics in their formulations, which he calls "mathematized, accounting, econometric equations" of social and cultural reality. As for statistics, he claims:

Statistics show, on the opposite, that it is much more likely that both the causes and the length of economic cycles and the relationship between different factors vary greatly from one cycle to the next. This is why each cycle must be considered as a unique historical phenomenon (BÖHLER apud RONCA, 2017).

Böhler thus found a science that made sense from his earliest studies, contributing to interpreting the economy not just through reason, which prevents and distances man from being an individual, but pointing to the need to consider the personal and collective myths that constitute human society, as proposed by C.G. Jung's analytical psychology. His "crossing over" came about through intellectual transformations, leading him to abandon the economic models "prescribed" by his science.

According to Demierre (2023, p. 66):

For Böhler, the place of myth is central to understanding the problem facing man. The concept of myth arises once he evokes that science is a living myth, triggering the projection of our conception onto the outside world. In addition, science feeds the techniques, through innovations (perpetual growth) that build this artificial world. This explains very well why he thinks there is a problem of a mismatch between reality (the world that includes the rational and the irrational) and our models, in all periods of history (we are unable to assimilate both sides in our models). For Böhler, the solution to the problem of myth is self-criticism, by gaining awareness of this phenomenon. Realizing this is the first step towards change. In other words, man must evolve by becoming aware of his inner self. The development of the inner self undergoes a process of individuation, that is, an individual achieves self-realization by considering both the conscious and unconscious parts of their psyche. This event will allow us to reach a kind of fullness of our psychological being. It is worth noting that Böhler expresses the idea that certain individuals, through their preference for rational intuition, enable this myth to be presented through the development of increasingly important techniques. Science draws its essence from rationalism, which obviously suits people with their preferences. The latter, through previously envisioned rational ideas, will seek to project their ideas onto the world through techniques, creating an irrational world. He deals with this point in detail in his works.

In his “crossings”, Böhler is led to realize that all comes from within, so man needs to learn from his social history and integrate the inner and outer worlds so as not to become an artificial object of self. This is the condition of modern man, who projects all his libido into work, perhaps anticipating the current condition since the advent of economic neoliberalism in the 1990s, along with the collapse of workers’ rights. In addition to these factors, there is also the ability of the nation-states that have joined this movement to assert themselves on the world stage, arbitrating, through institutions, on issues related to working conditions in general, environmental costs, and interest rates. The famous slogan “minimum state” illustrates this by indicating that states should increasingly intervene less in social policies, so that their institutions could access financial funds from the states themselves, to defend their own interests, which are contrary to those of the workers. This scenario has led to economic neoliberalism being associated with the far right and authoritarian measures in terms of society’s own customs, shaping a collectivized individual with a regressive psychological aggravation, prone to positions that are closer and more disruptive to the contemporary world.

“Crossroads” from Logos to Myth

Böhler (1973) admits that it is very difficult to shed light on the mythical foundations of economics and its sciences, given the strong lack of self-criticism on the part of its proponents and their self-centered attitudes. In Böhler’s view, the basic assumption of rationality in economics, which is proclaimed by scholars, financial agents, and government officials, does not allow anyone to take responsibility for the functioning of systems as they have existed for many generations: “The struggle for the market economy or capitalism is therefore not about reality but about perceptions of reality, in other words, a struggle between mythical evaluations” (Böhler, 1973, p. 202-203).

Böhler’s contributions to economics point to the mythological presence and action in the perspectives of economics, considered by experts to lie in the realm of “logos”, of rationality. However, their methods take neither social reality nor the condition of individuals into account, as if they had no opinions or personal ideological convictions, leaving most of the population subject to emotional suffering for their decisions. According to Böhler (1973, p. 204):

The parties might consult experts, but their selection is already politically determined and the decision is made based on metaphysical assessments. At best, the press mobilizes the science that sheds light on the directions mentioned. Insofar as the editors have some expert knowledge, the opinion is based on models that have become stereotypes, since only a few major newspapers

or media outlets have skilled personnel who would be able to examine the particular conditions of the individual problem with sufficient thoroughness. Thus, when deciding on such an important problem, “rationality” in the usual sense plays a subordinate role.

For Böhler, the *zeitgeist* the spirit of the age, is at work in economic decisions around the world, dissolving one of the most important resources in the functioning of the world economy, for example, exchange rate flexibility, taxation, and the charging of interest between the differences in the currencies of countries. Thus, it shuts down all possibilities for the practice of international solidarity, as it is held hostage to the economic policies practiced by the world’s economic systems in terms of their forecasts, evaluations, and re-evaluations, as well as demands for exchange rate flexibility, the devaluation of their currencies, and their export policies, limiting the individual decisions of each country. Such forecasts remain in force despite being inadequate, as experience has shown, precisely to the extent that they are based, according to Böhler (1973), on myths that cast them in an optimistic and mystical light.

The myth in the world economy is the *zeitgeist* with its technical-rationalist discourse, in other words, what the spirit of the age, as a psychological mechanism, considers to be the “logos” is the “myth” present and active, leaving the individual, as such, distant from the economic decisions being made. This psychological mechanism does not correspond to people’s reality, as it functions as a model of thought with which to comprehend reality. Here we see the exploitation of people by technical-rationalist systems, without changing what they call the “market economy”, liberalism, and now “neoliberalism”, a movement that believes itself to be the complete solution to economic problems.

According to Böhler (1973, p. 205):

Accordingly, the *zeitgeist* brings both “value-free” science and “rational” economics under its control. Its utopian character manifests itself in the inclination to form abstract models of the future instead of solving the concrete problems underlying the monetary crisis, as well as in the dissolution of established rational orders as a result of the process of demythologization with which every mythical expectation ends. None of those involved are aware that the system they blame for the crisis is the product of the projection of their own complicity, which they do not wish to see. [...] The struggle for social systems is therefore a struggle for myths. [...] The rule of the myth is so strong that its followers do not even perceive how different reality is from ideologies as it is supposedly realized.

Both the ideology of liberalism and now neoliberalism - the market economy - and what is considered “progressive”, which seeks to reject or soften the exploitation of people, according to Böhler, are unconsciously charged with affection. Each proposes a

range of affections, real emotional complexes. The proposals of the market economy suggest a decentralization of decisions, generating associations with insecurity, power, private property, exploitation, selfishness, injustice, individualism, and chaos in economic relations in general. The “progressive” ideology, on the other hand, calls for a decentralization of economic decisions, promising to create associations with the idea of community, common property, peace, justice, altruism, security, collectivity, and planning. As Böhler sees it, both perceptions have nothing directly to do with these affections. However, as pairs of opposites, they have become absolute for both visions and economic hypotheses.

But myths are the only psychological “reality” worth living for, for which millions of people have had to lose their lives, for which millions, if not billions more, work, suffer, and give up their lives, for their whole lives because they are fascinated by the symbols of myth. Although everyone involved uses the heavy artillery of reason, the outcome has nothing to do with reason since, measured by rational standards, it must be seen as irrational if bare reality were the source of all reason, which rationalists persist in ignoring (BÖHLER, 1973, p. 206-207).

Böhler also sees the dominance of myths in economic processes. According to him:

So-called economic goods are not actually material objects, but projections of desires and expectations onto the outside world. The consumer’s imagination promises paradise and reaps the rewards of mundane everyday life because every achievement devalues the desired object. In reality, the individual does not know what they want: they are a victim of advertising, its status, conformism, and the *zeitgeist*. Otherwise, the company’s advertising, propaganda, and sales policy could not exist. This creates the relative stability of demand. The consumer is not the king, but the servant. The rationality of consumption is in a small place. Despite the need to balance income and expenditure, there is no rational link in the short term and even less in the long term (BÖHLER, 1973, p. 210).

In light of this, we see how much myth directs our personal and collective economic, business, and state projections, as financial investments seek to satisfy unfulfilled desires. However, although they can stimulate us to constructive activities, they trap us in a state of envy, irritation, and psychic torment, which we try to compensate for with further acquisitions, amoral and unethical decisions, and even criminal ones, especially between multinational companies, central banks, financial institutions, and banks, thus creating the condition of economic inequality. The mythological performance on us and the direction of our collectivity brings us into contact with the fantasy that the “other” does not have much value, particularly if they have less money. The poor do not count. In addition, there is the fantasy of hiding the crimes of theft against the most economically unjust, which

are being designed and enforced around the world in an iniquitous, corrupt, competitive, and insensitive way.

According to Samuels (1995, p. 116, 117):

Economic inequality gives rise to personal and national hopes established by the wealth of symbolic life. We believe all this emotionally, even though we know intellectually that such wealth cannot be bought by women, men, corporations, or governments. [...] Myth has illuminated our investing in such corruption. [...] In our time, both in the capitalist West and in the former communist East, it is quite tricky to overcome our divided emotional attitude towards the market economy.

Final Considerations

Analytical psychology made Böhler realize that once money becomes the center of social life, it accelerates time and causes the psychological suffering brought on by the contemporary integration of finance and electronic technologies. Muniz Sodré said:

This motion and rearrangement, triggered by the speed of electromagnetic waves, points to the heart of the matter: the shockwave of electronic culture, a counterpart of the economic fiction foreshadowed by Goethe, in which Mephistopheles, out to help Faust, invents paper money. It was indeed alchemy, but the magic is only in the “quickening” of experience. The compression of space by the acceleration of time is also the ultimate magic and reason for our global displacement. This magic today is apparently more Mephistotelian than divine. However, it is also worth reflecting on Giorgio Agamben’s phrase: “God is not dead. He has become money” (AGAMBEN, 2012 *apud* WULF; BAITELLO, 2018, p. 99).

Böhler (1973) sees human satisfaction based on ethical life values, such as dedication to work, since, through them, we impose our individual condition to the diverse adaptations that life demands from us. It is not about accumulating goods, since it is a merely instinctive trend that does not consider other human values. It is about though coordinating individual purposes following the “wisdom of the heart” and not the “welfare theory”.

The “crossing from Logos to Myth” seems to be a) from the “logos” of the free market – neoliberalism – or the progressive vision of economic systems that both perspectives propose to the world, towards b) a perspective of a personal myth, since the accumulation of goods is at the expense of life and health, the family and the community in general, the environment, the social conditions of our cities, and development that compromises the future and contradicts the “wisdom of the heart”. The redistribution of income and wealth cannot stem from technical-rationalist arguments such as those proposed by economic postulates that only consider the so-called

“economic frameworks” based on full employment, stability of the currency, and price levels (controlling inflation), as well as the balance of payments (controlling spending without counting investments in priority areas where human values are most needed, such as health, housing, and education, for example) and balancing growth.

According to Böhler (1973, p. 216):

Why do we not take all human values into account to achieve a harmonious society? The reason is the complete lack of epistemological criticism of the economic postulates themselves, and this in turn is because the economic principle has been mythologized and raised to an ethical principle through the subsumption of concepts. This has reinforced the disastrous tendencies of the *zeitgeist* and, therefore, the imbalance in society.

Our profession is among the main reasons for us to make this crossing, which integrates economic activity and, therefore, we participated in the capitalist system and the economy, with all the emotional and relational implications of the psychotherapeutic process and not only in its symbolic aspects. “Money is always a phenomenon that takes place within the analytical relationship, and the economy has a therapeutic value”, according to Gustavo Beck (2023, p. 215). Thus, we are engaged and committed to our psychotherapeutic practice and its economic implications.

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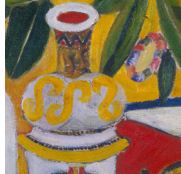
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C. G. Jung's Psychology and Cultural Roots: Reflections on mental health in the *América Ladina**

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Article



SUMMARY

This study discusses the association between Carl Gustav Jung's Complex Psychology and the process cultural development in the *América Ladina* (according to the concept coined by Lélia Gonzales), emphasizing the importance of cultural roots for mental health. Based on the reflections of intellectuals from the African diaspora, this text discusses how cultural uprooting derives from colonization and how the diaspora can lead to identity crisis and psychological problems, especially among Afro-descendants and Indigenous people. The analogy of plants, with their roots and rhizomes, is used herein to illustrate how reconnecting with cultural traditions and appreciating one's ancestral roots is essential for the process of individuation as well as for the psychological well-being. The lack of connection with one's own history and culture can generate feelings of alienation and psychological disorientation, which was also noted by Jung. In the context of the *América Ladina*, cultural practices such as storytelling, festivities and ceremonies with Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous origins, among other forms of cultural resistance, play a crucial role in the preservation of both individual and collective identities, as well as in mental health promotion. It can be concluded that the process of developing cultural roots is fundamental not only for survival but is substantially important for the affective resistance of individuals and for the prosperity of Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities, providing a path to health while allowing the continuity of cultural traditions in a world marked by uprooting and alienation.

Keywords: Cultural Roots; Analytical Psychology; *América Ladina*; Affective Resistance; Mental Health.

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Introduction

The narrative regarding Latin America's history is often presented from the "European discovery" perspective, as if there was nothing of significance in the region before such an event. However, it is paramount to recognize that modernity, a historical period that begins approximately in the fifteenth century, is characterized by the cultural and political imposition of European countries on other regions of the world, a pattern that was later followed by the United States. The fabrication of this European hegemony, which is based on a worldview that is centered on a single deity, is typified by exploitation practices and the looting of local wealth, combined with the invasion and subjugation of native people, often seen as "primitive" or underdeveloped. This behavior underlies the political concept that we now know as colonialism and neocolonialism, being defined by a specific way of thinking and acting towards territories and populations that do not belong originally to the self-imposed colonizers, rejecting the ontological, epistemological and technological diversity of the local culture to impose their so-called hegemonic model (SODRÉ, 2012).

European self-perception, which considers itself a conscious and rational civilization, established its foundation in a Cartesian philosophy that is typified by a binary and materialist thought, forming a predominant monotheistic worldview that was disseminated as a universal model, thus shaping the Western perspective. Everything that did not fit this paradigm was considered abnormal, inadequate or inhumane. The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (2013), despite having been born in the "heart of Europe", as he himself defined Switzerland in both territorial and social terms, recognized in this concept an expression of the "spirit of the time", identifying it as a one-sidedness tendency that distanced the European from their unconscious (the unknown in oneself and in the world) as well as from nature.

All men [need the concept of God], except a few recent specimens of the "*homo occidentalis*", particularly clever, supermen for whom "God is dead" - which is why they have to turn into gods themselves, that is, tin-gods with thick skulls and cold hearts (JUNG, 2013, p. 110, my translation).

Currently, the consequences of this Western worldview, or pan-Europe, as Muniz Sodr  (2012) phrases, manifest themselves as a dualistic segmentation of life, either at the individual level, contrasting mind-body and reason-emotion, or at the collective level, with the dichotomies society-individual and man-nature. This duality denies and persecutes cultures that coexist with each other and in harmony with nature, contributing to a broad mental, social and environmental health crisis that puts the very life on the planet at risk.

Affective living is quite challenging in the context of such a contemporary life, so heavily influenced by pan-European thinking and action, demanding speed as well as immediate and linear responses to every experienced event. In order to find an approach that is not only critical, but also affective and integrative, it is fundamental to recognize that Brazil is a country of continental dimensions, where multiple people, languages and traditions live together. Lélia Gonzalez, one of the most distinguished Brazilian intellectuals, assists us in this understanding, offering a profound and innovative critique of the traditional account of Brazil's historical-cultural formation, acknowledging that, in fact, as Brazilians, we are part of an *América Ladina*:

It is a new and creative consideration of the discussion on the historical-cultural formation of Brazil that, for geographical reasons and, above all, reasons related to the unconscious, does not turn out to be what is generally disseminated: a country whose formation of the unconscious is exclusively European, white. On the contrary, it is an African America whose latinity, turned nonexistent, has its T changed to D in order to broadcast its name with all the letters: *América Ladina* (it is no coincidence that the Brazilian cultural neurosis has racism as its first and foremost symptom). In this context, all Brazilians (and not just those identified as "Blacks" and "Browns" by IBGE's population census) are *Ladino-Afroamericans* (GONZALEZ, 1984, my translation).

In her work, Gonzalez defies the dominant narrative that portrays Brazil as a nation built on an essentially European and white collective unconscious, derived from the colonizers. She proposes, instead, that Brazil should be understood as an "African America," where African culture has not only contributed significantly, but is intertwined indissolubly.

Gonzalez (1984) therefore introduces the concept of *América Ladina* to capture this complex cultural reality. By replacing the "T" of "*Latina*" with a "D", she suggests a reconfiguration of Latinity that professes and values the deep African roots present in the cultural formation of Brazil and the Americas. According to her, the *América Ladina* is a space where African influence shapes everyday life, values and identities, surpassing the simple idea of a Latin American country, echoing the typical pronunciation of African ancestry.

The author also argues that racism, a basic premise in Brazil, is the central symptom of a cultural neurosis that is born from the attempt to deny or minimize African influence on national identity. For Gonzalez, all Brazilians, not just those identified as "Blacks" or "Browns" by the IBGE (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* - Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), are actually "*ladino-amefricanos*". In other words, consciously or unconsciously, everyone shares this African heritage that is deeply rooted in the country's formation (GONZALEZ, 1984).

Gonzalez (1984) intellectual pluralism¹ resignifies Brazilian identity, offering a new theoretical framework that conveys the plurality and complexity of Brazil's cultural influences. Her vision goes beyond the objection to the traditional perceptions concerning race and identity, proposing a broader and more inclusive integration of the multiple cultural heritages that are assimilated into Brazil, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and valuing African contributions as a central part of Brazilian history and culture.

During a trip through the United States of America, Jung observed something similar to what is pointed out by Lélia Gonzalez, regarding American people's particularities, which led him to declare the existence of differences between European and North American white people. Considering that these are peculiar traits that significantly differentiate these groups, the author concluded that:

(...) there are many Black people in the United States who have the most impressive figure. And some states have a Black predominance, a fact that surprises the naive European who always believed that America is a country of white people. It is in fact not a country of white people, it is mixed, and nothing can be done about it (JUNG, 2013, p. 961, my translation).

It is known that Carl Gustav Jung's Complex Psychology approach of the human psyche is thoroughly entrenched with the consideration of the collective unconscious and the cultural influences that constitute the individual (ARAUJO, 2002). Therefore, the above statement is an example of how the author was dedicated, empirically, to observe cultural and group dynamics. Nevertheless, given the social indicators as well as the adversities derived from racism, it is not enough to declare that there is a "miscegenation", whether cultural, social or biological, it's necessary to actually understand the impact of culture on mental health. This reflection becomes even more relevant when we consider the history of colonization, the de-Africanization of the diaspora along with the marginalization of African and Indigenous people, which configures the complex and multifaceted reality of the *América Ladina*.

Lélia Gonzalez's assessment (1984) indicates that, even with miscegenation, racism functions as a symptom of Brazil's cultural neurosis, affecting all Brazilians, regardless of race, corroborating the importance of the cultural rooting as a possible antidote to this condition. In this context, Jung's Complex Psychology which, even in the last century, had already observed psychological effects in the light

¹ Intellectual pluralism is a concept defined by Dr. Bárbara Carine in the book *How to Be an Anti-racist Educator: For family members and teachers*, as a decolonial category based "on the rupture with the restrictive approach of the intellectuality imposed by the Western white-centric perspective that enforces an epistemic and performative ritualistic for the constitution of the intellectual" (CARINE, 2023, p.13, my translation).

of the cultural complexity of human groupings and their territories, provides us with a fertile field for exploring the consequences of cultural rooting – or lack thereof – in the individuation process and psychological stability.

With this in mind, the purpose of the present study is to reflect on the development of cultural roots in the *América Ladina*, as well as its relationship with mental health. Articulating this discussion with Carl Gustav Jung's Complex Psychology and using the metaphors of roots, rhizomes and "mother trees", it will be examined herein how the Afro-descendant and Indigenous cultural traditions² have been fundamental to the affective resistance, in connection with mental health and the individuation process. Furthermore, cultural rooting is analyzed in this paper as a phenomenon that, by nurturing identity along with individual and collective memory, acts as an antidote against the effects of uprooting and alienation, both fruits of modernity and colonialism. Thus, the intellectual pluralism of individuals from *América Ladina* combined with Jung's Complex Psychology enables us to understand how the connection with cultural traditions is essential for psychological stability and mental health, especially when taking into consideration the history of oppression and cultural marginalization.

From Dispersal to Flourishing: Aspects of the African diaspora

Nei Lopes, who had his intellectual pluralism expressed in the work *Encyclopedia Brasileira da Diaspora Africana* (2011), identified two main moments of the African diaspora. The first began in fifteenth century, during the slave trade, being characterized by the author as a true genocide. Throughout this period, millions of Africans were cruelly uprooted from their lands and cultures, being forcibly scattered along transatlantic routes through the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. This process was not limited to mere physical dispersal, representing a systematic attempt to eradicate the cultural identities of African people, forcing them to assume a position of subalternity in new and hostile lands.

The author goes on to state that, in the twentieth century, a second moment of the diaspora manifested itself with the migration of Africans to Europe, mostly moving to former colonial metropolises in search of better living conditions and more opportunities. However, in this context, which we are still experiencing, the term "diaspora"

² Although this study is based on the Afro-Brazilian tradition, reinforcing the concomitance of both cultural traditions (perhaps we could call it Afro-Indigenous) is necessary due to the fact that, as oppressed cultures, both groups shared and still share many affective resistance strategies.

expands to encompass not only the physical dispersion of Africans, but also the survival and cultural transformation of their descendants, who, despite the adversities faced, have built a rich cultural heritage both in the Americas and in Europe.

A fundamental concept in Lopes' analysis (2011) is the "de-Africanization", which the author describes as the process of systematic deconstruction and erasure of cultural identities from Africa. This system was implemented as a deliberate strategy by the colonizers and enslavers, with the goal of breaking the Africans' bonds with their cultural origins, in order to facilitate and consolidate domination. It is also worth mentioning that the de-Africanization began on African soil, where individuals were compelled to adopt Christianity and assume Christian names before being shipped to the New World.

This "amputation" of their original identities represented the first stage of the disruption of their cultures and traditions. In the Americas, this de-Africanization process continued with the imposition of subaltern identities, such as that of "nigger", a term that not only ignored the diversity and richness of African cultures, but also replaced them with an imposed identity, marked by subjugation and inferiority. Then, the enslavers imposed group distinctions such as "kaffir" and "creole", "jigaboo" and "coon", all designed to undermine the cultural cohesion and the collective memory of African people, isolating them from their origins and weakening their resistance (LOPES, 2011).

The de-Africanization, while an oppressive strategy to dismantle African identities, failed to completely eliminate the Africans' cultural heritage. Instead, they adapted, took roots in new lands and continued to flourish, contributing to the cultural and civilizational diversity of the contemporary world. This way, Africans managed to preserve and transform their traditions in the diaspora, creating new cultural expressions that resisted the process of de-Africanization. Afro-Brazilian religions, African-American music and further cultural manifestations can be cited as examples of this resistance, demonstrating how African roots, even on foreign soil, have endured and grew, influencing the world. Hence, it is possible to observe the African diaspora not only as a process of dispersion and disaggregation, but also as a history of cultural resistance (LOPES, 2011).

The heroes of the first African diaspora traveled to Europe and Asia to plant the first seeds of humanity (...) the sprouts of this tree planted during that African diaspora took root and blossomed, everyone living today can identify their ancestry in this common branch (FORD, 1999, p.41, my translation).

This statement of Clyde W. Ford is, in itself, an act of cultural resistance, as it establishes that the first diaspora of the African people occurred long before the fifteenth century, removing from the hands of the colonizers the primacy of Black people's expansion

throughout the world. In an eloquent and symbolic manner, the author defends African people's fundamental contribution to the formation of humanity, using the metaphor of a tree to illustrate the lasting impact of the first African diaspora in global history, as something that sowed the seeds of humanity throughout the world.

Consequently, the scholar and author of *The Hero with an African Face: Myths from Africa* (1999) refers to the participants of this diaspora as "heroes", a term that elevates these individuals to a status of honor, acknowledging their central role in spreading cultures and civilizations across the globe. The author argues that these ancestral Africans, by migrating to Europe and Asia, "planted the first seeds of humanity" (FORD, 1999), suggesting that the foundation of global civilization has its roots in Africa.

The metaphor goes on, describing the "sprouts" of this humanity tree, which have "taken root and blossomed" over time. In this work, Ford describes how the cultures and civilizations that evolved from these early African migrations not only survived but thrived, deeply establishing themselves in multiple parts of the world. Ergo, the image of this tree with strong roots and diverse stems symbolizes the interconnection of all people, with Africa serving as the shared "common branch" from which everything originated.

His conclusion is particularly powerful, defending that "everyone living today can identify their their ancestry in this common branch" (FORD, 1999). This statement universalizes the connection to Africa and suggests that, regardless of cultural, racial or geographical differences, all human beings share the same origin. In this metaphorical expression Ford not only draws attention to the significance of Africa for the global civilization development, but also contests narratives that marginalize or omit African contributions to human history. That is to say that, by using terms such as "heroes" and "sowing seeds", the author gives prominence to African people, underlining the idea that the first African diaspora was a seminal event that gave rise to much of the cultural and civilizational diversity we see today, having occurred long before the 15th century.

Such ideas in connection with the observations of Nei Lopes (2011) lead us to understand the African diaspora as a network of processes that dates back to the beginning of what we know as humanity, expanding into territories beyond Africa through a forced displacement resulted from the slave period, reaching the present day with the emigration of Africans to Europe, many of which bringing traumas with them that affect us all. But the abovementioned processes are also expressed in their positive character, such as the propagation of wisdom and resistance, which is perhaps the great mark of the African diaspora around the world. By using this powerful metaphor of seed dispersal through different territories, the author

connects African migrations to the process of “bringing humanity” to multiple parts of the world, suggesting that the rich cultural diversity of the modern world is, in large part, a legacy of these early seeds sown during the African diaspora. Large trees have grown in these territories, whose crowns, flowers and fruits bear Africa with them.

The Analogies of Plants: Roots and rhizomes as complementary structures

Notwithstanding the known fact that aquatic plants exist, when the word “root” comes to mind, it is very common to think of soil, just as when we talk about walking a path, traveling, going somewhere, we usually think about walking and treading on the ground. These are empirical findings that instigate us to consider our relationship with the earth, as well as with the elements of the mineral, animal and vegetable kingdoms. In this sense, to better understand the effects and importance of cultural rooting in mental health, it is easier to start with the plant metaphor.

Plants, which can have both roots and rhizomes, present a combination of structures that are responsible for their great adaptability and resilience. Roots are essential for absorbing water and nutrients from the soil, as well as for firmly anchoring the plant, ensuring its constant nutrition and therefore its immediate survival. On the other hand, rhizomes, which are underground stems that grow horizontally, providing both vegetative propagation and nutrient storage, allows the plant to spread to new areas and survive in adverse conditions or in changing environments (FONSECA, 2023).

In contrast, plants that only have roots depend exclusively on said structure for both nutrient uptake and anchoring, thus being less adaptable in poor soils or where vegetative propagation would be beneficial. Whereas, plants that have only rhizomes, such as some types of grass, have the ability to spread rapidly and colonize new areas, but without robust roots, they may be less efficient at absorbing nutrients and more vulnerable in unstable or dry soils (FONSECA, 2023).

Plants that simultaneously have roots and rhizomes can combine these two complementary structures, making them more resilient and adaptable when compared to those that present only one of these morphological characteristics. Such integration gives a significant evolutionary advantage to said plants, allowing them to thrive in diverse environments and conditions (FONSECA, 2023). Roots and rhizomes, fundamental structures for plant survival, can be seen as metaphorical representations of the different ways in which humans connect with their cultures and histories. Plant roots penetrate deeply into the soil, absorbing nutrients and water, assuring

stability and sustenance, likewise, a person's cultural roots provides a solid foundation for the notion of self, a meaning of life and a sense of belonging, enabling the individual to feel safe and connected with their history, social group, time and place, even if they travel the world.

Conversely, plant rhizomes, which grow horizontally beneath the surface, represent a form of propagation and adaptation that is less obvious but equally crucial, symbolizing the ways in which cultures spread, adapt, and transform over time. For many people who have been forced to leave their ancestral lands in the diaspora, the cultural rhizomes illustrate the ability to preserve and adjust essential aspects of their culture, regardless of new geographical and social contexts.

Thinking of roots and rhizomes as complementary structures is a powerful metaphor for understanding the importance of cultural rooting, along with the preservation of identity in diasporic and colonial contexts. To further unfold this analogy and explore its broader implications, it is possible to introduce the idea of the "mother tree", which is a concept developed by Suzanne Simard (2022).

"Mother trees" are the oldest and largest trees in a forest that, through their roots, share nutrients and information with other plants, especially younger ones. These mother trees create an underground support network, where mycorrhizal fungi connect the tree roots, allowing the exchange of essential resources and facilitating the survival of the entire forest community. This means that mother trees not only support their own species, but also assist in the maintenance of the entire ecosystem's ecological balance by taking care of the plants around them (SIMARD, 2022).

The idea of the "mother tree" rounds off the realization of how cultures and identities can be sustained and nurtured in adverse conditions. Roots, as already mentioned, are fundamental for plant survival, providing water, nutrients and stability, exemplifying the deep connection with the land or, in the case of cultures, with the ancestral traditions and histories that sustain the identity of a population. Whereas the rhizomes are underground stems that spread horizontally, enabling vegetative propagation and adaptation to new environments, symbolizing a culture's ability to adapt, resist, and grow in new contexts, even after forced displacements such as the diaspora.

Therefore, when we apply these concepts as a metaphor for the cultural and psychological context, it is possible to think of these mother trees as the central figures or elements in a given culture, as the Meisters of knowledge who nourish and sustain communities continuously. These individuals, especially in times of crisis, share the cornucopia of wisdom they have accumulated over time in a rhizomatic movement, so that the new members may prevail creatively, transforming and renewing the local culture. These mother trees

can be community leaders, cultural masters, storytellers, sculptors, weavers, rootworkers, cowboys, artisans, curators, farmers, *repentistas* (bard-like figures that sing a type of improvised poetry using specific metrics), *cancioneiros* (similar to troubadours) of the oral tradition and further nomenclatures that Brazilian popular wisdom and lore has been unfurling throughout the ages. Finally, they are the people who keep both the culture and access to the collective memory alive, ensuring the transmission of knowledge and essential values to certain communities.

Mother Trees in the *América Ladina*: Cultural rooting and mental health

In the context of the *América Ladina*, the cultural roots represent the intimate connection with African and Indigenous traditions, which, despite centuries of oppression and marginalization, continue to nurture the identities of Afro-descendant and Indigenous or even Afro-Indigenous communities. These roots are essential for the survival, resistance and existence of these cultures, granting their members with a sense of belonging and continuity. Rhizomes, on the other hand, illustrate how these cultures were able to adapt and transform into new contexts, even in the face of forced uprooting by colonization and slavery.

With this in mind, Lélia Gonzalez (1984) uses cultural concepts and notions of memory to explore how cultural practices reflect both the repressed knowledge and the dominant narratives in Brazilian society. This empirical and intellectual exercise is central to understanding her analysis of racial and gender dynamics in Brazil, especially regarding the construction of Brazilian cultural identities.

For the author, it is through the awareness of a single “national cultural identity” that hegemonic narratives are structured and perpetuated, such as the myth of racial democracy in Brazil. Consciousness, subsequently, is in this case a place of “unknowing”, of concealment and alienation. In other words, the cultural awareness that is socially promoted and accepted as “truth” often hides the realities of oppression and inequality, suppressing, above all, the plurality of cultures that coexist in this territory (GONZALEZ, 1984).

The racial democracy discourse — the idea that there is no racism in Brazil and that all ethnic groups coexist harmoniously — is an example of the construction this cultural awareness, serving only to mask the deep racial inequalities that permeate the country. This fallacy, disseminated by the dominant ideology, hides the experiences and contributions of the Black population, promoting a distorted view of reality. Hence the recurring observation pointed out by González

(1984) that, in terms of nation, there is a great neurosis ongoing in Brazil.

Thus, the scope of the unconscious, that is, the unknown that affects us, emerges as an important aspect in this discussion. This is something that prompts Gonzalez to define “memory” as the space of “not-knowing that knows”, meaning that which has been excluded from the dominant consciousness, but still persists latently. As the cultural memory, this scope includes histories, traditions, knowledge and experiences that have been repressed or marginalized by the hegemonic discourse, but that continue to significantly influence and shape culture (GONZALEZ, 1984).

Since memory is the place where the experiences of the Black population in Brazil are kept, from the slavery resistance to the preservation of African traditions, even if these experiences have been systematically oppressed or devalued, they continue to emerge in popular culture, religious practices, language and Afro-Brazilian artistic expressions. Memory therefore provides us with a counterposition to consciousness, revealing hidden truths and challenging the narratives imposed by the dominant ideology. In summary, for Gonzalez (1984), culture as both memory and awareness embodies the struggle between the dominant narratives that try to cover up the realities of oppression (awareness), in addition to hiding the suppressed truths that, nevertheless, continue to live and influence culture in a profound and significant way (memory). This notion is crucial to understand how “Brazilian culture” is at the same time a battle field of domination and resistance.

It is important to note that Lélia Gonzalez’s (1984) statement is similar to what is considered as the “unconscious” from a psychoanalytic perspective. Inspired by Freud and Lacan, her approach to awareness and memory refers to the conflict between something we do not know or are not aware of, and something that has been removed from consciousness, but which still exists “somewhere”, from where it influences life through what we call memory. In this dialectic between contents that “extract” consciousness and contents that are “suppressed” from it, there are the domains of both the socio-historical and racial subjugation as well as the possibilities of resistance. This leads Gonzalez to emphasize the importance of “recovering our racial memory”, highlighting the investment in what we now call racial literacy and further modalities of strengthening, propagating and teaching Black and Indigenous cultures.

However, it is necessary to remember that, along with what is suppressed from the individual or collective consciousness, there is something that does not emanates directly from this awareness: the collective unconscious.

Whereas for Freud the unconscious is a function of consciousness [as derived from repressions and displacements of contents arising from consciousness], I consider it as an independent psychological function, prior and opposite to consciousness. According to this concept, the unconscious can be divided into personal and collective. The latter is a psychological disposition, independent of time and race, for regular functioning. Their products can be compared to “mythological motifs.” Despite the autochthonous origin of the former, both are analogous in principle, which is indicated by their psychological regularity (JUNG, 2011, p. 93, my translation).

In Carl Gustav Jung’s *Complex Psychology*, it is in the collective unconscious that reside the potential of making great connections, creations, achievements or transformations — something that psyche’s deep roots reach out to and bring to the surface. This great shared unknown is the generating *locus* of this connection between individuals as well as of their integration with groups where they belong, being associated to all existence in a timeless manner.

Jung (2013) states that the human psyche is a complex and profound phenomenon that overlap the limits of traditional intellectual categories, encompassing in its nature mysteries as vast as the universe itself, whose galaxy systems punctuate the inadequacies of human understanding. Only a spirit devoid of imagination could deny the greatness of these mysteries and, consequently, the inherent limitation of rational comprehension.

In other words, seeking to understand the soul only through reason is not only insufficient, it’s naive and even ridiculous. At its innermost levels, the psyche seems to be linked to something that surpasses notions of space and time, a form of existence that is inappropriately called “eternity” in the symbolic discourse. According to Jung (2013), it is undeniable that this trans-spatial and transtemporal existence of the psyche exists, as there has been an inclination in the human psyche to this belief since time immemorial. Even if science, with its “rigorous methodology”, replies that “there is no evidence”, and this universally present inclination is part of humanity’s ancient wisdom, where ignoring it can result in a dangerous disconnection with the human being’s very essence.

The author further warns us that the doubt, the resistance to traditions, the lack of courage or psychological experience and the lack of knowledge can lead people to deviate from these “innate truths of the soul” — understood as the psyche’s instinctive and profound truths, which we all feel intuitively —, at the risk of losing themselves in a disoriented and meaningless existence, manifesting symptoms of inferiority complexes. Jung (2013) considered this to be the basis of a certain neurotic agitation widely observed in contemporary society, which, in turn, may catalize the feeling of living a meaningless existence.

For the Swiss psychiatrist, these symptoms are reflected in processes such as uprooting and disorientation, characteristic of an era so far removed from its ancestral traditions and marked by the naive belief that radical changes in human nature or society can occur suddenly. These aspects that arise from modernity underlie a utopian view of life, with the belief in the discovery of a formula or new truths, capable of swiftly starting a new era, which Jung in an interview available in the documentary *Matter of Heart* (1983), as translated by the present author, declared to be a serious sociological and psychological mistake:

Men has always lived in myth, and yet people think we can be brought into this world today and not live in myth, without any history. This is a disease! It is absolutely abnormal, because men are not reborn each day. They are born once, into a specific historical setting with its specific historical qualities and, in that way, they are only complete when they have built a relationship with those circumstances. It's like being born without eyes and ears, when you're growing up with no connection to the past. According to [the current perspective of] science, you don't need a connection to the past; you can get rid of it, and that's a mutilation of the human being. (WHITNEY; VAN DER POST, 1983).

Simply put, to believe that we have no connection with history, the past and the traditions that are full of symbols associated with basic human tendencies, as if such instincts could change radically from one moment to another, is to disregard the complexity and depth of the psyche.

Araújo (2002), analyzing Carl Gustav Jung's position towards culture, states that for the Swiss psychiatrist, culture is an essential part of the human psyche, being closely linked to his theory of the collective unconscious. Jung believed that culture not only shapes the individual psyche, but is also imbued with unconscious elements that share roots with the collective unconscious, which contains the universal archetypes. Culture reflects both the collective history of humanity and the specific experiences of a social group, influencing the way individuals perceive and interact with the world. Jung saw culture as a symbolic system that is able to provide the means to express the unconscious through myths, rites and symbols that are characteristic of each society.

Furthermore, the author takes into consideration the cultural diversity and differences that exist between individuals of different cultures, arguing that culture influences the psyche in different ways depending on the historical, geographical and ethnic context, acknowledging the work with cultural symbols as vital to the wholehearted comprehension of the human psyche (JUNG, 1986). The concept of the cultural unconscious emerges as an evolution of these ideas, recognizing that beyond the personal and collective unconscious there are cultural layers that deeply influence individuals' behavior

and identity, where culture conditions human nature in ways that surpass the universal archetypes, involving specific historical and social aspects (ARAUJO, 2002).

The debates around culture and the cultural awareness are tightly intertwined in the Jungian perspective. Culture is seen as a system of symbols, myths and rituals that reflect and shape the collective and individual unconscious, as a network through which the unconscious manifests and expresses itself. Which means that culture is not only a product of the human psyche, but also a factor that strongly influences the formation of both individual and collective identities, fusing itself with the archetypes and symbols shared by a community that, in turn, help to bestow meaning to the human experience (JUNG, 1986).

In due course, supported by the ideas of authors who gave continuity to the Complex Psychology, the concept of the “cultural unconscious” emerges, as a response for the demand of understanding how these cultural elements are incorporated into the unconscious, as a factor that continues to influence human’s behavior and the psyche in ways that transcend both the personal and the collective unconscious. The cultural unconscious, as discussed by authors such as Joseph Henderson, refers to the layer of the psyche that contains specific cultural influences, such as the myths, rites and values that are socially transmitted. Henderson places the cultural awareness between the collective and the individual unconscious, pointing out that much of what Jung originally considered personal can actually be culturally conditioned. Authors such as Michael Adams and Frantz Fanon expand on this idea by considering how stories, traumas and cultural experiences shape the unconscious of specific groups, especially in multicultural or colonization contexts, arguing that the human psyche is largely formed by shared cultural experiences that are passed from generation to generation (ARAUJO, 2002).

Culture, then, can be seen as the content that fills the cultural awareness. While the collective unconscious deals with the universal archetypes present throughout humanity, the cultural unconscious deals with the specific aspects of a given culture that influence how individuals think, feel, and act. Culture is therefore associated with the symbols and myths of the cultural unconscious, shaping individual and collective identities. In other words, the culture and the cultural unconscious are interdependent: culture feeds the cultural unconscious with its symbols and myths, while the cultural unconscious, in turn, influences and is reflected the culture of a population. Thus, the understanding of the human psyche, in the view of these authors, cannot be complete without considering culture’s crucial role and its manifestations in the cultural awareness (ARAUJO, 2002).

From this perspective, there are social spaces in Brazil that still show an affective resistance, valuing the relationship with culture and its effects, places that defy the tendency to dismiss the connection with the past, places such as the *terreiros* (worship spaces) of African diaspora religions like Umbanda, for example. These environments are vital for the communities where they operate, not only as places of spiritual practice, but also as centers of social, cultural and health support, playing a fundamental role in preserving heritage, strengthening cultural identities while promoting both the mental and the physiological health of their members, through the bonds that are formed and all the learning that unfolds there. More than that, the *terreiros* are places of resistance, countering racism and religious intolerance, offering a sense of community and belonging to those who attend (SILVA; SANTOS, 2020).

Within such spaces, relationships and practices are maintained concomitantly as the root and the rhizome of these cultures with ancestral traditions that relate to the “innate truths of the Soul”, allowing them not only to survive but to reinvent themselves, maintaining the connection with their origins alive while adapting to new realities. The *mãe-de-santo* (or *lolorixá*, the priestess in Afro-Brazilian religions) in Candomblé, for instance, can be seen as a “mother tree” in many communities. Besides leading rituals and ceremonies, they pass on ancestral knowledge, connecting community members to their spiritual and cultural roots, as well as offering both emotional and spiritual support. Similarly, storytellers who preserve and transmit oral traditions also act as mother trees, nurturing the collective identity and ensuring that the stories along with their lessons of the past continue to guide the present and the future.

It is possible to observe these processes in other cultural practices, with or without an explicit religious scope, such as in the collective outings of the *bate-bolas* (a very traditional clown-like carnival character, part of a year-long group preparation), the *Congada* (a traditional festivity with dancing and music that reenact the crowning of a king from Kongo), the *Festas do Divino* (a 10 day Pentecost celebration that involves pilgrimage, religious masses, parades, games, food, dance and music), the *Nossa Senhora do Rosário* (a liturgical novena for our Lady of the Rosary syncretized with the *Congadas*), the *Círio de Nazaré* (a procession carrying an icon of the Virgin Mary, with festivities that last 15 days), the *Cavalhadas* (a cultural gathering derived from Portuguese heritage amalgamated with local folk elements, where performers demonstrate athletic prowess in acts inspired on medieval tournaments, also referencing the battles between the Portuguese and the Moors), the Carnival, the *Folia de Reis* (a ceremony devoted to the Epiphany, in celebration of the Three Wise Men, where locals sing religious or humorous verses from door to door), among many other cultural, artistic and spiritual expressions

that were sowed, flourished and spread in different parts of Brazil. Always and once again, as rhizome stems whose roots connect to the groundwater level of the collective unconscious, nourishing the cultural unconscious and renewing the compendium of both ancestral and everyday knowledge of individuals, groups and territories.

The metaphors of roots, rhizomes and mother trees relay a deep interconnection between the elements that sustain a culture and the mental health of its members. It is interesting to remember that, when analyzing the issue of the “black mothers” in Brazilian society, Lélia Gonzalez presents us with a distinct image that is very significant to grasp the extent and complexity of what is named herein as a “mother tree”:

(...) she is not this extraordinary example of total love and dedication as the white people would like, nor this sellout, this traitor to the race like some Black people think in their hurry to judge. She is simply the mother. That's right, she's the mom. (...) Because the white one is, in fact, the outsider. If you disagree, I ask you: who is it that breastfeeds, that bathes, that cleans poop, that puts the baby to sleep, that wakes up at night to take care of the child, that teaches them how to talk, that tells them stories and so on? It's the mother, isn't it? That's what I thought. Then she is the mom, in this delirious high of Brazilian culture (GONZALEZ, 1984, p. 235, my translation).

Without “mother trees” (keeping in mind that the gender issue is not a determining factor), that is, without members who are deeply and strongly rooted in their heritage, cultures can lose the sense of both identity and continuity, along with the transmission of knowledge and the essential values that can be compromised, leaving communities more vulnerable. Without rhizomes, they may fail to adapt and survive in new environments.

Mother trees, as guardians of the collective memory and ancestral wisdom, play a crucial role in this process, safeguarding the cultural roots so that the rhizomes can expand, nurturing new generations and ensuring the transformation as well as the continuity of culture.

Conclusion

In an ideal scenario, a balanced access to both cultural roots and adaptive rhizomes would be guaranteed, promoting the perpetuation and renewal of traditions. However, the reality of colonization, enslavement and diaspora has imposed a profound disconnection on many groups in the *América Ladina*, with substantial consequences for the mental health and the individuation process. This uprooting, by detaching people from their transgenerational history, compromises the perception of life's meaning along with the construction of an

integrated identity, which are essential elements for developing the awareness of oneself and of the world.

The analysis of the cultural and historical influences that shape Brazilian identity, especially in the context of the *América Ladina*, reveals an intricate network of relationships between culture, memory and mental health. The metaphors of roots, rhizomes and mother trees not only serve as a powerful analytical tool, but also as a guide to understand how Afro-descendant and indigenous cultural traditions remain vital for the preservation of mental health as well as for the construction of resilient identities, even after centuries of oppression and marginalization.

In light of this, Lélia Gonzalez elaborates an innovative critique by confronting the dominant narrative that portrays Brazil as an essentially European nation. By resignifying Brazil as part of a *América Ladina*, Gonzalez proposes that Brazilian identity is deeply rooted in African and Indigenous influences, which, although historically suppressed, continue to play a central role in the country's cultural formation. The author invites us to acknowledge that the suppression of these cultural roots can result not only in an identity crisis, but also in serious complications to the collective mental health, exacerbated by the perpetuation of racism and social inequality.

The concept of cultural rooting, when articulated with Carl Gustav Jung's Complex Psychology, allows for an in-depth understanding of culture's importance to the individuation process and psychological stability. Jung, by calling the attention to the collective unconscious' imperative, indicates that cultural traditions are more than a reservoir of ancestral wisdom, being actually vital sources of psychological nourishment that connect individuals to a deeper sense of belonging and historical continuity. The loss of this connection, or uprooting, can lead to a psychological alienation, manifested in symptoms of disorientation and lack of meaning, common in contemporary life.

The idea of the "mother tree", developed by ecologist Suzanne Simard and reinterpreted herein, complements this vision by emphasizing the importance of central figures within communities — those who, rooted in their traditions, act as guardians of the collective memory and conduits of cultural wisdom. These mother trees, whether they are spiritual leaders, cultural masters or tradition keepers, are paramount to maintain the collective mental health, ensuring that the cultural roots are kept alive and that the rhizomes, that is, the new generations, are able to expand and adapt, guaranteeing culture's continuity in defiance of adversity.

The cultural resistance observed in religious practices of African origin, as well as in popular festivals and other Brazilian cultural expressions, exemplifies how roots and rhizomes work together to preserve and renew the cultural identity. These spaces, such as the

Candomblé's *terreiros*, act as nuclei of affective resistance, where traditions are preserved, adapted and transmitted, functioning both as deep roots and as rhizomes that spread and adjust to new contexts.

Subsequently, the maintenance and enhancement of cultural rooting is essential not only for the preservation of the collective identity, but also for the individual mental health of African diaspora people in the *América Ladina*. By nurturing the collective memory and reinforcing connections with their ancestral heritage, these people and communities find a sense of belonging and resistance that supports them in order to face the challenges of modernity and colonialism. The integration of Gonzalez and Jung's perspectives provides us with a richer and more multifaceted understanding of the cultural rooting's importance, ascertaining that it can be an antidote against the destabilizing effects of uprooting and psychological alienation, especially in contexts of historical oppression and cultural marginalization.

Therefore, the present study proposes that both the mental health and the individuation process in the *América Ladina* are intimately correlated to the strengthening of the cultural roots and the preservation of heritage, giving prominence to the impacts of the "mother trees", be it concrete people or symbolic connections, which are fundamental to sustain these networks. Finally, the affective resistance of these people in their cultures, fueled by their roots and rhizomes, makes the survival, vitality and ability to flourish of cultural identities possible in contemporary Brazil. Through this metaphor, a more harmonious integration can be envisioned between past and present, tradition and innovation, as a path to psychological stability and mental health.

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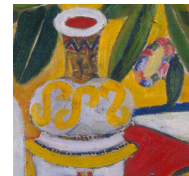
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Masculinities and heteropatriarchy: reflections on the negativity of masculine identity

Gustavo Pessoa

Article



ABSTRACT

This article examines the links between male identities and how our current socio-political-cultural system is organized in the form of a heteropatriarchy that forces the oppression of other identities. In this sense, male identities are organized by negativity, that is, by the negation of other identities. The effect of such negativity is a kind of command to oppress minority populations, which requires men to renounce this power as a means of allowing other subjectivizing processes to take place. Jungian psychology provides a possibility for an aesthetic elaboration of these processes by analyzing images, highlighting imagination as a fundamental competence for considering other worlds in which identities can be overcome, so that the mandate of violence that structures masculinities can ultimately cease.

Keywords: masculinities, negativity, identity, aesthetics

When Pedro Lemebel claims to be a third-world queer person at one moment, or a transvestite at another, something is at stake in the heteropatriarchy. Through his only published work, “Poco hombre”, we find an opening through which, in all his originality, Lemebel denies what people have tried to impose on him all along: masculinity. His Manifesto starts with four negatives, which resonate with Didier Eribon (2008) when they, a French queer, tells us that gay identity is formed from offense, insult, and negativity. The dissidents of sexuality organize themselves first by what is taken away from them, more clearly their dignity as a subject, so that only at a later moment can these bodies know themselves for what they are. Lemebel’s work of art shares with us his reflection on masculinity:

My honor is to accept myself as different,

Being a coward is much worse

My ass is mine, buddy

And that’s my revenge

My honor waits patiently
The males grow old
 [...]

So many kids are going to be born
With a broken wing
And I want them to fly, buddy
May your revolution
Give them a piece of red sky
So they can fly.

(LEMEBEL, 2023, pp. 47-48)

The images of culture have been the object of analysis in depth psychology from Freud, who did not shy away from exploring potential latent meanings in works of art such as Hamlet or Michelangelo's Moses, to Jung, who did not evade analyzing literary and mythical works when articulating his theories. For the early psychologists, culture proved to be a territory for legitimizing the analytical processes observed in individual listening. They worked on the hypothesis that, based on cultural production, the psychic processes underlying a certain collectivity that was experiencing a certain historical process could be intuited.

Jung (2013, OC, vol. XV) also proposed the idea that the productions of culture under an aesthetic analysis have something to reveal from the unconscious, based on an archetypal theory, where the author also points out how there is something else in art and the images presented aesthetically, something that concerns both the author's singularity and the fundamental images that precede it, which will be referred to as archetypal images. Psychoanalysis and analytical psychology converge in the view that "[...] what the artist gives us access to is the place of what cannot be seen – and it remains to be named" (LACAN, 2001, p. 192). There is something about aesthetic formalization that escapes our ability to make it immediately comprehensible. Lacan acknowledges that there is something else in the images of culture that can be heard from the unconscious beyond authorship.

Aesthetics is understood here as a system that arranges positions and places from which impressions and the sharing of the sensible are feasible, as proposed by Rancière (2009). For the French philosopher, there is an aesthetic unconscious that informs us of the encounter between thought and non-thought, the experience of the sensible, and the attempt to rationalize and frame this experience, which transcends the possibility of symbolization, as mentioned above.

The sharing between people who occupy different places ensures that we are, to a certain extent, always dealing with an aesthetic-politics, since aesthetics tells us about the decisions that people collectively make based on the places they occupy and the impressions that are captured from these positions.

On the Brazilian scene, masculinities were the subject of public debate based on a speech made by the president who served out his term between 2018 and 2022. A public statement that could be roughly translated as if the President were “unkillable, unbreakable, and uncatchable” was made into a medal and given to the then-president of Argentina in 2024 (FREITAS, 2024). The survival of the scene of the recitation of the he could never be “impotent” reveals the attempt to produce a certain aesthetic within the register of political ridicule, a concept coined by Tiburi (2020). For us, it is relevant to consider the reiteration of negativity in male identity established by the lexicon of negativity. The choice of three words that are conjured up from negation by the Latin prefix of negation, as it is in the Portuguese language, corresponding to the prefix “un” in English, highlights this grammar of what is formed by what is negated.

These recent stagings reinforce the hypothesis outlined in Pessoa (2021) that the images of masculine and feminine are suitable for analysis from a cultural perspective, crossed by a cultural complex, as opposed to considering gender to be an archetypal category. We argue that desire and sexuality certainly inform us of an archetypal order of human experience, although the terms “masculine” and “feminine” seem to fit better into the dynamics of a heteropatriarchal complex that is reflected in binarism as a way of constituting the subject. Rubin (2017) calls this operation a sex-gender system, and Butler (2003) calls it a heterosexual system before the experience of the Oedipus complex.

The aesthetics of masculinity, illustrated by the former president’s speech, create images that speak to us repeatedly of negativity. Man is defined by what he is not: unkillable, unbreakable, and uncatchable. The need to use this type of language, which is not new in human history, shows us that even the identity of the category that enjoys the most privileges in our society, that is, man, still has to be symbolized to become intelligible. It is as if a question about this identity lingers within us: what is a man?

Kimmel’s (2016) research reveals a few common characteristics shared by the men he interviewed, as well as what he could draw from their responses. The author believes that men need to prove to others all the time what they are not; more specifically, men need to prove that they are not homosexual and that they are not women. This leads to three considerations: the need for constant proof, which points to the instability of male identity. Although instability is attributed

to all identities, according to Butler (2003), such a claim about men contradicts a certain idea of the strength and robustness of the male self-image and self-esteem. Secondly, we notice the presence of homophobia in the male discourse, which rejects the association with traits considered pertinent to homosexual identity. Thirdly, and no less importantly, at all costs, there is the need to disidentify as a woman. Here, the categories of the non-identical, i.e. women and homosexuals, are evidently taken as inferior and necessarily rejected.

However, it is worth noting two other outcomes of these attributes. Men's need to prove themselves begs the question: prove themselves to whom? This question is answered by Kimmel (2016), who shows us that there is a system of male competitiveness-solidarity where men must prove their masculinity to another man-subject. The status of subject, of course, is granted only to the identical, men; therefore, we can infer that men need to prove themselves to each other. I can only be unbreakable insofar as the unbreakable exist and thus, invoking the Freudian image of the father of the horde, we have a kind of superman with the authority to lead the herd. Such is the image within a masculine aesthetic based on negativity.

Connell's (2005) research suggests the idea of a superior man, leading to the concept of hegemonic masculinity. For the author, there is an ideal of masculinity that is pursued by most men and achieved by very few, if any. This idea of masculinity speaks of a male superpower, a Self capable of performing the greatest tasks and designs. The idea of hegemony is based on opposition to oppressed groups, which is why Connell (2005) also points out that one of the ideals of hegemonic masculinity is to distance itself from the traits shown by gay men. In our colonial, capitalist, racist, ableist system, however, it is reasonable to assume that men on the periphery of capitalism, in colonized territories, subject to racism and ableism of any kind, will also be subject to inferiority in terms of the ideal of hegemonic masculinity. Thus, other subaltern masculinities will be experienced by these men. For this reason, Connell (2016) strongly affirms the need to speak of masculinities, in the plural, whenever we refer to the term.

The second implication leads us to the issue of a particular negation in the aesthetics of the "unkillable, unbreakable, and uncatchable". Negativity summons up its opposition, telling us that some can die, some can be broken, and some can be caught. These, being non-identical, cannot be men. Who would they be? Would the deadly, the breakable, and the catchable have the same status as subjects? Here, masculinities face a contradiction. They need to establish themselves through an oppositional mechanism, through the formula of a given negation, but neither can they give the opposite its condition of symmetry. Women and homosexuals are breakable, catchable, and, more frighteningly, they are also those that can die.

Such a stark conclusion is not surprising for those who fall into these categories, although it highlights the fragility of the political position that these individuals occupy in our society.

In *The Elementary Structures of Violence*, Segato (2003) listens to accounts of men imprisoned for raping women. By carrying out an anthropological analysis of the discourse, the author concludes that violence structures male subjectivity itself. This means that the subjects are part of a dual system that we commonly call patriarchy or, as Preciado (2020) would have it, heteropatriarchy, which is based on the “[...] segmentation between soul and body, [which] reproduces, in the order of experience, the sexual binary epistemology. There are only two options, male and female” (Preciado, 2020, p. 23). The masculine, for Segato (2003), is based on a mandate of violence: the man is the unkillable who has the right over the mortal: women and LGBTI+ people. In this sense, male subjectivity is the internalization of a certain authority, and therefore the right to violence, over other bodies that do not become subjects under the male gaze. In the order of experience, the violence of masculinities is negativity made concrete, the negation that materializes as a flow between bodies-subjects that can exercise it as opposed to those bodies that can die, be broken, or be caught.

As Butler (2003) explains, the category of binary gender is elucidated by the concept she borrows from Nietzsche, the metaphysics of substance. This concept helps us to understand how some categories of a historical, cultural, social, and political nature, in other words, better understood from a Jungian perspective based on the theory of cultural complexes, for example, become the object of a reading of immanence and transcendence, which would lead us to a conceptualization based on the theory of archetypes. This process occurs deliberately with the category of gender. Butler (2003, p. 56) states that

Gender is not a noun, but neither is it a set of floating attributes, as we have witnessed that its substantive effect is performatively produced and imposed by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. As such, gender proves to be performative within the discourse inherited from the metaphysics of substance, i.e. constituting the alleged identity.

What the understanding of the metaphysics of substance presents us with is the need to repeat acts, in other words, to perform continuously what is supposedly a natural truth, to convince the public of the natural substance of what is being performed. Thus, to assert and prove their masculine identity, men will need to repeat the acts that affirm their masculinities. The problem is that, since masculinities are largely structured by negativity, men are forced to reject what women and homosexuals are and, ultimately, to use

violence to demonstrate their value as subjects. Such is the heteropatriarchal system.

What could an analysis achieve in the face of a system that orchestrates collectivities and internalizes in the subject such possibilities of understanding oneself as human? At this point, it is clear that the heteropatriarchal system, which in turn structures a heteropatriarchal complex, also imposes a significant degree of social and institutional violence on men. The dismantling of the heteropatriarchal system will inevitably depend on the elaboration of its complexes, which makes psychological analysis a post-identitarian tool to support the dismantling of this system. As Butler (2003) points out, the appearance of substance given to identities, especially male identity, leads the subject to a kind of dead end: if I give up what I have been convinced I am, I will be nothing. At this point, we should argue for an inversion in the power of negativity: an interesting effect that can be provoked in the analysis is the understanding that, in fact, we are nothing. A kind of excess of meaning rests on identity, a source of meanings that makes us remain attached to what, in truth, fosters a system of violence and exclusion that, strictly speaking, should be of no interest to anyone.

The key archetypal factor here is humanity itself, which brings with it the possibility of giving diverse and normative bodies the status of a subject who, enjoying their freedom, can undertake the search for their uniqueness. In other words: what is prevented in the oppressive dynamics of the heteropatriarchal complex is individuation itself, as proposed by Jung. There is no way to explore unique paths that refer to oneself in a system strangled by identities that call on us to perform repetitive acts that confirm what the system itself would like us to be, yet, in the very impossibility of such permanence, forces us to repeat ourselves until we convince ourselves that we are one and the same thing.

There is, however, a consequence of the intertwining privileges of male identity that poses a challenge for a post-identity journey. One of the consequences of male identity enjoying its negativity is that, to a certain extent, men as subjects are already made to feel that they can be what they are. Minority identities, i.e. women, racialized people, people with disabilities, and the LGBTI+ population, due to their historical lack of equal rights and opportunities, are continually marked by the need to affirm their identity as the cause of their oppression. It is in the face of the historical and deliberate erasure and blindness of a hetero-patriarchal system that dissident identities, which are not guaranteed subject status, need to affirm their oppressions and reassert the groups to which they belong. Such an act is not particularly a choice or a desire, but rather a necessity to avoid dying.

The universal male, represented by the image of the white man, enjoys the power to hide his own identity. There is no need for the white man to claim his place as a subject, nor to point out the social, political, and cultural prejudices to which he is subjected for being socially and psychologically structured as a white man. The introduction of the white man begins with his name, his life story, the subjective elaboration of his path, and even his ancestry, of which he is clearly aware. The white man knows who he is and where he came from because he can figure it all out. The white man is allowed to see himself as such, to the extent that it is impossible for a woman not to understand herself as a woman, for a black person to understand themselves as a black person, and the process repeats itself with every dissent from the white heterosexual norm in which we live. This is because populations that do not enjoy the power and status of white men are victims of violence and other oppressions caused precisely because they belong to these identity categories.

In this regard, the analysis of a male subject will start from a more clearly established subjectivity, provided by a discourse with a certain clarity of possibilities and limitations. As a rule, the white man on the couch knows where he came from and where he wants to go. The mystery that affects him refers to his paralysis in the search for the ideal, the hole produced in the heteropatriarchal imagination that promised him all the rights guaranteed. In other words, it is in the gap produced by a question that hides itself all the time: am I not, then, unbreakable, unkillable, uncatchable? The self that is structured in masculinities will need, in analysis, to surrender to the negation of the negation, rejecting the performativity of its negativities and renouncing the power conferred by its own emptiness if it wishes to dismantle its mandate of violence. It is only by associating himself in some way with his images of failure that a man can give rise to the creation of non-violent alternatives for himself.

By pointing out the tear in male illusions, Connell (2016) makes it clear that very few men see themselves as living up to the ideal of the subject envisioned by the hetero-patriarchal system. Based on this, the author concludes that there are many masculinities, with hegemonic masculinity, full of power, being the one that is less performative and restricted to an especially select group of white men. What do all the others do with their failures and limitations?

The aesthetic-political project of a certain segment of the population is the persistence and repetition of the "unbreakable". This illusion is part of what Tiburi (2024) called PRCC: patrirracialcapitalism. The satirical reference to both a political party and a narco-criminal mafia is no accident. This amalgam of privileges that structures a system and is claimed without any embarrassment by some men is part of the project to maintain a hegemonic masculinity that regulates all bodies using a convincing resource: political ridicule (TIBURI,

2020), the creation and dissemination of images within a certain discourse, images that co-opt affections trapped in what I call here the heteropatriarchal complex.

It is in this gap that analytical psychology has the chance to play a crucial role. Few twentieth-century authors have dedicated themselves to an analysis of images from a psychological point of view like C.G. Jung. For a long time now, analytical psychology has been advocating an exploration of images that brings out both the symbolic-cultural character that needs to be dismantled on the one hand, but on the other, from the archetypal theory, we say that there is something more to images. For so long now, we have been guided by the Jungian intuition that there is something in images that is not visible at first, as Lacan himself admitted. Jung (2002, OC, vol. IX) brought to our attention that the images we can hear from the unconscious bring potential forms that survive time, a certain aesthetic principle that provides order to our humanity. This elementary aesthetic form, the archetype, seems to have nothing to do with all the cultural conditioning factors that drive a certain project of power. Thus, it seems problematic to say that gender is archetypal since gender is a category that sustains a project of colonial and hetero-patriarchal society. If sexuality and performativity can be seen as archetypal phenomena, gender is a derivative of these conditions that is shaped by certain locations (Europe, especially), at a certain historical moment (the emergence of the ancestral figure of the pater familias, as seen in Pessoa [2021]), which sustain a social order that has become more sophisticated and has proved especially terrifying for the bodies of women and LGBTI+ people.

Masculine identities reside in our world as a kind of body animated by the hetero-patriarchal complex in its negativity, reinforced by an aesthetic-political project that intentionally spreads images to co-opt people through the affections that these images arouse and move in us. It is our deepest feelings and emotions that are at stake, as we are co-opted by the manipulation of our traumas and everyday suffering. As asserted by Safatle (2016), fear is the most often mobilized affection in our time, which paralyzes us in identities based on unease and suffering. Thus, we could say that there is not only a fear of the feminine, as analytical psychology has explored at length. There is also a fear of the masculine, much less metaphorical since it is at the hands of the masculine that we are dominated, raped, beaten, and killed.

Analytical psychology understands, though, that the game of affections mobilized by a complex, despite its enormous potential for generating suffering and symptoms, also points to paths for elaboration and alternative ways out. An image is a form that is potentially unlimited in its capacity to provide us with insights and, therefore, generate transformations that move us out of the complex itself. It requires

continuous listening to the image and a silent persistence on the part of the analyst in identifying the gaps and holes that can allow us to exercise a certain amount of agency that we have left. Therein lies the possibility of a certain freedom of action, of a return to the act. To do so, we must overcome our own fear and terror of the threats of the “unkillable” because although Kronos was not killed, he could be isolated and exiled, as another image teaches us.

We also need to overcome the image as the bearer of transcendental truth, that is, the somewhat religious understanding that the images of the unconscious contain ready-made solutions that have been sent by some higher authority. Affections are repeated and reproduced based on a historical process which, if properly observed, tells us how we ordered ourselves and how the complex reached the strength with which we can see it today. We need to pay attention to history, philosophy, and art, which tell us about other aesthetic-political projects that are more inclusive, liberating, and emancipatory. We cannot shy away from dialoguing with these fields in an era of post-identity, nor can analytical psychology shy away from studying its sister fields. We cannot just stick with the image, we need to understand it in a broader context that can better inform us about what this unconscious is saying that we find difficult to hear.

Male identities, like all others, are yet another misfit performativity in this PRCC system that we support desperately and that we maintain as if it were our only alternative. We should point out, though, that it is in their constitution through violence that male identities are inserted into the system as the primary holders of privileges and possibilities that have led us to a critical aggravation of the system itself, which is threatening to collapse at every moment. A review of the masculine position and its permeability to criticism is urgent. Such a transformation can only take place by shifting the negativity through which the masculine is structured; instead of a resolute denial of dissident sexualities, privilege must be refuted through simple denials: man is not king, man is not elite, nor is man phallic. How could we conceive of a man who does not enjoy the power and seduction of the phallus?

It is through aesthetics, more precisely aesthetic politics, that we can imagine whole new possible worlds and encourage new forms of intuition and imagination. Finally, it is worth recalling that imagination is a faculty that has always been fostered by a certain Carl Jung, who sought to express himself through his images, and by encouraging others to produce their own, analytical resources that survive to this day and help many in their processes of elaborating their complexes. For those of us dedicated to analytical psychology today, the task remains to let go of the mythologies of the past, identify the affections that remain, and, from their paintings, produce new images that better portray the worlds we desire.

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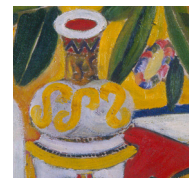
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Jungian clinical approach with women in abusive relationships and post-divorce abuse: challenges and coping

Fabiana Teixeira Pithon

Article



Abstract

This article seeks to discuss how the Jungian clinical approach can contribute to the analysis of women in heterosexual abusive relationships or post-divorce abuse. Initially, the characteristics of this gender violence are addressed, as well as more specific aspects of psychological violence, in addition to explaining the existence of so-called judicial abuse, necessary interfaces with the discipline of Law, psychological characteristics of the aggressor, which are consistent with the alpha narcissistic personality disorder and sociocultural aspects in the prevalence of men's violent behavior and women's victimization, involved in the cisheteropatriarchal cultural complex. Clinical work involves identifying the characteristics of these relationships, carrying out psychoeducational work, strengthening the ego, and helping the patient to establish limits and reconstitute her psychic individuality by disidentifying with the aggressor, who appears as an inner demonic lover, seeking to help her get out of the role of victim. This way, she could connect with herself and continue in her individuation process. The biggest challenges arise from the fact that this demonic lover is embodied and present in real actions of violence in his external world.

Keywords: abusive relationships; narcissistic abuse; gender violence; analytical psychology; post-divorce abuse.

Introduction

A therapeutic process is always a journey. It is even more difficult when dealing with heterosexual women in so-called abusive relationships and, worse when the abuse does not finish after the end of the relationship: *post-divorce or post-separation abuse*.

We resort to the Jungian method through the transference relationship to deal with this challenge. In these cases, it requires the addition of certain precautions by the analyst, such as so-called *gender literacy*, so as not to act countertransferentially and further consolidate the pattern of violence experienced by this woman, in

addition to knowledge about the current term *narcissistic abuse*. This draws attention to the awareness of the relationship patterns of the aggressor figure, so that this woman, through the strengthening of the ego and reconnection with the Self, can be transformed. In the realm of images of the unconscious, it is possible to say that there is a "dance" with a *negative animus*, personified by the figure of the abusive partner or ex-partner. It is very difficult to stop dancing to his tune. According to Carl Gustav Jung: "Where love reigns, there is no will to power; and where power takes precedence, there is no love. One is the shadow of the other." (JUNG, OC, vol. VII/1, §78). We will continue to show that the dynamics of these couple relationships are about power and control, not love.

1 The problem of abusive relationships

To address the challenges of clinical work with women in abusive relationships and the prolongation of these relationships after divorce, we must first talk about a reality that many ignore: the alarming and growing numbers of violence against women and femicide, which increased significantly with the isolation imposed by the pandemic but continue increasing after it. According to the Yearbook of the Brazilian Public Security Forum (*Anuário do Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública*), femicide broke a record in 2023, with psychological violence against women having increased by approximately 33.8% compared to the previous year. In 21.0% of cases of violence, ex-spouses were responsible for the case. Increases also occurred in assaults (9.2%) and domestic violence (10.0%). Meanwhile, general violence, considering the population as a whole, decreased by 3.4%. Among the most common effects of domestic violence on the physical and mental health of victims are symptoms of anxiety, depression, traumatic stress disorder (TSD) or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), fibromyalgia, and autoimmune diseases (KOLK, 2020; MATÉ, 2003).

What characterizes an abusive relationship? Talking about this is something relatively new, although it has always existed under other names: until recently, people only talk about marital conflict, making violence against women invisible.

Kast (2022) reminds us that whenever someone's boundaries are violated, there is abuse. Thus, an abusive relationship is one in which there is abuse of power and domestic violence. Maria da Penha Law, number 11,340/2006 (BRASIL, 2006), recognizes five types of gender-based violence: physical, sexual, patrimonial, moral, and psychological. In understanding the existence of post-divorce abuse, we would add procedural violence and institutional violence, which we will detail later.

The use of physical and sexual violence, although not yet properly addressed by our society, has always been the most obvious violence. Psychological and moral violence, on the other hand, have more subtle forms, through manipulative mechanisms, and perhaps only their effects seem more visible such as physical and mental illness, while their mechanisms remain hidden. Due to how this violence occurs, insidiously and across generations, they have always been normalized.

Dealing with women in abusive relationships involves understanding, together with them, the conditioning and normalization of violence to which men and women are subjected when they witness their parents' relationship patterns. Feminist writer bell hooks (2021) understands this phenomenon as follows:

Most of us cannot accept a definition of love that says we are never loved in contexts of abuse. Most children who have been physically or psychologically abused have been taught by their caregivers that love can coexist with abuse. In extreme cases, abuse is an expression of love. This flawed thinking often shapes our adult perceptions of love. So, just as we cling to the idea that those who hurt us as children loved us, we try to rationalize our being hurt by other adults by insisting that they love us.

[...]

And if a person's goal is self-healing, the well-being of their soul, confronting unlovingness honestly and realistically is part of the healing process. (hooks, 2021, p. 51).

Another aspect to be considered is the psychic mechanisms that a woman has when dealing with this violence, which are unconscious, with neurological correlates, as they are mechanisms of reaction to trauma, in this case, the so-called relational trauma. We will highlight the concept of *abaissement du niveau mental*, coined by Pierre Janet, to explain a psychic phenomenon that "reduces the threshold of consciousness, and allows the entry of unconscious contents [...], beginning to penetrate consciousness in the form of autonomous invasions" (JUNG, OC, vol. III, § 510), and the mechanism of "identification with the aggressor" (FERENCZI, 2011) contributing to the phenomenon of participation mystique (LÉVY-BRUHL, 1912 *apud* JUNG, 1991), a phenomenon of unconscious psychological identification between the woman and her aggressor. The emergence of these psychological phenomena makes it difficult for women to become aware of the abuse they have suffered and to make the definitive decision to distance themselves from their violent intimate partner.

Going through these difficulties, a woman who has children with an aggressor will face another phase of difficulties that may last throughout their childhood and adolescence. This is the continuation of psychological violence but in another format, this time, being able to be followed by procedural violence and patrimonial violence, and reinforced by the Brazilian Justice System as institutional violence.

As this article is being written, in the Paris Olympics, the story of Olympic sprinter Flávia Maria de Lima is making headlines. She said having left an abusive relationship, in which her partner, among other abusive behaviors, controlled all of her money. When she became pregnant, he stated that he did not want to be a father, but ever since they separated, he, who shows no motivation to spend time with his daughter, files a lawsuit every time Flávia leaves the state to compete and support herself and her daughter as an athlete, claiming maternal abandonment. In her testimony to the *Coletivo Mães na Luta*, she states: “When this judicial terrorism began, I started to panic about competing” (MACHISMO, 2024). We understand here that there is psychological, procedural, and institutional violence because the Justice System allows the existence of mechanisms available to men to violate women. Cases like this and other even more serious variants are frequent.

Despite some advances in laws protecting for violence against women, to this day the Brazilian Justice System, represented by certain judges and lawyers (not all, fortunately), still insists on considering abusive relationships as marital conflict or high-conflict divorce. Today, in common sense, our Justice System carries the names of abusive relationships, narcissistic abuse, domestic violence, and other more technical names, such as *coercive control* (KATZ, 2022), psychological violence, and the name proposed by psychologist Ramani Durvasula (2020a), *stress due to antagonistic relationships*, which is more consistent, even, with scientific knowledge on the topic. We will continue to use the terms “narcissistic abuse” and “abusive relationships” because they have become popular and, therefore, are easier to understand. When the Brazilian Judicial System, based on the decisions of a judge, ignores the violence suffered by women or their children and imposes conditions for the maintenance or intensification of violence, we understand that there is institutional violence.

2 The cycle of violence

Understanding the cycle of violence is the first step in a series of understandings for good clinical care. It was initially described by American psychologist Lenore Walker (1979), as comprising the phases of increased tension, a phase in which there is *psychological violence*; *physical violence*; and *honeymoon*, a phase of “redemption”

for the aggressor, when he realizes that he is about to lose the victim, seeks forgiveness, promises changes and tries to behave like the perfect partner. However, several psychologists who study narcissistic abuse, such as Dr. Ramani Durvasula (2020a), consider it more appropriate a cycle that involves love bombing: a conquest phase in which the man is the prince charming, seductive, helpful, promises to fulfill all the woman's needs and usually wants to commit quickly, making many romantic or family plans for the near future; *devaluation*: phase in which psychological violence begins, with effective devaluation, blaming, betrayals and may include physical violence, and *discard*: when he breaks off the relationship, he may turn to conquer other women, but later returns to harass the first woman, restarting the cycle.

The existence of *love bombing* makes it difficult to identify the violence in the future and causes a lowering of the mental level (JUNG, OC, vol. III). Not all abusive relationships will necessarily begin with this phase. We have seen more than one relationship that begins with an ambivalent game, alternating between wanting and not wanting the woman, creating a bond of dependence for "crumbs of love" and seeking approval. This manipulation is popularly called *negging*. In another case, the relationship begins with the partner being threatening, filling the woman's psyche with a paralyzing fear that prevents her from leaving the relationship. She reads about the usual descriptions of abusive relationships and she cannot identify herself because she did not find typical elements of love bombing, such as grandiose declarations of love, receiving flowers, or gifts, or meeting an extremely kind man who would be willing to do anything to fulfill her desires. We need to be aware of these variations.

3 Forms of psychological violence

We understand that there are many ways in which psychological violence can be expressed in an abusive relationship. The problem with psychological violence is that it is often made invisible by culture and by the victim, whose consciousness is at a low point, especially after the aggressor has gained her trust during the *love bombing phase*. Furthermore, psychological violence often occurs initially in a very subtle, almost imperceptible way, before reaching more intense levels. These include acts compiled by the so-called Violentometer, an instrument developed by the Interdisciplinary Program for Gender Studies in Mexico (INSTITUTO POLITÉCNICO NACIONAL, 2012): devaluing – including humiliating comments and jokes –, stalking, cursing, belittling, blaming the woman for his violent acts or for anything he interprets as "wrong", isolation from family and friends, excessive jealousy, emotional blackmail, controlling friendships and activities, threats, humiliating in public or private, ignoring or excluding

("the silent treatment"). Among the most insidious and harmful forms of psychological violence is what has come to be called gaslighting, which consists of distorting or denying reality to cloud the victim's perception of reality and themselves. Thus, the victim begins to hand over their reality screen and needs approval from the aggressor, who begins to exert even more control over their life (STERN, 2019). The lowering of consciousness caused by gaslighting reaches the point where the victim identifies with the aggressor's point of view and believes that she is going crazy.

Some signs in clinical care may indicate that a woman is a victim of gaslighting. It is common for her to have little confidence in her perceptions, which is a point to be worked on in therapy to validate them. It is also common for the patient to describe many arguments she has had with her partner in which she justifies herself to the analyst with excessive arguments for having done things disapproved of by the aggressor, projecting onto the analyst the gaslighter (perpetrator of the gaslighting) who pretends not to believe in her point of view. When there is some confidence in herself or her memory, the arguments with the gaslighter are endless, turning the couple's life into a living hell as the woman and her partner meet daily.

The last stage of psychological violence, showing the escalation to physical violence, is when the aggressor damages or breaks objects in fits of rage, hinting at what he might do to the woman next time. All of these acts have the ultimate goal of increasing the aggressor's power and control over his victim and are not at all about love.

In the violence assumed in the post-separation period, in the case of a woman who has children with the aggressor, we can highlight what the collective of mothers One Mom's Battle, translated into Portuguese by *Coletivo de Proteção à Infância Voz Materna*. It describes, based on the experience of women in situations of coercive control who are part of or seek advice from these movements:

Counterparenting: He undermines parental decisions and imposes conflicting values to anger the other parent. He denies or withholds consent for the child's needs (medical, therapeutic, educational, or extracurricular).

Isolation: He creates false narratives and spreads rumors to family, friends, teachers, and community relationships to discredit or destroy reputations and undermine current (or future) support systems.

Harassment and stalking: He sends a barrage of manipulative, threatening, or abusive messages with the intent to terrorize or intimidate. He monitors whereabouts and activities through social networking, social media, spyware, or physical stalking.

Neglectful or abusive parenting: He exposes children to unsafe content, situations or people while using violence, intimidation, threats, manipulation, or ridicule to obtain children's obedience.

Legal abuse: He disregards and manipulates court orders while misusing legal systems to control, harass, intimidate, and drain financial and emotional resources. He seeks custody orders for revenge, punishment, and control. [so-called abusive litigation]

[False] "Alienation" Claims: "Parental Alienation" Claims as a Legal Strategy to Overcome Allegations or Findings of Abuse, [...] (O QUE, 2024).

These behaviors also involve what we call "vicarious violence." In these cases, the aggressor uses the children, causing them harm or using them to harm their mother.

4 How to explain the behavior of a male aggressor?

By following women in clinical care and hearing testimonies from women who have lived through abusive relationships, we have observed that the aggressor's behavior is stereotypical. The stories repeat, leading to believe in pathological and cultural factors. The profile of the aggressor usually fits, with some variations, the so-called Alpha Narcissistic Personality Disorder, as named by American Jungian analysts Dougherty and West (2007), who describe the following characteristics: aggressive competitiveness, destructive envy, inability to suffer, a sense of entitlement and aggrandizement compensating for low self-esteem, constant belittling of others, habit of humiliating people, inability to tolerate intimate relationships, being driven by manipulative interpersonal strategies with manipulative cycles and the search for power and control, in addition to an antagonistic relational pattern. A great insight is provided by Dougherty and West (2007) when we come across their description of the alpha narcissist as someone who has a compulsion to attack the envied object. We understand that the manipulative cycle with the person she tries to have a relationship would tend to repeat unconsciously and without modifications. It hardly crosses women's minds that they could be the target of the narcissist's envy. In the case of the Olympic athlete Flávia Maria de Lima mentioned above, this dynamic becomes more visible with the attack always following each of her professional achievements. "The predatory archetypal identification of the alpha narcissist manifests in a determination to win, to ruin or humiliate the other, to put the other down" (DOUGHERTY; WEST, 2007, p. 218). It is common for the narcissist to seek constant conflicting interactions to obtain emotional supply, even if this is negative.

Mario Jacoby (2023) and Dougherty and West (2007) also highlight the delusional nature of the narcissist, who considers everyone as an object that must work according to his will. After all, the narcissist

imagines that this is his world, which must work according to laws and rules dictated by him. Another correlated aspect is the lack of empathy, which explains his difficulty with relationships:

Narcissistically disturbed people defend themselves against any form of demonstrating empathy since this leads to human closeness. For them, this would involve the risk of merging with the other and having their fragile self-identity dissolved (JACOBY, 2023, p. 325).

In a violent relationship, the abusive partner reverses the possibility of an intimate and deep relationship based on intimacy and Eros, to be expected into a relationship based on power.

Outside the Jungian circle, scholars who specialize in narcissistic abuse, such as Durvasula (2020a, 2020b) and Sarkis (2020), do not restrict it to narcissistic personality disorder of any type but show manipulative, aggressive, and harmful behaviors in interpersonal relationships, in the former so-called disorders belonging to "Cluster B" of the DSM-5: narcissistic, antisocial, borderline, and histrionic. They also no longer understand narcissism as a personality disorder but rather consider the existence of narcissistic defenses.

When dealing with the stereotypical behavior of the aggressor in these abusive relationships and how psychological violence occurs, as well as the cycle of violence, we come across the archetypal figure of a Trickster (JUNG, OC, vol. IX/1), with his ambivalence and duality, leading to deception, sometimes introducing himself as a wonderful man, with promises of being a savior, and sometimes acting as the executioner, a monster. The hope of having their partner back as he was during the love bombing phase is what keeps many women in abusive relationships but they need to realize that this is not his whole personality. The good man carries the bad man with him. We also understand that the image of the good man is part of a strategy to confuse and dominate. More than just presenting the Trickster archetype as a possible complex in the aggressor's psyche, we need to understand that this archetype is constellated in the abusive relationship, as a third element, in which this duality always makes the woman want to try again to improve the relationship, as they are culturally held responsible for the success of the relationship. We also find this quality of the Trickster especially in gaslighting and devaluation strategies in which the aggressor distorts reality, inverts the blame and disqualifies the woman, disguising the devaluation as praise.

5 Cultural Aspects of the Advent and Rise of Narcissistic Abuse

Attributing a personality disorder or pathologizing behavior can be an easy way to avoid ethical responsibility for harm caused to

others. It is difficult to think about increasing violence, with alarming numbers: a minimum of three femicides in Brazil per day, according to the Brazilian Public Security Forum (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2023), most of them perpetrated by intimate partners or ex-partners, without questioning what is happening in our society. We know that patriarchy promotes cultural values that enable the escalation of violence. Based on the questioning of patriarchal culture, it is expected that it will react to its possible decline with even more violence. The so-called social devices and processes of subjectivization in men and women, as conceived by Brazilian researcher Valeska Zanella (2018). The *love device* in women makes them seek emotional fulfillment – and also be held accountable for it –, attributing to them the responsibility for the failure or success of a relationship, which also makes it difficult for them to identify and leave an abusive relationship, and makes them believe that their partner can improve if they make an effort. Another harmful effect is that it makes them have as a life goal to be approved by men, distancing them from themselves, which makes them vulnerable to abuse once again and to rivalry with other women. The *maternal device*, on the other hand, drives women to the socially shared desire that they should find fulfillment in motherhood, concentrating the tasks of care on them, who take care not only of their children but also of their partner, who has not learned the task of caring, because efficiency, focused on professional and material achievements is his device.

Feminist bell hooks (2020) reinforces the deleterious effect of the idealization of romantic love and patriarchal culture in the naturalization of violence:

Feminist thinkers have drawn attention to how this idea of love has been the interest to patriarchal men and women. It has supported the idea that a person can do anything in the name of love: beating people, restricting their movements, and even killing them and calling it a ‘crime of passion’, claiming “I loved her so much that I had to kill her”. Love in patriarchal cultures is linked to notions of passion, to paradigms of domination and submission, in which the assumption was that one person would give love and the other would receive it. (hooks, 2020, p. 146-147).

All this can be understood as the domain of a cultural complex, in which practices, norms, standards, values, and implicit assumptions of gender roles and power encompass what Gustavo Pessoa (2022) called the cisheteropatriarchal complex. This validates the supremacy of white, cis, heterosexual men over women and the feminine, relegating all those who do not belong to the hegemonic group to an inferior category and considered objects of possession. Gender-based violence also stems from a cultural complex whose historical roots date back to the colonial period, with its sugar mill owners, slave owners, women, and children. Thinking about the

cisheteropatriarchal cultural complex in this way also points us to the transgenerationality of abusive relationships within families, reinforcing family complexes. Unfortunately, the action of this cultural complex behind abusive relationships also occurs in LGBTQIAPN+ relationships, although our scope of study is limited to heterosexual relationships. All of this will imply the need for greater awareness by the analyst so as not to act countertransferentially in the therapeutic setting with the corresponding oppressive couple of this woman in an abusive relationship (MATTA, 2023). As hooks (2020, p. 107) rightly points out: “we know that patriarchal masculinity encourages men to be pathologically narcissistic, childish, and psychologically dependent on the privileges (albeit relative) they receive simply because they were born men.”

Graham et al. (2021) go further in understanding the social mechanisms for the emergence and maintenance of a society constituted by misogyny, with their theory of Social Stockholm Syndrome. They have consistent arguments based on robust and diverse research, that Stockholm Syndrome can be generalized to society as a whole. In this conception, the female gender (not just women, or everyone who is not a cis, heterosexual man) is devalued and subjected to male violence. With no way out of this violence, women choose, or rather, strive to be chosen, approved, and emotionally bond with those who demonstrate acts of kindness and appear to act as protectors, even if, in the future, they turn their violence against them. As in an abusive relationship where Stockholm Syndrome is observed, girls are raised to be around and obtain approval from men, and their lives revolve around the idea of romantic love, projecting these protective and kind qualities onto men. Thus, once again, they are socially forced to take responsibility for the success or failure of the relationship and are blamed for the violence they suffer in the most diverse areas of life, from romantic relationships, family relationships, work relationships, or occasional violence without a previous relationship, such as rape by a stranger. Reporting on research, they show that the violence that women fear most is not death, but rape: genuinely male violence. Men, on the other hand, are raised to reinforce narcissistic qualities, such as the sense of entitlement to always have their needs met by women.

Graham et al. (2021) even point to the contamination of this social functioning in the construction of the understanding of the female psyche in psychological approaches, which becomes biased by femininity understood by the Social Stockholm Syndrome model. What model of the female psyche do we have in analytical psychology? Neumann (2000) suggests the model of the myth of Persephone and Demeter: Persephone, in her feminine initiation, needs to make an abrupt break in her symbiotic relationship with her mother through the abduction of Hades, which represents the – violent – entry of the

masculine principle into her life. She marries her abductor. Despite this, in Bill number 4,053/2008, for the approval of the Parental Alienation Law (OLIVEIRA, 2008), it is the model of the myth of Medea, the one who resents the end of the marriage and deprives the parent of his children, that prevails as a stereotype of women in the family courts of the Brazilian Judiciary, that is, once again, they are blamed for the violence they suffer.

6 Clinical work with women in abusive relationships

Under the unconscious influence of the cisheteropatriarchal complex and all its transgenerational burden, the testimonies of women who suffer violence of any kind by men are silenced, disqualified, and even denied. This is the first trap that the analyst must avoid falling into. Validating the patient's experiences already has transformative power in a society that commonly labels them "crazy". In this way, perceptions and experiences can be made aware and elaborated.

The dynamics of gender devices (ZANELLO, 2018) can be a good start for *gender literacy* when dealing with these cases. Without recognizing the social, family, and individual mechanisms that violate women, they can be thrown into a hole of misunderstanding in the analysis, through which acceptance or bonding, fundamental to Jungian therapy, is not created. In our clinic, what we understand as *gender literacy* must be more than the understanding of the socio-cultural issues that permeate gender, especially about violence. For transference work that helps lead the patient to profound transformations, a conscious and genuine experience of what the cisheteropatriarchal complex means is necessary. Paraphrasing Jung (OC, vol. XVI, §179): "It is because it is not possible to take a patient beyond the point where we are."

Most of them come to the clinic with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, with anxiety, hypervigilance, sleep disturbances, flashbacks, and intrusive memories. One of the main signs of psychodynamic issues of an abusive relationship in the clinic is to observe that the patient "walks on eggshells", that is, lives in hypervigilance, because the partner can be overcome by narcissistic fury and "explode" at any moment, for any reason, and blame her. As in typical Stockholm Syndrome behavior (GRAHAM et al., 2021), the victim thinks to control the situation and keeps circling the aggressor's desires and needs so as not to "make a mistake". This is where we can understand that an unconscious psychological identification is formed between the aggressor and the victim. Regarding the Stockholm Syndrome, we can see that the person turns to the aggressor and lives as if in a long-term kidnapping. Graham et al. (2021) explain that, at this moment, the feeling of guilt sets in as a survival mechanism for a neurological

traumatic fight reaction, as the guilt takes the victim out of a possible freezing reaction, making her feel responsible for what happens to her and makes her fight to please and influence her aggressor, trying to free herself from punitive violence, even if, in fact, the aggressor's outbursts do not depend directly on what the victim does or does not do, but rather on her internal motivations.

One of the patients we treated came to the office somewhat aware that she was in an abusive relationship and that her husband was gaslighting her. Many years before coming to therapy, she had noticed that she was experiencing tachycardia and cardiac arrhythmia. After undergoing all the tests to detect heart problems and obtaining negative results, she was able to conclude that this was due to a state of anxiety every time her husband came home and that it also affected her sleep, as she could be woken up at any time by him to discuss something futile for which he blamed her. In her case and that of other women subjected to psychological violence, an important task is to help them give up seeking the approval of the aggressor, despite all the disqualification, devaluation, and blaming (STERN, 2019).

The extreme importance given to psychoeducation is one of the main concerns highlighted by Ramani Durvasula (2020a). It is important to emphasize that most of these specialists do not belong to psychology approaches with transference as a central element of psychotherapy. Psychoeducation is named by Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) as a resource that seeks, in our case, to explain what is understood by an abusive relationship, its characteristics, and to understand the aggressor's modus operandi to better deal with him, even if there is a long way to go for the patient to become aware of the destructive power of his behavior and to convince herself that some guidance can be useful in helping her deal with him and overcome narcissistic abuse. It even goes as far as naming each type of abuse that women suffer, such as *gaslighting*, *love bombing*, *silent treatment*, *triangulation*, *smear campaign*, and *use of flying monkeys*, among others, helping her in the process of awareness. What we explained in this article can be considered a work of psychoeducation. Jung (OC, vol. XVI), in *The Practice of Psychotherapy: Contributions to the Problem of Psychotherapy and the Psychology of Transference*, shows us that he is not exclusive in his approach and that different methods should be used according to the patient's needs. These methods may originate from other approaches, as he emphasized those of Freud and Adler. All this work involves strengthening this woman's ego.

Not only is it important to identify signs of abuse within a romantic relationship, but it is also important to have models of healthy relationships. It is interesting to look at the explanations of James Hollis (2011), in his book *The Middle Passage: From Misery to Meaning in Midlife*, and the transformations from the romanticized form to the humanized form of a romantic relationship. A realistic and mature

model of relationship would be one in which two people remain in their individuation processes, but have each other as partners on the journey, with mutual support and respect, without expectations that a “magical other” (HOLLIS, 2011, p. 66) will save them. It is necessary to give up the fusional model of relationship, typical of romantic love, which places the couple in a mystical participation, distances them from their respective individuation processes, and leaves room for abusive invasions by the other.

Among the psychoeducational resources, the concepts of zero contact and gray stone stand out (MACKENZIE, 2015). As much as the victim is deceived by her psyche into believing that she is capable of changing the quality of her interactions with the aggressor, contact with the aggressor will always evoke the same stereotypical reactions in him, which we Jungians understand to be due to the activation of a complex since his ego is poorly constituted (JACOBY, 2023).

Zero contact is a goal to be pursued especially after the relationship has been successfully broken off. It involves blocking electronic or in-person contact, and not seeking access to details of the aggressor's new life, or vice versa. This is particularly painful and difficult for these women because the bond to be broken requires going through mourning. This mourning is more painful than the mourning of a healthy relationship, as it involves dealing with unfulfilled promises, dreams of a “perfect love” that have been shattered, grandiose idealizations shattered, dealing with the disappointment of a strong devaluation, strong feelings of rejection and unilateral guilt for the failure of the relationship.

In the case of a woman who has children with the aggressor, *zero contact* is not possible, even if she has obtained a restraining order through the Maria da Penha Law (nº 11.340/2006) that prevents the aggressor from contacting her. This woman is obliged to maintain contact to send information about the health and education of her children, to arrange details of parenting time or even to make decisions regarding the children together, if custody is shared. If she does not do this, she may be accused of the legal argument of practicing “parental alienation” and have her custody reverted to the aggressor. In this case, the *gray stone* is the resource to be used. This resource consists in showing the least amount of emotion possible, with the image of the *gray stone* as an inert, banal, almost imperceptible element, becoming uninteresting for the typical narcissistic trait of seeking conflicting interactions to feed oneself emotionally. Acting under the *gray stone* principle requires a much greater mobilization in terms of psychic efforts to disidentify with the aggressor and reestablish the woman's individuality, to end the mystical participation. This requires that the patient strive to react less and less emotionally and not respond immediately after receiving the violent communication. We advise women to wait one to three days to respond to an email,

if possible, and not to respond to any attacks, limiting themselves only to exchanging information necessary for decisions regarding the children's lives. As this objective is achieved, the endless discussions, about what the aggressor seeks, tend to decrease and become more spaced out. We also understand that the aggressor's point of view is gradually left aside, helping the woman to center herself and reconnect with her Self, which can be understood as the process of individuation.

However, although we can help our patients understand their aggressor's manipulative mechanisms and take steps towards limiting their aggressions through conversations with the analyst about the resources of *zero contact* or *gray stone*, we still have another deeper problem to solve. So far, we have talked about many resources that are more consciously worked on but with the approach of analytical psychology, we can deal with its powerful unconscious counterpart, which, in our view, is reflected in all of the victim's conscious difficulties: the internalized figure of their aggressor, who insists on being part of their life and poisoning the possibility of new perspectives.

7 The demonic animus that inhabits the woman who is a victim of relational trauma

It is common in observations and clinical reports or testimonies of abusive relationships for women to admit that they are always dealing with their aggressor in their psyches as if they were in a mental prison. They are always worried about how they will react if they do this or that, with arguments to avoid being blamed or with the repetition of verbalization of a disqualification made by the partner or ex with whom they have to deal, always reacting emotionally to these mental attacks. We can also see the phenomenon as a type of psychic slavery or emotional kidnapping. In cases where there is psychological violence from gaslighting, this internal aggressor can also appear as a judge for whom she builds arguments to avoid being "guilty" based on the accusations that the aggressor makes against her in real life and others that she projects onto her psyche. The figure of the aggressor is usually present in her psyche, terrorizing her, regardless of whether this woman is still at a lowered level of consciousness and still makes efforts to save the relationship or whether she has already become aware of the deleterious quality of this relationship and has already ended it. We would call this *animus* as an evil or demonic lover, according to Kast's (2022) denomination, who exerts control and continues the abuse in her psyche.

It is interesting to note that this demonic *animus* seems to incorporate more of the characteristics of her aggressor in her external life than vice versa. Regardless of the victim's situation in her

dreams, it is common for him to appear as her true lover or current partner, even when this relationship has already ended. There are cases in which the woman even feels repulsed by this ex-partner, she is already in another relationship, and the aggressor appears in the dream as her current partner, with whom she stays by his side, dances, or has sexual relations. This reveals the quality of fusion that this woman still finds herself with this aggressor, in what we understand to be a mystical participation. This internalized aggressor carries the characteristics of the aggressor from her external life and poisons her future relationships, either by creating distrust towards the next men she may meet, or by unconsciously attracting her to new abusive relationships.

This is the biggest challenge for the clinic with these women because it is as if it were necessary to carry out an internal transformation in which this internal aggressor diminishes in size and strength so that this woman can change her attitudes towards the external aggressor. Efforts to strengthen the ego are useless if no changes are in the unconscious. We believe that the depth of the Jungian method can help in this transformation as the woman faces daily and renewed violence, whether from the aggressor, the justice system, or even society.

Bringing the understanding of trauma experts, such as Bessel van der Kolk (2020) and Judith Herman (2020), who will consider the intolerable and prolonged affect on the nervous system of an abusive relationship, as the so-called *relational trauma*, we initially try to seek understanding from the Jungian perspective of the images of the unconscious in trauma, first brought by Donald Kalshed (2013), in *The Inner World of Trauma*, and its subsequent update in line with the most recent discoveries of neuroscience and other psychological approaches to trauma, in his chapter *Working with Trauma in Analysis* (Kalshed, 2019).

Kalshed's thesis (2013, 2019) says that, when an early trauma occurs, the *self-care system* comes into action in the psyche, as forces of the Self, splitting the traumatic complex into a part of the personality that regresses to a moment before the trauma, which would be the sacred core of the personality and which is sometimes protected, sometimes terrorized by a *daimonic* figure. This *daimonic* figure, in addition to the terror to avoid retraumatization (which fails), would have a protective function of taking the child to a fantasy world where he or she could take refuge from the evil of the world, with archetypal figures of magical animals, dolphins, and others.

In the cases discussed here, the idea of the demonic lover brought by Verena Kast (2022) appears to be much more plausible than in Kalshed's (2013, 2019) explanation of the splitting of the trauma complex. He makes it very clear that his theory refers to early

trauma, which does not prevent women in narcissistic abuse from having already suffered it. However, in clinical practice, reports show us that even women with good parental support and a good marital relationship between their parents are susceptible to falling into an abusive relationship. Furthermore, these women demonstrate that they cannot take refuge in a world of fantastic or even comforting fantasy, neither in dreams nor in daydreams, because the violent reality is present in real life and their psyche. Kalshed also refers to the violence of archetypal proportions in which the *daimonic* figure of early trauma usually threatens. In the case of women in abusive relationships, the violence of the real aggressor can be much greater than she could imagine and can escalate to femicide, the greatest risk of which occurs in the months immediately following the breakup of the relationship. Therefore, it is possible for those who pay attention to see at least one reprehensible newspaper headline every day reporting that a woman was killed by her ex-partner followed by the following subtitle: "he did not accept the end of the relationship". According to sociologist Evan Stark (2007), femicide, contrary to the old idea of a crime of passion, is a way for the aggressor to regain the control that was threatened to be lost with the end of the relationship.

Verena Kast's explanations (2022) are more in line with the empirical reality of these women and even project possible solutions, even though she emphasizes that the psychodynamics of the aggressor-victim described by her do not refer to extreme cases, as we can understand that they happen in cases of domestic violence. This demonic lover archetypically resembles Bluebeard, analyzed by Kast (2022), as the one who kills all the women he marries and who come into contact with his shadow. Bluebeard shows us the strength of the compulsiveness of these attacks. The woman also dies when she loses her innocence and discovers what marriage is really for in the way we have always known it: for the interests of patriarchy. Women think of marriage as the fulfillment of a dream, but they find violence, power, and expectations of submission. The happy ending with Bluebeard's death signals the hope of transformation of the demonic lover, but first, the Evil must end. We can associate Bluebeard's story with a cycle of violence, using Kast's (2022) analysis as a guide. First, the distance. Second, he seduces her and becomes more interesting. She marries him. Then she discovers his shadow, something that was repressed and dissociated, and all the violence appears. It is interesting how Kast denounces how the woman in the story distances herself from her feelings and intuition to let herself be seduced by him. We can find a cultural correlation with the way women are socialized: to be approved by men (ZANELLO, 2018).

Bluebeard is described as someone who yearns for relationships but is very afraid of closeness, which is why he kills women. We see a narcissistic trait here: "Instead of giving over to the relationship, he destroys it." (KAST, 2022, p. 20). Despite the happy ending in the story, Kast (2022, p. 21) points out that, unfortunately, Bluebeard's aggressiveness cannot be transformed and, rather, needs to be "combated in a limited and aggressive way at the right time." This is why, in the story, he is killed, and does not turn into a prince after being removed from a witch's spell, as often happens in other stories. This is also an example of women not waiting for this man from the outside world to turn into a good man, as happens in the story Beauty and the Beast.

As we manage to get the patient to be distanced from the company and aggression of her tormentor, which may even come via email, her psyche calms down and the terror in her life diminishes. Then, it becomes possible to dream of other *animus* figures, even as a sign of possible inner transformation. But this woman will only be able to do this after distancing and protecting herself from this man's attacks, which becomes difficult given the open path of the legal system with its misogynistic laws and behavior.

We do not have romantic and easy solutions. We need to think about transforming the way women deal with violence and empower them. The work is hard, because aggressions are updated in new acts of violence and, often, are reinforced by society, whether through its laws and conduct or by blaming women in various ways.

Transformation Possibilities

The transformation of the demonic *animus* goes in the direction, as Kast (2022) points out, of leaving the identification with the aggressor and finding herself, removing the sieve of reality that she had given to this man and the need to be approved by him. For her, since aggression cannot be transformed, but rather stopped, it is necessary to take ownership of her intrinsic aggression, leaving the role of victim. This aggression can be experienced assertively when the patient is encouraged to set limits. As her ego is strengthened, the woman can also begin to see her aggressor with more deficiencies and less power than he seemed to have before. Her fear, therefore, diminishes, and she feels ready to set such limits. It seems simple, but transference work is essential for the patient to feel empowered when mirroring herself in an analyst who is awake and in control of herself within a patriarchal society or in a sensitive and kind male analyst, who can mirror a positive male figure for her. We can also think of an analyst who transcends gender binarism, showing the

possibility of overcoming the power relationship between masculine and feminine.

A patient, encouraged by a lawyer and a psychotherapist, obtains a court injunction that prevents her daughter's alcoholic father from being with her without the presence of someone the patient trusts. Despite the initial threats and protests from this abusive father, over time, her anxiety began to diminish and she began to see the poorly thought-out way in which he acted to attack her. This also diminished her fear.

Within the therapeutic process, we may be faced with the need to process anger and grief, in addition to having to work through the mourning for the end of this relationship. As much as we may be tempted countertransferentially to deny this relationship, it existed, and for another way of living to emerge, this mourning must be experienced and worked through (MARLOW-MACCOY, 2020).

Following the specificity of Jungian psychotherapy, working with dreams, fantasies, and images that appear in expressive techniques can be a fruitful path, by transforming emotions into images, depotentiating the destructive power of this aggressive animus as Dr. Nise da Silveira (2001) worked with her psychotic patients and their internal monsters.

Being confused by an *animus* and an abusive man with Trickster characteristics leads her to decentralization. Reconnecting with the Self is naturally the purpose of therapeutic work. To this end, Kast (2022) warns of the need to seek the cultivation of other, healthier areas in their lives, even while this demonic lover reigns in their psyche. This may involve encouraging these women to resume their professional development – after all, many will be at a financial disadvantage when their relationships end – as well as seeking desires, projects, and contacts with creative areas in their lives that can be discovered or rediscovered. The more connected to the Self, the fuller of life their psyche will be and the less susceptible to the external aggressor. Despite the paths outlined here, it will never be easy. The real attacks from the external aggressor shake and overwhelm victims of narcissistic abuse, but the closer they are to themselves, the less damage they will suffer.

Last but not least, we must heed Hillman e Ventura (1995) advice, in an interview with Michael Ventura, not to individualize and demobilize the individual from the power of social action. As we have seen, gender-based violence has historical and cultural roots, which are reflected in our institutions, especially in the Justice System. Every day, women join collectives, help other women in abusive relationships on social media, and actively campaign in the National Congress to raise awareness among members of Congress for changes in our laws. These efforts are not always fruitful. Brazil still ranks fifth in

the world in the number of femicides, and many mothers succumb and lose custody of their children in an act of violence and injustice against them. However, anyone who can follow these efforts over the years will see that changes, although very small and slow, have been achieved.

We can see the above path as the flow of the individuation process, making conscious something that goes beyond understanding each woman's situation. By making each other's realities known, they begin to wake up to the fact that there is a patriarchal system that works as a superstructure. They begin to question and position themselves critically regarding how they are socialized to this day. This is extrapolated to question the criteria and the beauty industry with its health risks, female rivalry, invisible maternal work, and the way their children should be raised. It also involves breaking with prejudices and pre-established standards of how they should live, in addition to being able to experience – and be capable of acting – true female sisterhood.

Final considerations

Analytical work with women entangled in stress due to antagonistic relationships aims to establish the strengthening of the ego, their individuality, the ability to set limits by disidentifying with their aggressor, reconnecting with the Self and the alchemical/transferential work of transforming the demonic *animus*. However, we can understand that the existence of gender violence is not an individual problem. Therefore, we find its transgenerational roots and observe how stereotypical and compulsive these relationships are due to the deep-rooted cisheteropatriarchal cultural complex, which discredits women's testimonies in society and in the judiciary, privileging men's rights.

Despite the efforts of collectives of mothers and institutions focused on protecting women, there is still a long way to go before laws and practices are consistent and fair. This will involve dealing with the defeats and frustrations of patients and their analysts. What we can do, as far as possible, is to help them wake up to the patriarchal reality and encourage them not to give up on seeking fairer ways in their lives, in their relationships, in the education of their children, in their work relationships and in the laws and rules that regulate our society, that are more fair and consistent with a dynamic of alterity and equity. Cultivating spaces where healthy relationships with the community and oneself are experienced is also an ideal proposed by analytical psychology.

Coercive control is already a crime in Australia and England. This may be a hopeful start to the patriarchy's continued decline. A society where the dynamics of otherness are valued is also loving.

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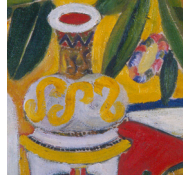
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Sexual Trauma: A Jungian Study on the Inferiorization of Women

Patrícia Helena Duarte da Matta

Article



Abstract

This article investigates the relationship between rape culture in Brazil and Cultural Complexes. The article, theoretical in nature, integrates concepts of trauma, feminism, and Jungian psychology to deepen the understanding of the experience of women victims of abuse and offer insights for clinical practice. The research identifies a common psychic mechanism in different theoretical approaches: a psychic distortion of identification with the aggressor that is forged as an elaborate defensive complex. Furthermore, it proposes a Jungian clinical approach more attentive to the social and cultural context, allowing for a deeper and more effective listening. We conclude that the Jungian approach can contribute to the deconstruction of outdated notions about the feminine and offer new possibilities for healing for women victims of abuse.

Keywords: trauma; sexual abuse; cultural complex; feminism; Jungian psychology.

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is widely naturalized in the Brazilian society, which contributes to the perpetuation of rape culture, as evidenced by data from public security yearbooks of the last four years (FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DE SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA, 2024). This is part of a logic of inferiorization of women, deeply rooted in Western tradition (FEDERICI, 2017; KEHL, 2016), contributing to the perpetuation of traumatic effects on women's mental health. There are important studies on the neurological and cognitive effects of trauma resulting from sexual abuse and its correlations with suicide, depression, and self-harming behaviors among women (CONCEIÇÃO et al., 2015).

The study of trauma permeates the entire history of modern psychology. When investigating hysterical women, Freud began to identify symptoms resulting from sexual repression in the culture of the time. His preliminary investigations pointed to the existence of repressed memories, which led him to formulate the theory of the

unconscious. It was the boldness of his ideas that attracted Jung, resulting in a partnership, until they diverged, especially regarding the phenomenon of sexuality. Listening to women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries revealed, for both Jung and Freud (KEHL, 2016), an important field for investigating the etiology of neuroses.

In analytical psychology, a more in-depth discussion about trauma has been conducted by Donald Kalsched (2013). The author considers the influence of archetypal structures that emerge in the context of traumatic experiences, emphasizing a cure that considers an important defensive system that forms at the moment of splitting. However, beyond the individual perspective, in clinical experience we encounter the retraumatizing effects of a culture of inferiorization of women and permissiveness to abuse.

From the perspective of Samuel Kimbles and Tomas Singer (2022), of cultural complexes that shape the subjective experience of women, this study seeks to integrate the Jungian perspective with a critical analysis of gender relations, in order to understand how rape culture influences the traumatic experience of women and how Jungian clinical practice can offer tools for healing.

SEXUAL ABUSE AND TRAUMA: THE INDIVIDUAL AND SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE

Sexual abuse, in the Brazilian legal context, comprises any libidinous act practiced with violence, serious threat, or against someone incapable of offering resistance, whether due to vulnerability or any other reason. This definition encompasses from non-consensual physical acts to rape. It is also crucial to highlight that the perception of abuse can be complex, especially in cases of close relationships or psychological manipulation, where the victim may take time to recognize the violence suffered.

The report of sexual abuse is often the only proof of the crime. In the Brazilian context, marked by a macho culture, victims face a challenging reporting process, permeated by obstacles such as lack of protection, discrediting, and difficulty in obtaining reparation. Despite this adverse scenario, Brazilian legislation has evolved with advances in the typification of the crime¹, the deadline for reporting²

¹ BRAZIL. Law No. 11,340 of August 7, 2006. Maria da Penha Law.

BRAZIL. Law No. 8,069 of July 13, 1990. Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA).

BRAZIL. Law No. 13,104 of March 9, 2015. Femicide Law.

² BRAZIL. Law No. 12,650 of May 13, 2015. Joana Maranhão Law - extension of the prescriptive term.

and the guarantee of specialized care³. However, the culture of victim-blaming still persists, demanding a careful look from mental health professionals.

Specialized listening to abuse requires a deep understanding of the social context and power dynamics that permeate these cases. Mental health professionals, such as psychologists, must maintain a constant dialogue with the outside world to understand the realities of victims and offer comprehensive care. As Parise and Scandiuci point out, “the soul is outside the center and the analyst must be at its service” (2022, p. 16), highlighting the importance of an approach sensitive to the particularities of each case, with its complexities being observed.

The theory of chronic interpersonal abuse and the psychopathology of trauma

In order to define what she called the theory of chronic interpersonal abuse, researcher Dee L.R. Graham (2021) conducted a series of scientific studies with women victims of violence. She mapped behaviors generalized by women that correspond to the characteristics of Stockholm Syndrome. The author found that this syndrome, often associated with kidnapping situations, also manifests in contexts of chronic emotional abuse, such as child abuse and domestic violence. According to her, in situations of extreme vulnerability and threat, the victim, seeking survival, may develop a paradoxical bond with the aggressor. This bond is established through a psychological defense mechanism, in which the victim denies the severity of the situation and creates an alliance with their tormentor. This dynamic is facilitated by the alternation between moments of terror and moments of apparent calm, where the aggressor shows some kind of care or kindness.

To deal with the trauma, the victim performs a psychic split, separating the good and bad parts of the aggressor. She begins to idealize the aggressor, attributing qualities they do not possess, and begins to blame herself for the abuse. This identification with the aggressor is reinforced by cognitive distortions that allow the victim to justify the abuse and maintain a sense of control over the situation. This dynamic is described by Graham as a survival mechanism that allows the victim to cope with the trauma.

According to the author, the long-term consequences of this type of pathological bond manifest as symptoms similar to those

³ BRAZIL. Law No. 12,845 of August 1, 2013. Next Minute Law. Resolution No. 8 of July 7, 2020 of the Federal Council of Psychology that establishes standards for the professional practice of psychology in relation to gender-based violence.

of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). Splitting, instability in relationships, intense anger, and distortion of self-image (lack of sense of self) are some of the most common characteristics. These sequelae demonstrate the severity of the impact of emotional abuse on the victim's mental health. In summary, Stockholm Syndrome, in cases of chronic abuse, is a complex defense mechanism that involves symptoms such as denial of reality, idealization of the aggressor, and victim-blaming. This dynamic has lasting consequences for the victim's mental health and interpersonal relationships.

Studies conducted in the field of psychiatry and cognitive psychology also point to correlations between a history of childhood sexual abuse, BPD, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). A 2005 study found the occurrence of sexual abuse in 75% of patients diagnosed with BPD (CONCEIÇÃO et al., 2015). Another study pointed to a 40% prevalence of PTSD in girls who were victims of sexual abuse (BORGES; DELL'AGLIO, 2008). Children who are victims of abuse have an increased risk of developing PTSD (20% higher risk), depression, and suicide (21% higher risk). Denial of abuse and repression of anger at the time of trauma are two common mechanisms of psychic survival in victims of chronic trauma (Graham, 2021). Anger outbursts are common symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and frequently occur at inappropriate times, without justification (CONCEIÇÃO et al., 2005).

In addition to the symptoms highlighted by Graham (2021) related to BPD, her findings correspond to the surveys mentioned above. In the clinical experience of the author of the present study with women victims of childhood abuse, the presence of typical characteristics of BPD and PTSD was revealed (AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION, 2014). Among these characteristics, we can highlight that reliving the trauma through intrusive memories and nightmares, avoidance of stimuli (often making it difficult to seek professional help or invest in social relationships), emotional numbing (decreased interests and emotions, such as tenderness, sexuality, and intimacy), in addition to the feeling of lack of future or abbreviated future, also manifesting through anxiety, irritability, and sleep disorders.

Graham (2021) also brings an interesting contribution to the analysis of the sociocultural context. Her theoretical elaboration expands the perception of behavioral aspects resulting from abusive situations against women beyond individual processes. The author states that there is a kind of generalization of Stockholm syndrome in society. For her, the psychology of women today is, in fact, the psychology of women in a captive situation. She states that:

"femininity, love for men, women's heterosexual identity and practice are survival strategies observed in circumstances of terror – circumstances advocated by

the four precursors of Stockholm syndrome (threat to survival, impossibility of escape, isolation, and kindness)” (GRAHAM, 2021, p. 255).

The concept of social Stockholm syndrome questions the celebration of a femininity that glorifies this defensive reaction of women to oppression, reinforcing a posture adopted by an oppressed group, aiming at survival. It also questions heterosexuality as it is exercised by most women as a protection strategy in this battlefield where male domination is established.

In Jungian terms, we could say that part of the victim's ego, influenced by a powerful archetypal force – constellated by a complex – becomes identified with the aggressor. The victim begins to see the world from the aggressor's perspective, as only then can she anticipate his needs to keep him happy, ensure her survival, and have a false sense of control. This can explain the feeling of guilt for the aggression she suffered at the individual level, as we will discuss next from Donald Kalsched's perspective. Otherwise, this same mechanism of psychological distortion and identification with the aggressor will be extended later to a discussion in collective terms, from the perspective of cultural complexes.

A Jungian perspective on trauma

Trauma is not limited to an isolated event, but rather an experience that causes unbearable psychic pain or anxiety, which Donald Kalsched (2013) defines as a terrible fear associated with the threat of dissolution of the self. The author proposes to complement psychoanalytic notions about early trauma by adding to them the Jungian perspective that includes archetypal phenomena.

Psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott (1965) postulates that parental mediation is crucial for the construction of a cohesive *Self* and for the child's exploration of the world with confidence. However, childhood trauma interrupts this process, frustrating the child's first yearnings and preventing the realization of their potential, as well as preventing the construction of a secure base for emotional and cognitive development.

Kalsched (2013) complements this notion by observing trauma from the archetypal defense processes it triggers. To better understand it, we will return to the Jungian notion of *Self*. When referring to the collective unconscious, Jung highlights its contradictory and chaotic character, impossible to be verified (JUNG, OC, vol. VI). The *Self* would be, according to him, the ordering archetype of the psyche, responsible for integrating opposites and promoting unity in this unconscious chaos. The realization of the *Self* in the individuation process depends

on its relationship with the ego, which acts as a mediator between the conscious and the unconscious in the individual.

Early trauma interrupts the development of this medial capacity between ego and *Self* (KALSCHED, 2013). According to the author, it is the maternal function that acts as an external metabolizer of the baby's experiences, allowing the transformation of emotions and the construction of more integrated internal representations. That is, in the early stages of life, this ordering principle is projected onto the maternal object and then integrated into the individual. Trauma, by overloading the containment capacity of this maternal object, prevents the elaboration of painful experiences, leading to the fragmentation of the psyche and the perpetuation of antinomical archetypal representations.

The absence of an integrative principle prevents the child from building a cohesive *Self* capable of dealing with the paradoxes of life. The traumatized child experiences a *Self* in a precarious way, which the author names as a **false-Self**, forming a "self-care defensive system that is much more archaic and devastating than the usual level of ego defenses" (KALSCHED, 2013, p. 70). The integration of these contents into consciousness can be catastrophic, and that is why an archetypal split of this magnitude operates. The memory of trauma becomes fragmented and confused.

This fragmentation reveals that chronic traumatic anxiety prevented the transition between the ego and the *Self*, inhibiting the symbolic activity of imagination. Fantasy, then, assumes this place as a defensive role, filling the void, but without promoting psychic integration. Such defenses prevent the flow between opposites of psychic energy that is trapped in a self-defense system. Kalsched (2013) also draws our attention to the protective sophistication of these archetypal defenses that occur at the moment of trauma and that are personified as daemonic images. According to the author:

"when trauma hits the developing psyche of a child, a fragmentation of consciousness takes place in which the different 'parts' organize themselves according to certain archaic and typical (archetypal) patterns, most commonly dyads or syzygies formed by personified beings. Typically, one part of the ego regresses to the infantile period and another part progresses, that is, grows too fast and becomes prematurely adapted to the outside world. [...] The part of the personality that progressed then takes care of the part that regressed." (KALSCHED, 2013, p. 15)

The two separate parts come to be mediated by a false-*Self*, which acts as a kind of controversial guardian. This triadic structure was called by the author as an autoimmune system, or even as an archetypal self-care system of the psyche (KALSCHED, 2019). In this dynamic, the Trickster archetype can emerge as this controversial

daemon (KALSCHED, 2013), responsible for keeping the traumatic shadow in the unconscious. This guardian of the split filters the individual's experiences, isolating the traumatized part from reality. Once this system is established in the psyche, it will be the one that will screen all of the individual's relationships with the outside world. Every investment of emotions, even positive ones, is understood by it as something threatening, which becomes a great challenge in analysis. After all, the possibilities of change and new affective experiences activate the autoimmune system and, therefore, its great potential to retraumatize the survivor of trauma.

Jung (OC, vol. IX/I) presents the Trickster archetype as a representation of the obscure state in the face of lack of consciousness. Commonly represented as the being of mischief, the ridiculous, the inadmissible, and the clumsy, this powerful joker that constantly changes shape, confusing and playing - sometimes in an inconsequential and risky way -- with the opposite tendencies of the unconscious. In this autoimmune system (KALSCHED 2013), this archetypal function, which sometimes reveals itself as the Trickster and helped at the beginning to overcome the catastrophic moment, becomes a toxic ally, as it prevents building healthy relationships and becoming aware of its original trauma.

Another point that deserves to be considered for the understanding of the trauma of abuse is the condition of identification with the aggressor from the archetypal perspective. In Kalsched's words, this condition is "bewitchment by the negative side of the ambivalent primordial *Self*" (KALSCHED, 2013, p.260). For a stage of elaboration to be reached, a violent sacrifice of this protective fantasy of the false-*Self* is necessary. Or rather, the "sacrifice of the divine identity of the ego and the return of a personal spirit to the body" (KALSCHED, 2013, p.262).

The author warns that this dangerous process can have a destructive or redemptive outcome. When unsuccessful, the ego remains identified with this destructive *Self* and ends up being devoured by its negative aspects. However, when successful, the primordial *Self* is freed from its defensive role and reorganizes itself in a function of guiding the individuation process. In the case early trauma repair, it can happen in the co-creation of an intersubjective reality in the therapeutic relationship (KALSCHED, 2019), allowing the emergence of a symbolic function.

Verena Kast (2022) also discusses the importance of awareness of this unconscious identification with the aggressor. She states that the conviction of this magical way out through grandiosity is part of the victim's psychology. Once the identification with the grandiosity of the aggressor is created, a false sense of control is created. However, this illusory solution, over time, begins to threaten creative potential.

The false *Self* that protects the victim in trauma becomes the villain of her psyche. This discussion also reminds us of the Stockholm Syndrome theory addressed earlier, corroborating the thesis of cognitive distortion and identification of the victim with the aggressor.

CULTURAL COMPLEXES: ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY AND COLLECTIVITY

Jung (OC, vol. VIII/II) defines the complex as the image of a certain psychic situation, endowed with a strong emotional charge, which has its own coherence and a high degree of autonomy. Complexes are centers of energy whose source is archetypal. They are vital manifestations of the unconscious psyche and, therefore, complexes can never be fully assimilated into consciousness. The expression of a complex occurs as a result of a conflict, that is, a new demand for adaptation or updating of the psyche to consciousness.

The complex harbors within itself an energetic tension. When it constellates, its energy has a value that surpasses and breaks conscious intentions, because when activated, it carries with it an archetypal nucleus. Part of it connects to the ego and another part, more difficult to be assimilated into consciousness, is projected onto an external object. An activated complex is capable of creating a split in consciousness that finds itself unable to bear ambiguities.

The complex can be recognized in the simplistic certainties of a particular world view, as well as in stereotyped, emotional, and inappropriate reactions. The painful embarrassment that appears as an effect of the complex comes from the shock of a demand for adaptation, for assimilation of unconscious contents into consciousness. For this reason, complexes also carry embryos of new life potentialities, as they allow access and dialogue with the collective unconscious.

Interested in expanding the Jungian perspective on complexes and exploring the cultural levels of the psyche, Samuel Kimbles and Thomas Singer began to introduce the notion of cultural complex into this complex. They started from Joseph Henderson's notion of cultural unconscious, a theory that considers Jung's division of the unconscious and describes layers of the psyche ranging from the individual sphere, through family and cultural strata, to the collective unconscious.

Singer (2022) observes that the collective unconscious is the terrain of the archetype and, therefore, is not limited to time and space. The archetype is not limited to culture and the collective life of specific historical moments and territories. The collective unconscious is a priori and timeless. However, the subject is historically situated in a specific space, time, and group. Therefore, the archetypal

interaction between the collective unconscious and the individual psyche is also crossed by culture. Thus, cultural complexes ensure “belonging, uniqueness, and temporal specificity for the appearance of unconscious contents in society and in the individual” (PARISE; SCANDIUCCI, 2022, p. 110).

Cultural complexes tend to erupt in situations where a conflict emerges, when paradoxical situations are difficult to assimilate by a society or a collective. A certain group, when taken by the event of the formation of a complex, is influenced by the fission that it operates. This group tends to identify with one part of the unconscious complex while the other is projected onto another group. Singer (2022) highlights some signs that contribute to the identification of a cultural complex, such as emotional or affective reactivity (energetically charged and expressed in repetitive behaviors); the unconscious character (involuntary and autonomous); the existence of a dominant archetypal core; the tendency to simplification (which replaces the anguish generated by ambiguity and uncertainty), and accumulated experiences (memories that cross generations, acquiring a strong historical character).

Cultural complexes are evidenced from traumatic collective experiences in historical contexts, such as immigration, slavery, colonization, territorial conflicts and wars, ethnic and gender relations, religion, among others. They are broader complexes, and therefore more difficult to work with at the level of the individual. As stated by Silva & Serbena (2021):

“These group affective nuclei organize the psychological history of a culture, generating its own autonomous emotional field, belonging not only to individuals, but to the culture itself. Both the demands of the past and future processes are shaped by these complexes.” (SILVA; SERBENA, 2021, p. 170).

It is important to emphasize that not all complexes express themselves in a negative way and that they often serve to provide a strong sense of cultural identity and belonging. In the same way, they have the ability to mobilize individual and collective egos on a daily basis. According to Singer, “the best way to know if a cultural complex is touching – whether in a group or in an individual – is by the emotional reactivity that certain topics automatically trigger” (SINGER, 2022, p. 118).

The theory of cultural complexes opens up new territory in Jungian analytical psychology. It allows intersections with contemporary philosophy and assists us in investigations into the discourses that operate on the individual today. The notion of cultural complex frees us from a dangerous trap of the Jungian camp that is to confuse cultural patterns with archetypal expressions.

Starting from this premise, Gustavo Pessoa (2022) argues in favor of an awareness of the cultural complexes of contemporaneity, demonstrating the requirement of assimilation and adaptation in consciousness of contents constellated for a long time in the history of humanity. According to him, with regard to issues of gender and sexuality, it is necessary to abandon the essentialist and stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity, taken as a *Priori Data*. And considers that this field needs an expansion of the debate about hetero/homosexuality, as a way of elaborating these cultural complexes. The Jungian analyst states:

“To argue that concepts that inhabit the discussion of sexuality are directly archetypal can bring the veneer of essentialism [...]. In addition, they make it difficult to emphasize the conflicts we experience, since the conflict situation occurs in human interaction in the here and now. The archetype, by psychoid and non-human, is not in itself a stage of conflicts” (PESSOA, 2022, p. 279)

According to this author, today's society is under the influence of a complex that he calls cis-heteropatriarchal. Such a complex hierarchizes the heterosexual white man and establishes his stereotypical actions as superior. Thus, the power relations constructed in the patriarchal logic that privilege the heterosexuality of the white cisgender man are highlighted, in this case, also considering the racial hierarchies that are transversalized in the culture.

Pessoa (2022) considers that heterosexuality established as a normative hegemonic standard is a facilitator of the construction of Western capitalist society, since, as previously discussed, capitalist society is based on the heterosexual family. This normative standard establishes a model to follow, a simplistic standard. The pattern excludes and submits everything that is considered deviant, such as the typical split of a constellation complex. Next, we will present the events that have provided, over time, the historical consistency of this cultural complex that operates by the normative pattern of the bourgeois heterosexual nuclear family.

THE NOTION OF FEMALE INFERIORITY: FROM THE HISTORICITY OF MYTHS TO THE EMERGENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY

The considerations discussed earlier may indicate that, in addition to a trauma that takes place at the individual level, sexual abuse can be understood as a symptom or expression of a cultural complex. The violent imposition of one body on another, by itself, demonstrates such irrationality that it will demand for the victim a long process of elaboration of the ruptures it causes in his psyche. However, the

challenge of traumatic elaboration gains an even greater contour because it happens in a society whose legitimization of misogynistic culture favors the trivialization of violence and isolates the victim from the social context through mechanisms of guilt and shame.

To understand the social structures that reinforce this dynamic, this work focuses on a broad historical rescue. According to Singer & Kaplinsky (2019), cultural complexes are established as accumulated experiences that cross generations. We will return to the origins of the patriarchal system, from the ancient age, to review the place that has been assigned to women in history since this period.

Starting from a feminist perspective, I will analyze some social, cultural, historical, and political crossings that have forged the discourses about women, especially with regard to the relationship of superiority that is imposed on the woman's body, object of this article. I will follow the history of the West in search of historical and cultural parameters that forged the myths and, therefore, the discourses about women that are so present in the Jungian universe.

The term patriarchy serves to designate a system of structures in which there is a predominance of man's power in culture and economic and social relations. There are no precise historiographical references about the beginning of a probable patriarchal era. What is known is that in prehistoric hunter-gatherer societies there are indications that these were more egalitarian societies. The first historical record that signals a formal inequality of power in the relationship between men and women is the Code of Hammurabi, dated 1722 BC (STEARNS, 2015), in that it established unequal sanctions on women with respect to men. However, in the West, until the period of the High Middle Ages, there are reports of women who enjoyed the freedom to move around the cities, could work and participated in planting communities and religious experiences.

Ancient Greece no longer included women in its organization of power systems. To them, the domain of the private sphere remained, and so they remained throughout the Greco-Roman culture. Historiographic studies indicate that the patriarchates of antiquity can serve as a reference to thinking about the ethics of women's domination (AZEVEDO, 2019). In the following excerpt, The Philosopher Marilena Chauí describes the characteristics of this transition to patriarchy at the beginning of the ancient age:

"The female figure was sacralized, and the woman was venerated as a goddess. That is why he had authority and power. With the advent of patriarchy, the pantheon of deities began to have at its top the male figure. Zeus, Jupiter, and Jehovah symbolize the hegemony of the father and his law. The female becomes mere physical support of a life originating in the male [...] devoid of any role in the generation of life and, above all, emerges as the bearer of death." (CHAUÍ, 2020)

In this work, the philosopher tells us that the little we know about some of the ancient Romans arises from reports made by men and translate a split vision of women, which lasts for centuries, sometimes describing women from their domestic modesty and idealized motherhood, sometimes characterizing it by lasciviousness, revenge, envy, shamelessness, and dangerous sexuality.

In Jungian literature, we find vast references to archetypal images represented by myths, many of which originate from Greco-Roman culture. There is the use of mythologies as an epistemological source of this current of thought. Jung explored them in various cultures, found repeated patterns and formulated the concept of archetype. Myths would therefore be a kind of transcription of archetypal experience (JUNG, OC, vol. IX/I), they would be representations created by humanity to represent its psychic experiences. And, precisely, in trying to embody something as incomprehensible as the archetype, the myth carries with it the marks of its time. Especially after the advent of writing, myths ceased to change in orality and became even more imprisoned in time-space. That is, the myth is not the archetype itself, because it is inscribed in a specific temporality.

Joseph Campbell (2015), when researching the archetypal trajectory of the Great Goddess throughout history, identified clues about the historical period in which patrilineal peoples prevailed over matrilineal ones. It was from the fourth to the second millennium BC, in the roots of Judaism, that he identified the beginning of the Western Patriarchate. In this coalition between cultures, the tradition of Judah totally overlaps the masculine with the feminine, as can be observed in the Biblical records, in which all information about female deities is suppressed (Campbell, 2015). Only in 1950 did the Catholic Church validate the assumption of Mary dogma, one hundred years after the first feminist wave.

Already in the Greek tradition, women remain among the deities. However, they take on passive roles, go from Supreme authorities to wives and protégés of the gods. Those with greater authority often assume characteristics validated by patriarchy, such as authoritarianism, and are marked by a vindictive spirit, due to the betrayals and inferiority to which they are subjected, such as Hera and Demeter. While in the tradition of Judah the goddesses were eliminated, in the Greco-Roman context they were inferiorized, under the yoke of the gods.

Laurie Schapira (2018) takes a similar path of analysis of the development of myth. The author, when analyzing the myth of Cassandra-looking for archetypal correlations for the understanding of hysteria – discovers how the myths of Greek goddesses were assimilated by patriarchal culture. According to the author, in order to become the sun god, Apollo went through three phases in history.

In its prehistoric phase, it was portrayed as the demon of the earth, more connected to the primitive forces of nature. In Homer's records, he came to have a youthful and imposing heroic image, until finally becoming of Olympus. That is, only at its final stage, already at the height of the patriarchal era, Apollo began to be revered as the God of logic and reason, the representative of truth and beauty.

The relationship between the goddesses and Apollo also changed with the advance of patriarchy. Artemis, originally a great mother, in Homer, loses her supremacy and is presented as Apollo's twin sister, as if to represent her feminine, but hierarchically inferior side. Athena was also Apollo's sister and reveals herself as an important ally of the Patriarchate. Born from the head of Zeus, she had few feminine attributes and, due to these characteristics, she gains a special place next to Apollo. In a passage from *The Iliad*, she ignores her brother's misogyny by being permissive of an act of matricide. This allegory is excellent for describing the decline of the matriarchal order, replaced by patriarchy. The myth, in this case, represents its historical time (SCHAPIRA, 2018).

To Cassandra, Apollo promised to give the gift of prophecy if she would lie with him. She received the gift, but, frightened, gave up giving herself to him. Vindictive, he steals a forced kiss from her and condemns her to never be heard from again. That is, even if he had the gift of Prophecy, his words would not have any credit. Schapira (2018) relates this passage to the drama of hysteria. The hysterical is one that has a powerful medial capacity, but that finds no place of expression in the world that represses it. She knows everything, however, silenced, it remains that her potential can emerge as a symptom.

Hestia, in order to escape Apollo's attacks, makes a pact with Zeus. The solution given by the patriarch, instead of punishing him, was to isolate her under the justification of protection, assuring her of her private role as Mistress of the home. The solution she found was to ally herself with male power to achieve social place and protection, even if it cost her the price of her freedom and autonomy.

To complement this notion, it is enough to review another myth from this perspective, the free teenager Core, in love with her captor, forgets her own story. Even before Hades granted her a secondary throne in the world of the deep, in prehistoric times, Core was already the goddess of the underworld, Earth and abundance (CAMPBELL, 2015). Nor can we fail to mention that the great mother revered and who is next to Zeus is the one who hates all other women, showing herself to be competitive, vindictive, and desperate.

The illusion of protection appears as a subterfuge of the Greek gods in the myths previously reported, and in the latter, we can see, again, the mechanism of identification with the aggressor. The

reading of the myth in this perspective intends to contribute to the possible awareness of a Cultural complex. After all, it is important that survivors of abuse no longer have the same end as poor Medusa, blamed for the rape she suffered, she is now condemned to terror, silence, and invisibility.

James Hillman (1984), when discussing the notion of female inferiority, makes a critique of scientific thought that was influenced by the Aristotelian view, inspired by Apollo:

“The image of female inferiority has not changed because the image that is given in the male psyche remains. The theories of the female body [referring to the theories that sought to prove the inferiority of women] are based predominantly on observations and fantasies of men. These theories are statements of the male consciousness confronted with its sexual opposite [...] a specific consciousness that we call scientific, Western, modern [...] we call this Apollonian consciousness... it is a structure of consciousness that has an alienation relationship with the feminine” (HILLMAN, 1984, p. 221)

In the essay cited, Hillman dialogues with the feminist thought that was thriving at the time, the third wave of feminism. He suggests that we rethink psychology from a deep revision of the paradigm of female inferiority. The works of Hillman and Andrew Samuels were significant for the openings in Jungian thought, as they expanded the permeability of feminist thought in this field. However, there is still a need to increase the visibility of feminist voices in analytical psychology today.

Susan Rowland (2002) makes a Feminist Review in Jungian analytical psychology. According to the author, over time, Jungian authors have extended and/or revised key concepts of the theory from the debates brought by feminist movements. Some examples, the theory of counter sexuality (anima-animus); the problematic linkage of Eros/feminine and Logos/masculine; the rejection of male-dominated monotheistic culture, and a notion of the return of goddesses who resurface after periods of disappearance or discredit. Jung himself revised concepts about the feminine after the revelation of the dogma of the assumption of Mary. More recently, reflections on contemporary masculinity have begun to emerge.

This work intends to continue with this reasoning, bringing feminist thought closer to Jungian psychology, based on the observation that, in sexual abuse, a power relationship operates that goes beyond individual limits. In addition, the threat of rape generates a vicious circle, it isolates, deprives women of freedom, a need for protection is created that results in the maintenance of abusive relationships. To corroborate Graham's hypothesis of how Stockholm Syndrome becomes widespread in society, we will expand the research a little further, to understand the trajectory of patriarchy until the modern age.

Women in the late Middle Ages: work, body, and reproduction

In order to follow the timeline of the origins of the inferiorization of women, advancing to the modern age, I turned to the work of feminist philosopher Silvia Federici (2017), who wrote about the history – until then Hidden – of women in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Its central thesis is that discrimination and inequality towards women are not only a legacy of previous patriarchal models but are even more forceful and strategic in the formation of capitalism, in the context of primitive accumulation.

At the end of feudalism, the great social inequality caused revolting movements to emerge against the feudal lords. Women, who had their rights to property and income further reduced, led the exodus movements from the countryside to the cities. In this period, there were also growing heretical movements that no longer recognized the values of the church impregnated with greed, corruption, and scandalous behavior of the clergy. Such movements, harshly persecuted by the Inquisition, had women in active roles. They began to be persecuted and burned at the stake with the subterfuge of persecution of witches (FEDERICI, 2017).

Later, with the Protestant Reformation and the emergence of the Moderna State and the consequent instability generated by power disputes, the revolting movements of the population intensified. The nobility, the clergy, and the bourgeoisie United in a counter-revolutionary movement and, among their strategies, invested in segregating the movements and establishing conflicts among the people. The hidden part of this history – and that has been discovered by feminist historians – is that the oppression of women served as a strategy of fragmentation of workers' movements.

To manage the turmoil of proletarian youth, a “malicious sexual policy was revealed, which gave young men access to free sex and transformed class antagonism into hostility to proletarian women” (FEDERICI, 2017, p. 103). The clergy gave permissiveness to rape, and there are records that public brothels paid for by the state were created. In this context, gang rape was allowed and the chances for women to legally defend themselves against abusive acts were suppressed. Brothels were considered remedies against homosexuality, which also began to be persecuted at this time. The church corroborates this persecution as a strategy to contain social protests. The encouragement of misogyny and the fight against heresy and sexuality were articulators of the division and weakening of the revolting masses.

As economic, religious, and social changes took place, so did the philosophical formulations that underpin the transformations of this period. In a society governed by individualistic and rationalistic logic,

there would no longer be room for collective practices. Thus, peasant organizations and rituals of transmission of popular wisdom of healing and use of plants were being persecuted as heresies. The midwives were silenced. All female wisdom of conception control and healing practices has been suppressed. Abortion and contraception were condemned. Federici (2017) says that bonfires and torture chambers have become great laboratories of social discipline. The female body became the domain of the state and the medical profession and became a mere reproductive machine.

While the worker's body began to be controlled in the service of industry, women were relegated to the domestic sphere to take care of the worker and reproduce more labor force, from which it is concluded that the control of the uterus and female sexuality becomes fundamental for the structuring of capitalism. In this way, even the rich woman, with the privilege of comfort, ends up reproducing the same function, also restricting herself to the domestic environment.

By the end of the Middle Ages, women, poor or not, had lost ground in all areas of social life. This was a period of erosion of women's rights (FEDERICI, 2017). Forbidden to carry out economic and social activities (meetings between friends and families of origin were prohibited), prevented from formally representing themselves and working outside, defenseless against abuse, having the street as a harmful environment, they begin to need men as their protectors, providers, and guardians for social life. Those who showed insubordination came to wear muzzles, considered gossipy, foul-mouthed, and too talkative. In literature and culture, they come to be seen in an inferior way, as representatives of human vices.

Then a new model of femininity arises that corresponds to the needs of the bourgeoisie, whose logic is structured in the patriarchal family. The woman who serves capitalism well is passive, obedient, thrifty, asexual, and chaste, and accepts that her social role is limited to the domestic sphere. Indoctrinated since the late Middle Ages, women have become even more obedient and moral than their husbands themselves. In psychological terms, identified with the aggressor, they became educators and transmitters of moral and cultural values.

The "maternal instinct" assured the woman the only possible socio-existential place. This is the discourse that constitutes the idea of femininity, deeply structured in bourgeois logic, as the quote explains:

"the female body receives a set of attributes derived from that most differentiating: motherhood. Motherhood is the predicate that allows you to define, tame and control the essential core of this body, that is, the way to tame, control sexuality. [...] motherhood supplants all other feminine attributes and it becomes 'feminine nature', the idea that there is a feminine instinct which is motherhood. [...] women belong to the field of nature, while men, endowed with reason, will and

Freedom, Institute the cultural and historical world in which women are only placed without being agents of this world” (CHAUÍ, 2020)

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, femininity also prevails as the set of attributes proper to all women, depending on the particularities of their bodies and their procreative capacity, as stated by psychoanalyst Maria Rita Kehl (2016). According to her, this is how the discourses on femininity were constituted in the context that precedes the creation of psychoanalysis.

The idealization of motherhood, reinforced through many generations of education to curb the instincts, results in a symptom that will be the founding problem of psychoanalysis. It was achieved that frigidity was a more or less normal state among married ladies. Not by chance, sexual repression became fertile ground for the birth of psychoanalysis from listening to hysteria and sexual repression. By welcoming the drama of women, Freud opened a space for listening to the symptoms resulting from this repression. Jung, in the midst of this listening, recognized femininity as an integral part of the male psyche. In both, we can notice the reflections of the cultural advances that occurred in the sense of returning to women a space of affirmation, although quite limited to the spirit of the time. Both Freud and Jung recover the social place of women. However, they continued reproducing the Aristotelian logic of female inferiority in their concepts, as discussed by Hillman, cited above.

According to Kehl (2016), the French Revolution originated in the ideals of emancipation fostered by the philosophical ideas of the Enlightenment. It was from this historical event that women began to have their civil personality back. The idea of individual emancipation and the autonomy of the subject, freed from religion, indirectly influenced the first feminist ideas. However, the author affirms that the discourses that constituted traditional femininity are still part of the social imaginary of the present day. The psychological suffering of women also corresponds to the anguish related to the need to adapt to this social context. According to her, such notions of femininity reinforce the inferiority of women throughout history and generate psychic conflicts.

The psychoanalyst proposes a denaturalization of these notions to promote an expansion of the possibilities of healing in the clinic. According to her, from the encounter of women with new potentialities not ascribed to previously established patterns, we expand their existential and subjective repertoire. This posture can be a facilitator in listening to women who have gone through the trauma of abuse, because, to the extent that they become aware of social problems, they reduce the effects of this individualizing culpability.

This may explain, at present, the increasing engagement of movements that encourage the wave of public revelations of harassment situations, such as the #meToo or the Messed with one, messed with all. The network communication provided by the internet contributed to the Union of women in the cause, generating a sense of belonging, and thus creating the environment for victims of abuse to strengthen themselves to the extent that they realize that they are not isolated cases. In this way, space is opened for questioning the male privilege that benefits from the silence of the victim.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Starting from the definition of cultural complexes described above, it is possible to infer that rape culture and the notion of women's inferiority signal the expression of a Cultural complex. As Singer (2022) points out, the best way to know if we are playing in a cultural complex is by the proportion of *emotional reactivity* that he provokes. Thus, an important criterion is already met.

This article dealt with the notion of female inferiority, demonstrating how the idea of femininity present in contemporary discourse was being constructed and naturalized after a succession of historical facts in which the patriarchal order prevailed. The historical perspective that proves the domination and subjugation of the female body corroborates with another criterion of definition of cultural Complex, which are the *accumulated experiences*. That is, memories that cross generations, acquiring a strong historical character for this notion.

More specifically on the issue of abuse, the historical surveys of Silvia Federici (2017) give even more relevance to the catastrophic effects of permissiveness to rape in the late Middle Ages. In this period, which the author defined as the erosion of women's rights, in which a malicious and violent sexual policy was operated, class antagonism was transformed into hostility to women.

Another important criterion is the notion that the cultural complex *operates in unconscious character*, that is, it emerges autonomously, influencing cultural behavior. Because we are immersed in it, if we could identify it completely, it would no longer be a complex. However, we can move towards identifying its nuances, understanding the meanings of *irrational and violent behavior* that it stirs up in culture, such as rape.

In addition, we can check the *powerful moods* this complex arises (SINGER, 2022), manifesting itself in polarized debates on topics such as the control of the female body, contraception, abortion, child pregnancy, the blaming of abuse victims and other aspects of macho culture. This dynamic reveals the tendency to *simplification*

of complex issues, replacing nuance and ambiguity with Manichean positions, which reinforce gender inequality.

“Rape is the only crime in which the victim feels guilt and shame,” noted journalist Ana Paula Araújo (2020), as she toured Brazil collecting stories of sexual abuse, and revealing the irrational character of this collective behavior and deeply rooted in Brazilian culture. Soraia Abdulali (2019), survivor of a gang rape in India at the age of 17, economist and researcher on the subject, corroborates this perception:

“Rape is the only crime in the face of which people act wanting to imprison the victims. It is the only crime that is so bad that it is assumed that the victims will be irreparably destroyed by it, but at the same time not so bad that the men who commit it [think] that they should be treated as criminals” (ABDULALI, 2019, p. 13).

From the problems brought by this statement, We can mention the two major contributions of this work to overcome this context. Firstly, by instrumenting clinical perception with information about psychopathological phenomena related to PTSD and bpd, in addition to building approximations between Dee L.’s theory of chronic Interpersonal Abuse. R. Graham (2021) and Jungian theory, in particular the contributions of Donald Kalsched (2013). It was found that there is a common psychic mechanism in all these approaches, the mechanism of psychic distortion that leads the victim to identify with the aggressor. This mechanism allows the victim to justify the abuse, which helps them maintain a false sense of control over the situation. To this perception, Kalsched (2019) complements with the archetypal notion of the defensive complex named by him as an archetypal self-care system, widely discussed in this work.

The second contribution of the present study was to bring the individual clinical view closer to a critical notion, which inserts clinical listening in the sociocultural context, thus contributing with a sophistication of listening, drawing attention both to the subjective experiences of women and to the influences of cultural complexes that cross us.

It was possible to unite the reasoning of Graham’s Interpersonal Abuse theory with the theory of cultural complexes, corroborating the idea that these traumatic mechanisms can also extend to social groups and amplifying the author’s hypothesis that the psychology of women today is, in fact, the psychology of women in captivity. In Jungian terms, we could say that Graham’s findings indicate the existence of an activated cultural Complex, which historically reinforces the idea of women’s inferiority and the behavior of identification with the aggressor.

Feminist authors Graham, Federici, Chauí and Kehl agree that there is a notion of passive, obedient, thrifty, asexual, chaste, and domesticated femininity, characteristics that have been historically reinforced. The idealization of motherhood, reinforced through many generations of education to curb the instincts, results in a symptom that will be the founding problem of psychoanalysis. And it is important to emphasize that the discourses that constituted traditional femininity are still part of the social imaginary of the present day.

Thus, these cultural complexes, while ensuring belonging, uniqueness and temporal specificity, maintain a system of hierarchical and unequal relations. Such a context needs to be widely debated for greater awareness. The debate will allow the blossoming of new potentialities of life since the complexes allow access and interlocution with the collective unconscious.

In addition, the elaboration of the notion of cultural complex frees us from a dangerous trap of the Jungian field that is to confuse cultural patterns with archetypal expressions, as discussed by Hillman (1984), Schapira (2018) and Campbell (2015), and presented in this work. In this way, Jungian psychology is allowed to resignify concepts that are bound to a space-time already overcome and is open to more updated notions of society, especially with regard to the notion of feminine, often imprisoned in an essentialist logic.

This article can contribute to the elaboration of ambivalent and paradoxical issues that are presented in the current times, in order to enable the Jungian clinic to allow women to discover new potentialities. By breaking with certain patterns limited by the cultural Complex in question, the Jungian clinic will also be able to broaden its possibilities for healing.

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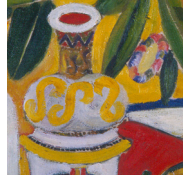
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Contemporary crossings: From modernity to complexity

Walter Boechat

Article



Abstract

This article addresses the many crossings that challenge humanity today, focusing on the paradigm crisis in the sciences, and the transition from modernity to complexity. However, several other intertwining transitional crises are briefly mentioned, such as the global warming crisis, with the transition from the planetary Holocene phase to the Anthropocene, called by some the “Capitalocene”. Furthermore, the blurring of borders between countries, with the Islamization of Europe, is a shock of the return of the cultural complex of European colonialism from centuries past. The presence of a new paradigm emerging since the beginning of the last century is also addressed, as well as how such a paradigm crisis affects Jung’s complex psychology. This article seeks to illustrate how the writing of the Red Book unfolds amid the exhaustion of the paradigm of modernity and how Jung takes a step back, a *réculer pour mieux sauter* (Janet) to the medieval paradigm, and rescues the ideas of alchemy (for example, *Gerard Dorneus’ Unus Mundus*) to propose a new epistemology, thinking that is frankly embedded in the new paradigm of complexity, a proposal to overcome the dichotomous traps in which modern man is trapped.

Keywords: Jung’s complex psychology. Complex thinking. Paradigm crisis. Myth of the Hero. Alchemy.

*“Our great-grandfather, called Rio Doce by the whites,
....., sings. On silent nights we hear its voice
and talk to our river-music.....its waters
make music and at that time, the stone and water involve us
so marvelous that they allow us to conjugate the we: we-river,
we-mountains, we-earth..... allow us to leave our bodies,
this same old anthropomorphism and experience other forms
of existing”.*

Ailton Krenak (2022, pp. 13-14)

Contemporaneity faces many different crossings that are visible in the most diverse social, anthropological, and psychological fields. Humanity as a whole is experiencing moments of significant radical change and thinkers from various fields speak of these changes as radical and challenging. Humanity as a whole is undergoing this great crossing, which has multiple sides, all of them threatening, all of them demanding global responses.

In several of his writings, Jung makes clear his concern for the fate of humanity, which is evident from his work during World War I, such as in "Adaptation, individuation, and collectivity" (JUNG, OC, vol. XVIII/2), in which he reflects on the relationship between the individual and society and the profound relationship between individuality and collectivity. This was also his concern during World War II, in various essays, such as *Wotan* (JUNG, OC, vol. X). In these and other works, he always perceived the collective challenges as inextricably linked to the internal issues of the human being. Therefore, the solutions to the great problems that appear increasingly threatening to contemporary men and women must be approached from the individual's point of view. There is an emphasis on the subjective universe for humanity's great collective journeys, as in the well-known phrase stated in the second interview with Prof. Richard Evans, from the University of Houston:

"The world is suspended from a thin thread, and that thread is the psyche of man."

(Jung in: MCGUIRE; HULL, 1982, p. 272).

The three major threats

Some researchers seek to align the major contemporary threats to humanity as the following three main ones: the ecological crisis with global warming, the atomic threat, and the rise of artificial intelligence. These complex issues are somewhat interconnected, and we will approach them from the point of view of the paradigm crisis of modernity, as addressed by Madel Luz (1988) and other philosophers of the sciences.

Global warming

The threat of ecocide by global warming and catastrophic floods is being felt more and more intensely and can be experienced directly by us in the suffering floods that have hit our brothers and sisters in Rio Grande do Sul, the severe fires in the Pantanal, as well as other devastating fires in different parts of the world, such as Australia, California, and the Iberian Peninsula. No one is truly safe from these grave ecological imbalances. Liliana Wahba (2023) aptly recalls Ailton Krenak's expression that we are experiencing planet

fever. Still on the subject of Brazil, another example of imbalance due to global warming can be acutely felt in the threat of rising ocean levels, bearing in mind the vast coastline of our continental country. Since colonization, vast areas of the coast have been occupied by cities, several of them state capitals. The effects of rising sea levels are already being felt in many places. The beautiful tourist beaches of Florianópolis have been affected. The sea is advancing, and the layer of sand is gradually disappearing. On some of these beaches, an extreme preservation measure was taken: at great financial cost, the ocean floor was dredged and huge volumes of sand were used to recompose the strip of coastline that was gradually disappearing under the sea. These are the early signs that the oceans, humanity's longtime companions, are gradually becoming a dangerous threat.

In modern times, humanity is trapped and desperate at this great collective crossing that seems to challenge the entire human race. The entry of humanity into the so-called *Anthropocene*, a new geological era that followed the Holocene, seems to threaten the planetary natural balance with death. The start of the Anthropocene varies among scholars, with some placing it at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution at the end of the 18th century, with the invention of the steam engine. Other authors suggest that it began with the predatory action of the Sapiens on the planet much earlier, around 12,000 BC (HARARI, 2016), when hunter-gatherers began to settle on the land and agricultural culture began. The abandoning of the nomadic hunter-gatherer system led to the dawn of villages, followed by large cities and then the great imbalance-producing empires. Not only the beginning of this new geological and social era is the subject of controversy and debate. Some argue that the term Anthropocene is inappropriate, as the prefix *anthro* would imply all of humanity in the process of irreversible ecocide, whereas the rich capitalist nations would be much more responsible for the process, instead proposing the term *capitalocene* for the new era of planetary crossing.

There is a drastic exhaustion of the hero myth in modernity

It is the polarizations of modernity that suffocate contemporary man and cause asphyxiation. Modernity has exhausted the myth of the hero, as Luigi Zoja commented in *History of Arrogance* (ZOJA, 2000). The name of the ancient Sumerian hero Gilgamesh means "the builder of walls". If these walls were at the origin of the culture needed to build empires and civilizations, in modern times hyper-heroism has been exhausted by the destruction of the planet, overpopulation, and the threat of an ultimate ecocide. We are now paying dearly for the construction of modern consciousness and so-called scientific

objectivity, so dear to modern science, but the ultimate mark of separation from nature.

The myth of the hero has a symbolic meaning in the formation of consciousness as well. The exhaustion of the myth of the hero in modern times calls for new models for building consciousness other than the traditional heroic consciousness that polarizes with instincts and nature, the traditional model of the hero who kills the mother dragon or the monsters of the unconscious to establish consciousness. This model was traditionally followed by Freud, with the myth of Oedipus, Jung, with the hero who kills the mother dragon, Neumann, and Edinger, who propose the ego-self axis as a heroic polarization between consciousness and the unconscious. James Hillman (1999) had already suggested a different approach to the problem, *the alchemical hero*, who dives into the hermetic vessel and the arcane substance, realizing the new consciousness and mentioning that the traditional hero has the eyes of the serpent that he himself overcomes. In his book *Play and Reality*, Winnicott (2017) proposes the model of play for the construction of consciousness. Indian cosmogony presents the image of Brahma creating the universe through *Lila*, the divine play or game; here we should remember that all cosmogony is a mythological projection of the creation of consciousness. All these new avenues for the development of consciousness reflect that the hero myth is no longer suitable as a model for contemporary human consciousness.

Proposing a potential model for an ego-self relationship

Perhaps we could envision the relationship between the conscious ego and the self within a model that differs from the heroic one proposed by Neumann and Edinger and is closer to everyday experience. I suggest a model based on Gestalt psychology (Figure 1). In general, the ego, as the core of consciousness, appears as the figure and the self as the background. However, at certain moments in life, in moments of creativity or wherever consciousness is acting beyond its usual limits of everyday life, the self becomes the figure, and the ego is the background. Of course, these are rare moments in consciousness. The advantage of this Gestalt model is that it does not create an exaggerated distance between two psychological entities, the ego and the self. The self, despite having the Imago Dei as one of its main symbols, remains a psychological entity and not a theological or metaphysical one.

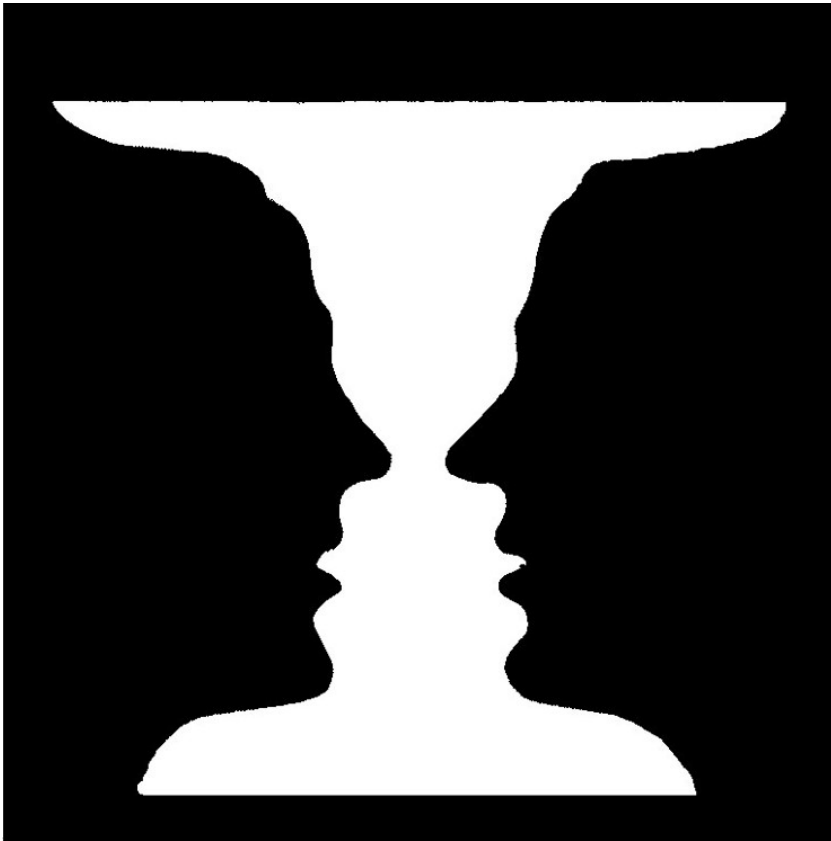


Figure 1. Proposal for a recreational model to display the dynamic relationship between the ego and the self.

Several pandemics appear associated with the growing deforestation process

Returning to the problem of hyper-heroism in modernity and the ecological crisis, we see pandemics emerging on the fringes of civilization-nature contact, whose processes of intense devastation of nature, burning of forests, and diverse extractive activities cause nature to be strongly threatened. Regarding the latest coronavirus-19 pandemic, it is known that the genome of SARS-COV-2 is very similar to that of the virus found in bats normally eaten in China as a food source. It has been hypothesized that there could be a *zoonotic spillover* from the bat to the pangolin, a species of small armadillo from inland China and North Africa. However, it is worth bearing in mind that this passage of viruses from animal species to humans, generating strains that are destructive to the human species, has occurred in prior pandemics, such as the Ebola virus, influenza A (H1N1) in the Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-

CoVID), the AIDS virus (proximity of humans to African monkeys), yellow fever, among others. Therefore, it is not a recent phenomenon and has intimate connections with deforestation, with the human community always paying a high price for ecological imbalance.

The destruction of the planet runs hand in hand with the unfolding of consciousness by Homo Sapiens

Therefore, the current devastation of the great tropical forests, such as the Amazon Rainforest, threatening their biodiversity and the ecological balance of the planet, is part of the pathological exacerbation of the myth of the hero and the major ontological imbalance of the paradigm of modernity. In fact, this imbalance extends back much further than is generally assumed. As Harari showed in his bestsellers “Sapiens” (2016) and “Homo Deus”, the natural imbalance imposed by Sapiens begins with the emergence of reflective consciousness in 70,000 BC. As an example of this, Harari cites the migration of the Sapiens across the Behring Strait towards occupying the Americas. This passage from Alaska to Patagonia occurred in record time. While other species would have taken centuries to adapt to different biomes, Sapiens modified the biomes in their rapid passage. Entire species were wiped out, such as giant sloths, saber-toothed tigers, and other animal and plant species. These changes in nature are sometimes attributed to climate change, volcanic eruptions, and so on. However, Harari demonstrates through many examples that “we ourselves are to blame”. (HARARI, 2016, p. 73)

The nuclear threat

Wars continue to rage and there has not been a *single moment* since the Great Wars without a war taking place somewhere on the planet. Therefore, the fantasy once expressed by Oppenheimer, that the development of the atomic bomb would lead to the extinction of wars, is proving increasingly questionable. Given the current invasion of Ukraine, newspapers are already openly talking about the potential use of nuclear weapons, terrifyingly reviving the ghost of the extinction of present-day humanity by the well-known nuclear threat. Before the advent of virtual media, wars reached us through newspaper reports several days after they happened. Now, we participate directly and in real-time in the images of the atrocities of the Hamas group and the genocide in Gaza. The psychological impact is massive and relentless. Through a defense mechanism, we have come to incorporate the tremendous suffering and violence of the wars currently underway as something inevitable and inherent

to life. In addition to the pain for the families of Palestinians who have been decimated, there is one constant: fear.

Europe's largest nuclear power plant, the Zaporizhzhia plant, is based in Ukraine and has been continually endangered in the ongoing war, with Ukrainian and Russian forces accusing each other. In November 2022, the plant recorded 12 explosions that damaged some buildings and equipment. In April 2024, Russia accused Ukraine of attacking the dome of the building, which houses Reactor 06. In August 2024, a fire was reported at the plant. The danger of a nuclear accident is very high.¹ The ghost of Chernobyl hangs over Europe now.

The erosion of the man-machine boundary

A third major frontier irreversibly crossed by modernity is the man-machine boundary. As Harari (op. cit.) reminds us, intelligence has always been associated with consciousness throughout the history of the planet, but not anymore. The future of humanity cannot be predicted with certainty with the predominance of *intelligence that is independent of consciousness*. Science fiction literature has consistently addressed this issue, which is now becoming an actual nightmare in society, faced with the threat of mass unemployment, especially in repetitive activities, in a new society dominated by artificial intelligence.

The blurring of borders

The blurring of borders is a manifestation of the global changes that humanity is experiencing. Within this context of great threats, we are experiencing what Hungarian sociologist Zygmunt Baumann (2005) called liquid modernity, values, and references in constant liquefaction, a process of extreme cultural dissolution. This perception of the weakening of structures and perspectives has been around for a long time. Geographical boundaries themselves are undergoing an accelerated process of dilution, the traditional patriarchal family, gender boundaries, and the dissolved limits of ageism are all accelerated cultural processes. In the dynamic journey of a civilization in transition, conservatism is struggling with progressive perspectives. We are reminded of the alchemical theme of the old king, the senex, and the young prince, the *senex*, and the *puer*, which appears in engravings in treatises such as the Splendor Solis (Figure 2).

¹ CNN BRASIL (2024).

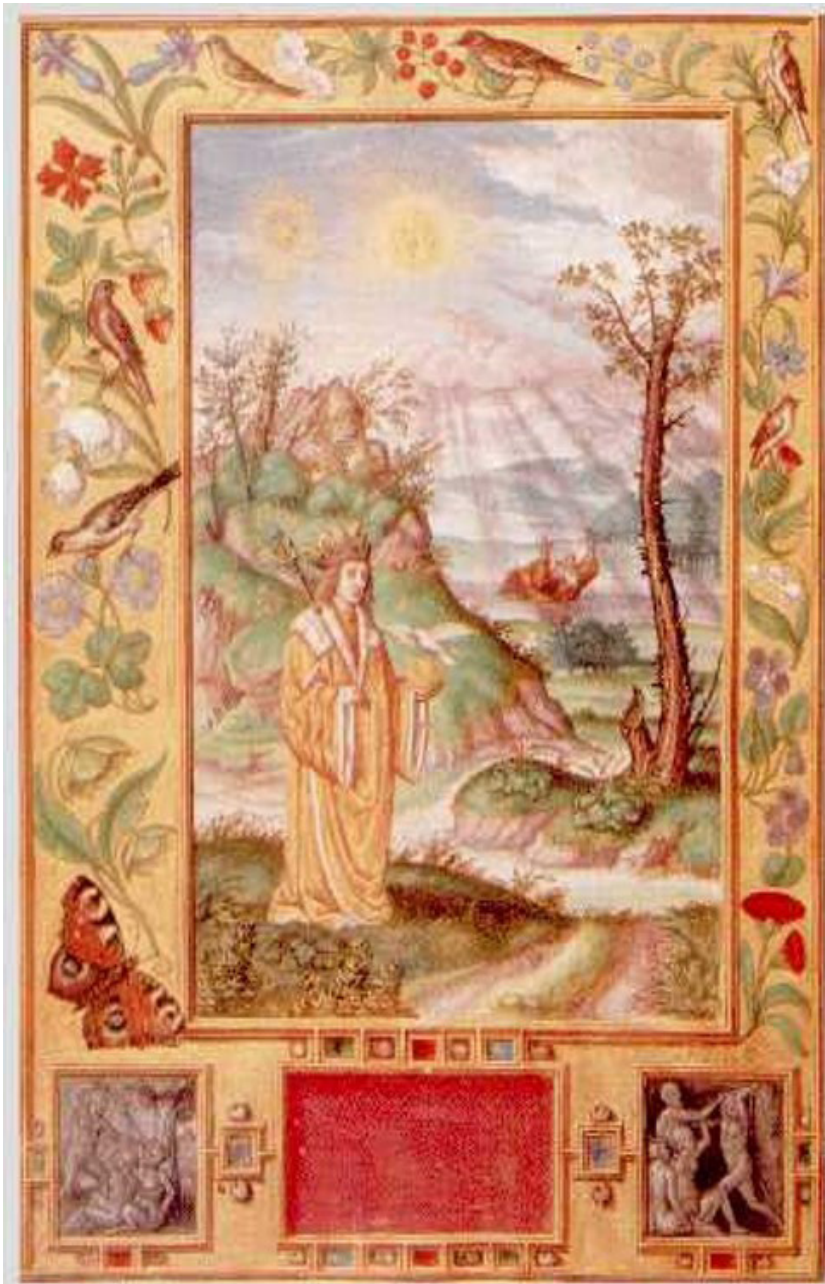


Figure 2. The panel "The Drowning King" from the alchemical treatise *Splendor Solis* (1520), attributed to Salomon Trismosin.

The old king, the *Senex*, undergoes the process of aqueous dilution, tends to die, and resists his dilution. The young prince, the *puer*, is already wearing his new clothes, but is uncomfortable in clothes that are still too big for him. The *senex-puer* transition

illustrates the current turbulent moment. Traditions are liquefying, but somehow leaving behind the references that have guided culture and integrating entirely new values is problematic for the collective. These alchemical images are true portals to moments of crossing the individual and collective consciousness.

Blurred geographical borders

The very borders between countries are rapidly being blurred by several factors: the sharp increase in communications, cultural exchanges, the virtuality of communications, as well as the global phenomenon of mass migration. An intense migratory movement from Africa and the Middle East is causing a strong Islamization in several European countries, which is leading to problems of national identity. The strong rise of radical right-wing political movements marks a reactionary movement in the face of this process. From a symbolic perspective, this is a confrontation with the collective shadow, the emergence of the cultural complex of colonialism, which guided the whole of Europe in past centuries and is now returning and showing its dark aspects. An authentic return of the repressed. The imperial attitude of a conquering Europe of previous centuries is now returning in the form of Islamization from Africa. Europe is now struggling with the inner conflict of creative integration versus repression. Added to this is the ghost of negative population growth in several European countries, accompanied by the hyper-population of immigrants.

Gender and family boundaries

Gender boundaries are also being dissolved, with traditional binary identities giving way to diverse identities on the so-called LGBT+ spectrum. Traditional family identities have already been dissolved, with frequent separations and children from multiple marriages living under the same roof. Family therapists are called upon to develop new solutions and creative solutions to the issues arising from the new post-modern family.

The blurring of gender boundaries clearly pits conservatism against transformation. This process is still underway and is met with strong resistance from conservative groups in Brazil and around the world. This is part of the main agenda of contemporary culture.

The changing phases of life

With the arrival of modern technologies, the stages of life have changed radically. In the Middle Ages, children were seen as

lesser adults (ARIÈS, 1981). Shortly after the Second World War, children were used as a workforce in the reconstruction of Europe and then entered adulthood. After the post-war boom in capitalist financial growth in the West, the period of adolescence as we know it took shape as a time of life independent of others, with its own identity. Just as the adolescent moment expanded and took shape in this period, in contemporary times a new phase of life is forming. Traditionally, the elderly period began after the age of 60. With the advances in contemporary medicine, between the ages of 60 and 76, there is a new phase of life, a period in which there is an intense and creative neuronal arborization and a window of a new phase of life, of a creative maturity that opens up for contemporary men and women. In other words, after the age of 60, you do not necessarily have to become an old person, in the sense of making the final crossing into retirement, giving up on acting creatively in the world. Living through this phase with the maturity it demands calls for a sense of meaning and an attitude of spiritual awareness. This phase has its challenges, as we can see in our own aging process, as well as in some of our patients. Retirement is a challenging journey for many clients. At first seen as a liberating moment, the newly retired person falls into depression, nostalgic for the protective structure of the institution. For certain patients I have seen in my office, analysis can be a key element in rediscovering the creativity needed to nurture the new phase of life.

Spirituality in this phase of life is a powerful aid, almost indispensable, we could say so that people can age wisely and seize the creative possibilities of this phase of life. As an example of how serious and often insurmountable the challenges of this stage of life can be, I recall a clinical case of a patient's relative. This elderly relative, with sexuality as the main reference in his life, was unable to confront the experience of sexual impotence with maturity and ended his own life. This is an example of the challenges that coming of age can bring.

Contemporary culture is also strongly dissolving the boundaries of other stages of life. Children entering puberty want to become adults quickly, before their time, and there is an early eroticization of boys and girls. Social networks on the Internet have recently reported the absence of hyaluronic acid on the shelves of certain beauty product stores. It turned out that some pubescent children were stealing beauty products on a large scale and indiscriminately to anticipate the transition to adulthood, striving for a false appearance of young adolescence.²

A passage by the poet Manoel de Barros illustrates the various ways in which the crossings of late life can be experienced.

² Site de Internet: Taylor (2024).

On the occasion of his 80th birthday, the poet was approached by a publisher interested in publishing his memoirs of childhood, adulthood, and old age. After much reluctance, Manoel de Barros sent a book for publication entitled "*Memórias da primeira infância*" (Memories of Early Childhood), which was to become a great success. Then, at the publisher's request, he sent a second text, "*Memórias da segunda infância*" (Memories of Second Childhood), and later another autobiography, "*Memórias da terceira infância*" (Memories of Third Childhood). The editor praised the texts for their poeticism and lyricism but said that he was expecting a text about the experiences of maturity and especially about aging. The poet replied: "I only ever had childhood. I've never been old. I can only tell you about my births."³

Here, the poet creates an interesting neologism, *velhez* (something like "oldness"), the petrification and loss of creative agility, and distinguishes it from old age, the natural aging process of bodies that time naturally produces.

Paradigm shifts in science

The transitions and crises of the modern paradigm clearly illustrate the journey we are on. Hence the title of the article, "Contemporary Crossings, from Modernity to Complexity." What do we mean by the word paradigm? We use it in the same sense as Tomas Khun (1962/2017) designated as paradigmatic those scientific achievements that generate models which, for longer or shorter periods and more or less explicitly, guide the subsequent development of science research. The paradigm is not, however, a static mold, but a dynamic one that points to the future.

In this sense, we realize the so-called "paradigm of modernity", which would have begun with the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, marking the end of the medieval paradigm and developing with the great expansion of civilization during the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution, from the 17th to the 19th century. The extreme polarizations that contemporary man suffers from are the outcome of a sharp paradigm crisis.

The current paradigm of modernity fell into crisis in the first half of the 20th century, following major transformations in the physical sciences: Einstein's theory of relativity, the quantum mechanics of the Copenhagen group, the phenomenon of *negentropy* proposed by Ilya Prigogine, among others. Madel Luz (1988) describes this transition from the paradigm of modernity, also called the Newtonian or Cartesian paradigm. Luz (1988) coined the term *medical rationalities* seeking

³ Reference to Prof. Elton Luiz Leite de Sousa, in "*Música, poesia e não velhez*."

to incorporate new healing disciplines with credibility in the new emerging paradigm, or paradigm of complexity. Thus, not only the so-called *evidence-based medicine* would have therapeutic credibility, but other knowledge and other rationalities, such as acupuncture, psychoanalysis, and Jung's complex psychology. Psychologies that deal with the unconscious are included in the new paradigm because the unconscious does not follow the laws of cause and effect in the time and space of the Newtonian universe. The psychic dynamisms of dreams, fantasies, and the unconscious, in general, escape any measurement and *the possibility of measurement is the essence of modernity*. The Newtonian paradigm of the natural sciences is really guided by the exact measurement of all things.

The great polarizations of modernity and the emerging paradigm of complexity

The aforementioned polarizations of modernity are the essence of the modern worldview, deriving from the first polarization, between man and nature, within the mythopoetic vision of the banishment from paradise. From this first polarization arise all the others, spirit-matter, mind-body, conscious-unconscious, man-woman, Northern Hemisphere-Southern Hemisphere, academic knowledge-popular knowledge, and so on. As Luz (1988) reminds us, the major pitfall of this dichotomized worldview is that it is rigid and hierarchical, i.e.: spirit is seen as superior to matter, mind is superior to body, man is superior to woman, academic culture trumps popular culture, the Northern Hemisphere is higher than the Southern Hemisphere, and so on. The new emerging paradigm, the complexity paradigm, as Edgar Morin (1994) calls it, offers a new vision of the world that transcends these polarities.

C.G. Jung's complex psychology transcends the polarities of modernity

We agree with Sonu Shamdasani (2011, p. 26) in reminding us that the term 'complex psychology', suggested by Toni Wolff to Jung for his school of thought, is quite appropriate. This is because Jung's complex psychology is part of the new paradigm of complexity, it is complex thinking by nature, recognizing that psychological phenomena cannot be reduced to a single first cause. Complex knowledge proposes a new worldview free from the strict polarizations that imprison modern man. The knowledge of complex thought has the power to free today's humanity from the prisons in which modernity keeps it. Thus, the man-nature dichotomy is relativized by the new awareness of how to care for the planet through sustainable development, as

proposed by Leonardo Boff. The wisdom of the original peoples has also been rediscovered and valued. Soon after arriving in the New World, the Portuguese discussed whether the indigenous people had souls and dedicated themselves to catechizing them. Then they were enslaved and decimated. Today, although the indigenous holocaust still rages on in certain areas, more people are listening to them and learning from their shamans about the wisdom of nature.

As for the polarity between academic culture and popular culture, Freud, Jung, Von Franz, and others, through their research into fairy tales, myths, and popular traditions, show that popular culture is just as important as academic knowledge. Furthermore, the concept of culture has expanded greatly. Culture is not just the bibliophilic knowledge of books, but the popular traditions that form an essential part of a people's cultural heritage. Music, food, rituals, and popular festivities are the fundamental lifeblood of a society's culture.

As for the mind-body and spirit-matter polarities, Jung's complex psychology, with its alchemical epistemology of reality and its concept of the psychoid, recovers the dignity of matter and transcends the mind-body and spirit-matter dichotomies, beyond inside and outside. The body is being rediscovered in contemporary culture in its symbolic dimensions inherent to the individuation process. The Jungian analyst's school of *authentic movement*, founded by Mary Whitehouse and followed by Joan Chodorow and others today, aims to reclaim movement and the body as one of the richest forms of active imagination, as well as incorporating the body into the therapeutic process.

Regarding the conscious-unconscious polarity, Jung, in his Red Book, takes an important epistemological turn, showing that the unconscious is not an epiphenomenon of consciousness, a *partie inférieure*, as Pierre Janet and the entire Western tradition supposed, but is the seat of creativity; the contents of the unconscious have in themselves a reality that Jung later came to conceptualize as the reality of the soul.

This marked turn towards recognizing the unconscious as *prior to consciousness* appears in the dialogue between the characters Elias and Salome. When Salome says that Jung and she are brother and sister, and Mary is their mother, Jung reacts in utter confusion:

"Is this a hellish dream?How can she say such a thing? Or are they both out of their minds?" And then, stunned, he makes a rational defense, trying to protect himself from the unusualness of the unconscious:

"You are symbols and Mary is a symbol. I am just too confused to understand you right now."

Elias: "You can call us symbols just as you can call other people like you symbols. You weaken nothing and solve nothing by calling us symbols."

“You throw me into terrible confusion. Do you wish to be real?”

Elias: “Of course we are what you call real. Here we are, and you have to accept us. You have the choice.”

(JUNG, 2013, pp. 167-168).

The reality of the soul is emphasized at various points in Jung’s work, for example in the well-known and much-quoted phrase in Psychological Types (JUNG, OC, vol. VI, §73):

“The psyche creates realities every day. The only expression I can think of to designate this activity is fantasy”.

Jung was affected by the great crisis of modernity when writing the Red Book

Jung wrote his Red Book during the First World War, facing this great crisis of modernity and instinctively returning to the Middle Ages. As he wrote in 1928:

“Modern man has lost all the metaphysical certainties of the Middle Ages and has replaced them with ideals of material security, general well-being, and humanitarianism.”

(JUNG, OC, vol. X, §163).

Jung developed a pre-modern epistemology based on medieval alchemy

Throughout his writings in the Black Books, from 1913 to 1932, Jung’s original reference was to the Gnostic ideas of the early Christian era, since Jung was interested in the structuring of the Western collective psyche. At that time, the official Church and its dogmas represented the beginning of this structuring. The Gnostic apocryphal gospels, with their various symbols and multiple currents, represented all the ever-changing wealth of the collective unconscious to be repressed for the sake of cultural organization. Aniela Jaffé (1971) draws attention to the importance Jung gave to cultural history: observing how Gnostic themes appeared in a certain way in the dreams and fantasies of contemporary people, he wondered how such remote Gnostic contents had a kind of historical continuity up to the present day. Jung found in medieval alchemy this historical link between ancient Gnosticism and the contemporary psyche.

I can think of examples of this continuity in Gnostic ideas such as the *pleroma*, the void-full, the pre-existent totality of all

things, the origin of all that exists in the universe, and the without-qualities. According to the Gnostics, all created things emerge from the pleroma. There is thus an eternal tension between pleroma and creature, anything that emerges from the pleroma with quality. Even the eternal God, omniscient and omnipresent, from this perspective, is a creature, one of the first to emerge from the pleroma, whose qualities are essential and close to a pleromatic existence. The Gnostic notion of the pleroma is expressed in the alchemical concept of the *Unus Mundus*, which will appear in the 16th century in the writings of Gerard Dorn, a disciple of Paracelsus.

In fact, Jung's epistemological references are grounded in Gnosticism and alchemy. Complex psychology operates in a pre-modern epistemology, in which the subject-object and man-nature divisions are not marked. Jung rescues the concept of *Unus Mundus*, the One World, which is key to his vision of the psychoid archetype and synchronicity. These concepts, developed in the late phase of Jung's creative work, surpass modernity and fall radically within the paradigm of complexity, offering ways out of the dichotomous prisons in which modern man is held captive. Through this radical return to the Middle Ages, Jung makes an authentic movement of *reculer pour mieux sauter*, (stepping back to leap further), an expression by Pierre Janet often quoted by Jung.

The alchemical perspective could be likened to the Amerindian perspectivism proposed by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro

It is quite remarkable that South American Amerindian cultures have a worldview comparable to the medieval alchemical perspective. The anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2002) developed the revolutionary concept of *Amerindian perspectivism*, through which the worldview of the indigenous South Americans (and some Asian ethnic groups, according to Viveiros de Castro) is revealed to be fully integrated with natural processes, unlike modern man's dissociated and predatory view of nature. In this vision, the world of the gods, the ancestors, the human world, and the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms are joined in an indivisible whole. Just as humanity has a culture and has animals, plants, and fish as a natural source of food, there is also a culture in the jaguar's universe and, from its perspective, man is part of nature and can be hunted as a source of food. While the modern view is that there is only one culture, human culture and that nature is rich in diversity and a source of raw materials, in modern fantasy, inexhaustible raw materials, for Aboriginal perspectivism, the universe is permeated by various cultures that interact: spirits

and ancestors, humans, animals, plants, and minerals are part of a unified whole, an authentic *Unus Mundus*.

Final remarks: do paths to salvation still await modern man?

This is how contemporary modern man is, in deep crisis, threatened with self-extinction, suffering from fiery and destructive asphyxiation. Perhaps this is why Brazilian indigenous leaders from different ethnic groups have become increasingly vocal and are being heard in the media and in published books, such as Tapuia Kaká Werá Jecupé (2020), who reminds us that plants, stones, and animals are called “our grandparents” by their brothers and sisters, or the Yanomani shaman Davi Kopenawa (2015), who refers to the white people with disdain as the people of merchandise, or Ailton Krenak (2022, p. 14), who speaks of the Doce River “as his grandfather-river, very musical, from which his people hear the melody and depend on it”. These indigenous leaders bring the voice of the earth, an ontological alternative to modernity, and greater respect for the planet. Taking all these alternative perspectives, contemporary complex thought can build a true *complexio oppositorum*, merging traditional wisdom and modern science and creating possible forms of survival for humanity.

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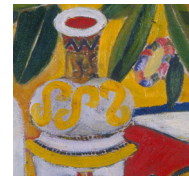
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Intersections, borders, transpositions

Gustavo Barcellos

Article



Abstract

Intersections cross us. Intersections are crossings. How to live them and what is your imagination? In the imagination of the intersections we find many images, from myth to tarot, figures such as Scylla and Charybdis, the Fool and the Hermit, from language to clinic, from life to death. The article explores the images and the emotional impact that intersections and crossings impose on us, in addition to exploring the aspects in which language offers us crossings in a clinic supported by speech.

Keywords: archetypal psychology, crossings, monstrosity, myth, language.

Cutting in deep sea

Take us to the keel

To a sweet world

island

Mariajosé De Carvalho, "Trilogia de setembro", 1976

Everything crosses us: emotions, ideas, feelings, sensations, perceptions, perversions, intuitions, what we do not understand or what we take time to understand, to accommodate, to accept. Everything crosses us. We are crossed by the demands of others, of society, of history, and by our own demands, our desires, our wills. We are crossed by dreams, which continue during the day, or for a few days, years until, to enchant us, to disturb us, to displace us. We are crossed by surprise, by the unexpected, by scares. We are crossed by everyday life, by commitments, by tasks. We are crossed by love, by its arrival or its departure. We are crossed by time, by death, by disease. We are crossed by the gods. We are crossed.

We cross bridges, borders, neighborhoods, terrains, backyards, courtyards, lands, seas and air. We go through difficult phases, foreign territories, doubts and uncertainties, countries and nations. We go through political regimes, mentalities, psychological types. There are revolutions, insurgencies, transformations, transitions. Persecuted

Tupamaros become presidents, tortured by military dictatorships as well. We cross genders and sexualities, from alpha male to 'boyceta', from Cinderella to Drag Queen. We go from one stage of life to another, from one stage to another. Where will the continuity be? Will there really be continuity? We crossed the sea. We crossed the samba.

We are crossed, always one would cross. Porous, we are finally left looking like sieves to ourselves, full of holes. And will there even be a life without holes? We pierce the commitment, we pierce the bubble, we pierce the date, we pierce the cake, the tire, the sign, even our reporting holes, that is, holes in the way we report our lives. Nonsense. All our biographical narrative, all the story we tell about ourselves, including the one we take to our therapies, a huge hole. For there are holes in our narratives, holes, and it is through them that the soul enters. We speak of a porous ego. We need those holes, those that are always lower. Medical science calls these holes diseases. Psychoanalysis, the psychopathology of everyday life. The Jungian psychology, of complexes, complexities, or memories, dreams, reflections. We do not have to name them. Holes are holes, we know this, because we know them from the beginning since there are even a certain number of them in our own bodies, with which we have to live, holes through which life enters or leaves. Oral phase, anal phase, genital phase: libidinous holes? There are holes everywhere, in the city, on the roads, in the fields, in the mountains, on the slopes, in outer space, in the world. There are hot holes, bottoms, and there are black holes. Holes bury people, and also feelings, sorrows, memories. Holes where to stick the head itself-operation patch-holes, how often do we need them? Thus, we have in us an *experience* from the holes, in body and soul. For them, things go through us. They fill, or empty, our lives. We are crossed.

Ferries, bridges, tunnels, planes, trains, ships, cars, motorcycles, bicycles; the compass, the astrolabe, the GPS; the swim, the walk, the run, the jump; the path, the detours, the trail; the takeoff, the flight, the landing; unfasten, sail, navigate, rotate, cross. These are some of the objects and actions that present to us the imagination of the crossings. Let us try to go through his psychology.

Crossing is the realm of expanses. We go from one place to another. In them, in the crossings, we are Nautas (from the Greek *nautēs*): astronauts, cosmonauts, argonauts, netizens, spacemen, psychonauts. Nautical refers to navigation and, today, more than ever we are again forced to navigate, now in a sea of information, permanently connected to the internet. The internet is like a stream that flows through us. Are these crossings?

But the crossing is also the realm of connections and here we have, on the bridge, its best and most effective metaphor. Is it? Perhaps the bridge is not an image of connection exactly, but of

junction, as Peter Bishop (1988), who wrote a beautiful study on bridges, argues. From this study, I emphasize: “bridges not only connect, they fundamentally *join*. The image of the connection is too linear, too restrictive” (Bishop, 1988, p. 89). Thus, connection and junction are not the same thing. For him, bridges present us with the fantasy of maximum uninterrupted flow. Flows come together and, who knows, that is what our crossings want: to flow and join, even if so often we cannot complete our crossings. We stand in the middle of the road. A separation, or a divorce that, if necessary, did not take place, stretching toxic, or aging relationships. A career transition that we did not have the courage, or the conditions, to make. When can we know if we have fully completed the work of a mourner? A dream trip that never happened. An unspoken word, the aborted gesture. Failures.

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In Greek myth, there are many images of crossing. They teach us many things. For me, the most interesting is perhaps even the one that involves two strange marine beings that, after undergoing intense metamorphosis processes, will have their existences linked to paths and crossings: I speak of Scylla and Charybdis. Scylla and Charybdis, two water nymphs, naiads, who have been transformed into monsters. After the transformation, they will both inhabit the Strait of Messina, which is the Strait that separates the island of Sicily from the Italian peninsula and will act in the sea. Straits are strips of water that join much larger bodies of water, such as oceans and seas. In the Strait of Messina, it is common to produce the optical illusion known as Fata Morgana, a mirage on the high seas that is due to a thermal inversion. In it, the images are duplicated. Scylla’s metamorphosis occurs because she is fleeing the pursuit of Glaucus, a very ugly aquatic creature. The water element is quite present here, mind you. Scylla is discovered by Glaucus, also metamorphosed by the gods into a sea god. Glaucus was a human whom the aquatic deities resolved to transform into a sea creature with a greyish-green beard, bluish arms, curved legs. He fell in love with the nymph Scylla who, terrified by his appearance, begins to flee through the waters, the rocks, the underwater caves. The love of the ugly Glaucus was immense and, desperate, he threw himself in pursuit of the beautiful nymph, begging and weeping (the water again) for her to grant him a little attention. Impervious to his pleas, Scylla remains on the run, hiding in a place so inaccessible that Glaucus could never find her. Dejected, he thinks he has lost the nymph that he is chasing and goes to the island of Ea, the island where Circe lives, the greatest sorceress in Greek mythology, the witch, the one who knows magic, present in several myths. Glaucus asks her for a magical intervention so that Scylla becomes enchanted by him. But something surprising happens: Circe ends up being enchanted by Glaucus herself, declares

her love, her passion, and now it is he who does not want her and runs away from her. He chased a nymph who ran away from him, now it is he who runs away from Circe, who pursues him for love. *Sometimes crossings are chases.* But she, instead of taking revenge on Glaucus, turning him into something else, resolves to take revenge on Scylla, who is the rival. She prepares her magic potions with herbs and leaves them where Scylla likes to bathe, in a spring, and then poisons that spring. Scylla, who was a beautiful nymph, ends up being metamorphosed into a monster, from whom Glaucus will now feel repulsed. The terrifying sea monster that Scylla turned into had the face of a beautiful woman. The cruelest thing is that the face remained the same, of a remarkable beauty, but around the waist it had six snake heads with three rows of teeth and still a circle, which comes out of it, of twelve barking dogs. The dogs alerted her when a ship passed through the strait, a strait where many mythological scenes take place. Many heroes, in their crossings, have to pass through there, the passage through the Strait of Messina. Among them, the most famous is perhaps Odysseus, who is on his return journey to Ithaca, and has to pass through that Strait. A peculiar crossing, back home. *Many crossings happen on the way home.* Ulysses is the archetype of the traveler. The most significant crossings pass through there, through Messina. *Often, crossings are therefore passages, they are temporary.* Odysseus loses most of his companions in this strait, loses all his ships, is left practically alone, and manages to pass through. Perhaps this speaks of the hero, of this hero who wants to go home, of the few who manage to cross the Strait between Scylla and Charybdis. Odysseus escapes from Charybdis and is attacked by Scylla. Escape from both.

In this strait, we have, thus, on one side this monster, Scylla, placed there, which devours sailors, destroys ships, creatures, a monster that feeds on everything that crosses the place. It presents the danger of crossings, the danger of being swallowed up by our crossings, of disappearing into them. *Often, crossings swallow us up.* And on the other side we have Charybdis, another monster, who was also a transformed nymph. Everyone knows the story, but there are interesting details: while Charybdis had a nymph existence, she was particularly known as a voracious nymph, she was very hungry, very voracious. Bottomless hunger. She is transformed by Zeus, struck by lightning and thrown into the depths of the sea, where she turns into a sea monster: her epiphany will then be a whirlpool. Her voracity is transformed into a monster that is a whirlpool in the Strait of Messina. That is, when the ships pass, she takes the form of a whirlpool and swallows them all.

It is because I would like to share with you the question around the idea of monstrosity and crossings that I mentioned these two unpleasant creatures. Monsters are present in various mythologies.

Also in alchemy, the *monstrum* from a poorly performed conjunction. They are also present in Jungian psychology. Monsters are important creatures to the extent that we need them to return us to humanity. What is striking first is that the vast majority of the monsters in classical mythology are women, they are female monsters. There are several male monsters, this is true, but much of the Greek monstrous imagination is female: Chimera, Lamia, Medusa, Harpies, Gorgons, Sphinx, Medea (in a way) and, here, Scylla and Charybdis.

The story of Scylla and Charybdis in the Strait of Messina has generated a well-known expression: it refers to a situation in which one is “between Scylla and Charybdis”. That is, it is an expression of a philosophical character to talk about a situation in which we are between one negative thing and another, between one evil and another. Jung uses it sometimes. It is a powerful metaphor about crossings, intersections, about narrows, narrowings, moments in life when we have to cross through tight, tapered and dangerous, difficult paths, when we have to make great transformations and we feel restricted, pressured, without power of choice, limited. We can be destroyed on either side, either by Scylla or Charybdis.

Now about monsters, about monstrosities: the *monstrum* is, etymologically, “the one who reveals”, “the one who warns”, a glyph in search of a hierophant. This refusal to be part of the “classificatory order of things” holds true for monsters in general: they are disturbing hybrids, hybrids whose outwardly incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuring. And so, the monster is dangerous, a form-suspended between forms-that threatens to explode any and all distinctions.

A mixed category, the monster resists any classification constructed on the basis of a hierarchy or a merely binary opposition, requiring instead a “system” that allows polyphony, mixed reaction (difference in sameness, repulsion in attraction) and resistance to integration – that allows...“a deeper game of differences, a non-binary polymorphism at the ‘base’ of human nature.” Cohen (2000, pp. 23-60.¹

These are excerpts from J. J. Cohen, which are in his book *Pedagogy of monsters: the pleasures and dangers of boundary confusion* (Cohen, 2000). We need the monsters. The monster shows, reveals something, and so it is he who warns. It defends – or dismantles-the boundary between the human and the nonhuman.

I speak here of monstrosities because, for me, they present us with an extreme image of crossing. The monster is not deformed, on the contrary, it is multiformed. It talks about polyphony, you talk

¹ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen is professor of English and director of the program in the Humanities at George Washington University. He has published articles on gender theory and on the cultural construction of monstrosity. His most recent book is *Sex, monsters and the Middle Ages*.

about coming out of a binary regime, normal-abnormal, formed-deformed. The monster causes a binary regime of thought, formation-deformation. It is already a crossing. With them, the monsters, we question binarisms. Here, monsters help us. Binarisms can very easily become oppositionalisms, thinking only in terms of opposites: full and empty, inside and outside, connection and loneliness, above and below, subject and object, community and individuality, fixed and mobile, feminine and masculine, fantasy and reality. Pairs of polar opposites haunt Jungian psychology, which is all assembled in polarities, but go beyond that: oppositionalism is "an ideological framework imposed on life by our minds and is generally unconscious." (Hillman, 2013, p. 118). To see things from the point of view of the soul, we must "overcome the mental framework that dualism imposes on us," as he suggests, in his remarkable *The thought-landscape* (2008), The Geographer and Orientalist Augustin Berque (2023), when speaking of "mediation", or in a *medial body*, that is, the intermediate and multiplied field between an individual and his environment. Oppositions separate. We soon find ourselves involved in "transcending" opposites, and with enantiodromy, compensation, balance, balancing, all spiritual goals. It is not the way the soul makes distinctions. It is not psychological. The soul sees and deepens each thing in itself, without needing pairs, opposites, only analogies, similarities. The soul connects all the time.

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In the Tarot, the crossing brings, in my opinion, two very interesting images, of the Fool and the Hermit, the cards 0 and 9 in the deck. Wanderers, they present the walking way of traversing the world. The Hermit represents the sage who decided to live away from society, seeking to know himself and the world through silence and inner contemplation, and the lonely walk. In other words, the inner journey. In this conception – internal contemplation, wisdom that comes from within – it is, to use Fernando Pessoa's terms, about dedication to the interior landscape.² Another point says: the Hermit, Arcanum 9, is a card symbolizing isolation, restriction, remoteness. The Hermit isolates himself to discover the knowledge that surrounds him. In the Jungian psychology of the individuation process, the emphasis falls on exactly this: isolation, retreat, a look at oneself, an intrasubjective gaze, occupation with one's inner landscape, meditation, analysis of

² The excerpt is in a book by Fernando Pessoa, himself, called *Cancioneiro*, in which he mentions this duplicity of the inner landscape and the outer landscape:

"1-In every moment of mental activity a twofold phenomenon of perception takes place in us: at the same time that we are conscious of a state of mind, we have before us, impressing us with outward-facing senses, some landscape, meaning by landscape, for the convenience of phrases, everything that forms the external world at a given moment of our perception.

2-The whole state of the soul is a landscape. That is, the whole state of soul is not only representable by a landscape, but truly a landscape. There is in us an inner space where the matter of our physical life stirs. So a sadness is a dead lake within us, a joy a sunny day in our spirit."

(Pessoa, 2001, p. 101.)

dreams, scrutiny of emotions, in a process that is normally understood as isolated, self-directed. I see in this some characteristics of this letter, although there is still another, not exactly definition, but reference to the process of individuation much more interesting. In 1932, Jung gave a series of lectures on the psychology of kundalini yoga, where I find this phrase: "individuation is becoming that which is not the ego, that which you are not, you feel as if you were a stranger." (Jung, 1999, p. 39). This already seems to me another way of understanding what we are talking about: becoming that which is not what I know about myself, but the other within me, pointing somehow to the fundamental ambiguity, the stranger within me, that which I am not. Here Jung himself is somehow contradicting himself, and fortunately, because contradictions are welcome in this kind of thinking: on the one hand, there is this idea that individuation is the becoming what one is, that is, the definition, let's say, more *standard*, as a *self-care process* on the other, he is suggesting that the important thing is to "become that which you are not," an *exit process*.

The Fool's card, on the other hand, is an unnumbered card, the zero card, shall we say, both the beginning and the end. Fool and Hermit: both are Wanderers, both carry with them a walking stick. One is young, one is old. This contrast, which says that these two letters would have a lot to do with each other, makes me dare to think that they would be, so to speak, two moments of the same archetype. So, we have the hermit and the Fool, the old and the young. Now, in archetypal psychology, it is an archetype that we usually refer to as *senex et puer*, which is, so to speak, a drama with which we are involved in life all the time: what is new in us, what is old in us? What needs to remain, what needs to be overcome? How to pay attention and take care of our renovation processes? How to recognize them? And all the challenges of making "new" and "old" harmonize in the face of so much dispute that may exist between them within us. In our culture, there is a rather conflictive relationship between everything that wants to be born, that is new, that points to a renewal (the Poundian MAKE IT NEW), and that which is old, that is established, that is wise, permanent, traditional or outdated. See, for example, how James Hillman, my reference author within the Jungian field, refers to this energy *puer*:

The *puer aeternus* is that structure of consciousness and pattern of behavior which... is compelled by a phallicism to investigate, to seek, to travel, to hunt, to search, and to transgress all limits. (...) It is a tireless spirit that has no "home" on Earth, it is always coming from somewhere or going somewhere, in transit. (Hillman, 1998, p. 196)

This is the image we have of the Wanderer, a passerby. It suits the Fool of the Tarot. The Hermit is a wanderer too. Both are crossing. But looking at the lightness with which the image of the

Fool is presented, there is even a certain joy in looking up. The Fool looks up, the Hermit looks down. The Hermit already has a place on Earth. The Fool, as Hillman says, does not have a place on earth, he is looking at the sky. It belongs to heaven, to high ideals. It has an upward gaze, while the Hermit has a downward gaze. Two crossing styles.

The ultimate goal of the notion of individuation is often presented in the imaginary *senex*, i.e. isolation, Union, stones, cosmic systems, geometric diagrams, especially the structured mandala, the crystals and the wise old man. "Even' wholeness through integration, ' which is one of the definitions also of individuation, may reflect Saturn who ate all the other gods by swallowing their children." (Hillman, 1998, p. 258) With the hermit's letter, we are faced with a notion of self-care perhaps a little less poetic, evidently heavier, which emphasizes all these aspects that I am emphasizing: introspection, introversion, isolation, work almost exclusively in the interior landscape. The Hermit is prose. Poetry comes with madness.

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In our crossings, there is also the way to doubt. That is an interesting one. It makes us inquisitive, far from the certainties that always fix us, grab us, preventing us from going forward, from going away, to navigate, to scrutinize, to inquire, to move. The certainties have us, we are not the ones who have them. Just in case, we can overcome the most dangerous certainties, reaching places uncertain, or not, unknown, new, challenging. Just in case, let us go further, consider other points of view. Doubt widens the gaze. It is because we doubt that we go deeper into understanding something. For this, however, we must be sincere with doubt, that is, not confuse it with ignorance or disguise it as shame. Doubt is alive, no one doubts. Doubt softens us inside, and that is where we can transit better. Cross better, although this is not how doubtful it seems to us at first. Doubt frees us from certainties, so often so imprisoning. Certainties imprison, or perhaps, we can speculate, do not even exist, at least definitively, immovable. That is why we say, remembering a certain Chinese sage, that really the only certainty we have in life is: for a cup of rice, two of water.

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Exoduses and diasporas. Intersections and Crossroads. Seven are the seas. Life is a journey; it should not be so short. The crossing in this world is short, fast. Some say we are coming home. Homecoming is a particular kind of crossing: the way back, either to us or to an ideal—a *topos* paradigmatic in literature and a powerful archetype in life. Thus, the most defining of all crossings is undoubtedly the last one, which we make, they say, in a boat, the one crossing a misty river, in a boat driven by a helmsman of recognized talent and wide fame, charon, half an old man half a monster, towards death, towards the

world of darkness, the other side of life, journey without return. The ship of fools? No, that is another one.

However, the most dazzling image of crossing that we have in our archetypal psychology is that of the Knight Errant. With it, James Hillman ends his masterful testimony on the ways of the soul, the book *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975). The Knight Errant leads us to understand that the soul is always walking, always crossing, erratic, erring. He is the mirror of the psyche, the wandering soul. Remember that the need (*ananké*) was called The Wandering Cause. Older notions regard the soul as a wandering Wanderer, always on the road, always wandering, following fantasy. As in the song: "I'm wrong, I'm wandering / always on the road, always far away / I'm wandering as long as time leaves me."³

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Now, to finish, the adverb *through*. In this reflection, we cannot escape it, it is unavoidable. Its lexicon reads: "by means of," "through", "through or intervention of". Everything to do with intersections, borders, transpositions. Here I must call James Hillman again, this great traverser of notions and mentalities, ideas and attitudes, because he teaches us a vigorous lesson about intersections, about crossings, exactly in his suggestion that it is the soul that, in addition to crossing US, crosses everything and everyone, wanting to see always deeper and deeper, in what appears, in this reflection, as the specific, basic and original, *seeing through*. When we understand that it is through the soul that events become experiences, it is understood that it is "the hungry eye of the psyche that desires to see through" (Hillman, 2010, p. 269) of everything and everyone that dissolves the hard shell of events to reach the soft core of the fantasies that sustain the events. In this movement, in this moving, also called *psychologize*, makes the soul deepens. "Seeing through" speaks to us of the ever-crossing soul.

And speaking of through, the psychology we do is through metaphors, we cross events through them in search of deepening and approximations, because metaphors are our "means of transport," and the very paths we cross in the soul. Metaphor: way forward and back. Back and forth. Ebb and flow. "Transference", reminds us Alfredo Bosi, is the "word that literally translates the Greek *metaphorà*" (Bosi, 2000, p. 303) - or that is, crossing, and why not? Metaphors cross us and make us cross. Seeing through is metaphorical. Metaphor is a condensed myth, as Vico taught, an abbreviated fable, and should be understood "less semantically as a figure of speech, and more ontologically as a way of being. (...) Metaphors are more than a way of

³ Paula Toller and George Israel's song "Nada sei" with the band Kid Abelha, released in 2002.

speaking; they are ways of perceiving, feeling and existing.” (Hillman, 2010, p. 303). Through them we travel.

I think that we psychoanalysts should always be lovers of words, which keep metaphors for us. Love for the soul means love for words, which present it, or rather, which pass through it. The love for words is naturally placed in an activity that, from the beginning, was defined as “healing by speech”, something at first very strange in the universe of care: healing by speaking? No medicine, no substances, no touch, no cut? That words have extraordinary strength and mysterious power has long been known to religions and mystical-spiritual traditions of various peoples, which will tell politics and law. For the word touches the body, touches the symptoms. The word makes body, makes symptom. This is what psychoanalysis realized or rediscovered for the field of care: the word heals the body, heals the symptoms. *The soul is a dark thing until it is said*. From silence to the word, there is a crossing that defines us as humans. We know that in the discourse something is already underway, it is already moving. Our *gira-mundi* it is a word spinner. To remember, in a single verse, everything my friend Neide Archanjo taught me about words, one of the most inspired poetic voices OUR country has ever had, I quote:

because being water on the outside

words are seas Inside.

(Archanjo, 1984, p. 36)

Linguists define an *etymology* as “the study of the origin of words.” We analysts understand it as the observation, in the word, of his unconscious. I left the etymology to the end, unlike what we usually do when we start with it. She is so often our pathfinder in the crossings and antics of language. Etymology helps to “open the metaphor”, since it is necessary to make it reverberate. No reverb, it is just a figure of speech. Intersect, *travers*, crossing, indent. “Traves-sia”: act of crossing, of moving from one point to another. The word “travessia” originates from Latin, from the radical *trans*, from “through, what crosses,” and *versus*, from “turn, make turn”. It is undoubtedly, though worn, a great metaphor. So, metaphors make us mobile. Metaphors cross us, make us turn perceptions, cross around *underneath*. They make us cross from one place to another, from one situation to another. They make our world go round; world go round. In this spin, understandings appear. So, we have our lives “crossers”, and we, mischievous, restless, in crossing. After all, we are all here... just passing through, aren't we?

Pedra Grande

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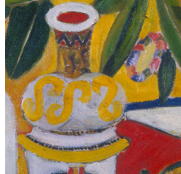
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JUNGIANS AND PSYCHEDELICS: a dialogue under construction

Iago Lôbo

Article



ABSTRACT

This article introduces the debate on psychedelics in Jungian literature, reviewing the main comments of C. G. Jung, Aniela Jaffé, and Marie-Louise von Franz on the subject, as well as the works of Ronald Sandison, Margot Cutner, Michael Fordham, and Betty Eisner, Jungians who used psychedelics in a therapeutic context between the 1950s and 1970s. Disagreeing with Jung's negative opinion of this model of psychotherapy, these Jungian pioneers found therapeutic use for psychedelics, emphasizing the work of integrating the unconscious materials accessed. Although Jung was against the clinical use of psychedelics, his theory and psychological concepts proved to be easily applicable in understanding the psychedelic experience, contributing to a broadening of the debates within the Psychedelic Renaissance. The text aims to be a theoretical and bibliographical reference to stimulate further clinical and theoretical work on the use of psychedelics based on Jungian psychology.

Keywords: Jung; Analytical Psychology; Psychedelic Renaissance; Psychedelic Therapy; Psycholytic Therapy

INTRODUCTION

Between the late 1990s and early 2000s, we observed a global movement to resume research involving clinical trials with psychedelic substances in humans. This movement has been called the Psychedelic Renaissance (SESSA, 2013), referring to the resumption of efforts initiated in the 1950s and 1960s, giving rise to the discipline that we now call Psychedelic Science. Psychedelic substances have been promoted, mainly by the mass media, as possible promises for global mental health crises, and in academic circles, as a hope for a new paradigm in the field of psychotherapies associated with psychoactive substances. However, it is still a field under construction, or perhaps, we could say, in dispute.

As a rule, Psychedelic Science is the knowledge produced within an academic and biomedical context, which does not always value the subjective and social factors of the psychedelic experience. Psychology has not been as prominent in this scenario, but, little by little, the category has been called upon to think about the different contexts of psychedelic use, which are increasingly appearing in clinical practices as clinical demands: either as a space for developing an experience with some psychedelic substance, or as a space for preparation and monitoring for these experiences.

Although Jung's reticent stance toward psychedelics seems to have influenced the Jungian field to this day, the invitation from the Jungian Association of Brazil to write this article and to participate in a panel on psychedelics, alongside Prof. Dartiu Xavier, at the XXVII Congress of the AJB (11-14/09/24), in Salvador, shows a change in perspective on these substances. In this text, based on a literature review, I will demonstrate the different positions adopted by Jungians on psychedelic substances and their therapeutic uses, proposing a rapprochement between the fields and suggesting themes for future work.

1. JUNG AND Mescaline

We could not begin this conversation from Jung's writings on the subject. Having died in 1961, it would have been difficult for Jung not to have heard about the experiments with psychedelics that were growing among European and North American intellectuals and writers at least since the 1920s. Psychedelics would become even more popular in scientific circles after the discovery of the psychoactive effects of LSD in 1943.

The only writings by Jung that directly mention psychedelics are found in five personal letters and two chapters of *Psychogenesis of Mental Illness*, between 1953 and 1959. Considering these texts, Jung had contact with research on psychedelics carried out during the period known as the First Psychedelic Era (SESSA, 2013), between the 1880s and 1930s, when the main psychoactive substances studied were opium, hashish, and mescaline. As we will see later in the text, although he read works on LSD, Jung seems to have consolidated his impressions about the psychotherapeutic uses of psychedelics from reading research and reports on mescaline (the active ingredient found in the peyote and wachuma cacti).

The psychotomimetic paradigm (a word derived from the term mimesis, imitation) predominated in this First Psychedelic Era, since the synthesis of mescaline in 1919 and the invention.¹ of LSD in

¹ We chose the word "invention" and not "discovery" to emphasize an active aspect of Hoffman's unconscious in the process of developing the LSD molecule, since there is a hypothesis that

1943. This paradigm proposed the use of these substances as tools for inducing psychotic states, to understand the phenomenological experience of madness, as well as to discover its possible causes. In the psychotomimetic paradigm, therefore, the clinical potential of psychedelics was not yet recognized or investigated (RODRIGUES, 2019, p. 17), which may also have influenced Jung's view.

Jung's first direct reference to psychedelics is in a 1953 letter written in response to parapsychologist Joseph Rhine [1895–1980] (JUNG, 2015a). In an earlier letter, Rhine, in addition to suggesting that Jung write down his recollections of experiences and observations of extrasensory phenomena, comments on the experiments of the British writer Aldous Huxley [1894–1963] and a group of scientists that included “[...] an Englishman and a Canadian psychiatrist using the alkaloid mescaline as a method of giving them access to unconscious operations.” Jung responds by saying that the researcher in Canada is Dr. Smythies, but he cannot see what contributions his work would make to the understanding of extrasensory phenomena.

In *The Doors of Perception*, where Huxley recounts his personal experiences with mescaline, the writer refers to the work of John Smythies [1920-2019], stating that “[...] at least one professional philosopher has taken mescaline to shed light on old unsolved enigmas, such as the place of mind in nature and the relationship between the brain and consciousness” (HUXLEY, 2022, p. 10). Immersed in the psychotomimetic paradigm, the psychiatrist began to argue that schizophrenia could be caused by the abnormal production of some endogenous substance similar to mescaline, such as catecholamine (SMYTHIES, 1953).

In another letter (JUNG, 2015c), Jung says that around 1925 he became acquainted with the work of Dr. Prinzhorn [1886-1933], a psychiatrist and art historian who conducted experiments with mescaline in Germany – almost 20 years after LSD was invented. From these accounts, we can conclude that Jung was introduced to psychedelics through contact with research on mescaline, of a psychotomimetic nature, which emphasized the symptoms and states induced by the psychedelic, mistakenly comparing them to pathological ones and ignoring its possible clinical uses.

raises an important intuitive component in this story: the chemist “father of LSD” believes that the hypothesis raised by chemist David Nichols is “entirely possible”: Hoffman had in fact “a spontaneous mystical experience, from a synchronistic connection, which would explain both the ‘peculiar premonition’ that persisted with the chemist [after abandoning the initial studies of the new molecule], and his decision to resynthesize the molecule, even against the opinion of his supervisors”. Nichols’ hypothesis is based on the well-known fact that “the chemist ‘had a predisposition to altered states of consciousness’, having even reported an experience of this type during his childhood”. The history of the creation of LSD and the hypothesis raised by Nichols is described by me and colleagues in the chapter “Sweet, bitter and tasteless: LSD, adulterants and management of adverse effects”, published in the book *Harm reduction in the context of parties* (LÓBO et al., 2021).

As early as 1954, Jung acknowledged that he did not know much about mescaline-type substances. Father Victor White [1902-1960] wrote to Jung saying that he had been invited to a mental hospital to provide support to the team regarding archetypal and religious materials experienced by patients under the influence of LSD. Jung questioned whether the drug that the priest called LSD was mescaline and confessed that he knew “very little” about the subject and what its psychotherapeutic value could be for neurotics or psychotics (JUNG, 2015b). Even though he knew that he was not very up-to-date on psychedelic research, Jung demonstrated how he viewed the experiments of the still recent psychedelic science negatively, stating that “[...] It is horrible that the alienists have found a new poison to play with, without the slightest knowledge or feeling of responsibility” (JUNG, 2015b, p. 173).

While he compares alienists to a surgeon who has never learned more than how to open a patient’s belly and leave things in the same place, Jung compares Huxley to the character in Goethe’s poem, who learns from the master how to summon ghosts, but does not know how to get rid of them (JUNG, 2015b, p. 173). Although we cannot deny the existence of serious bioethical and methodological errors in the first research with psychedelics (GEORGE et al., 2020), we agree with Jungian psychologist Fernando Beserra (2011, p. 48) when he says that Huxley “[...] cannot be accused of ‘lack of moral development’ corresponding to his ‘invention’, since his entire work seeks to respond to the society of his time, the political, moral, and philosophical questions that were then constellated”.

In the letter to White, Jung (2015c, p. 222) explains the reason for his “doubts and hesitations” regarding the use of psychedelics, understanding that, by providing contact with the unconscious, the psychedelic experience would necessarily demand work on the consciousness that he did not believe was possible.

I only know there is no point in wanting to know about the collective unconscious than what can be achieved through dreams and intuition. The more you know about it, the greater and heavier your moral burden becomes, because unconscious contents become personal tasks and duties as soon as they begin to become conscious (JUNG, 2015b, p. 172).

In a 1955 letter in response to LSD enthusiast Alfred Hubbard [1901-1982], Jung admits to never having taken psychedelics or given them to anyone; despite this, he understands that he has dedicated at least 40 years of study to “[...] the psychic sphere that is opened by this drug: that is, the sphere of numinous experiences” (JUNG, 2015c, p. 222). When comparing mescaline to active imagination and other analytical techniques, Jung believes that they achieve similar results: the “[...] complete realization of complexes, and numinous visions and dreams”. The difference with mescaline, however, would

be that it “[...] reveals such psychic facts at any time and space, when and where there is no certainty that the individual is mature enough to integrate them”, while in the analytical process, this encounter would occur “[...] in due time and space, in the course of treatment” (JUNG, 2015c, p. 222).

Mescaline abruptly removes the veil of the selective process and reveals the underlying layer of perceptual variations, apparently a world of infinite richness. Thus, the individual gains an insight and a complete vision of psychic possibilities that otherwise (e.g. through active imagination) he would only attain through assiduous work and relatively long and difficult training. But if he attains and experiences them [in this way], he has not only acquired them through legitimate effort but has also arrived at the same time at a mental position in which he can integrate the meaning of his experience. Mescaline is a shortcut and therefore produces a perhaps inspiring aesthetic impression, which remains an isolated and unintegrated experience, contributing very little to the development of the human personality (JUNG, 2015c, p. 223).

As early as 1957, in response to a letter from Betty Eisner [1915-2004], a Jungian pioneer in psychotherapy with psychedelics, Jung almost seems to recognize some benefit in the use of psychedelics, when he states that “[...] it is a fact that you obtain certain perceptions and experiences of things that appear both in mystical states and in the analysis of unconscious phenomena, just as primitives do in their orgiastic conditions or intoxications” (JUNG, 2015d). But, in the sequence, his concerns about the integration of experience once again appear.

In the chapters “Schizophrenia” and “New Considerations on Schizophrenia”, included in *Psychogenesis of Mental Disease*, Jung (2015f, 2015g) explains how he understands the psychodynamic functioning of psychedelics. For him, the psychedelic experience would be similar to the schizophrenic experience, as a “disintegration” or “fragmentation of apperception” resulting from an “*extremo abaissement du niveau mental*” (§569).

This drug and similar drugs, as is known, cause an *abaissement* that makes unconscious variations in perception perceptible, through the fall in the threshold of consciousness, enriching, on the one hand, perception in an astonishing way and, on the other, making integration into the general orientation of consciousness impossible (§569).

During this period, even as he continued his observations and comparisons between a “toxic disorder” (§570) and schizophrenia, Jung seems to have already begun to distance himself from the psychotomimetic paradigm – and also from the notion of an organic or toxic cause for psychosis. After recognizing that “[...] the discontinuous, abrupt, rigid and stagnant behavior of schizophrenic apperception differs from the fluid and mobile continuity of the symptoms produced

by mescaline”, he claims to have already abandoned “[...] the possibility [elaborated 50 years earlier] of the existence of a specific metabolic toxin”, going on to observe that “[...] the psychogenic cause of the disease is more likely than the toxic one” (§570). Coincidentally or not, in this same year of 1958, the results of an international study group organized by the World Health Organization were released, which reported being in favor of continuing research with psychedelics, and suggesting that the term psychotomimetic, “[...] until replaced by a happier one, should not be used”, given the significant differences in psychotic symptoms (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 1958).

A sixth exchange of correspondence deserves mention here, although Jung does not directly address psychedelics, due to its historical value: Jung’s (1961) letter to Bill Wilson [1895-1971], founder of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), became a reference in Jungian circles for studies on chemical dependency (especially alcoholism). Jung stated that some alcoholics could recover “[...] through spiritual experiences, better known as religious conversions” (LATTIN, 2012, p. 61), summarizing the idea in the maxim *spiritus contra spiritum*: “The same word is used for both religious experience and the most depraved poison” (JUNG, 1961, p. 625). For Jung, alcoholism would be an inferior deviation on the path of seeking spiritual connection.

Jung died, however, before receiving Wilson’s reply letter, in which he reported having had a mystical experience in a hospital room that had contributed to his treatment for alcoholism. Wilson, more than 20 years later, relived this experience by taking LSD with psychiatrist Humphry Osmond [1917-2004] and began to advocate the use of LSD as a preparation for alcoholics who had difficulty understanding the spiritual aspect of the 12 steps of the AA program (LATTIN, 2020; MCDONNEL et al., 2024).

2. JUNGIAN AND PSYCHEDELICS

As we have seen, Jung seems to have adopted a conservative, or cautious, stance regarding the use of psychedelics. Although he agreed that “[...] the lowering of consciousness provided by the drug [mescaline] offers no resistance to the unconscious” (JUNG, 2015e, p. 300), he understood that this contact with the unconscious could not be beneficial to the individual or the culture without equivalent work on the consciousness. For him, contacts with the unconscious provided spontaneously (through dreams, synchronicities, symbols, etc.) would be sufficient, to be elaborated in the analytical work. Important disciples, such as Marie-Louise von Franz and Aniela Jaffé, followed him in this way of understanding the phenomenon of drugs, reinforcing a prohibitionist perspective within Jungian theory.

Jaffé [1903-1991], a close disciple of Jung and editor of *Memoirs, Dreams, and Reflections*, wrote in 1971 about mescaline in a short passage from her book *The Myth of Meaning in the Work of Carl G. Jung* (JAFFÉ, 2021). In the text, Jung was her main reference for developing the theme he writes about, postulating what the position adopted by the master would be:

Jung showed great interest in the mescaline experiments. He saw in them the confirmation of his research on the manifestations of the unconscious and its numinosity. He repudiated the use of drugs in psychotherapy or as a means for spiritual experience and a “religious reharmonization” of man, which could not be otherwise, given his respect for nature and its rhythms and laws. An artificially induced experience is not, in general, following the development and maturity of the personality. This discrepancy poses a danger because any content that emerges from the unconscious to consciousness implies a spiritual or moral duty, which, if not fulfilled, will lead to misunderstandings, complications, suffering and illness (JAFFÉ, 2021, p. 62).

For the author, the growing interest in the use of psychedelic substances could be explained as an unconscious movement of compensation in the face of the overwhelming action of external reality and the excessive rationality of our culture. Although she considered that the psychedelic experience “is no different from a psychosis”, Jaffé (2021, p. 60) was able to perceive that “[...] as in the fantasies of the waking state, the ego’s function of perceiving, experiencing and discerning is preserved”, as well as that specific contexts, such as use within a religious tradition, “[...] offer protection against the irruption of the unconscious caused by the toxic substance” (JAFFÉ, 2021, p. 62). Brazilian research carried out within the scope of the Psychedelic Renaissance, under the guidance of Professor Dartiu Xavier, with adolescent members of the ayahuasca religion, reinforces this observation by demonstrating that the volunteers presented physical and mental health conditions similar to those of the control group, in addition to a lower prevalence of psychiatric symptoms (SILVEIRA et al., 2005); Although objective evidence is lacking, researchers have considered that religious affiliation and group and family support may be protective factors for psychopathologies and problematic use of psychoactive substances (SILVEIRA et al., 2005; GROB, 1999).

In the citations, we can see that Jaffé bases his thinking on psychedelics almost exclusively on Jung’s writings contained in the work *Psychogenesis of Mental Disease* (cited above), and in the classic letter to Father Victor White. Von Franz [1915-1998], in turn, also elaborates on the dreams of “drugged” patients, showing that he may have had more direct clinical contact with psychedelic users than Jaffé or Jung. In her text *Drugs in the View of C. G. Jung*, she reaffirms that the Swiss “[...] was deeply disturbed by our current tendency to explore these discoveries out of mere curiosity, without recognizing

the growing moral responsibility to which we expose ourselves" (VON FRANZ, 1999, p. 323).

We notice a mistake, or a bias, in Von Franz's analysis already in her premises, when she speaks of "drugs" and "drug addicts" in a generic way, without recognizing the pharmacological specificities of each substance and their contexts of use: for her, drugs with effects and classifications as distinct from each other as hashish, LSD and heroin, would have the same basic effect, which is, "[...] a decline in perception, that is, the decomposition of the conscious synthesis and perception of *gestalts*" (VON FRANZ, 1999, p. 323-324). What is interesting, however, in Von Franz's work, is that the analysis of the dreams of psychedelic users seems to show that the use of these substances seems to have facilitated the conscious understanding of the unconscious motives and symbols constellated in dreams.

In one case, the analyst reports that "[...] a young woman, highly gifted artistically, but who had been extremely restricted psychically" (VON FRANZ, 1999, p. 327), took LSD and then "[...] dreamed that she had had a lovely 'trip' but now had to take a different approach", and then entered analysis. In another case, a regular LSD user, who had always had positive experiences, after entering the analysis experienced a "bad trip" when he took the substance again. In both cases, she seems to point to analysis as the most legitimate route to access the unconscious: "It is evident that now that he knew a better way to the unconscious, the trips resulting from drug use had become in a way illegitimate, and the unconscious beneficially frightened him" (VON FRANZ, 1999, p. 326).

For Jungian Fernando Beserra, co-founder of the Brazilian Psychedelic Association, "[...] Unfortunately, Von Franz, an eminent Jungian researcher, falls into a terrible ethnocentrism and a lack of sociocultural, psychological and chemical relativization in her commentary" (BESERRA, 2014, p. 228). According to Beserra, "[...] Franz is clear [...] about the radical difference between users, their uses and their choices of substances used, as well as the difference in the reaction of the unconscious and the 'transpersonal' psyche"; despite this, according to him, she ends the chapter with a "reactionary and illogical perspective":

Humanity has often advanced towards new achievements by passing through mistakes. It seems to me quite understandable, and more than forgivable, that many people of the younger generation are unable to bear the intellectual emptiness and dehumanization of our technological unculture and resort to drugs. But then, for each individual, the time comes when he must decide whether he wants to immerse forever in this inexpressiveness or to pass through it, as through a gate, and advance towards the great work of objective self-knowledge (VON FRANZ, 1999, p. 330).

Reactionary perspectives that equate drug users with sick people or drug addicts are not uncommon in the Jungian debate on the use of psychoactive substances, as can be seen in the work of Luigi Zoja [1943-], one of the main Jungian references on the subject. Zoja (1992) argues that the Western world has moved away from initiation rituals, but, as an archetypal need, it would tend to return negatively. For him, drug use would be an expression of an unconscious need for initiation, and one of the ways that young Westerners find to initiate into a complete and adult identity would be through drug use. The author even replaces the term “drug addiction” with “drug initiation” (BESERRA, 2014, p. 230), which would assume a negative, destructive, and unconscious quality, guaranteeing the loss of the previous condition, but without contributing to the emergence of a new consciousness, and having its realization in symbolic or factual death (ZOJA, 1992, p. 58).

I hypothesize that every attempt at initiation, when it is not sufficiently conscious, nor protected by rituals, nor inserted in a coherent cultural complex, mobilizes the archetypal model, especially the process of death, either because it is the first and simplest, or because, unlike regeneration, it is easily achievable in a literal way, as organic death; and the need, frustrated in its symbolic expression, tends to become literalized (ZOJA, 1992, p. 58).

Although it brings up a significant debate, Zoja also seems to make some exaggerations in the pejorative and moralizing tone when he analyzes the use of psychoactive substances. For the author, pathological use would begin when the consumption of the substance moves away from its archetypal function, which would include, for example, all types of recreational use, including legalized substances such as alcohol or tobacco. For Jungians Fernando Beserra and Andrew Soares, this statement is exaggerated, since most recreational drug users do not develop an abusive relationship or even health problems related to use (BESERRA, 2014, p. 232); in addition, the emphasis given by the author to the importance of ritualizing the use of substances as a form of psychic containment of the experience “[...] can contribute to the stigmatization of the use of psychedelics for recreational purposes” (SOARES et al., 2022).

Other Jungians have written about drug use, and specifically about psychedelic drugs, without starting from a position of reticence and caution, perhaps precisely because they theorized based on their clinical practice with patients and users. During the same period in which Jung, Jaffé, and Von Franz were writing the works in which they address psychedelics presented above, other Jungians were also elaborating on the subject, but based on the psychedelic science of that time, based on their participation in research mainly with LSD, and supported by Jungian theory. We will address some of these works and their important contributions in the following section.

3. JUNGIAN PSYCHEDELIC PIONEERS

As stated earlier, Jung appears to have had contact with psychedelics during the period Ben Sessa (2013) calls the First Psychedelic Era. This era is characterized by research into mescaline (the first psychedelic to be isolated and synthesized in a laboratory) and a psychotomimetic paradigm that did not prioritize the investigation of its therapeutic properties. This is evident in the references Jung mentions, namely Aldous Huxley's (2022) accounts of his visionary experiences with mescaline, and the research of psychiatrists John Smythies and Hans Prinzhorn, who administered mescaline to patients admitted to the hospitals where they worked.

Jungians Marie-Louise von Franz and Aniella Jaffé wrote about the subject in the 1970s, during the so-called Second Psychedelic Era (SESSA, 2013), which we can also understand as the period of birth of Psychedelic Science, marked by research with LSD and psilocybin, the overlap of the psychotomimetic paradigm with the psychedelic and psycholytic paradigms (which began to investigate different psychotherapeutic applications) and the beginning of the social uses of psychedelics. These important advances in psychedelic science provided information and contacts to the two authors, which were not accessed by Jung: Von Franz analyzes dreams of social users of LSD and Jaffé even cites the work of the important and controversial psychedelic pioneer Timothy Leary. This contact was not enough, however, to produce analyses that were less chemically mistaken and morally stigmatizing.

In this section, we will discuss the contributions made by Jungians who worked within the psychedelic scientific production, mainly related to LSD, and are recognized in the psychedelic field as pioneers in the area. Although not as close to Jung, some even had contact with him via letters, questioning him about his views on these substances. In contrast to Jung's "frank and critical opinion" (JUNG, 2015c, p. 224), they constructed their analyses of psychedelic experiences based on their clinical experiences, but without distancing from Jungian theory, contributing with detailed descriptions of clinical cases, Jungian analyses, recommendations for psychotherapists who work with LSD, and reflections on the transference relationship. Among the Jungian psychedelic pioneers, we will highlight here the work of Ronald Sandison, Michael Fordham, Margot Cutner, and Betty Eisner.

Ronald Sandison [1916-2010] was chief psychiatrist at Powick Hospital in England when he first came into contact with psychedelics (HILL, 2013, p. 24), and became known for developing the psycholytic model (derived from the Greek term *lutikos* for lysis, breaking), which consisted of using low doses of psychedelics to break down the patient's ego defenses and facilitate analysis – but not replace it. The term psycholytic was used to refer to both the low-dose therapeutic

model and the drugs, before the term “psychedelic²” gained popularity among scientists and users. Although Sandison is recognized as the coiner of the term “psycholytic” (BISBEE et al., 2018; HILL, 2013, p. 25; BESERRA, 2022, p. 64), Eisner claims that it was actually coined in 1961, at a meeting of the now-defunct Royal-Medico Psychological Association of London, at Sandison’s home, by her colleague Hanscarl Leuner [1919-1996] (EISNER, 1997, p. 213-214). According to Eisner, the psycholytic model was developed simultaneously and independently by her and Sandison (EISNER, 1997, p. 213-214).

Still in 1954, Sandison (1954, p. 508) made one of the first phenomenological descriptions of the psychedelic experience based on Jungian principles, mapping three main presentations: 1) non-specific generic images; 2) the recollection and reliving of forgotten memories and experiences from childhood; and 3) the experience of archetypal and impersonal images. The latter would have, for the author, “[...] a similar nature to those experiences of contact with the collective unconscious that patients have through the analysis of dreams, images and fantasies” (SANDISON, 1954, p. 508), and would be the most important, since the archetypal experience would provide symbols of healing (SANDISON, 1963, p. 34).

The immediate result of LSD administration is to produce a deepening of the patient’s emotional tone, a change in thinking, sometimes a regression to an earlier emotional and intellectual period, and the revivification of emotionally charged memories. There may be a release of deeper unconscious material, resulting in impersonal experiences manifested by dreamlike impressions, illusions, and hallucinations (SANDISON, 1963, p. 33).

For Sandison (1954, p. 508), any of these experiences could occur independently of a psychotherapeutic context and could be beneficial to the user by providing contact with repressed aspects of their emotional lives. In a clinical context, according to the author, the success of the treatment of obsessive neurosis disorders, character disorders, and psychopaths would be certain (SANDISON, 1963, p. 33). For him

In many cases, the rigid conscious barriers and resistances the patient offers are too great to overcome. LSD gives such people some real, tangible experience of their unconscious and rekindles their faith in their spirit at a comparatively early stage of the treatment, helping them proceed more rapidly (SANDISON, 1954, p. 509).

² Psychologist Humphry Osmond coined the term *psychedeli* in an exchange of letters with Aldous Huxley in 1957 (BISBEE et al., 2018). The term is derived from the Greek words *psyche* and *dcDios*, commonly translated as “manifesters of the mind,” but here I propose a more Jungian understanding: “manifesters of the soul.”

Sandison (1954, p. 512-513) even compared the effects of LSD and active imagination, stating that the therapist “[...] must bring the patient to the point where he can actively influence the images produced by LSD so that he can consciously explore his mind and learn something of the great wisdom of the unconscious”. This comparison was criticized by the British Jungian analyst Michael Fordham [1905-1963], who believed that psychedelics would decrease the capacity for conscious engagement in the analytical process, drawing attention to the passive aspect of the experience caused “[...] by involuntary biochemical means” by LSD (HILL, 2013, p. 25).

[...] the similarity is superficial and the differences considerable. [...] in active imagination the archetypes in the unconscious are given form by the deliberate activity of the patient. This is why the imagination described by Jung is called active, in contrast to other types of imagination in which passive, often defensive, participation is more characteristic. The activity in LSD fantasy is different from that found in active imagination and resembles the second passive type of imagination which I have proposed should be grouped under the term “imaginative activity” (FORDHAM, 1963, p. 125).

In the text in which he makes this argument, Fordham also criticizes Jungian analyst Margot Cutner [1905-1987], who agreed with Sandison regarding the comparison of the effects of LSD with those of active imagination (CUTNER, 1959, p. 716). While Cutner emphasized the psychotherapeutic importance of the emergence of the unconscious, Fordham drew attention to the defensive aspect that the conscious can assume in the face of unconscious images, defending integration as an essential point of the analytical process: “[...] it is fallacious to assume that making patients conscious of unconscious fantasies, repressed memories, etc., is necessarily therapeutic. Therapy depends more on the integration of previously unconscious products into the ego” (FORDHAM, 1963, p. 125).

In his conclusions, Fordham (1963, p. 130) states that “[...] To think that the hallucinatory process can complement the results of analysis results from confusion because the ego is not mobilized, but divided and the relationship of the ego to the image is essentially different from that of active imagination”. Agreeing with Jung on the importance of integrating the psychedelic experience, he disagrees with him on the impossibility of this stage: “[...] The case material presented shows that he exaggerates when he uses the word ‘impossible’, because case two [...] integrated some of the experiences, giving them a meaning” (FORDHAM, 1963, p. 129).

Cutner, born Kuttner in Germany, a Jungian with experience in body therapies, joined Sandison’s department at Powick Hospital in 1955, when she began participating in the LSD research conducted there (DUBUS, 2020). In 1959, in the article “Analytical work with LSD 25” (CUTNER, 1959, p. 721), she presents her therapeutic method,

developed over three years of work with LSD with Powick patients. Cutner proposes that psychedelics could mobilize a compensatory, or complementary, movement in consciousness, through the activation of lower functions, or by the reversal of attitudes of introversion and extroversion.

[...] the material emerging from LSD, far from being chaotic, reveals, on the contrary, a definite relation to the psychological needs of the patient at the time he takes the drug. If we believe, with Jung, that the activities of the unconscious are, to a large extent, complementary to those of consciousness, it is not surprising to find that the unconscious activity observed under the influence of the drug reveals its compensatory character – in a way similar to dreams, visions (including active imagination) and other manifestations of the unconscious in general (CUTNER, 1959, p. 720).

Based on this premise, she explains the mystical experiences provided by psychedelics as a momentary realization of the archetype of the Self: “[...] a successful completion, through the momentary joint working of all four functions, is achieved, to result in a momentary experience of wholeness” (CUTNER, 1959, p. 721). In addition to mystical experiences, she highlights four others in which it is also possible to observe action of unconscious compensation: 1) sudden activation of one or more inferior functions and inversion of attitudes (introversion-extroversion); 2) emergence of repressed material from the personal unconscious; 3) changes in body image (with emphasis on parts of the body neglected by the patient’s consciousness); and 4) activation of healing symbolisms, also experienced in the transference relationship.

Cutner comments that the characteristic that most concerns LSD researchers is its “unpredictability” (p. 716), agreeing that (except for some basic patterns) a person will have the same experience twice, nor will two people have the same experience under the influence of LSD. The author confidently states that these expressions may seem arbitrary to anyone, except to an analyst: for Cutner, the explanation for this supposed unpredictability would be in the teleological factor of the nature of the psyche, pointed out by Jung.

[...] the phenomena observable under the effect of LSD seem to confirm, even more clearly than those observed in the general analysis, Jung’s idea of the psyche as a self-regulating system in which unconscious activities function as compensatory factors in the service of a striving for wholeness. The teleological factor introduced by Jung into the conception of the unconscious seems to become even more obvious when one has the opportunity to observe reactions to LSD in a fairly large number of patients over several years. Looking at the material obtained in this way, it seems that something like an autonomous selective process is at work, determining the sequence of the emerging material purposefully - as if everything that emerges were exactly what is “needed” for

a given patient at a given moment, as a factor that complements the conscious personality (CUTNER, 1959, p. 720).

Cutner's interpretation of the teleological functioning of the unconscious during psychedelic experiences is similar to the idea of the inner healer, widely disseminated in the psychedelic field of psychedelic therapies, as well as a theme present in various mythologies. This factor, or agent, would be the protagonist in the states of consciousness called by the Czech psychiatrist Stanislav Grof [1931-] holotropic ("oriented towards the whole", in his translation) (GROF, 2015, p. 25): a subgroup of non-ordinary states of consciousness

[...] that has heuristic, healing, transformative, and even revolutionary potential. This includes the experiences of shamans and their clients, of initiates in native rites of passage or ancient mysteries of death and rebirth, of spiritual healers and mystics of all ages, and of individuals in psychospiritual crises ("spiritual emergencies") (GROF, 2015, p. 25).

Grof is one of the founders of Transpersonal Psychology, named the "godfather of LSD" by Albert Hoffman [1906-2008] (the "father of LSD"), for his contributions to the understanding of the clinical applications of LSD, having conducted more than 4,000 psychotherapeutic sessions with LSD in his career, before the prohibition of the substance (GROF, 2008b). The legacy of his work is visible today, for example, in the dissemination of the theme of the inner healer, both in underground circles and in clinical trials with psychedelics (PEILL et al., 2024). The article by Joseph Peill and team (2024) points out that, in the MDMA-assisted psychotherapy model developed and used by MAPS (Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies), the postures recommended to therapists and the instructions given to patients to "listen" or "let go" of the inner healer during psychedelic sessions (MITHOEFER et al., 2008), for example, are inspired by Grof's holotropic works. Thus, teleological philosophies, such as those assumed by Jung in the unconscious (Jung) and Cutner in the psychedelic experience, remain present in the psychedelic field – "[...] following Jung's idea of the psyche as a self-regulating system, 'striving' for 'wholeness'" (CUTNER, 1959, p. 756).

Another recognized pioneer in the psychedelic field is Jungian analyst Betty Eisner [1915-2004], whose theoretical contributions remain important today. In a 1997 article, Eisner reported 22 years of practice with psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy; in the text, she recognizes a "[...] current revival of interest and research on psychedelics" (EISNER, 1997, p. 213) – a movement that would later be recognized as the Psychedelic Renaissance (SESSA, 2013). During her career, Eisner even accompanied the first LSD experience in psychotherapy by Bill Wilson, one of the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, in 1956, together with psychiatrist Sidney Cohen [1910-

1987] (POLLAN, 2018, p. 152) – she was also Cohen’s first guinea pig (DUBUS, 2020). She openly defended the importance of personal experience with psychedelics for anyone who wants to work with these substances (EISNER, 1963, p. 141) – a debate that is still alive and without absolute consensus in the psychedelic field (VILLIGER, 2024).

Eisner believed that the most important process in psychedelic therapy is to allow the patient’s unconscious to reveal in its sequence (EISNER, 1963, p. 143). To do this, it would be essential to consider the set and setting in which the treatment was taking place, in addition to the therapist’s suggestion that the patient symbolically “[...] move toward the problem” and “[...] allow the process to happen” (“allow it (whatever) happens”) (EISNER, 1997, p. 214). This voluntary and active stance of the patient would be fundamental, according to Eisner, for the success of the therapy:

LSD treatments are placed within the context of psychotherapy and are used as an aid to speed up the process of therapy. The criterion for choosing the patient seems to depend more on motivation and readiness than on the diagnostic category: it is far preferable to have a patient who knows that something is wrong, that it must change, and is willing to make an effort to do so, than to have any specific diagnostic category (EISNER, 1963, p. 142).

Although the notions of set and setting are present in the work of other authors who studied the use of psychoactive substances (OLIVENSTEIN, 1983; ZINBERG, 1984; HART, 2014), Timothy Leary is credited with introducing these terms into the psychedelic field in the 1960s (POLLAN, 2018, p. 190): set referred to the subject; setting, to the environment of the psychedelic session; and matrix “[...] is the environment from which the subject comes: the environment that surrounds the subject before and after the session, and the broader environment to which the subject returns” (EISNER, 1997, p. 214). For Eisner, the idea of matrix had not yet been considered in the psychedelic field, or elements of it were included as part of the set or setting.

Matrix means the environment from which the subject comes, such as the family and the living situation; the environment in which the subject lives during the sessions; and the environment to which the patient returns after successful therapy—the everyday space. A good matrix, like a good group or a good marriage, is a place where the best possible for individuals is served within the creative context of the larger relationship. [...] When a matrix functions properly, it also becomes a process: the environment becomes one in which individuals can change and mature, and as they grow, the matrix expands to contain further growth (EISNER, 1997, p. 215).

Eisner’s work has indeed attracted interest in the current Psychedelic Renaissance, particularly through his idea of the matrix and its applications in psychedelic therapies. Mateo Petrement has

studied the transition from psychedelia linked to countercultural values to supposed political neutrality, analyzing it as an effect of a neoliberal matrix, which has shifted the focus of social debate to the individual to combat the promise of psychedelics of “[...] a revolution of consciousness that could inform a more humane culture, free from hierarchical social divisions and the compulsion to work and consume” (PETREMENT, 2023, p. 10).

Tal Davidson (2017) demonstrated how Eisner, in an attempt to manipulate the matrix to favor therapeutic work, created a therapeutic community (EISNER, 1997, p. 215) composed of houses and apartments for her group of clients, allowing her to dictate different life situations for them and eliminate environmental aspects that would inhibit their growth (DAVIDSON, 2017, p. 109). After the death of one of these clients, however, other members of the community denounced Eisner for manipulative and extortionate attitudes, in addition to physical and sexual abuse, and she ended up losing her medical license (DAVIDSON, 2017, p. 24). Eisner (1963, p. 141) seems to have lost her way in the analysis of the transference relationship and exaggerated in her proposal to control psychedelic journeys through “[...] manipulation of the environment, dosage and conditions of the patient”.

Based on Davidson (2017) and Petrement (2023), the musician and psychologist, co-founder of the Brazilian Psychedelic Association, Sandro Rodrigues (2024, p. 13), defends incorporation of the concept within the psychedelic paradigm of set and setting, further expanding the recognition of the beyond-pharmacological effects of psychedelics and the power of the matrix in “[...] giving name and place to the web of the real that escapes control”.

Incorporating the matrix into the drug-set-setting paradigm is a methodological proposal to invert the priority and commitment of the psychedelic renaissance, recovering its revolutionary potential and the possibility of positive social transformations that serve not only a small and privileged portion of the population but that value the voices of different social actors and prioritize the universality of access to resources for promoting collective health, autonomy, and well-being (RODRIGUES, 2024, p. 20).

In addition to the Jungian pioneers who worked with psychedelics, other important actors in the psychedelic scene valued Jung's contributions in this context. Grof (2020, p. 125) only came into contact with Jung's work in 1967, when he immigrated to the USA, confirming his observations: while his insights into consciousness and its transpersonal domains came from his sessions with high doses of LSD, Jung's came from his spiritual crisis (which Grof calls “spiritual emergency”), which gave rise to the Red Book and his Depth Psychology. For Grof & Grof (1992, p. 12), “[...] modern depth psychology and consciousness research owe a great debt to the Swiss

psychiatrist”, having he “[...] demonstrated the objective nature of the historical and archetypal domains of the collective unconscious [...] years before psychedelic research and new experiential therapies accumulated evidence to confirm this” (GROF, 2008a, p. 49).

Timothy Leary [1920-1996], a pioneer of psychedelic research at Harvard and later called “the most dangerous man in America” by Richard Nixon (POLLAN, 2018, p. 58), also paid “homage” to Jung in 1964 in his classic *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead* (LEARY et al., 2022). Although he disagrees with Jung’s (1992) commentary on the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, Leary considers him one of the great psychologists of the 20th century, along with William James, another important pioneer in the study of consciousness-altering drugs. Commenting on the passage in which Jaffé (2021, p. 61-62) speaks of Leary, Beserra (2011) denies the fact that he was removed from the university for having become “addicted” and having been “legally held responsible for the sale of marijuana”, demonstrating once again his distance from the researcher’s work and contributions.

The work of these pioneers in the psychedelic field demonstrates the possible dialogue between Jungian theory and clinical practice and the use of psychedelic substances. Even though he had no direct experience with psychedelics, Jung was a pioneer in the work with archetypal images and their clinical management (FORDHAM, 1963, p. 129) – as he acknowledges:

Although I have never taken the drug nor given it to anyone else, I have devoted at least 40 years of my life to the study of the psychic sphere that is revealed by this drug; this is the sphere of numinous experiences (JUNG, 2015c).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Knowing that it is not possible to exhaust the entire debate surrounding the connection between Jungian psychology and psychedelic substances in a single article, the text sought to present a timeline of Jungian contributions to psychedelics in the last century, creating a bridge with contemporary concepts and debates to the current Psychedelic Renaissance, and introducing the Jungian field to psychedelics. As demonstrated, the theoretical foundations of C. G. Jung’s *Depth Psychology* prove to be easily applicable in understanding the psychedelic experience, through the accumulated clinical experience with symbols, images, and archetypes, and recognizes the healing aspect of the integration of the conscious-unconscious relationship and the teleological quality of the psyche.

The Psychedelic Renaissance has led to a gradual movement of Jungian analysts and psychologists toward psychedelics, identifying the contributions that analytical psychology can offer theoretically and clinically. Specific psychedelic Jungian literature is growing, with recent productions rescuing texts little discussed in Brazil (LÔBO, 2017) and discussing the confrontation with the shadow and the clinical management of difficult psychedelic experiences (HILL, 2013), the process of integrating the psychedelic experience (COHEN, 2017), the entheogenic and sacred uses of psychedelics (MELLO, 2015), harm reduction in psychedelic-induced crises (BESERRA, 2022) and the contributions of indigenous cosmologies and shamanic perspectives (SOARES et al., 2022; BOECHAT; MENEZES, 2023). I hope to contribute to the fertilization of Brazilian Jungian soil with psychedelic spores and feed the underground mycelial matrix for the flourishing of a critical and accessible psychedelic analytical psychology.

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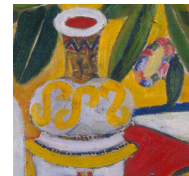
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Indigenous mythologies and Jungian psychology: the jaguar and the amplification of the myth of the Guarani twins

Ana Luisa Teixeira de Menezes

Article



Abstract

The myth of the Guarani twins is evidenced as part of indigenous mythologies as a knowledge that contributes to thinking about the Amerindian perspectivism in the Jungian clinic. Indigenous mythologies are constituted as ancestral narratives that have an educational, transcendent, and daily role. These stories are crossed by animals that place us in a perspectivist thinking, in which beings are considered human and, therefore, the relationship of communication and subjectivation is direct, as well as symbolic. From the narrative of the creation of Guarani life, we emphasize the death of the mother, the walk of the twins, the jaguar, the snake, the parrot, and the frog as characters that give a deep sense to the expansion of the myth as an experience of the walk of Nhamandú in and with Jungian psychology.

Keywords: indigenous mythologies, myth of the Guarani twins, Jungian clinic.

Introduction

Indigenous mythologies bring a contribution to Jungian psychology to think of myths as ancestral narratives that are updated in everyday life, are real, as an educational and imaginative process that goes in the direction of totality. Eliade (2000) tells us that when we lose the connection with the mystery of indigenous mythologies, they become legends, crystallized stories that lose their numinous meaning, in a split between reality and imagination.

Entering the myth of the Guarani twins or the creation story of Guarani life and becoming a character is a complex journey. According to the Guarani, it is necessary to take the walk that Nhamandú left us. The myth, Vherá Poty teaches, is not a story to be told, simply, with beginning, middle and end, but a field to be crossed in an intrapsychic movement, as something that is part of each of us, that needs to be preserved in its essentialities and lines. As an ability to speak from the unconscious or from nature through a language of its

own. The psychic understanding of the subjectivation process from an indigenous myth occurs in the dialogue of meanings that it, with its structure, possesses. There is an organizing resonance between psyche and myth. The psyche is a cosmos. And Indigenous myths offer us this learning, bringing closer the idea that the elements of nature have personalities.

The myth speaks of a state of being where bodies and names, souls and actions, the self and the other interpenetrate, immersed in the same pre-objective and pre-subjective. A means to an end, mythology proposes to tell. The myth of the twins does not speak of a differentiation of the human from the animal [...] The original condition common to humans is not animality, but humanity (CASTRO, 2002, p. 355).

The myth of the sun and the moon is a principle of Guarani existence and invites us to walk towards the spirit. When we enter into these principles, we connect with the soul of thought and organize ourselves by the potential of the encounter between the psyche and the cosmos, creation. Soul, for Hollis (1995, p. 39), is the “intentionality for a sense, for the totality of the organism”. The search for the sun provokes the existence of the moon and the dialogue with the jaguar, the serpent, the parrot, the hummingbird, and the Frog as processes of personification of the unconscious. As Jung presents us, the meaning of the mythologization of the psyche is to be able, from images of the soul, to carry out the unfolding of the significant images in the realization of personal myth and individuation (BOECHAT, 2009).

The myth of the Guarani twins: reviving the walk of Nhamandú

The myth of the Guarani twins was being amplified as the walk of Nhamandú¹. It opens perspectives for understanding a psychic walk, in which the sun is generating the moon, as well as Papa Tenondé, the first great Guarani deity is a little child that was generated from nothing. It is the end and the beginning of everything, as the existence of night and day, as the blink of an eye, as creation and imagination. Vherá Poty (2019). We can think like the psyche, as a producer of images, as creation and imagination, in which we can be born from ourselves.

Talking to Vherá Poty about the history of the Guarani principle of life, he warned me about one of the most fearful things for the Guarani, which is to turn into a jaguar and that this can be fatal.

¹ Nhamandú is a Guarani deity, the sun.

At the beginning there is the creation of the Nhanderú Tenondé. It is the principle, everything and nothing. It is neither masculine nor feminine. The life created by Nhamandú is the construction of Guarani life, of our customs. Turns the woman from a basket. It was designed to deceive the *xariã*. The Guarani story takes 15 days to tell. The woman leaves pregnant and follows the path. It is the creation of the Guarani walk. Kuaray wanted to go and his wife did not. *Xariã* go along. Presence of duality: good and evil. Nhamandú creates the earthworm to fertilize the Earth and the *xariã* create the snake. It was *xariã* that closed the belly of the mother. I used to be like a kangaroo. *Xariã* throws a challenge to the Kuaray and goes to give a moon time for the child to be born. This is a profound argument of the mother to be more than the son. When the mother is on the way, Kuaray asks for fruit, and she is stung by Wasps. Wasps are moments of despondency and complaints. And then the child ceases to guide the way. The woman finds the way of the jaguars. In the beginning it was people. With carelessness they were transformed. They are the owners of the forest (*Kaguypo*), dominators of the forest. Our life is *tekoachy*, it is an imperfect life, built from the person. Everyone has the right and left side. For one, the right can be the left and vice versa. The *agã* it is the past, present and future. It is responsible for the dream. Can go ahead and come back. Your *agã* has been there (VHERÁ POTY, interview, 2015).

According to Vherá Poty, the woman walks because the child wishes to meet. And at the moment when the child ceases to lead the way, the woman is lost and dies. And the children are taken care of by the jaguar.

The part of the jaguars, for example, we speak jaguar, but it is the mother of the jaguars, who in this life of theirs was not jaguar, was a person, only that she is the protector of the jaguars, not that she is an animal, because animals are not animals, they are the first people, hence that image that has a person's body, but has a jaguar head, but not normal people. We are the representation of our deities. Then he created his brother, but the moon it is generated by your brother, because if it were, for example, you would be like twins. Hence, I would not know how to say much more, as it is generated by the will of his brother, this becomes a much weaker light, because he only has strong light when his brother is together, otherwise he cannot illuminate as much as his brother, so at night he comes, but does not lighten, because night and day, if the sun were not here now, that is, if he had not come it would be night, there is no day and night here, there is the moon and the sun, here there is no day and night. It is darkness, life with brightness, the sun is the day (VHERÁ POTY, interview, 2015).

In Amerindian thought, deities are close to animals. The animal symbolizes worlds invisible to humans. The presence of the jaguar is also the alert to the danger. Not that the jaguar is an evil in itself, but it can be, if the ways and rules of ethics are not taken care of.

There is something today that in the visions in Guarani life it is unknown by society. They are misconceptions of forest beings, water beings, air beings, animals. They all have a very strong ability, that jaguar that did not fall into the water, when the bridge fell, she was released and named a fierce being that

makes the woods dangerous and then *Nhanderu Mirim* he said that the one who escaped will be responsible for everything else that will make our forest dangerous. At the same time that it is the protector of the forests it will be a great threat to us, but that there is respect between humans and these beings. The one who fell was named to be the ferocious being who makes water dangerous. All animals have their importance within our universe, but this is not necessarily what we have to consider. The sacred image of our life is important. For many things, it is not a threat. So there has to be a certain balance between contact and closeness with these beings. That is why they are very wise. Because they have a domain, they are the very reading of the forest, they know and know like no one else the whole territory. They make an ambush. It is the simplest. He is listening in every thought. If you fight too much with the jaguar, it catches you but respects you. She also respects and has habits and brings a lot of examples: when we have new children that we have newborns, we have to control the desire to eat meat, we do not eat much, there is a certain time that we cannot even eat, in fact, when we have a young child and newborn we are very fragile, fathers and mothers, because we are controlled by the spirit. Therefore, all food has to be controlled (VHERÁ POTY, interview, 2015).

The encounter with the jaguar is thought of as an encounter with a world of unconscious, dark images, as an instinctual and spiritual force. How can we hear the voices of God and the devil? Jung (2007, p. 247) warns us about the process of unconsciousness that we live, a demonism that takes hold of us when we allow ourselves to be fixed by an idea of "human spirit considered harmless, ingenious, inventive and sensible that does not have the awareness of the demonism inherent in it". This is what Boechat (2014) says: that the voices of the unconscious speak to us, being necessary not to stay in literalization. They are emerging images that produce a journey to the Mandalorian Center. The jaguar is the vital force that the ego needs to integrate.

Looking at the jaguar means an approach to facing difficulties, to an encounter with courage. For Jung (2007), this does not have to do with the intellect but with existence itself, with expanded thinking, at various levels of connection. In an interview with Karai José Verá, in Campo Molhado, he states that:

A jaguar walks far, does not tire. Has a good idea, good thoughts, study. She knows with her hand, feels with her hand, not in her head. The jaguar takes care of the road. When she walks, goes across the road, hears a trail of people, went there and went here, she knows with her hand. She knows the son of the one who passed by, if he is the son of *Toupee*, of *Karai* [... He knows whether man is brave or meek. If the person is meek and does not fight with anyone, he follows, but if he is brave, he advances only to frighten. The jaguar protects the way (MENEZES, 2006, p.139)..

The paths of Jungian clinical practice, in the understanding of Boechat (2014), strongly bring the valorization of unconscious processes experienced in images. They are like symbols that bring

creative outlets to our impasses, they value the creative dimension as a space for elaboration and overcoming the sufferings of each one. Hillman (2010, P.95) states that there are subjective subjects, internal characters who are “fictionalizing, actively imagining, not me. The action is in the plot, inaccessible to introspection, and only the characters know what is happening. As Philemon taught Jung: You are not the author of the play of the psyche.” The image, for Jung (2012), is absolutely real. It is where the experience of the world takes place, inside each one and in the way each person subjectivizes himself.

It is proper to the spiritual being first a spontaneous principle of movement and Action; second the capacity for free creation of images, regardless of perceptions by the senses; and third the autonomous and sovereign manipulation of images (JUNG, 2007, p. 210).

This force is necessary for the confrontation of complexes, which, Jung teaches (2012, p. 49, § 210), need a decision to be overcome, since “complexes constitute the true living units of the unconscious psyche, whose existence and Constitution we can only deduce through them”. Although they are dimensions that we often want to avoid, it is precisely from them that we produce our learning, in contact with the fragments of the soul.

Jung (OC, vol. VIII/2 § 209) compares the dimension of the complex with a soul perspective of some Indigenous peoples as “an image endowed with powerful inner coherence, which has its own tonality and enjoys a relatively high degree of autonomy”. That is, we can have a level of consciousness, but we have no power to control or end, however we can learn to cope as a “foreign body, animated with life of its own.”

The walk of the Guarani child begins in the walk of his mother, which I relate to the symbology of the child in the processes of individuation (JUNG, 2007). From the miraculous birth to the insignificance of the child, from being exposed to something, this reveals, according to the author, movements of the genesis of the self, the path of self-realization in which the environment is showing the dangers. In the case of the Guarani, from the animals, or the jaguars and the child's ability to survive and overcome these inclement weather that announce the possibility of being swallowed by the instinctual soul.

We can think of the process of humanization of the force that dominates the human as a psychic dimension in which we face the jaguar, internalizing the mechanisms of external projection. Instead of seeing the jaguar outside of us, we swallow it to begin the processes of humanizing the jaguar. To devour the jaguar, in this perspective, is to allow oneself to become undifferentiated in the face of chaos, to enter into darkness as in an encounter with a mass of clay or earth

to assimilate and integrate this force into each of us. This conception of Amerindian perspectivism will be developed throughout the work.

In the child's walk, the mother is devoured by the jaguars and Nhamandú survives in overcoming their obstacles. The mother was swallowed, the child survived and was cared for by the jaguar, which expresses well the sense brought by Jung:

Nothing in the world welcomes this new birth, but nevertheless it is the most precious and pregnant fruit of the future of original nature itself; it signifies ultimately a more advanced stage of self-realization. That is why nature, the very world of instincts, takes care of the "child": the latter is fed or protected by animals (JUNG, 2007, p.169).

To Vherá Poty,

No matter how weak the child may seem, he is fully accessible in terms of communication with any being. The child is portal. It is communicable with the animal and with the divine. In the case of Nhamandú, it is different since he is the son of Nhamandú Ereté. He was generated for the purpose of making the first path, which the next humans would follow. He is the one who builds the way of the people *mbya*. Path made of the sun. They were not born together. It is generated by him after his birth. What he thought became real. It is the creator. It is what shines. The one who shone in his time was his father. Nhamandú Tenondé stepped on the earth as a protection and used the *popyngué* and he put into the Earth and Created Woman, all that he desired. We all have a purpose. Knowledge that goes beyond a thought, is a miniature of the deities. All this is an imagination, what is done on Earth is what is done among the deities. Nhanderú Tenondé is Papa'i. It is not ambitious. The picture is disastrous. What it looks like is not what it is. The desire of the greater deity was to create something that acts opposite of him. Indigenous Peoples, more similar to earth colors, because they belong to the center of their own creation, the heart of the flower, from where everything arises, humanity, feeling, and that the Guarani belong to the Earth (VHERÁ POTY, 2019).

Nhamandú, son of the sun, begot the moon *Jaxy*, because he felt alone and generated him as a being opposite to him. This factor helps us think about how much we need the opposition to go on our way. The path of Nhamandú is conceived from the ingestion of the mother by the jaguar. The Divine Child is born with the death of Mother Nhandesy and it is around her that the ancestral narrative takes place. The jaguar and the divine child approach, still unconsciously. It is in the walk that the Guarani sacramentalizes his word, stands, rests on the ground. Comparing the verticality of the child and its naming, Chamorro (2008, p. 256) defines as a long prayer divided into several *Jasuka*. The first *Jasuka* it narrates the emergence of heaven and Earth, then the birth, the naming ceremonies, the instruments of rituals, such as the *takuapu* used by women, the birth of corn, of the indigenous, until arriving at the walk of the twins, which is compared

to the path of the hero, the human and the mother who walks her walk with suffering.

For Jerome, professor of Guarani, the history of Guarani is narrated in the walk, "it is in the trajectory that tells the story and the forest lives again". The Guarani need to move from their village so that the land is reborn more fertile. The centrality is not the human, not the person, but the universe in which the Guarani lives as a rite of the myth of the twins. For Vherá Poty (2015), it is the beginning of Guarani life.

Dance is a portal, it is more than a movement. Dance is a person's walk, the orientation between good and evil, which puts you between positive and negative. Dance is orientation. And if you live in a unique spirituality: *Nhamandú, Tupã*, ceremony House. The names *Vherá* and *Pará* come from *Nhanderu Tupã*; *karaí* and *Jaxuka* come from *Nhanderu karaí Kuaray* and *Ará* come from *Nhanderú*; *Nhamandú* and *Jakaira* he is the creator of them all. *Karaí* it is the first to be created by *Jakaira (NhanderúPapáTenondé)*. Beginning and end, everything and nothing (VHERÁ POTY, 2016).

Thinking about the path of sun and moon, I highlight four spaces of connection in the psychic transfigurations: the encounter with the jaguar in the act of the mother being devoured, and in the learning of sun and moon, as a Divine Child, in dealing with the jaguar; the encounter with the bird that reveals the origin and then it makes flight possible; the frog that guards the fire and also burns itself; and the serpent that kills the sun and makes them learn to live new cycles of death and rebirth.

The jaguar as archetypal image of the numinous

In the mythological version (CLASTRES, 1990, p. 75), the Guarani twins did not know their mother. While their mother was walking looking for the real father of her children, *Nhanderú Mbaekuaa*, they found the grandmother of the jaguars², who tried to protect the pregnant mother: "I have many grandchildren! That is why I will hide them: perhaps you will not notice their tracks". And covered it with a large clay pot. But when the jaguar got inside, it smelled it, uncapped the pot and, with its fangs, ruptured the uterus where the children were and offered them to the grandmother. But grandma could not kill them. The hot water cooled and the fire went out. Therefore, the mother did not know her children and in this way the future sun and moon emerged. What we call *emboi*, according to:

² Sometimes, in this work, I will refer to the jaguar, which is a term used by the American people to designate jaguar.

It was so that things in their totality began, as, for example, obscurity, the presence of which we see well. Now we no longer suffer because we have the light of fire. When it is night and we no longer see things, we go to sleep: "let's lie down and sleep!" and we invoke our Father-the sun-to see if, when we sleep, he takes care of our sleep. It is for us the only way to wake up well. Otherwise, we would wake up a little sick and, in that case, we would use the remedies we know (CLASTRES, 1990, p. 76).

Darkness is represented by the unconscious, a dimension that we cannot see, and the light of fire, as the path of consciousness. The Guarani say that the sun had to create the moon to make its way. The image of the walk of *Nhamandú* it is archetypal, the path that can be walked by all of us, in every choice and confrontation that we need to make. If we let ourselves be swallowed by the jaguars, we park the course, we paralyze. This phenomenon can be experienced both in the therapeutic process and in our own movements, when we feel that we are relatives of jaguars. On the other hand, the approach with the jaguar is necessary, in an instinctive and spiritual being, as a mythical consciousness that integrates the human in its nature.

The sun discovered, through the parrot, that the jaguars were not their real grandparents and that they had fed on their real mother. Upon learning of this, sun and moon set a trap to arrest and kill everyone who had killed their mother. The moon dug a hole where they placed an ear of corn to attract the jaguars. The chief of the jaguars was the last to arrive, but the moon did not have enough strength to capture her and a pregnant female escaped. The female gave birth to a male and they procreated. The sun wanted to fight with the moon, but the latter stated that he did not have enough strength to throw her into the hole. And so, the jaguars were born, grew, and distributed themselves near the waters, the springs, to turn them into haunted places.

The jaguar wins the sun and the moon temporarily. For these, mainly *Nhamandú*, they also represent the archetype of the child, in its character of invincibility and the beginning and end. They represent the totality of the human being.

The child is all that is abandoned, exposed, and at the same time the divinely powerful, the insignificant and uncertain beginning and the triumphant end. The "eternal child" in man is an indescribable experience, an incongruity, a disadvantage and a divine prerogative, an imponderable that constitutes the ultimate value and devaluation of a personality (JUNG, 2007, p. 178-179).

The journey of sun and moon between the jaguars and the parrot may be referring a verticality of instinct to the significance of the origin itself. It is the recognition of the need for spirituality, of the cosmic forces that can guide existence. The two brothers asked Tupã to protect them and dictate to them the rules of life. They were

afraid that jaguars would kill them and asked for a land where they could live in peace.

To sleep on this land, you have to have a solid house, so that the jaguars do not eat them. For it is impossible to take revenge on the jaguars. Thus, in this version, sun and Moon have left the Earth and the sun watches over everything. The sun was generated from the word of Tupã, its root.

The fear of the wrath of God, referred to by Kusch (2000), is the fear of the jaguar, which represents the animal force and the forces of the unconscious, the waters and the forest, haunting places, something that, according to myth, cannot be destroyed. The jaguar represents this passage between birth, the rupture of the umbilical cord and the fear of death. It is the force of fear, of transformation, of consciousness; it can be symbolized as the darkness that provokes a new consciousness. To protect the strength of the jaguar, the twins turn to the divine forces, to the numinous. How to deal with a force that is greater than will and control? In search of overcoming consciousness, the fear of dying, meeting with the sun, with the orientation of life norms and thus being able to cross the lunar and gloomy nature. How to get along with the jaguar integrating its instinctual and spiritual strength?

These are aspects that speak of a change of consciousness; it is not an egoic plan, but a spiritual one. The jaguar symbolizes the instinctual force that guides the dynamic process, and, when integrated, becomes the spirit, the energy that drives the movement, whereas the "spirit is the dimension of the psyche that embodies the energy [...] so the spirit is the energy for us to go where desire takes us" (HOLLIS, 1995, p. 39).

We are crossed by dualities, sun and moon, night and day, visible and invisible, good and evil, light and shadow. This duality is presented by the mythology of the twins and the Guaraní life principle. Jung (2007), with support in mythology, opens a space for connection with systems of our unconscious, in communication with archetypes of the collective unconscious that enhance an immersion in our psychic subjects. It is a process of encounter of the objective psyche that, when personified, is subjectivized to a conscious dynamism.

There is a fine line between what presents itself as external reality and the imaginative internalization that produces other levels of reality. When the jaguar discovered the pot where the mother was and devoured it also seeking to devour Nhamandú,

the womb where the children were, to offer them to the grandmother... he put the children with the umbilical cord in the hot water and it cooled. The two children were lucky, for our own good fortune and for our fate. Then he threw

them into the fire and the fire went out. He then thought of keeping them as domestic animals (CLASTRES, 1990, p. 75).

For the Guarani, it is not a matter of luck, but of respect for the deity that is Nhamandú, considering that, according to Vherá Poty (2019), Nhamandú means awakening and feeling, a process of awakening.

When sun and moon discovered their nature and history, from the parrot, they wanted to destroy all the jaguars, but they could not. Psychically thinking, this is a message of how much a process of signification of the unconscious, dark world is necessary, how much it is impossible to kill the shadow, to kill the jaguar, because they procreate and are the source of life. For Jung (2014), the process of integrating the shadow is the task of individuation, of the ethical encounter with what was split in the totality of each one.

The clashes between sun and moon with the jaguar are part of a

consciousness of an original undifferentiation, almost an identity between good and evil, an incomprehensible unity of the two [...] It is completely impossible for us to imagine a creator of the world who is not a pair of opposites. He has to be oppositional, otherwise he would have no energy. There would be no creation of light from darkness [...] So it is. But when the two things are separated, the issue becomes complicated" (JUNG, 2014, p. 28).

The levels of this consciousness are becoming more complex in the walk of Nhamandú, first between sun and moon, in a level of energy production for the path; then, in a new consciousness of duality that involves deeper levels such as death and life.

And what protective, outgoing element does the myth offer for children? One of the ways is the discovery of fire. "The elder brother created the frog, destined to swallow fire." And the frog, keeping the fire in his mouth, vomited and lit the fire (CLASTRES, 1990, p. 89). In the version described by Vherá Poty (2019), the frog burned itself with fire. The discovery of fire, in the history of humanity, is represented as the condition for the awakening of consciousness as an encounter with devices that allow us to deal with the most original life and imaginal cultivation, the cold, the cooking of food, The Making of instruments, alchemy, the transformation of raw into cooked. It is also the flame that keeps the imagination alive, the creation, which gives consistency to the vase, which unites the elements in the making of products, of ceramics. It is what feeds the sense of the soul.

Regarding cooking, Barcellos (2017) relates fire and heat constancy to the condition of imaginal assimilation. Fire also produces the condition of alterations of materialities, as in a change of understanding of a thought-matter. A significant duality that the jaguar offers us, as an Amerindian image, is the instinctual force that seeks the divine

manifestation, from the body, the embodiment of energy. When the jaguar swallows the mother of Nhamandú, it represents an instinct yearning to realize itself. At the meeting with the child, the jaguar can mean an aspect of the creative manifestation. The moment the jaguar swallows the body, it feeds on matter. When a person assimilates the jaguar and does not allow himself to be swallowed by it, he is integrating the qualities of this instinct, personifying his unconscious, transmuting fear into courage, death into life. By assimilating the jaguar, instinct becomes creative principle. This becomes creation, presented in the child who seeks to realize himself. The realization, the creation is the divine co-dwelling in the human and the jaguar. It becomes the vital force, the courage, the personified force, within the reach of humanization.

The jaguar is an archetypal image of the numinous, in its destructive polarity, devouring, threatening and, in its spiritual dimension, creative, healing, courageous; it contains the polarities of death, the potency of killing, crossing the darkness and living and the numinous, so well symbolized in the figure of the shaman's soul.

Through Roberto (2001), I seek to clarify the meaning of the numinous from the archetype and archetypal image of the jaguar.

There is then a difference between the concept of archetype itself and the concept of archetypal representations. The archetype, being a psychoid factor, is unobservable, but it generates effects that make possible the observations that are the archetypal images. Archetype refers to a principle, or agent, which organizes and structures the psychic imaginary either into specific models or motifs (mythologems) or into constellations of people in action (mythems). We can notice that the archetype simultaneously encompasses image and emotion. Every time we reach archetypal contents, we find images of archaic-mythological character and an increasing numinosity (ROBERTO, 2001, p. 90).

The jaguar and the shaman speak of archetypal processes in nature. This finds its individualization in a psyche incorporated into nature, in an instinctive and spiritual relationship with the jaguar, of humanization. "Shamans, masters of cosmic schematism dedicated to communicating and managing cross-perspectives, are always there to make concepts sensitive or intuitions intelligible" (CASTRO, 2002, p. 350-351).

A new humanity is inhabited by divinity in relation to the jaguar. The strength of opposites, side by side, coexisting in complementarity, in a space of respect and preservation. Shadow and light coexist in absolute respect, in the consciousness of the one who does not exist without the other. This coexistence is the consciousness of the spirit in the body, as differentiated elements. The consciousness of death that brings life, the body as the container of shadow and light. The gravity that holds the divine, the weight of lightness, the body that

welcomes the spirit. Elements that do not touch, that need to be differentiated for the protection and care of the consciousness of humanity: the notion of balance of materials, which coexist side by side. The spirit settles on the body and gives it adjustment. Thought becomes lightness in consciousness and consistency to hold its weight, for there is no longer separation between the jaguar and the divine. It is the fullest awareness of the sense of humanity. The deity and the jaguar walk together in the body of the human.

The deity needs the jaguar to emerge. For Castro (2012, p. 190), “the interiorization of the other is inseparable from the externalization of the Self; The Taming of the other is consubstantial with the ‘wildening’ of the self”. The spirit appears in the mask of the animal that dresses the body of the human. Each species is a wrapper, a garment that covers a humanity and that the Shaman can visualize.

Amerindian perspectivism in the Jungian clinic: animals in indigenous mythologies

Indigenous mythologies go beyond the Western hierarchy established between animals and humans. As characters, they influence the psyche in an autonomous way, as Jung (2014) thought about the relationship between unconscious and conscious. We find resonance with the thought of Castro (2002), in which he states that the basis of indigenous mythology is humanity, unlike European mythologies, in which the basis is animality. In indigenous mythologies everyone is human and the reality and universal basis is spirit.

We can observe this movement in the mythological universe of the shamanic bird in pre-Columbian cultures.

The bird defines the winged property of the spirit, and in an analogous sense, and the flight of the soul or flight of the shaman in his faculty of transcending the human condition, that is, of transmuting himself into a bird to ascend and descend, with the lightness of a feather, the axis of the universe and acquire the properties of the cosmos (GUTIERREZ; TORRES, 2011, p.107).

The shamanic bird, in its ascending and descending flight, brings the aspect of hunting and fishing, activating the sense of procreation as “progenitor, by dispensing with the seminal essence of the sun in the womb of the world” (Gutierrez; Torres, 2011, p.160). The image of shamanic flight refers to shamanistic thought in its dynamic conception of forms. The ascending and descending movements of the bird symbolize the creation myth. The movement of coming and going between heaven and earth can be thought of as an intense flow between the dimensions of the unconscious and conscious, and it reveals a transmutation of materialities and germinations

through the flows of death and rebirth. Matter and spirit feedback in a movement that rises and falls, spiritualizing the mind of the animal. It is an archetypal encounter that manifests itself in the spiritualization of matter; as instinctual nature and materialization of spirit, the flows are continuous. The vertical movement indicates the balance between the processes of descent and ascent and reveals a psyche of the heavenly world.

The hummingbird is a conductor of souls' words. It is very old. It is the first bird to feed on the liquid from the center of the Earth. It is the conductor of the spiritual liquid. Drinking water and going out is what allows the connection of the spirit with the Earth (VHERÁ POTY, 2019).

The personification of animals is an amplification produced from Amerindian thought and contributes to a subjectivation with the unconscious contents. The aspect highlighted by Gutiérrez and Torres (2011, p. 53) about the frog, in the Desana cosmivision, is of creation of themselves and of having the knowledge of the poisonous and entheogenic substances that they carry inside their parotid glands. To be born of oneself, in a potential self-fertilizer. Among the Embera of the Chacó, women perform traditional songs and dances for the frog, with the aim of curing serious illnesses (GUTIÉRREZ; TORRES, 2011).

On a psychic level, we can think of the image of the frog as capable of provoking transformations in what is more difficult to degrade, such as complexes. Being an inhabitant of two worlds, the frog plunges into the world of emotions, water, the moon, the feminine and the Earth, coping with everyday reality. The frog is also perceived as the living mother. "*in the middle the jaguar facing east and the serpent facing west*" (GUTIERREZ; TORRES, 2011, p. 61). Aspect of a duality that can be thought of from South American mythology:

The toad woman [...] Supernatural mother of the jaguars [...] he turns into a jaguar and squeezes kashabe flour from his glands of poison. The twins-jaguars, dismember and burn their mother, and hide her in a part of the forest that they previously cleared for planting. From its ashes, the first foodplants grow and the Milky poison is transformed and the bitter, or poisonous, variety of cassava (GUTIERREZ; TORRES, 2011, p. 57).

The healing property of the frog is the condition of letting itself be transformed, of creating itself from itself, carrying in itself the awareness of its poison and the potential for metamorphosis into psychopomp plants, such as fungi, which awaken a high level of sensory and emotional uptake and sensitivity. It is a quality of the mother-womb, of bestowal, of sacrifice. According to South American mythology, this quality produces the metamorphosis of the mother-frog in the form of a jaguar, from uncontrollable, devouring forces, into cassava, acquiring a condition of fertility. The frog symbolizes

the proximity of the jaguar and the serpent, the sun and the moon, to the rhythmic movement of the moon. The ability of the frog to guard the fire, referred to in Guarani mythology, may be related to the encounter of opposite elements, symbolized by the frog that lives in water and guards the fire, such as Encounters of chemical elements that do not cancel each other out, such as the shaman and the disease, the therapist and the complexes of the patients. The therapist must be able to keep the fire in the relationship with his patient and wait for the time to remove the stone from the body and throw it into the fire, while energetic materialization, as did the *karai* Alcindo, in a ritual that will be described throughout the text. In psychotherapy, this is a mutual decision. What can it mean to throw the stone into the fire, in the aforementioned ritual? Turn the source of the disease into a vital principle. It is what also symbolizes the connection with the serpent.

Then made a serpent from a torch. He got bit by it. The younger brother left in search of medicine, brought him, and took care of his older brother: he redoubled his health [... having been bitten by another snake, he died. The youngest then blew the top of his older brother's head and made him revive (CLASTRES, 1990, p. 91).

In Guarani conception, snakeskin is present in the basketry, *ajaka pará* (drawing with graphics), such as the jararaca snake, the caninana and the coral, representing the walk that a Guarani makes when moving to another village (SILVA, 2015). In this same conception, the woman emerges from the basket or the pot, containers that welcome the contents of the world. In the case of woven basketry with snakeskin graphics, there is an important element of transformation and updating of the meaning of the snake in Guarani culture and psyche. The skin of the snake is a materiality continuously re-presented and vivified; it symbolizes dimensions of death and rebirth, of transformation of a consciousness that seeks the remedy, which the "snake" matter makes possible. The being bit goes in search of the remedy and the encounter with health. The snake gives dynamism to the psyche, it is the movement of alert, of search, just as the Guarani does when traveling to another village. In basketry, the snake is fundamentally associated with the origin of the Guarani woman, the feminine. "The woman is an ancient basket. The carrying basket is for them [Guarani] the metonymy of the woman" (CLASTRES, 1990, p. 79).

The snake revives the movement of the psyche, makes it possible to access fire. To be bit is to come into contact with the conditions of metamorphosis of psychic materialities towards a creative expansion of thought. It allows access to a dimension that contains the remedy in the body as a core of the spiritual emergency. The poison in the body is the potency that contains and activates the medicine of its own system, a force in motion. The access of poison as a remedy is part of

the encounter of matter with spirit. The serpent symbol contains this integrative duality that represents fire and Earth, the encounter with the heavenly, the manifestation of and in life as a creative feminine.

The snake symbolizes a spiral image brought by myth *Yurupary*, in which it presents a movement of integration between the aquatic world, from below, and the aerial world, from above:

[...] the enveloping force - in spiral - which acquires the body of the anaconda around the trunk of the palm of paxiúba, refers us, according to the myth, to the vertiginous way in which this palm grows to the sky, originating from the ashes of the yurupary, and serving as an intermediary between the world above and the world below (GUTIÉRREZ; TORRES, 2011, p. 95).

Jung (2014, p.290) brings a sacrificial dimension: "I get goosebumps stepping into this valley of boring figures, where the woods stand on Stony slopes [...] I walk hesitantly on gravel stones avoiding that place, for fear of stepping on a snake."

We need to restore ourselves again. But since God's creation is a creative action of the highest love, the restoration of our human life means a restoration of our lower function. This is a great and dark mystery. The human person alone cannot accomplish this work. For this purpose, it is helped by the evil one, who does it in place of the person. But a person needs to recognize their joint guilt in the work of the devil. He must prove this recognition by eating of the bloody flesh of the sacrifice. With this gesture he announces that he is a human person, that he recognizes both evil and good and that through the retraction of his vital force he destroys the image of the divine figure and with this he also declares himself detached from God. This happens for the good of the soul, which is the true mother of the Divine Child (JUNG, 2014, p. 291).

It is the task of the Hunter to be attentive to the animal that carries in its body the soul of a person. And when he captures it, he also makes the sacrifice and binds himself to that soul, in some way. The Desanas Indigenous hunters, who live in the Amazon jungle of Colombia, do not over-hunt, as they know that they could extinguish the life force for people and animals. There is a preparation for the hunt, the day before, in which they are deprived of sexual intercourse, bathe in the river and take laxatives and purgatives. As well they put on oils and masks to attract the animals. When they manage to capture the prey, they ask their deities for forgiveness, with very respectful treatment (GOLDIN; NAVARRETE, 2003).

The same goes for hunters. Guarani: after they have small children, They dialogue with the spirits of the animals so that there is balance and protection between them, a regulation between death and life, between person and animal.

Final considerations

Indigenous mythologies bring humanities that inhabit our unconscious in the form of plants, animals, nature, people, places, and voices and provoke hauntings that can be numinous and dark at the same time. Learning to relate, denaturing the place of being devoured by fear and images that we do not consciously produce. Such an understanding passes through the recognition of the diversity of non-human vitality present in our thinking and in our emotion, integrating our instinctual and divine nature.

The healing experience goes through an intertwining, letting oneself be captured to be transformed, letting oneself be swallowed to also swallow and vomit, letting oneself be metamorphosed, as the mythology of the great serpent suggests to us in the encounter with spiritual sounds. The bird has a sound, the snake has a dance, the jaguar has a movement, the human can learn in this regard, this cyclical and cosmic universal greatness.

The Guarani perspective activates a thinking that helps us to realize that it is not only the therapist and the patient who are responsible for healing, but also provokes the field of nature and animals and the possible meanings of them in our psychisms.

How can a vision of a river, of an animal, help in healing a person? The spirit of nature comes loaded with a possibility of connection with something that has been lost in the course of one's life. It speaks of a numinous unconscious, of a *numes*, of an image that is not human and that has an intense spiritual charge, but that is not integrated into the person and is available in nature, as a potential health resource. But the person does not feel connected to it. It is like a still life, which is there, it can be photographed, but it has no life, no vitality. It is like knowing that there is a river through a photo and not because you dive into it.

The jaguar is an archetypal image, it helps to bring instinct closer to the spirit, what haunts to what enlightens. These two colors or reflections become embodied energy, as a vital movement that is activated in the body from this image. The jaguar, as a spirit, is a humanity that erupts through the body. The humanity of the jaguar, Amerindian, is assimilated spiritually, in thought. This emerges in the body that arises from within the jaguar. It is the spirit.

By connecting with the vital principle, while a movement of transformation, the psyche is activated in states of metamorphosis and possible cures. The jaguar, as an archetypal image, takes the human to a field of instinctual nature and also to its threshold: the challenge of death. To go through death is to walk the path from instinct to spirit. Learning to deal with instinct is spiritual experience, it is what does not die and what it accomplishes. The human is between and in the

instinct and in the spirit, in what gets sick and in what heals, in what gives life and in what dies, in what transforms and in what remains.

Perhaps this is our contribution when talking about perspectivism in the Jungian clinic, instigating this question so that we can inquire more about the humanity of the jaguar and the long work that this question brings us. This movement also relates us to listening to the depth of Amerindian history in our stories, in what is visible and invisible, in what is body and spirit.

Many Guaraní say that it is not easy to be *karaí*, which is somewhat maddening, because it requires a lot of surrender to something that is beyond us, like a transcendent encounter that unites Eros and spirit, death and life, in one heart. It is therefore special to connect with the archetype of the shaman that exists in the therapist, in a place that runs through the darkest. To be able to walk in the darkness with the patient in search of the light, even though it is so small. It is the ability that Jung (2014) reminds us to take care of the patient as a human being, even if he is sick. The shaman believes in the humanity of the patient and his jaguar, and for this he travels along with all possible and imaginable hauntings that awaken us, with all our fragile humanity.

For Jung (2014), the language of nature is the unconscious, and our task is to translate the intelligence of nature. For the Indigenous, in a perspectivist field, the animal was once a human. In this way, to talk to the animal is to humanize oneself, in a more complex perspective. One can listen to the animal in a humanized way, recognize in it a value, as Jung recognized in the unconscious. Therefore, shaman and jaguar complement each other, humanize each other, subjectify each other.

Animals personify themselves in our psyche. The presence of each acts, revealing to us its characteristic. If we are universe, the action of animals and their characteristics will be in us. Each species of animal represents levels of consciousness, not in a representation of superiority or inferiority, but of psychic specificities.

The presence of animals has been revealed as protective spirits and that communicate, helping me in the healing processes. We highlight some: the frog, the jaguar, the serpent, the hummingbird, and the owl. The dialogue with animals, which we bring from Jungian psychology, are experiences and constructions of meaning with indigenous mythologies, which allow us to expand the meaning of language and metaphors in the process of imagining and spiritualizing. The myth reveals mystery, and not only from an individual but from a universal perspective, transcending concepts of time, culture, and society. The myth encompasses the human in a total dimension, in the sense that it reveals true stories, in the most diverse psychic realities.

Indigenous mythologies help us in our psychic searches for healing in a rapprochement between the spiritual universe, the sacred and nature. The myth gives directions and conditions so that we can transcend our personal universes to spiritual values. This way, we can think of myth as the narrative that goes from the unconscious to the transcendent, as the thread that guides the movement from chaos to the cosmos. In Amerindian mythologies we find a polyphony of senses that organizes us into a cosmology, which includes and prioritizes nature, stars, rivers, plants, and animals in a very refined way, and expands our possibilities of healing, in the multiple ways of existing in a psychic cosmos.

The deities, for the Guarani, are very close to the animals. Jung (2014) opens paths for a shamanic and perspectivist thought, in clinical activity, as a numinous way of life in a condition of receiving infinite and unspeakable love, reaching the mystery of a beautiful and transcendental nature. To be able to receive the love and understanding of an unconditional trust in the presence of every person, animal, and spirit. The emergence of shamanism in the psyche extends to a corporal and spiritual thinking, in which we can access an ancestral memory of nature, of which we are part. Beyond the personal, collective, symbolic aspects, we can access a numinous perception of our own existence and beyond it. It is the emergence of an infinite and unconditional potential, which can be mediated through dialogue with the spirits of animals and nature.

We highlight the image of the jaguar/human, so present in Amerindian cultures. In this psychic oz/human encounter, this last he discovers a human nature that includes in his psychic world nature, deities, animals, giving meanings in the emergence of healing faculties, which learns and makes the movement of humanizing and animalizing the psyche, of going and returning continuously, in a lunar and solar condition, symbolizing the movements of identifying with the civilizing hero and with the original mythical return. The jaguar is thought of as an archetypal image of the numinous.

Healing does not only come from personal, family, and affective relationships. It also comes from ancestral knowledge. Access to this knowledge, as a memory, comes from going back to the roots. Belonging comes from access to this knowledge.

In the version of the myth told by Vherá Poty, Nhamandú's mother has a conflict with Nanderuvusu's father and he leaves. On her way in search of her father, she comes across a crossroads and enters the path inhabited by jaguars, which devour her. Nhamandú survives and cannot be annihilated. Create, then, Jaxy (the moon). They discover they are not grandma jaguar's grandchildren through the hummingbird and attempt to annihilate the jaguars, but fail to kill the last jaguar, who was pregnant. Thus it is that sun and moon,

as they continue their crossing, will find their humanity and divinity, in dialogue with the jaguar and other animals. Animals teach about the numinous and the shadows, the force that comes from being that is not human, from nature, from spirits, from the invisible, and that helps to perceive living as a universe.

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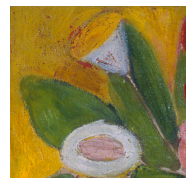
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