

The archetypal theory of history and the five archetypal positions of the ego-other polarity in individual and collective consciousness – A study of Jungian symbolic psychology

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Dear colleagues,

The archetypal theory of history is conceived as part of Jungian symbolic psychology. This discipline results from fifty years of creative work which began in my training in psychoanalysis in Rio de Janeiro and continued in analytical psychology in Zurich. It developed during the formation of the Brazilian Society for Analytical Psychology, which today has trained more than 100 analysts, and the Jungian societies and associations of Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, Ecuador and Venezuela.

The first issue that I bring today concerns the ego as center of consciousness. If the ego is the psychological representation of the subjective dimension and the other is the representation of the objective dimension, I propose that the ego does not occupy alone the center of consciousness, but shares instead this position with the other, forming the ego-other polarity throughout life in consciousness and in the shadow. In this way, the ego-other polarity searches to reunite in consciousness all the representations of the Self (Byington 2010).

Another point I want to share with you is that I use the term central archetype to designate the main archetype and the concept of the Self to include ego, shadow and archetypes. According to this idea, I developed the concept of the transindividual forms of the Self, such as the family Self, the cultural Self, the planetary Self, the institutional Self

and the therapeutic Self. They are systemic forms of totality coordinated by the central archetype within the process of symbolic elaboration. Of course the concepts of the cultural Self, of the institutional Self and of the planetary Self are indispensable for the archetypal theory of history (Byington 2010a).

Considering that the ego is formed through all life experiences coordinated by the central archetype, it follows that not only archetypal images express the central archetype, but also emotions, words, numbers, ideas, sounds, body, nature, behavior and even silence. From these circumstances emerged the concept of the structuring symbol which encompasses images and all psychological facts or entities to form the ego. A cluster of structuring symbols forms complexes. Structuring symbols undergo elaboration by the central archetype through functions which may be subjective, such as envy and jealousy, and objective, such as breathing and digestion. In this way they become structuring functions. Structuring symbols, complexes and functions express all polarities and therefore all representations of the subjective dimension and of the objective dimension (Byington 2010).

We may then conclude that the center of psychological activity is the process of symbolic elaboration which articulates dynamically consciousness and archetypes within the symbolic axis. It operates through the interaction of structuring symbols and functions coordinated by the central archetype to form the identity of the ego-other polarity in consciousness and in the shadow. I name this articulation symbolic axis and not ego-Self axis, because this last denomination implies that the ego lies outside the Self (Byington 2003).

I explain the dysfunctions of the process of symbolic elaboration through the concept of fixation from psychoanalysis, here employed to describe the formation of defenses, and of compulsive repetition, which I understand to be the shadow.

In this manner, we have a clear difference between normality and pathology in psychology; virtue and sin, in religion; and good and evil in ethics. The normal process of symbolic elaboration has no fixations. When it presents fixations, it forms defenses and the shadow, here considered the archetypal root of pathology, sin and evil (Byington 2010a). I realize that these last concepts are highly controversial. They are better explained in my three books listed below and in my site: www.carlosbyington.com.br, where you can also find the full text of this lecture.

The most important concepts to understand the archetypal theory of history are the ego-other positions in individual and collective consciousness. I developed this idea from Melanie Klein's schizoparanoic and depressive positions (1950) and from Neumann's matriarchal and patriarchal ego characteristics (1954). I propose the existence of five archetypal positions through which the ego-other interact. They are expressed by the central archetype and by an archetypal quaternio formed by the matriarchal, patriarchal, alterity and totality archetypes.

Every symbolic elaboration begins with the central archetype coordinating the ego-other polarity in the uroboric (Neumann 1970) or non-differentiated position.

The matriarchal archetype continues the elaboration process through the insular position, in which the ego relates to the other within islands of consciousness, always as an expression of sensuality.

I consider phenomena such as *participation mystique*, primitive mentality and unconscious identification as expressions not of the "unconscious", but rather of the insular position of the matriarchal archetype also exuberantly seen in animism.

The patriarchal archetype coordinates the ego-other polarity through the polarized position, which relates all polarities in strict opposition.

I conceive matriarchal and patriarchal archetypes as bi-gender. In my view, the matriarchal archetype is not only the feminine expression of the great mother, but a bi-

gender archetype of sensuality present in man and in woman. Parallel to it, the patriarchal archetype is also not exclusively masculine but present in the psyche of man and woman as the archetype of organization.

In this manner, Bachofen and Neumann's views of the feminine anteceding the masculine in the formation of cultural conscience can now be reformulated as the dominance of the matriarchal archetype preceding the dominance of the patriarchal archetype in many cultures, being both of them always present in every person and in all cultures.

From this new perspective emerges an archetypal typology which complements Jungian typology bringing two new types: matriarchal dominant and patriarchal dominant which can be applied individually and collectively.

The alterity archetype coordinates the ego-other polarity through the dialectical position which varies from opposition to equality and encompasses the anima and the animus archetypes as representatives of otherness; finally, the totality archetype, by the contemplative position, finishes every symbolic elaboration including life as a whole and embracing the historical process. In this position the ego-other polarity detaches so intensely from structuring symbols that their frontiers fade and they reunite again in the totality of the Self (Byington 2010a). It is important to realize that the individual Self (individuation process) (Jung 1954) and the cultural Self (humanization process) (Teilhard de Chardin 2000) are equally structured by the archetypal regent quaternio.

The fact that Neumann (1970) ended the history of collective consciousness at the patriarchal archetype induces us wrongly to think that patriarchal dominance is equated with progress and is the final goal of history. The idea that human evolution should be based on technological development is also a great mistake. According to this false parameter, hunting-gathering groups and tribal cultures with a great exuberance of the matriarchal archetype and magic-mythic mentality were to be considered savages,

undeveloped and primitives, whereas industrialized societies with great patriarchal exuberance and rational scientific mentality were to be considered developed and civilized.

These two errors are the great fallacy of Western humanism, which are clearly revealed by the archetypal theory of history and need to be recognized and corrected for the very survival of mankind.

Jung (1953) in his turn described the anima, animus and the Self as stages of the individuation process, differentiating the development of personality from that of the collective dimension, giving the false impression that the anima, animus and Self stages belong exclusively to the individual dimension.

The dialectical position of the alterity archetype coordinates the symbolic elaboration both in individual and in collective dimension, as for instance in democracy, ecology, sustainability, the civil rights movements, immunology, dynamic psychotherapy, scientific and artistic creativity, education and in the neurosciences relating dialectically structures and meanings, that is, body and mind.

When we elaborate historical reality within the archetypal positions of consciousness it becomes evident that the matriarchal and the patriarchal archetypes cannot be considered simply in terms of evolution, because they form the fundamental polarity of symbolic elaboration, and accordingly, their relationship must be elaborated by the dialectical position of the alterity archetype, which is the true final goal of history.

Possibly, human dependence on nourishment was accompanied by the dominance of the matriarchal position within the magic-mythic mentality, animism, the exuberance of fertility gods and goddesses, and relative hunting-gathering and roaming, during more than one hundred thousand years.

Possibly too, the agricultural-pastoral revolution which propitiated the settlement of societies more than ten thousands years ago, enhanced the increasing activation of the patriarchal position based on private property, organization of family and social classes

around it, followed by the formation of villages, cities and empires which ruled the earth, organized it socio-politically and gave rise to the identity of modern nations, institutionalizing increasingly rational causality. The polarized patriarchal position became dominant in the planet and led many societies to the scientific revolution and industrialization begun in Europe. No doubt that such an outstanding archetypal performance caused humanities, although erroneously, to identify patriarchal technological dominance with civilization and to equate matriarchal exuberance in antiquity with savagery.

The dialectical ego-other position of the alterity archetype operates through a quaternary ego-other relationship, in which the ego is capable of identifying the shadow of the other as well as recognize its own. Therefore this is the archetype which can rescue fixated symbols in the shadow of oneself and of others and reintegrate them in the elaboration process within a democratic relationship.

The main characteristics of common archetypal development in individual and in collective dimension are that although one archetype may be activated and even become dominant, the other archetypes continue operating and reacting. This perspective brought about the discovery that the extraordinary development and dominance of the patriarchal archetype, during the more than ten thousand years of so called progress and civilization, occurred together with repression and wounding of the matriarchal archetype, forming a huge shadow with disastrous proportions. As Lovelock's Gaia theory (2000) well illustrates, the planet is reacting to human occupation with signs of desperation just like any live creature would react to oppression, sadistic cruelty and exploitation.

The historical analysis carried out through the dialectical position of the alterity archetype shows that the patriarchal dominance cannot be equated neither with progress nor with the final goal of civilization, because the mythical patriarchal hero which slaughtered dragons, freed princesses and realized the wonders of civilization caused also

countless and immense matriarchal planetary wounds which polluted nature, brought oppression and social inequality, together with the belligerent usage of atomic weaponry, threatens exhaustion of natural reserves, and has established a model of domination and consumerism which already needs more than 1.3 planets to provide.

So, it is undeniable that the patriarchal archetype, although greatly responsible for development, should be identified neither with progress nor with the final goal of civilization. It is also undeniable that this position should be occupied by the alterity archetype which relates dialectically the matriarchal-patriarchal polarity confronting the shadow formed by the unbalance of their relationship.

In the same way that creation myths of fertility expressed the progressive implantation of the matriarchal archetype, and solar myths and monotheism accompanied the implantation of patriarchal dominance, two myths represent the activation of the alterity archetype in history: the Myth of Buddha in the East and the Myth of Christ in the West. Both myths express the post-patriarchal paradigm, exchanging a rational organization and power domination for a messianic heroic sacrificial message of enlightenment and salvation through universal brotherhood to be attained with mutual understanding and compassion.

In the eve of the genocidal confrontation between two intensely dominant patriarchal cultures of antiquity, there was constellated the dialectical myth of alterity. It was as if in the core of the Judaic cultural Self, the eminence of genocide constellated a messianic myth to transcend the polarized position of the patriarchal pattern which would lead inevitably to destruction.

Among the miracles of history, one of the greatest was the conversion of Constantine and the Roman Empire to Christianity. However, the very conversion of Constantine to Christianity, inspired by the need to defeat by war his brother Maxentius in

order to rule the empire, was already a most meaningful symbol that patriarchal dominance would continue under Christianity.

The tradition of the Roman Empire was dominantly patriarchal, and so would be the institutionalization of the Christian Myth even though it brought the “good news” of the messianic message of the implantation of the alterity archetype. The moment after Constantine proclaimed the Edict of Milan in 313 AD, there began the persecution, by Christians, of Christians accused of heresy. Although the Inquisition was officially instituted by Pope Gregory IX, in 1231 AD, the defensive patriarchal institutionalization of the Myth began in the fourth century AD and has lasted until today. I interpret this patriarchal domination as defensive, that is, deformed and pathologic, even more because it was exercised in the name of Christ. This deformation shows how much the Myth had become fixated and badly elaborated, giving rise to the anti-Christ, its defensive acting out in the shadow. Although the pattern of alterity remained at the core of the Christian Mass, all other rituals, including confession and most questions of faith, were defensively patriarchalized and exercised through repression.

Nevertheless, the extraordinary vitality of the Myth continued the implantation of the alterity position within the true vocation of many Christians and through many heresies, which were non-canonic ways to elaborate the Passion of Christ. For many centuries, the monasteries elaborated through the functions of feeling, intuition and introversion the meanings of the Passion and of the Resurrection based on the dialectic examination of sin and virtue polarity in consciousness.

In the second millennium of the elaboration of the Myth, the Renaissance expressed symbolically the Resurrection and the extroversion of the dialectical position of alterity to elaborate the symbols of nature, a true *anima mundi*. The persecution of the greatest of all heresies was finally defeated and science became the true heir of the dialectical position of alterity transmitted by the Myth. Christianity became divided. On one hand, the

defensively patriarchalized institutionalization of the Myth controlled the Church through the Holy Office, and, on the other, the creative vitality of the genuine Myth developed the dialectic relationship of the error-truth polarity coordinated by the alterity archetype in science.

Originally, science was neither necessarily antagonistic nor incompatible with the Christian Myth. Most of the scientific pioneers, like Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Kepler, Descartes and Leibnitz, were very religious. Their discoveries showed them more and more the complexity of the universe, which in no way diminished, but on the contrary, increased immensely the glory of God and the sacrifice of Christ in the name of love and compassion. It was the Church which persecuted scientists and separated science progressively from Christianity.

The tension between the Church and science came to a climax when science gained control over the university at the end of the eighteenth century. This rupture between science and religion produced a huge fixation and dissociation of the Western cultural Self.

Science identified the Inquisition with oppression, persecution, and associated religion with subjectivity and error. It equated truth exclusively with objectivity. In this manner, religion was excluded from the university together with the whole of subjectivity, including feeling, intuition, introversion, faith and any emotional relationship with the universe.

Therefore, the materialism and positivism established in the nineteenth century must not be attributed, as generally is, to objective differences between science and religion. When we understand the paradigm of symbolic humanism characteristic of the world vision expressed by the dialectical position of the alterity archetype, we understand that one of its very meaningful polarities has on one pole the dominantly subjective magic-mythical mentality expressed by the insular matriarchal position and, on the other pole, the

objective causal-reflexive mentality expressed by the polarized position of the patriarchal archetype.

The problem of the dissociation of the Western cultural Self and its loss of soul is related to the phenomenon of the serious fixations proportional to the importance of the structuring symbols and functions fixated.

Western culture became alienated when it lost contact with the insular matriarchal position wherein is rooted the Christian Myth. We went into alienation and lost our soul because we dealt defensively with our Myth.

The great difficulty to elaborate the shadow of Christianity is to recognize its original Myth and separate it from the defensive patriarchalized deformation occurred during institutionalization. This task, however, is most difficult because Christianity has been identified with its deformed institutionalized version.

The advantage of such elaboration today is not to change the deformed Christian institutions, which seems an impossible task. Rather, the point is to recognize how much Western humanism and science are deformed due to the identification of truth with objectivity and to rescue their sanity through the reunion of their objectivity with their corresponding subjectivity within the symbolic dimension. Only this procedure based on the archetype of alterity can free us from the distortion of truth and genuineness, and restore the integrity of the cultural Self.

Recognizing the four regent archetypes during symbolic elaboration in the individual and collective processes of development, I think we are prepared to take into account their interrelationship in the archetypal theory of history recalling the alchemist Maria Prophetisa's axiom that the one (non-differentiated position) becomes two (insular matriarchal position), the two becomes three (polarized patriarchal position), the three becomes four (dialectical alterity archetypal position) which is again the one (contemplative position of the totality archetype).

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