

Psychic wounds, Jung and narcissism

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Abstract

The article aims to think about psychic wounds and narcissism in the field of analytical psychology and its importance in the analysis process. The concept of narcissism and its emergence in Freudian psychoanalysis differ from the way in which the theme is treated by Jung; we observe how its sensitive and deep perspective helps us to reflect on the psychic wounds. ■



Keywords

Psychic wounds, Narcissism, Jung, Psychic energy, Eros.

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To be wounded, to have wounds, to cause pain to others is proper to the human being and goes through the whole history of humanity. Our starting point is the archetypal dimension of the wound and all the list of consequences caused by them in our psyche, in our behavior, in the treatment of our emotions, with the development of a resilience or psychic disorder.

In Jungian Psychology, we talk about wounds in various ways. Like psychic, narcissistic, maternal, paternal, primal or love wounds. Several authors have spoken directly or indirectly about them, which, in my opinion, are the objects of all the work of analysis and the engine of the process of individuation.

I will start by telling the myth of Narcissus and Echo and talking about narcissism, a concept revealed in Freudian psychoanalysis and treated, throughout the years, by countless medicine and psychology academics in their various approaches. There is a clear relationship between what we call psychic wounds and the theoretical formulations of narcissism, since the concept refers to a founding process of the individual's relationship with his internal and external world, which lasts throughout life. Any unsettling event that occurs during this process can be experienced and psychically registered as a wound.

The myth of Narcissus and Echo was narrated by the Latin poet Ovid (43 BC/17 AD) in one of his most famous works, *Metamorphoses*, which is composed of fifteen books with poems that tell the deeds of heroes and mythological gods in order to explain the origin of the world, plants, animals and life itself (OVÍDIO, 2017).

Narcissus was the son of the nymph Liriope, who was raped by the River Cephissus. When he was born he was so beautiful that his mother, worried that his beauty would be an offense to some god and considered a *hýbris* – an insolence – consulted the old and blind Tiresias,

who had the gift of *mantéia*, of fortune-telling. Would the most beautiful of mortals live long? Tiresias replied concisely: “Yes, if he doesn't see himself”. The drama of Narcissus was in the “vision,” the same vision that Tiresias had lost by punishment of Hera, and Zeus, to compensate him, had granted the gift of *mantéia*, the “vision from within,” the gift of the prophecy.

Because of his beauty many young people and nymphs fell in love with Narcissus, who despised everyone, insensitive. The nymph Eco, very chatty, was punished by Hera for trying to distract her, so that Zeus could lie down with other nymphs. The goddess protector of marriages and defender of legitimate loves told her: “You will be reduced to the faculty of that language by which I was deceived, and the use of your voice will be greatly reduced” (OVÍDIO, 2017, p. 187). Echo was doomed not to speak; she could only repeat the last words she heard. Like many others, the nymph fell in love with Narcissus and followed him without being seen. He, who was hunting with friends, distanced himself from the group and began to call them.

From his partners in the misguided hunt
Narcissus screams: Hello! Does no one
hear me?

Listen, the Nymph lover answers.

He is astonished: around he stretches his
eyes.

And seeing no one: Come here, he shouts.
An equal invitation arrives from her.

He turns around, sees nothing: why flee
thou from me?

He cries, why flee thou from me, they
answer.

From the mutual delusional voice, he still
insists:

Let us gather here. Sweeter phrase,

He does not expect it, he does not want it;
he is delirious, and soon,

Let us gather here, voice in cravings
To put it to work, the thickness breaks,
Come with open arms, ringing,
Such a sighing object, to harvest it.
He flees; fleeing eludes the embrace,
And rather, he says, I will die, let the love
unites us.
She, standing still, with the sight following
him,
And to what he heard, only answers: Love
unites us (BRANDÃO, 1989, p. 177-8).

Echo rejected and full of pain, isolated herself, stopped eating and sleeping and little by little she wasted away until there was only voice and bones left. Finally, she turned into a rock that repeats the sounds of what is said. Narcissus deceived everyone without ever corresponding to love. One of the despised asked for vengeance on Nemesis, goddess of indignation and punisher of *hýbris*, praying that Narcissus would love and not be corresponded. The prayer was answered.

There was a source of clean water in an isolated and untouched region where Narcissus went to rest and quench his thirst. Approaching the mirrored waters, he saw his own image and, seeing what so many others saw, his exceptional beauty, naively fell in love with himself. And he stayed there, trying to capture the image he dreamed of being the object of his love, trying to hug her and kiss her in vain. Without eating and without sleeping, driven mad by unrequited love, he died. And instead of his body only a yellow flower of white petals remained. It was the daffodil (OVÍDIO, 2017, p. 187-97).

What was the *hýbris* of Narcissus? His descent was beauty, but which god did Narcissus offend? Eros, the god of bonds; Narcissus is punished for not wanting to get involved, to relate to the other.

The myth explains the symbolic, archetypal, and psychological dimensions of the question of narcissism and its complementary polarity, the echoism. These are two faces of a psychological dynamic that we all experience. Both Nar-

cissus and Echo offend the god Eros; the first for not wanting a relationship with the other and the second for not getting it with herself. Psychologically, both the relationship with oneself and with the other suffer disastrous consequences in the history.

We said earlier that the drama of Narcissus was in the vision; the vision is a sensory function through which the eyes put men and animals in relation with the external world, it makes us perceive, evaluate, discern and also imagine, dream and daydream. We talk, therefore, in a metaphorical way, about perceiving the external world and the internal world. According to the myth, everyone, boys, girls, nymphs, saw Narcissus, but he did not see anyone, not even himself; he did not know himself, he had never seen his own image and collapses when he sees it and falls in love supposing he is another. This passion forces him to relate and, not being corresponded, not finding “echo” in the other, he succumbs.

Echo, unlike Narcissus, who remains in himself, repeats, resonates the other. Originally, before being punished by Hera, the chattering nymph spoke incessantly to seduce, to distract the goddess by taking her attention away from her husband, making her distracted by her verbiage. Now, Hera is a ruler who serves the established or establishes new forms and orders. While Echo babbles and Hera remains distracted, Zeus generates and creates new beings, new possibilities (BERRY, 2014, p. 141). The nymph therefore has a fundamental role in the generation of the new by Zeus. The nymph’s chatter is an empty, formless speech that aims at distraction rather than attention and reflection.

Hera’s punishment imposes a form on Echo through repetition; this repetition can be an effort for continuity, for the permanence of words that can thus gain other meanings as we saw earlier in the passage cited by Brandão. Repetition can also be a search for recognition or the expression of an essence (BERRY, 2014, p. 143-4). It forces us, in one way or another, to listen to ourselves, which can be pointed out by another

– as in analysis – or perceived by ourselves. This listening to oneself can lead to reflection and is exactly what Echoes lack, the ability to reflect, to pay attention to herself.

In synthesis, the myth of Narcissus and Echo deals with the relationship I-other, and this other can exist inside or outside of us. The way we perceive and deal with these internal or external “others” throughout life is what gave rise to the concept of narcissism and its different conceptions.

The concept of narcissism is of great importance in psychology because it refers to the fundamental aspects of human nature. The term is also of interest in the context of the culture that uses it in different ways. The most common ones refer to an individual who is vain, very concerned with his image – aesthetically or socially – or to someone whose personal interests are above all else and who does not empathize, or even does not see others. In the latter sense, narcissism is confused with individualism and/or selfishness.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Freud already used the term narcissism in several of his writings, but only in 1914, with the text “Introduction to Narcissism,” (FREUD, 2010) he explains the various meanings in which he considers it and inserts it as a concept of psychoanalysis (FREUD, 2010). Throughout the text, he uses the concept in different senses: as sexual perversion, as a stage of normal development (primary narcissism), as a type of objective relationship and as being related to self-esteem (MONTELLANO, 2006). After his death in 1939 and, mainly, starting from the fifties, several authors dedicated themselves to the subject. The concept of narcissism gave Freud the instrument to study everyday life issues such as passion, choice of object, hypochondria, mental pain and psychopathological issues as in the analysis of the Schreber case, in the text about Leonardo da Vinci, besides other themes such as psychosis and homosexuality.

Observing that aspects of the narcissistic attitude occurred in many other cases, he conceived

a narcissistic ‘libido’ that would have a place in human sexual development and, thus, the term, in this sense, would not refer to a perversion, but to “a complement (turned to the self) of what Freud called the *instinct of self-preservation*” (MONTAGNA, 1996). It describes a primary and normal narcissism, where the “libido” has a role in the regular sexual development of the human being, and a secondary narcissism, in which the “libido” is removed from objects and turns to the self. Although the notion of secondary narcissism comes from Freud’s observation of schizophrenia, he has not limited it to cases of psychosis extending his observation to all human beings.

The transformations that the concept of narcissism brought to the psychoanalytic theory were many; among the most important are the second theory of pulsation and the formulation of the structural Oedipus complex theory.

Willy Baranger, an Argentinean psychoanalyst of French origin, raises different uses of the term narcissism in psychoanalysis (MONTAGNA, 1996). He ranks the different meanings into three groups: narcissism as one of the forms of libido, the object and identification in narcissistic states, and narcissism as valorization/devaluation. In this last group would be the so-called “narcissistic wounds” that refer to everything that comes to diminish the self-esteem of the self or its feeling of being loved by valued objects, and also the so-called “narcissism of small differences”.

A few comments can be made on the previous. For psychoanalysis, the immediate acceptance of otherness, of the other and his differences, is permeated by a series of mediations that are due to narcissism. In 1917, in a text on the taboo of virginity, Freud quotes a British social anthropologist named Alfred Ernest Crawley (1869-1924) who invented the expression “taboo of personal isolation”. His book, *The mystic rose*, is central to Freud’s quoted article. In his text we read:

In words that are a little different from the usual terminology of psychoanaly-

sis, Crawley states that each individual is separated from the others by a “taboo of personal isolation”, and that precisely the little differences, within the general similarity, motivate the feelings of strangeness and hostility between them. It would be tempting to pursue this idea and to derive from this “narcissism of little differences” the hostility that in all human relationships victoriously combats the feelings of solidarity and superimposes the commandment of love the other (2013, p. 370).

In the text “Psychology of the masses and analysis of the self” of 1921 (FREUD, 2011), Freud points out that antipathies and undisguised aversions towards strangers who are close to us, that which is different in the other and bothers me, is the expression of a narcissism that feels threatened as if the difference criticizes it. This supposed narcissism is so rigid and conservative that any deviation brought by the other is seen as an affront; it is as if saying “everything that is different from me threatens me”. The recognition of what is different is opposed to narcissism, and for the other to be recognized as such, a psychic change must necessarily occur (REINO, ENDO, 2011). Now, this idea is way too interesting not to have been developed from the point of view of the Jungian thought. I will return to this point later.

In addition to these meanings of the term, we have what we today call Narcissistic Personality Disorder (DSM-5 and CID-10/F60.81) which is defined when a series of criteria are met. It is not the case here that we stick to this psychopathological state. Despite the consensus on the phenomenological description of the narcissistic personality of DSM-5, there are many differences and disagreements regarding theory, diagnosis, and clinical treatment. For our purpose it is enough to point out that there is an agreement that the concept of narcissism should include the description of normal and pathological aspects

of development. We are interested in the dynamics of narcissism and its wounds that are present in individuals regardless of this diagnosis. In the literature of Jungian psychology, we find authors who refer mainly to what has been called primary narcissism, a universal stage of normal human development.

1. Jung and the terms “wound” and “narcissism”

We only find a passage in Jung’s complete works in which he uses the expression “psychic wound” (JUNG, 2011b, p. 336). Talking about the psychological foundations of belief in spirits, he understands the wound as linked to the formation of complexes. The emergence or formation of a complex has as its origin an emotional experience that leaves an imprint, a psychic wound.

Certain complexes arise after painful or unpleasant experiences in the life of the individual. They are personal experiences of an emotional nature, which leave lasting psychic wounds behind them. An unpleasant experience is capable of suffocating, for example, a person’s precious qualities. This creates unconscious complexes of a personal nature [...] A part of the autonomous complexes originate from these personal experiences (JUNG, 2002, PAR. 594) (my emphasis).

The idea of a psychic wound that would be at the genesis of an autonomous complex leads us to the possibility that every wound is related to a complex in some way. The complex is constituted as a tangle of ideas and emotions that refer to a certain theme and that have been repressed, forgotten or never come to be conscious, like an “energy knot” (SILVEIRA, 1988, p. 46). Thus, a very painful emotional experience will leave a psychic wound that will group to already existing unconscious formations whenever the ego and consciousness are not able, for some reason, to deal with these contents.

A brief explanation on the question of psychic energy and its movements is necessary since this is one of the points of theoretical divergence between Jung and Freud and is related to the development of the idea of narcissism.

In *Symbols of Transformation* his thesis is about the progression and regression of libido, which allows an analogy with the ideas of primary and secondary narcissism. In this work, Jung justifies his choice of the term “psychic energy” to replace the term “libido” arguing that, besides sexuality, other human instincts are also of fundamental importance and that little do we know about their nature and psychic dynamics. The observation of his schizophrenic patients made him question whether the loss of contact with reality would be the result of the retraction of sexual libido, an opinion defended by Freud. He perceived that the patients presented a loss of any interest in the outside world and not only the sexual interest. The libido as psychic energy has a plastic character that allows its application to different areas of interest and not only sexual interest. In his words: “It is more prudent, therefore, when talking about libido, to understand with this term an energetic value that can be transmitted to any area, to power, hunger, hatred, sexuality, religion, etc., without necessarily being a specific instinct” (JUNG, 1989, par. 197). Its conception of psychic energy can be compared to the energetic model of physical sciences in which energy has different forms of manifestation: heat, light, electricity, etc. The question of libido as psychic energy has such importance that it was one of the determinants of the end of the relationship between Jung and Freud and deserved another work: *Psychic energy*.

In this book the author considers the psyche as a relatively closed energy system (JUNG, 2012a, par. 34), that is, it has a potential that remains the same in quantity through its multiple manifestations throughout our life. Psychic energy obeys the principle of equivalence as well as physical energy, that is, if a quantity of

energy “disappears”, “a corresponding value emerges in another form” (JUNG, 2012a, par. 35). If the interest in an object ceases to exist for some reason, the energy that fed that reason will take other paths: it will appear in somatic manifestations, in dreams, it will be able to reactivate sleeping contents in the unconscious, it will manifest as symptom. All these phenomena are expressions of the same transformed energy. The psychic energy moves in two directions: progression and regression. Progression is the movement it makes towards the environment with a view to adaptation. If the necessary attitude for adaptation is not achieved, the progression stops and there is a damming of the energy that is characterized by the disintegration of pairs of opposites and the consequent increase of tension that leads to conflict. Conflict is a state in which the energy is dammed, and the polarities are with equal values. If we choose one of the sides, there is simply a dissociation, due to an “internal disagreement”. The unattended possibility is repressed and generates symptoms that disturb the psyche going against adaptation (JUNG, 2012a, par. 61). The psychic energy then changes the sense of movement and the process of regression begins; the energetic flow turns to the unconscious, reactivating contents that were excluded from the consciousness because they were disturbing the efforts of adaptation to the external world. This unconscious material gains, with the regression, a quantum of energy that brings it closer to consciousness through dreams or all sorts of symptoms. But, adds Jung, among these contents of the unconscious are also the seeds of other and new possibilities of life that did not have enough energy to reach consciousness (JUNG, 2012a, par 62-3). Awareness of this unconscious material brings the possibility to consider, confront and integrate them. This dissolves stagnation, removes blockages and the psychic energy flows back towards the outside. A new phase of progression begins again.

Any “stop”, stagnation of psychic energy, whether in progression or regression, if it is

temporary, is part of the psychic functioning that occurs ordinarily. If there is a dissociation of the ego in relation to the Self or an unconscious fixation – incest – and an impossibility of reorganization of the consciousness with the elaboration of unconscious contents by the ego, we have the possibility of neurosis or even psychosis. It is through the transformations of the psychic energy and the formation of symbols that the development of the psyche is processed in its essence.

Montellano argues that the main beam of Jung's thought is constituted by two concepts that allow us to understand the psyche and the movement of psychic energy: archetype and individuation (MONTELLANO, 1996, p. 86). The idea that the unconscious is constituted by archetypes and that these coordinate the process of individuation brings a counterpoint to the concept of narcissism. The notions of Self and of Central Archetype will collaborate, through theoretical enlargements made by authors such as Michael Fordham, Erich Neumann, Carlos Byington, among others, to clarify the development of the ego and of consciousness in its articulation with the whole of personality from the beginning to the end of life.

Therefore, the term "narcissism" is not widely used by Jung; it is found only four times in his work (JUNG, 2011b, p. 482) and in three of them it is used with critical reference to Freud's work. In *Psychological Types*, the term is used when Jung is explaining the definition of *soul image* (soulful image). He says that when there is a projection of the anima, "an absolute affective attachment to the object arises" (JUNG, 1991, par. 844). If the soul content that asks for passage is not projected, "a state of relative unsuitability is created that Freud described in part as narcissism" (JUNG, idem). This means that when the projection on an external object has not occurred, the progression of psychic energy, which aims at adaptation to the external world, ceases and it starts to regress, turning towards the individual's internal world. It is to this regression

of psychic energy that Jung refers here with the term narcissism.

In a lecture given in 1924 called "The Student's Love Problem", speaking about the various meanings that can be attributed to the word love, Jung writes: "The word love needs to be further amplified in order to cover all the perversions of sexuality. There is an incestuous love, an onanistic self-love that deserves the name of narcissism" (JUNG, 2012b, § 204). It is clear in this passage the pathological meaning that he, like Freud, attributed to the term. In another text called "The Current State of Psychotherapy", from 1934, the term narcissism is used, among other psychoanalytical terms, to weave a harsh criticism of Freudian theory.

Freud is based with frenetic one-sidedness on sexuality, concupiscence or, in a word, on the "pleasure principle". Everything revolves around the question whether someone can do what they would like. "Repression", "sublimation", "regression", "narcissism", "incest", "satisfaction of desires" etc. are mere concepts and points of view related to the drama of the "pleasure principle". It even seems that in this doctrine the concupiscence of human nature has been elevated to the fundamental principle of its psychology (JUNG, 2012b, par. 340).

Only when it deals with the phenomenon of transference through the engravings of the alchemical text *Rosarium Philosophorum* does Jung employ the term in another way. He uses the expression "the devil of narcissism". This is interesting, because what might initially seem like a criticism of this term again, which for him was perhaps so connected to Freud and his theory, turns out to be a kind of ear pulling that this "devil" (or *dāimôn*) gives to an ego that does not perceive the needs of the soul. In this sense, it attests to the "necessity" of narcissism, of turning to oneself and meeting one's own demands.

Despite the apparently pejorative expression, it places itself against the unfavorable connotation attributed to the term:

The conscious, although not identifying with the unconscious tendency, confronts itself with it and take it into account, in one way or another, to play your role in the life of the individual, however difficult this may be. If the unconscious does not express itself in some way, through words, action, restlessness, suffering, consideration, resistance, the old split reappears, with all the often-unpredictable consequences that the contempt of the unconscious can bring. If, instead, the concessions to the unconscious are excessive, an inflation of the personality, in the positive or negative sense, will occur. Whatever the situation, it will always be an internal and external conflict: one of the birds has already learned to fly, the other, not yet. The doubt is as follows: on the one hand, one is debatable, on the other, one must be against. Everyone would like to escape this situation, certainly uncomfortable, but only to find out later that what was left behind were themselves. To live running away from oneself brings only bitterness, and to live with oneself requires a series of Christian virtues, which, in this case, we must have in relation to ourselves. These virtues are patience, love, faith, hope, and humility. It is important to benefit others with them, there is no doubt about it, but soon the **devil of narcissism** comes, pats us on the back and says: “Bravo! Well done!” And since this is a great psychological truth, it must be reversed in relation to so many other people, so that the devil has something to reproach. But if we must have these virtues for ourselves, does that make us happy? What if I am myself the recipient of my own gifts, if I am myself the least among my brothers whom I must

welcome within myself? What if I must recognize that I need my own patience, of my love, of my faith and even of my humility? That the devil, my opponent, the one who always contradicts me in everything, is myself? Can we really stand ourselves? You must not do to others what you would not do to yourself. And this is true for evil as well as good. [...] It was taken from John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, the verse I used as an epigraph in the introduction: “*Bellica pax, vulnus dulce, suave malum*” (a warlike peace, a sweet wound, a soft evil). With these words, the ancient alchemist formulates the quintessence of his experience. I could add nothing to the incomparable simplicity and synthesis of these words. They contain all that the self can claim for itself from opus. They clarify the darkness and paradox of human life. To submit and abandon oneself to the fundamental antagonism of human nature means to accept the tendencies that intersect themselves in the psychism (JUNG, 2012c, par. 522-3) (my emphasis).

What Jung raises in this passage of his work is fundamental: consciousness must consider the manifestations and tendencies of the unconscious; otherwise, it will reap harmful consequences. “Totality” for the great majority of people is restricted to consciousness. Many do not have the vaguest idea of the existence of “something” we call unconscious and of its enormous power. What manifests itself as a symptom, as an annoyance, and which often refers to old pains, events, our psychic wounds, is the insistence of something unknown (unconscious) in signaling that “something is out of order” as the song of Caetano Veloso says. Not observing this signaling hurts us in one way or another, is a neglect we commit against ourselves. Obviously, during a lifetime, this is inevitable since it is the ordinary dialogue between two instances – conscience and unconscious. But the observation of we –

in all aspects, physical, emotional, intellectual, social etc. – is something that demands, beyond the Christian virtues pointed out by Jung, discipline, training, exercise. In fact, this is a requirement for us to “apply” these virtues. Exercising patience, love, humility is an enormous task. To have faith and hope in our days and in our country, in ourselves and in relation to our neighbor, is sometimes quite difficult. But here, the rule of survival applies: when the stewardess of an airplane advises what to do in case of emergency, she explains that, in case of depressurization of the aircraft, oxygen masks will automatically fall on our seats and that we must put them on our faces before helping other people. If we are not alive, we will not be able to help anyone.

It seems possible that Jung did not use the term narcissism frequently because he associated it with psychoanalysis and because he found another way to talk about the issues surrounding this subject. These are issues that deserved your attention, but from different points of view. Schwartz-Salant clarifies:

The term narcissism appeared early in psychoanalytic theory, and it did so in a particularly pejorative way. Initially, it indicated self-love in a pathological degree and an associated impenetrability, carrying a pessimistic therapeutic prognosis. Being a narcissist was, in fact, being bad. It was a judgment according to which the person was not only turned towards himself but was also out of reach. This decree of psychoanalytic thinking extended to meditation, introversion, and creative fantasy, which is why it hardly comes as a surprise that Jung rarely uses the term (1995, p. 9).

From this clarification, it is evident that certain Jung’s placements have been poorly received and misunderstood, and still are. How can we attend to the “necessary” Christian virtues in relation to others and apply them to oursel-

ves? And how to apply them without reflection, introversion, and fantasy? Common sense might say: “But this is outrageous selfishness (narcissism!); only selfish people (narcissists!) dedicate love, patience, faith, humility to themselves! What we learn in the family, in religions, in ‘good manners’ is that we must think of ‘the others’, be charitable with them”. And then, we are left with Jung and his theory of ‘individualists’ and narcissism, the blows he suffered and his wounds relegated to an extremely dark area that should not be stimulated, cared for, at the risk of becoming extremely focused on ourselves and our interests and losing sight of the other.

But, as the myth shows us, we must consider both Narcissus and Echo, and the difficulty lies on both sides of this same psychological dynamic that is the relationship with the other. Now, this is one of the main problems (symptoms) of contemporary society: being individualistic, not caring about the other. It stimulates and applauds the exposure (thousands of photos shared by social networks), the “success”, the power, immersed in a broth of joy, ecstasy, parties, travels, condemning what is thought to be different from me, from my opinions, beliefs and postures. What is different is boring, perhaps depressed, the criticized “doing nothing”. We see an individualism, a narcissism (pejoratively speaking) in these behaviors and postures. How to take care of the body, of success, to be good, charitable, to be able to travel, to buy my desires? There is a difficulty to understand that we need to take care of ourselves. Not only take care of the body to meet the standards of beauty and health echoing the expectations of most. To take care of the psyche, the soul and its longings, the dark and hidden parts that often wake us up in the middle of the dawn in shock. This “individualism” is empty, it is not an attentive and reflective look at we, it is a “not seeing”.

Some religions preach goodness, charity, tolerance of others which, if well employed and developed, will bring due reciprocity and a secure place in heaven. But what should I do with

my anger, envy, pain, jealousy? What should I do with my hunger? Preaching the primacy of “neighbor” over ourselves has not worked. Between the four walls of the analyst’s office is where we hear the wailing, the pain, is where the vulnerability of each one stubbornly appears even under intense protest. I think that this is a fine line to understand and that it involves the concept of ‘other’ that we adopt. There is an “other” outside of us, other human beings with whom we inhabit this world. But there are also “others” within us who inhabit different worlds and who are potentially being developed. How can I contemplate the “external” other if I am not able to at least recognize another “internal” one? Most people have real panic at glimpsing something that is of the order of the strange, the unknown, the out of control, and that shakes their idea of themselves. To take care, therefore, is a difficult task, rather thorny... and implies a certain introversion. Knowing human nature involves innumerable paradoxes: what is good can turn out to be bad, the pleasurable can become pain, control unveils itself in intense chaos. “The ambivalence of the archetype is well known from Jung’s research. And this ambivalence, as we have seen, is precisely the main characteristic of narcissism” (SCHWARTZ-SALANT, 1995, p. 45).

A warlike peace, a sweet wound, a gentle evil is the paradox that the self-experiences in a process of amplification of consciousness in which accommodation is never totally possible and the restlessness, bothers and impels it to move forward.

Here we can return to the question of the narcissism of small differences. If the consciousness arises from an unconscious inertia and the complex of the ego develops from the transcendent function that intermediates its relationship with the Self throughout life, we understand that narcissism is archetypically based (MONTELLANO, 1996). Thus, narcissism of small differences. However, the impulse to relate, to desire what is different, would lead us to the possibility of accepting otherness, of engaging with the internal

and external other and their differences according to the system of values and the amplification of each one’s consciousness. These differences that take me away from the other for fear of what is different and that can manifest themselves through prejudice, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, machismo etc., remain to the extent that these narcissistic aspects remain unconscious and/or dark. Difference can cause fascination, but also envy, repulsion, shame, strangeness. To perceive what the difference of the other causes in me, takes me from the usual perception, from a certain automatism that is equivalent different to bad. This attentive consideration of what is different and what provokes in each one of us, can lead us to perceive that each difference is a different path of individuation in the other and perhaps also in me. To look inside and perceive what I feel and think about difference is a desirable and necessary reflection.

Jung wrote clearly about what he understood by reflection:

The term “reflection” should not be understood as a simple act of thinking, but as an attitude. Reflection is an attitude of prudence in human freedom, in the face of the need of the laws of nature. As the word “reflection” indicates, that is, “backward inclination”, reflection is a spiritual act in the opposite sense of natural development; that is, a stopping, trying to remember what has been seen, putting oneself in relation and in confrontation with what has just been witnessed. Reflection, therefore, must be understood as an awareness (JUNG, 2011a, par. 235, note 9) (my emphasis).

Jung defends that “the psychic factors that determine human behavior are mainly instincts as motivating forces of the psychic process” (JUNG, 2002, par. 233) and lists five instincts: hunger, sexuality, impulse to action, reflection and creativity. For him, the instincts in the human

being, differently from what happens in animals, suffer a psychification and can, occasionally, “be without their most essential characteristic which is the compulsivity” by the modification forged in the encounter with the psychic data (JUNG, 2002, par. 235). The instinct can respond in a specifically human way to certain situations.

But like everything in the psyche, instinct has a potential for pathological expression. Anything too much or too little can bring imbalance. Narcissus, when he sees himself reflected in the waters of the fountain of Thespieae, falls in love with his own image. He offends the god Eros for not connecting, not relating with another. Instead, he connects to himself, to his reflection, in an intrapsychic incest where the psychic energy does not move towards anything other than the beautiful image reflected in the source. Narcissus does not eat, does not sleep, does not relate, does not think about anything else and surrenders to death.

Narcissus would indicate this pathological development in the instinct of reflection: the activity of reflection (turning to oneself) dominates and excludes the need for nourishment, for common sexuality, for activity, for the entrance of any new thought or impulse (BRANDÃO, 1989, p. 184).

To consider carefully the other - internal or external - and to reflect on what I feel and think is not something easy and automatic. Jung said that “[...] compulsivity is replaced by a certain freedom, and predictability by relative unpredictability” (JUNG, 2002, par. 241). Freedom and unpredictability are too frightening for the conscience that always prefers the known, the predictable and therefore the comfortable. The process of individuation and the analytical process are a work against nature and the effort necessary for a transformation through conscious intervention is immense. If this effort does not occur, the process follows naturally, in the absence of conscious intervention, as a destiny. This is precisely

what occurs in the myth of Narcissus, his destiny had already been prophesied, “he would only live if he did not see himself”. The effort to be made is in function of the fact that individuation is a “work” and not a “destiny” prophesied by the symptom, by neurosis, by psychosis. It does not matter the size of the wound; it matters what we can do with it and from it. The so-called narcissism of small differences is too important not to be considered theoretically and experientially. It is the cause of war, violence, abuse and all kinds of individual and collective pain and can only be treated by and according to the development of the conscience of each one of us.

2. Eros, god of connections

If the paradox is inherent in the process of amplification of consciousness and reflection is the necessary tool in this process, what is the fundamental ingredient, also paradoxical, that we need so that the ‘recipe’ for this amplification does not disappear? Eros, love.

In the story of Narcissus, narrated by the Greek mythographer Canon (about 30 B.C.), the young man is described as ‘extremely beautiful, but proud towards Eros and those who loved him’. Here is the great ‘hamartia’ of Narcissus who, like Hippolytus, surpassed the métron (which Liriope feared) and, encased in his beauty, commits a hybris, a violence against Eros, against love-object and against erotic involvement with the other (BRANDÃO, 1989, p. 180).

We have, then, a relationship in the myth itself between the mortal Narcissus and the divine Eros. This also occurs in the psyche: it is through the relationship with another, the erotic relationship (promoted by Eros) with another internal or external that we can consummate something. From this, we have the paradoxical character of wounds which are simultaneously an obstacle and an opening for psychic development and the path of indi-

viduation. If we become narcissistically paralyzed, “proud of Eros”, without recognizing those who want to relate to us - be they people, dreams, symbols, symptoms, events - we commit a hybrid, an offense to Eros, we go against the possibility of psychic development, against our soul.

There is a song by Renato Russo, called "Monte Castelo" (MANFREDINI JUNIOR, 1989), which in his lyrics joins a poem by Camões with a passage from the Bible and which can be associated with Jung's quote about the virtues reproduced above. Let us see:

Even if I spoke the language of men
And spoke the language of angels
Without love I would be nothing

It's just love, it's just love
Who knows what's true
Love is good, it doesn't want evil
Doesn't feel jealous or envious

Love is the fire that burns unseen
It's a wound that hurts and you don't feel
It's a disgruntled contentment
It's pain that madden without hurting

Even if I spoke the language of men
And spoke the language of angels
Without love I would be nothing

It's a no more than wishful thinking
It's lonely walking among us
It's a not to be content
It's taking care that you win by losing

It's a willingness to be arrested
It's serving the winner
It's a loyalty killer.
So contrary to you is the same love

I'm awake and everyone's asleep
Everybody sleeps, everybody sleeps
Now I see in part
But then we'll see face to face

It's just love, it's just love
Who knows what is true
Even if I spoke the language of men
And spoke the language of angels
Without love I would be nothing
(MANFREDINI JUNIOR, 1989).

What the poet highlights is the paradoxical nature of love and its necessity for human life: without love I would be nothing. The impossibility of “being” without love speaks to us of the essentiality of this “ingredient” in our lives. The poet, already in the first stanza, refers us to Plato's “Banquet” (PLATÃO, 1991) in which love is an intermediary (*dáimôn*) between gods and men, as if a genius or an angel: “Even if I spoke the language of men/ And spoke the language of angels/ Without love I would be nothing”. It is also a form of knowledge in that, still according to Socrates/Plato, it is love for the beautiful and aspires to wisdom, like a philosopher. Being a philosopher is between wisdom and ignorance: “It is only love/knowing what is true”. The poem brings the contradiction so inherent to individuation. Those who have ever loved in life cannot disagree with the contradiction contained in each verse of the Portuguese poet: wanting and not wanting, being content and not content, being alone and filled with emotion, being loyal to what makes us suffer, feeling pain and pleasure, being insane by a pain that does not hurt concretely.

The idea brought by Plato of love, Eros, as *dáimôn* speaks to us of a very ancient characteristic of the Greek popular religion which is “the belief in supernatural spirits a little less anthropomorphized than the Olympian [gods] [...] a certain *dáimôn* is linked to a person at birth and determines, for good or evil, his destiny” (BRANDÃO, 2000, vol. I, p. 278) Thus, love can be its good or its bad, “it is to have with those who kill us, loyalty / so contrary to you is the same Love.”

We do not speak here of romantic love, between two people, but of all the kinds of love that a person needs throughout life and that

are essential to him or her: maternal care, professional recognition, encouragement to learn, friendship, spirituality. Renato Russo amalgamates the sonnet of Camões and chapter 13 of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (BÍBLIA SAGRADA, 2015). They are poems from ancient times, archetypal paradox of love.

The First Epistle to the Corinthians (BÍBLIA SAGRADA, 2015) is a letter of the Apostle Paul to the Christians of the city of Corinth, in present day Greece. It is a letter of advice and guidance, as a “manual” of how a Christian should behave. One of the most famous passages of the letter is the one that talks about the importance of love:

ings. And though I had the gift of prophecy, and knew all mysteries and all knowledge, and yet had all faith, so that I could carry the mountains, and have no love, I would be nothing [...] not unrighteous, but unrighteous with the truth. All suffers, all believes, all hopes, all endures. Love never fails; but if there are prophecies, they will be annihilated; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will disappear [...] (BÍBLIA SAGRADA, 2015, 1 Corinthians 13).

In some translations, as in the Jerusalem Bible, we find the word “charity” in the place of love because it is *agape*, Greek, charitable love. According to the Scripture, the source of *agape* is in God, it is the very nature of God and it is also found in the Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit who pours it into the hearts of Christians. It is a love “based on sincerity and humi-

lity, on forgetfulness and self-giving, on service and mutual support, to be proved by acts and to observe the commandments of the Lord, becoming the effective faith” (Cf. BÍBLIA SAGRADA, 2015, p. 2009, note e). Among the early Christians, *agape* was the meal with which the Eucharistic rite was celebrated. In other words, this love is communion, from Latin *communiōne*: mutual participation, a meal, food for the soul. We can think of the rapprochement between man’s relationship with God, advised by Paul, the relationship between the ego and the unconscious, or its organizing center, the Self. The definition of the *agape* contains, ideally, the necessary ingredients for the process of analysis: sincerity with oneself, humility to recognize mistakes, forget or leave in the past what I cannot modify, recognize my gifts, work (much!) and sustain myself and the demands of the soul, prove my changes through my actions and observe the “commandments” of the unconscious, becoming the effective faith. To be charitable and loving to oneself, even if the “others” have not been. But all this is difficult. It is a process that begins with birth and ends with death.

Here we have the key given by Jung to care for the wounds: the virtues – patience, love, faith, hope, and humility. We need to know ourselves well enough to perceive our own demand for love, for attention; only in this way will we be able to receive our own gifts, which will be the balm to treat the wounds inflicted by another or by ourselves, the other within us. ■

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Resumo

Feridas psíquicas, Jung e o narcisismo

O artigo tem como meta pensar as feridas psíquicas e o narcisismo no campo da psicologia analítica e sua importância no processo de análise. O conceito de narcisismo e seu surgimento na psicanálise freudiana difere da forma como o tema é tratado por Jung; observamos como sua ótica sensível e profunda nos auxilia a refletir sobre as feridas psíquicas. ■

Palavras-chave: Feridas psíquicas, Narcisismo, Jung, Energia psíquica, Eros

Resumen

Heridas psíquicas, Jung y narcisismo

El artículo tiene por objeto pensar en las heridas psíquicas y el narcisismo en el campo de la psicología analítica y su importancia en el proceso de análisis. El concepto de narcisismo y su surgimiento en el psicoanálisis freudiano difieren de la forma en que Jung trata el tema; observamos cómo su perspectiva sensible y profunda nos ayuda a reflexionar sobre las heridas psíquicas. ■

Palabras clave: Heridas psíquicas, Narcisismo, Jung, Energía psíquica, Eros

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