

# The Reality of the soul in the thought of Léon Bonaventure

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## Abstract

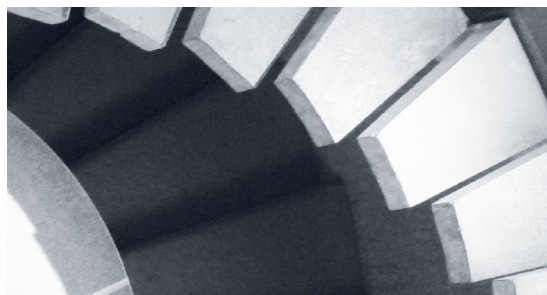
The article is part of the 2021 postdoctoral research Contribution to the history of analytical psychology through the eyes of Léon Bonaventure based on interviews with him and his texts. The insertion of the analytical psychology in Brazil through the pioneers Nise da Silveira in mental health, Pethö Sandor with the physio-psychic integration and Léon Bonaventure at the clinic empha-

sizing the reality of the soul reflects the interdisciplinary dialogue present in the construction of the conception. Psychotherapist, researcher and editor responsible for the transmission of Jungian work in Brazil, based on the existence of the soul per se - subject and object of psychological knowledge - Bonaventure highlights it as a matrix of experiences, presents the way of knowing it, discusses the presence of the typology in the authors' production. He thematizes the notion of the Self, based on the writings of the mystic Teresa of Ávila and compares the understanding of the soul and its center to that of Jung. As a "gardener of the soul", he approached it as experience and reality, in a symbolic attitude. ■

**Keywords**  
analytical psychology, Léon Bonaventure, reality of the soul, Self, archetype.

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## The Reality of the soul in the thought of Léon Bonaventure

### Introduction

The construction of analytical psychology took place over several decades and in interaction with diverse areas of knowledge, characterizing it by its openness to interdisciplinary debate. There are countless contributions from other disciplines to the elaboration of the concepts of psychic energy, archetype, symbol, synchronicity, amplification, etc. Jung established dialogues with researchers from different fields of knowledge, among which we can highlight Eugen Bleuler, Sigmund Freud, Théodore Flournoy, William James, Hans Schmid-Guisan, Henrich Zimmer, Karl Kerényi, Victor White, Rudolf Otto, Richard Wilhelm, Wolfgang Pauli, among others.<sup>1</sup>The breadth presented by analytical psychology can also be evidenced in the interdisciplinary meetings in which Jung participated in Eranos (QUAGLINO; ROMANO; BERNARDINI, 2007).

We can ask whether the insertion of analytical psychology in Brazil reflects this diversity. At the beginning, without a doubt. Jung's work began to be systematically studied after Nise da Silveira's work in the field of mental health (MELO, 2001, 2005; SILVEIRA, 1981, 1992). However, we must also list calatonia, body work elaborated by Pethö Sándor (SPACCAQUERCHE, 2012), and the emphasis that Léon Bonaventure gave to the reality of the soul, addressed in the books *Psicologia e Vida Mística* (BONAVENTURE, 1975) and *Miscellanea* (BONAVENTURE, 2021). These three pioneers of analytical psychology in Brazil (MOTA, 2010)

created distinct marks and deserve to be studied in their specificities.

When we carried out a survey on the memory and history of analytical psychology, in early 2021, we took into account that Léon Bonaventure was the only one of these pioneers still alive<sup>2</sup>. So, we proposed that he carry out a series of interviews, perhaps because he sensed that he was at the end of his life, he accepted the invitation, and, in addition to his testimony, he provided us with additional information. Leon Bonaventure's writings (1975, 2021a, 2021b) referring to the reality of the soul served as the basis for the elaboration of this article, being compared with the six recorded interviews.<sup>3</sup> That were filmed and a video was produced from them. This important historical material comes after he kept himself private for 36 years, when he gave a statement about his professional life<sup>4</sup> (BONAVENTURE, 1985).

In our interviews, Léon Bonaventure addressed several subjects: his childhood, his years of study, his training in Analytical Psychology, his relationships with his therapists and with European masters – Heinrich Fierz, Marie-Louise von Franz and Carl Meier. Analyst training took place at Instituto C.G. Jung, from Zurich, Switzerland, completed in 1970. On the occasion, Heinrich Fierz recalled that Léon Bonaventure had always dedicated himself to gardening, characterizing him as a gardener of the soul (BONAVENTURE, 2021d). Those years of study were fundamental and definitely marked him, especially the anal-

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<sup>1</sup> Here are some references to the debates with these authors: Beebe e Falzeder (2013); Ceccon e Holanda (2012); Jung (2012); Jung; Kerényi (2011); Jung e Wilhelm (2013); Lammers e Cunningham (2010); McGuire (1976); Meier (2001); Melo e Resende (2019); Resende e Melo (2018; 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Léon Bonaventure was born on September 10, 1934, in Verviers, Belgium, and died on November 6, 2021, in São Paulo, Brazil.

<sup>3</sup> The interviews took place at his house, in São Paulo, in the first half of 2021, totaling 4h 23min of footage.

<sup>4</sup> This interview was again published in a recent edition BONAVENTURE, 2021a).

ysis and supervision processes, which not only defined his vocation but also placed him on the path of observation, reflection and practical-theoretical guidance of analytical psychology.

Léon Bonaventure is part of the second generation of Jungians. He had already been practicing psychotherapy in Europe for some years when he arrived in Brazil, on March 22, 1967. Soon, he started working as an analyst. function he practiced until his death. He also worked as an editor: for five decades, he coordinated the translation and release of Jung's Collected Works in Brazil and, for forty years, he coordinated<sup>5</sup> the collection *Amor e Psique*, publishing, in which he published Jungian, foreign and Brazilian authors. The exercise of these activities was based on the image by which, in our interviews, he defined himself: "I am a war boy. I wasn't a war boy, I'm still a war boy". This perception was already present before:

Two moments, among others, marked my life. The first was my childhood. The almost everyday image of prisoners deported on trains going to Nazi Germany. I used to live in Belgium, close to the German border. I asked myself: why is that? And there was no answer. Everyone had the same question on their lips, but there was no answer. Nobody could give me a valid answer. Later, my studies in psychology and philosophy at the University of Louvain gave me sketches of philosophical answers to my question about human suffering. But they never satisfied me (BONAVENTURE, 2021c, p. 69-70).

The incomprehension of human suffering – collective, intense –, witnessed early on, is a fundamental milestone in his psychic life and one that helped him chart his path. He considers this first question, without an answer, the

“yeast” for the inner search that continued throughout his life. At the age of 87, the war boy said that it was still possible to hear the sounds of bombing clearly.

In this sense, Léon Bonaventure states that the four years of intense religious experience among the Dominicans are characterized as the other milestone of his life trajectory: “For a while, an answer came to meet my search, or rather, an orientation was given to me. indicated. But the path they followed was not mine. It was the analytical experience that opened the door to my interiority” (BONAVENTURE, 2021c, p. 70). Contrary to the excess of intellectualism of the Dominicans, the encounter with analytical psychology paved the way for the confrontation with human suffering, which begins with the suffering of each individual. For Léon Bonaventure, it is extremely important to understand the meaning of pain. The boy's pain was the therapist's beginning, Chiron's touch (GROESBECK, 1983).

In this article, we are going to present the theme that he considered the most important for the role of therapist: the reality of the soul. Then, as a related theme, we will address the archetype of the Self. The ideas, conceptions, way of thinking and feeling that will be exposed correspond to the way he approached the subject throughout his life. He states that “the soul is the interiority of everything that is alive” (BONAVENTURE, 2021a, p. 72), considering it as Jung's most important discovery and that “it exists per se” (p. 77). The soul presents itself in images and can be evoked, cultivated, cared for, even to heal itself. The discovery of the soul opens the doors to the development of interiority, because it is the interior life itself.

### **Soul and image**

For Léon Bonaventure (2021c), the reality of the soul is distinct from matter and mind, a thought that finds support in the conceptions of Jung (2011a), for whom there is the objectivity of tangible things (*esse in re*), there is the ideal formula (*esse in intellectu*) and there is the living

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<sup>5</sup> He was part of the team that included Maria Elci Spaccaquerche and Fr. Ivo Storniolo.

psychological process (*esse in anima*), designated by the term fantasy. Taking into account these propositions and Jung's soul dialogues, recorded in the Black Books (JUNG, 2020) and The Red Book (JUNG, 2009), matters, above all, the reality and meaning of the soul. Jung's (2011b) hermeneutics aims to communicate this type of experience with images and try to understand their meaning, through methodological procedures (reductive-causal and synthetic-constructive), enabling the differentiation of psychic contents (JUNG, 2011c). In 1914, Jung (2015) wrote about the experience of living an intense flow of imagination, which had begun a year earlier and which changed the course of his work:

At that time I was still totally caught up in the spirit of the times and thought differently about the human soul. I thought and spoke a lot about the soul, I knew many erudite words about it, I analyzed it and made it an object of science. I did not take into account that my soul cannot be the object of my judgment and knowledge; rather, my judgment and knowledge are objects of my soul.

I had to recognize that what I previously called my soul was not really my soul, but a dead doctrinal system. So I had to speak to my soul as something distant and unknown, which has no existence through me, but through which I exist (p. 117).

At the beginning of his professional career, Jung believed himself to have a soul, which was equivalent to seeing himself as its owner and master. Until he responded to an internal call: faced with a situation of personal crisis, inner uncertainty and disorientation, in which the emotional burden intensified, he decided to pay careful attention to what he felt and to his fantasies, in an attempt to learn about the Self. same. He had few certainties in the psychic field: he recognized the existence of an autonomous, involuntary, non-conscious psychic activity, which

he decided to hear and see, without any a priori conception (JUNG, 2009, 2020).

During breaks at work, he began to play with the stones in the lake, making small constructions and, little by little, he began to record the fantasies that occurred to him and that were triggered continuously. When he obtained an internal response, he realized that there was a living instance, greater and much broader than himself, to which he was connected, with whom he could dialogue and through which he became enchanted with existence. He realized that he didn't have it, he was just starting to explore a path of connection with the soul, which was expressed through images (JUNG, 2009, 2020). In this long journey, he realized in himself what he had learned from Pierre Janet – the possibility of an individual presenting more than one personality – and felt the need to specify the concepts:

In the course of my investigations into the structure of the unconscious I was forced to make a conceptual distinction between soul and psyche. By psyche I mean the totality of psychic processes, both conscious and unconscious. By soul, however, I understand a determined and limited complex of functions that we could characterize as "personality" (JUNG, 2011a, p. 424).

This theoretical inflection point occurred from the expression and confrontation with the images of the unconscious. Subsequently, this experience served as the basis for theoretical elaboration (HILLMAN; SHAMDASANI, 2015), that is, the confrontation with the unconscious is characterized as the foundation of Jung's mature work. This statement is corroborated by Léon Bonaventure (2011c):

The discovery of the Self (...) imposed itself on him after having given free space to the chaotic experience of the uncon-

scious process, without knowing where it would lead him. After that experience, Jung dedicated forty years of his life to the elaboration of what he had lived (p. 184-185).

With the intention of reflecting on the soul and the ways in which we can know it, Léon Bonaventure (2021a, 2021b) argues that this type of approach can only occur through itself. In the words of Jung (2011d): “The soul is the starting point of all human experiences and all the knowledge we acquire ends up leading to it” (p. 71). In this way, it is, at the same time, object and subject of psychology and therein lies the great difficulty of elaborating this type of science (JUNG, 2011e). Every production of the soul researcher will always be a confession of his own psychological attitude (extroverted or introverted) and of his functional type (thinking, feeling, sensation, intuition). The subject of knowledge inevitably imprints his perspective on what he seeks to know. With that, neutrality is discarded: “Our way of being conditions our way of seeing. Other people having a different psychology see and express other things in a different way” (JUNG, 2011f, p. 330).

These conceptions of Jung’s do not point, however, to a self-absorbed subject, as the soul can only be generated through personal, family, friendships and even psychotherapeutic relationships. Psychotherapy would therefore aim to cultivate the soul. But, despite the discovery of the empirical reality of the soul, most people live without paying attention to the contents of the internal world (BONAVENTURE, 2021d). Teresa of Ávila’s attitude towards the states of the soul is completely different, as she dedicated her life to recognizing them, referring to its center through various symbols, among which the interior castle stands out. The movement around these images creates an image axis that forms a spiral path, favoring reflection at increasingly different levels, called by the term logic of the soul (BONAVENTURE, 1975).

### The center and logic of the soul

Léon Bonaventure (2021b) considered the Self as Jung’s second great discovery. In his doctoral research (BONAVENTURE, 1975), guided by Roger Bastide, he significantly developed the understanding of this notion that presents the paradoxical qualities of the archetype, as described by Jung (2011g): “sufficiently determined to give an idea of the human totality and insufficiently determined to express the indescribable and indefinable character of the totality” (p. 30). The task is to relate to the inner contents without, however, identifying with them (JUNG, 2011c). The attitude of overcoming polarities, among which the cleavage between the positivist approach that prevails in psychology and the metaphysical projection of religion, is present in the various images of the Self: centralization, quaternity, mandala, Anthropos. The central archetype is the most intimate and personal thing we have, being also of a collective and transpersonal nature: “The important thing is that, over time, the discovery of the psyche and the Self becomes a living reality in the daily lives of men. and, like a mountain, be a mountain, and like a river, a river” (BONAVENTURE, 2021c, p. 187).

The archetypal image of Anthropos, for example, can be represented as a cosmic figure, such as the great man present in the I Ching or the Adamic and Son of Man images of the Judeo-Christian tradition, etc. Names are secondary and can take many forms depending on culture and time. What is important is the expression and recognition of something greater than the individual. Faced with situations of personal and/or collective disorientation, these images can symbolize the unity that indicates the possibility of mutual recognition and life based on a new humanism. The image or reference to Anthropos establishes a space for the expression, relationship and habitation of the Self (BONAVENTURE, 2021a, 2021e).

The experience of opposites can happen in a harrowing way or from the conciliation created in the relationship with the Self, being the

possibility of inaugurating a time of overcoming the duality between spirit and instinct, body and soul, conscious and unconscious. In this way, the hegemony of the ego, based on the Cartesian *cogito*, is questioned and perhaps dethroned, opening space for the democratic experience of aspects of the totality of the Self (BONAVENTURE, 2021a). When addressing the reality of the soul, Jung (2011a) describes the Self as follows:

As long as the Self is only the center of my conscious field, it is not identical with the whole of my psyche, but only one complex among other complexes. Therefore I distinguish between I and Self. The I is the subject only of my consciousness, but the Self is the subject of my whole, also of the unconscious psyche. In this sense, the Self would be an (ideal) magnitude that would enclose the I within it. The self likes to appear in unconscious fantasy as a superior or ideal personality, as do, for example, Goethe's Faust and Nietzsche's Zarathustra (p. 444-445).

The relationship between the Earth and the sun can be compared, according to Jung (2011c), with the bond between the I and the Self. According to Léon Bonaventure (2021f), the notion of the Self promotes a radical change in the conception of modern psychology, which was identified as the psychology of the Self and with aspects inherent to consciousness. The totality of the psyche encompasses consciousness and the unconscious field, having the Self as its center, which cannot be known directly(,) but only experienced and felt by consciousness through symbols that appear in dreams and daydreams (JUNG, 2011a). The ability that consciousness has to recognize unconscious psychic contents makes it possible, but does not guarantee, the confrontation with these images. This confrontation requires a symbolic attitude, in which the pairs of opposites of a given phenomenon

are taken into account, promoting dynamism and an attempt to unite, indicating a flow towards consciousness and the apprehension of its meaning (JUNG, 2011c).

According to Léon Bonaventure (2021f), the path to the Self involves aspects of consciousness, of the unconscious – personal and collective –, physical and physiological, which can be perceived and confronted, configuring a process of cultivation and connection with the soul. Self-awareness is the first step towards the development of interiority, which leads to the individuation process or is already the process itself. It is a movement around an axis, which characterizes the work of deepening in relation to the phenomena of the inner world. Each experience produces a state of soul that is given to us to know and generates life. The center is a variable and unique state of combination of the functions and faculties involved in each psychic situation, since, as a process, it is always changing in its vital experience.

From this relationship with the central archetype, there is an understanding of the unity of oneself and the unity of the world, simultaneously individual and cosmic, in which there is no longer an interior or exterior, since “the soul that has reached its center transcends categories of perception” (BONAVENTURE, 1975, p. 229). In overcoming the limits of the self, of his personal existence, the individual moves towards the center, which is an individual and universal reality. The roots of the self are found in the very center of man, and if they were cut he would be enclosed within the confines of his self. The Self, in turn, favors an expansion movement. According to Gerhard Adler (1979), the Self is characterized as a subject of transcendental cognition. It would therefore be like an unconscious center of understanding, a state of quasi-consciousness that is found in the unconscious field and emerges from it. In this way, Jung (2011d) describes the self as a “luminosity” surrounded by multiple “luminosities”, that is, by the unconscious as multiple consciousness.

This kind of unconscious cognition organ or this consciousness of the unconscious functions as a center of understanding and understanding, and can be observed in contents that emerge in dreams, fantasies or in historical records to be understood symbolically. Adler (1979) calls this cognitive quality unconscious logos. The Self, as a central archetype, can be understood as the goal of life, principle and basis for personality development. Léon Bonaventure (2021b) says that, due to the richness of meanings, it is always possible to develop many ideas about the archetype of the Self, indicating that the main references he found in his life “were, on the one hand, the work of Teresa de Ávila and, on the other, the testimony of the interiority of modern man, in its rich images that emerge in the silence of the night” (p. 196).

### Encounter with the archetype

Léon Bonaventure’s (1975) research on Teresa of Ávila is based on analogies between the experiences of the reality of the soul, the center of the soul and the symbolic language used by her, with certain dreams of her patients. Based on the solid Catholic formation he developed with the Dominicans, he found important similarities between mystical psychology and Jungian psychology. For him, the work of the saint, at least in *Interior Castle* (ÁVILA, 2014), spoke deeply to his own soul, feeling nourished: “One thing seems certain to us: the center, in mystical psychology, is analogously the same reality as the ‘Self’ in analytical psychology” (p. 234). Thus, it equates the center of the soul narrated by Teresa de Ávila and the Jungian notion of totality of the psyche (Self).

For Léon Bonaventure (1975), the soul is alive, a reality in constant transformation, because, when partially apprehended, it moves and changes. In this way, the subject is situated in different points of view, many times contradictory. This conception is extremely dynamic and changing, being able to enrich or impoverish, but it hardly remains static. For this dynamism to

occur, it is necessary to perform a true circumambulation operation (JUNG, 2011g) with a certain image in the center, and this makes it possible for consciousness to no longer be the same.

For Teresa de Ávila (2014), “we will never get to know each other” (p. 28). This proposition is, according to Léon Bonaventure (1975), similar to Jung’s posture of always remaining open to new knowledge about himself and the world, that is, mystical psychology and Jungian psychology have as their characteristic “the richness of a thought that is always open and welcoming” (p. 45). The mystique of interiority presents itself, for him, as appropriate “so that the soul can perceive the things of the soul” (BONAVENTURE, 1921a, p. 202). In this way, it is understood that the relationship with the center “is sometimes elusive, because the center is often known only as a hypothetical and mysterious reality, by virtue of being in the image of God” (BONAVENTURE, 1975, p. 103). The center always appears as a precious reality, with extremely difficult access. Although it is a priori a data, most of the time it remains neglected, almost or totally unknown and, therefore, ineffective, inoperative.

Léon Bonaventure (1975) found in Teresa de Ávila the path to be followed by the soul. Discovering the doors of the inner castle would be a great grace for the Carmelite saint (ÁVILA, 2014). In order to reach a system of true, original relationships, in which she can rediscover the unity of her center, Teresa of Ávila starts from a system of false relationships, dominated by externality, symbolized by the animals of the chthonic world: “the imagination wanders around the outskirts of the castle, suffering, surrounded by a thousand malignant and venomous reptiles” (p. 74). Little by little, however, from the flow of relationships that are formed, the realities of the soul are given and the center itself is realized, that is, it becomes aware of itself.

In analytical psychology, the different parts of the soul constitute the Self and are encompassed by it. Léon Bonaventure (1975) found that, by bringing together elements of the mystique of

interiority, he also brought elements of the Jungian view of the soul. The theme of the relationship between mystical psychology and Jungian psychology was studied in parallel with analyst training. This double formation was amalgamated and finds resonances in the period he spent among the Dominicans, in addition to leading him in the process of elaborating and trying to answer the question of his childhood. Those who engage in this type of search, with such a pressing emotional issue that evokes images, almost always make a circular or spiral movement that unfolds over time:

It is difficult to get rid of the impression in this case that the unconscious process moves in a spiral around a center, which (...) approaches slowly. In this process, the characteristics of the “center” become more and more clear. We could perhaps say inversely that the center – in itself unknowable – acts like a magnet on the material and disparate processes of the unconscious, capturing them little by little in its crystal web (JUNG, 2011g, p. 234).

Léon Bonaventure (1975) emphasizes the spiral movement around a center, in a process of circumambulation and relationship between the I and the Self, revealing a state of soul, that is, “the plurality of an inherent sense” (BONAVENTURE, 2021a, p. 180). In Teresa de Ávila (2014), this movement is equivalent to the route of the seven dwellings of the inner castle.

According to Léon Bonaventure (1975), Teresa of Ávila wrote in a state of prayer or ecstasy, conducive to the emergence of symbolic images with an archetypal basis. For him, the logic inherent in these images confirms that “Teresa felt the need to resort to such a plurality of symbols to describe the diversity and richness of one and only reality – the center” (p. 229). Teresa of Ávila inhabits this inner world and is, at the same time, inhabited by it, by the realities of that world. The portion of meaning that can be apprehended in

the dialogue established with the images is not due to a rational effort, but is inherent to the very movement established by the images, and it is up to consciousness to understand their language. The states of the soul that were described by Teresa de Ávila (2014) are important at all levels of relationships: with others, with the world, with the body, with the passions and with the empirical self.

The relationship between the inner castle and its dwellings correlates psychologically with how the soul center connects with its parts. In the work of Teresa de Ávila (2014), a set of symbols designates the center of the soul: gold, treasure, precious stone, oriental pearl, diamond, crystal, jewel, emerald, gold chest, kingdom, sky, fountain, tree of life, seventh abode, the most intimate of ourselves, living image of our Lord, Temple of God, among others. Each image reveals specific properties of the center, hence its plurality in unity.

As the different dwellings in the castle are linked to the centre, the symbols are both of the castle and the centre. The soul and the castle are the same thing: the celestial castle of the soul is the inner world itself, a world to be inhabited. This type of relationship creates the necessary conditions for the image of the outside world to coincide with that of the inside world, and the human being is the tissue that establishes the links to deal with both worlds. Léon Bonaventure (1975) observes that Teresa of Ávila’s mystical psychology, contrary to being identified with the portion called conscience, characterizes the whole man. In this sense, the importance of developing interiority means taking care of the soul, cultivating it (BONAVENTURE, 2021a, 2021b).

Léon Bonaventure’s encounter with the saint’s conceptions made him realize that updating the center of the soul is a necessary requirement to reach fullness, an aspect quite different from the desires and demands of the ego and instincts. In this way, she assumed for her life most of Teresa of Ávila’s vision of the soul: “With this research, it became evident that the center,



self-regulating in the microcosm, that each of us has, is not the ego. conscious (...) but that the great ordering center of our life is the archetype of the Center” (BONAVENTURE, 1921b, p. 195).

The center has a completely different nature from that of the passions and other psychic realities that can be perceived from it, which means that, in Teresa of Ávila, the manifestations of psychic life have as their nucleus the center of the soul, a true superior and sacred instance, both in his life and in his work. The syntheses that Léon Bonaventure (1975) elaborates about the central instance have this content: “In the midst of the diversity of all the realities of the soul, the center appears as the absolute reality, foundation of the psychic structure and spiritual life” (p. 230).

Although the symbols of the mansions and the castle were the basis of Teresa of Ávila’s thought, this double and important symbolism occupies, however, a secondary place in relation to that of the center of the soul, the seventh or principal abode (BONAVENTURE, 1975). In the saint’s elaborations, the center emerged with multiple functions: as an indicator of the path, as a light in the midst of ignorance, as compensation for the risks of personality disintegration and as a way of sustaining it in new ways of life.

The symbols mentioned by Teresa de Ávila (2014) remained alive and were not overcome, at least for Léon Bonaventure (1975), although several centuries separate the two authors – a mystic from the 16th century and a Jungian psychotherapist from the 20th century –, as there are a natural predisposition in the soul to create symbols, which concern the life of the psyche in its symbolic function, charged with keeping opposites together in a tensional synthesis.

### **Final considerations**

Driven by the attempt to understand human suffering and the reality of the soul, he found in Teresa de Ávila and in his training as a Jungian analyst the basis for understanding even the reality of the Self. The symbolic attitude towards the soul was present throughout his journey:

when writing his thesis, in his work as an editor, as a psychotherapist, in the articles he wrote. The soul is shrouded in mystery, it plunges its roots into the unknown, its core is in the deepest layer of the collective unconscious. To be perceived it takes a lot of attention and tuning the contact with internal phenomena. When you sharpen your listening and sensitivity, you realize that this work has no end, as it is a process with no finish line, just a continuous internal deepening.

Consciousness and the unconscious field form two systems that work in a compensatory way; the exercise of integration between them creates an intermediate space and favors the dialectical process. By means of a careful attitude towards unconscious phenomena one can arrive at knowledge of the soul. The concept of soul brings the fundamental relevance of attention to the inner world contained in the core of analytical psychology.

The soul is not an object that can be captured or defined. It is always in a process that tends towards the center. The relationship established with the Self, however, is elusive, always requiring new movements around the images produced. In addition, there is the understanding that analytical psychology has a historical foundation, among others, in the mystical psychology of Teresa of Ávila. The encounter with the work of the saint made it possible for Léon Bonaventure to approach the soul not as a construct, but as experience and reality, that is, by igniting a living archetype in him. Thus, he conceived that analytical psychology and mystical psychology have human fulfillment as their goal.

The encounter with the word of Teresa de Ávila paved the way for Léon Bonaventure to carry out several large-scale works: he committed himself to the preparation of the first Jungian association in Brazil, although he did not remain in it; as editor, he took care of the transmission of knowledge of Jung’s work in Brazil as well as texts by Jungian authors; worked as a psychotherapist; for 50 years he immersed himself in the study of the renaissance tapestry *The Lady*

and the Unicorn. He was a gardener of the soul, always in search of what Teresa of Ávila called the seventh home. Radically introverted and intuitive, he did not fit into certain institutional experiences, but he was one of those responsible for ensuring that Jung's books had a wide insertion among Brazilians and he considered that, in his work as editor, he made his contribution. In addition to being an editor, the war boy was also inserted in the Dominican environment, he was called a gardener of the soul, trained as an analyst and carried out this exercise throughout his life, as a researcher and Jungian therapist. The soul's experience goes through all these stages of life, but it also presupposes an arduous work of disidentification, summarized in his words:

In any living organism, when one observes life and its processes from the inside, we know that life begins in the undifferentiated one; a single cell in which everything is contained. Following a natural process of multiplication, diversification, integration and differentiation, the normal process is

a realization within the differentiated one itself, which is expressed, for example, in a beautiful fifty-year-old yellow ipe, flowering in September, in the middle of the field (BONAVENTURE, 2021d, p. 200).

From the perspective of the center, the individual and universal planes, the inner and outer lives, are inseparable. This important point in common that Léon Bonaventure found between the mystical psychology of Teresa of Ávila and the analytical psychology of Jung. Understanding the reality of the soul and the relationship between the I and the Self made it possible for Léon Bonaventure to become such a dedicated therapist and to have interfered in the lives of many who crossed his path, especially in his practice as a therapist. We hope that this article will contribute for his thought and its importance for the consolidation of analytical psychology in Brazil to be recognized by many others. ■

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## Resumo

### *A realidade da alma no pensamento de Léon Bonaventure*

*O artigo integra a pesquisa de 2021 de pós-doutorado “Contribuição à história da psicologia analítica pelo olhar de Léon Bonaventure”, baseada em entrevistas com esse autor e em seus textos. A inserção da psicologia analítica no Brasil por meio dos pioneiros Nise da Silveira, na saúde mental, Pethö Sandor, com a integração físiopsíquica e Léon Bonaventure, na clínica com ênfase na realidade da alma, reflete o diálogo interdisciplinar presente na construção da concepção. Psicoterapeuta, pesquisador e editor*

*responsável pela transmissão da obra de Jung no Brasil, firmado na existência da alma per se – sujeito e objeto do conhecimento psicológico – Bonaventure a vê como matriz das experiências, apresenta o modo de conhecê-la, discute a presença da tipologia nos textos. Tematiza a noção de Si-mesmo com base nos textos da mística Teresa de Ávila e compara a compreensão da alma e seu centro à de Jung. Como um “jardineiro da alma”, se aproximou dela como experiência e realidade, numa atitude simbólica. ■*

Palavras-chave: psicologia analítica, Léon Bonaventure, realidade da alma, Si-mesmo, arquétipo.

## Resumen

### *La realidad del alma en el pensamiento de Léon Bonaventure*

*El artículo integra la investigación de 2021 de posdoctorado “Contribución a la historia de la psicología analítica por la mirada de Léon Bonaventure, basada en entrevistas con él y en sus textos. La inserción de la psicología analítica en Brasil a través de los pioneros Nise da Silveira en la salud mental, Pethö Sandor con la integración físiopsíquica y Léon Bonaventure en la clínica con el énfasis en la realidad del alma, refleja el diálogo interdisciplinario presente en la construcción de la concepción. Psicoterapeuta, investigador y editor*

*responsable por la transmisión de la obra de Jung en Brasil, firmado en la existencia del alma per se - sujeto y objeto del conocimiento psicológico - Bonaventure la ve como matriz de las experiencias, presenta el modo de conocerla, discute la presencia de la tipología en los textos. Tematiza la noción del Sí-mismo con base en los textos de la mística Teresa de Ávila y compara la comprensión del alma y su centro con la de Jung. Como un “jardinero del alma” se acercó a ella como experiencia y realidad, en una actitud simbólica. ■*

Palabras clave: psicología analítica, Léon Bonaventure, realidad del alma, Sí mismo, arquétipo.

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