

Sexual Trauma: A Jungian Study on the Inferiorization of Women

Patrícia Helena Duarte da Matta

Article



Abstract

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 We conclude that the Jungian approach can contribute to the deconstruction of outdated notions about the feminine and offer new possibilities for healing for women victims of abuse.

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

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

SEXUAL ABUSE AND TRAUMA: THE INDIVIDUAL AND SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE

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

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

¹ BRAZIL. Law No. 11,340 of August 7, 2006. Maria da Penha Law.
BRAZIL. Law No. 8,069 of July 13, 1990. Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA).
BRAZIL. Law No. 13,104 of March 9, 2015. Femicide Law.

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

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

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

The theory of chronic interpersonal abuse and the psychopathology of trauma

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Jungian perspective on trauma

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CULTURAL COMPLEXES: ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY AND COLLECTIVITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

References

- ABDULALI, S. **Do que estamos falando quando falamos de estupro**. 1. ed. São Paulo: Vestígio, 2019
- AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION. **Manual diagnóstico e estatístico de transtornos mentais: DSM-5**. 5. ed. Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2014.
- ARAÚJO, A. P. **Abuso: a cultura do estupro no Brasil**. 1. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Globo Livros, 2020
- AZEVEDO, S. F. L. A ética da monogamia e o espírito do feminicídio: marxismo, patriarcado e adultério na Roma Antiga e no Brasil Atual. *In*: BRETAS, M.; VENDRAME, M. I. (eds.). **Dossiê Relações entre Crime e Gênero: um balanço**. Revista História São Paulo. São Paulo: UNESP, 2019
- BORGES, J. L.; DELL'AGLIO, D. D. Relações entre abuso sexual na infância, transtorno de estresse pós-traumático (TEPT) e prejuízos cognitivos. **Psicologia em**

- Estudo**, Maringá, v. 13, n. 2, p. 371-379, 2008. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1590/S1413-73722008000200020>.
- CAMPBELL, J. **Deusas: os mistérios do divino feminino**. 4. ed. São Paulo: Palas Athena, 2015.
- CHAUÍ, M. S. **Afinal, o que pensam as mulheres?** Curso em vídeo na plataforma Casa do Saber, 2020. Disponível em: www.casadosaber.com.br/. Acesso em: 02 jul. 2020.
- CONCEIÇÃO, I. K. *et al.* Sintomas de TEPT e trauma na infância em pacientes com transtorno da personalidade borderline. **Psicologia em Revista**, Belo Horizonte, v. 21, n. 1, p. 87-107, 2015. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5752/P.1678-9523.2015V21N1P87>.
- FEDERICI, S. **Calibã e a Bruxa: mulheres, corpo e acumulação primitiva**. 1. ed. São Paulo: Elefante, 2017.
- FÓRUM BRASILEIRO DE SEGURANÇA PÚBLICA. **18º Anuário Brasileiro de Segurança Pública**. São Paulo: Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2024. Disponível em: <https://publicacoes.forumseguranca.org.br/handle/123456789/253>. Acesso em: 15 ago. 2024.
- GRAHAM, D. L. R. **Amar para sobreviver: mulheres e a síndrome de Estocolmo social**. 1. ed. São Paulo: Editora Cassandra, 2021.
- HILLMAN, J. **O mito da análise: três ensaios de psicologia arquetípica**. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1984.
- JUNG, C. G. **A natureza da psique**. OC vol.8/2. 6. ed. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2022.
- JUNG, C. G. **Os arquétipos e o inconsciente coletivo**. OC, vol. 9/1. 11. ed. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2014.
- JUNG, C. G. **Tipos psicológicos**. OC, vol. 6. 7. ed. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2013.
- KALSCHED, D. **O mundo interior do trauma: defesas arquetípicas do espírito pessoal**. 1. ed. São Paulo, SP: Paulus, 2013.
- KALSCHED, D. **Trabalhando com o trauma em análise in Psicanálise Junguiana: trabalhando no espírito de C G Jung**. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2019.
- KAST, V. **Abandonar o papel de vítima: viva a sua própria vida**. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2022.
- KEHL, M. R. **Deslocamentos do feminino: a mulher freudiana na passagem para a modernidade**. 2. ed. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2016.
- PARISE, C. L. G.; SCANDIUCCI, G. **Re-imaginando um lugar de escuta**. 1. ed. São Paulo: Sattva Editora, 2022.
- PESSOA, G. O complexo cisheteropatriarcal: desde o desejo ao confronto do patriarcado. In: PARISI, C. L. G; SCANDIUCCI, G. (eds.). **Re-imaginando um lugar de escuta**. 1. ed - São Paulo: Sattva Editora, 2022.
- ROWLAND, S. **Jung: a feminist revision**. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002.
- SCHAPIRA, L. L. **O complexo de Cassandra: histeria, descrédito e o resgate da intuição feminina no mundo moderno**. 2. ed. São Paulo: Cultrix, 2018.
- SILVA, C. E.; SERBENA, C. A. A teoria dos complexos culturais: uma perspectiva junguiana do social in Estud. **Estudos Interdisciplinares em Psicologia**,

Brasília, v. 12, n. 1, p. 158-182, 2021. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5433/2236-6407.2021v12n1p158>.

SINGER, T. Sobre os complexos culturais na psique de grupo e individual. *In*: PARISI, C. L. G.; SCANDIUCCI, G. (eds.). **Re-imaginando um lugar de escuta**. 1. ed. São Paulo: Sattva Editora, 2022.

SINGER, T.; KAPLINSKY, C. Complexos culturais em análise. *In*: STEIN, M. (ed.). **Psicanálise Junguiana: trabalhando no espírito de C G Jung**. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2019.

STEARNS, P. N. **As origens das civilizações e do patriarcado**, 2015. Disponível em: <https://blog.editoracontexto.com.br/as-origens-das-civilizacoes-e-do-patriarcado/>. Acesso em: 14 ago. 2024.

Winnicott, D. W. **O cuidado materno e o desenvolvimento do eu**. Rio de Janeiro: Imago, 1965.

Psychologist graduated from the Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP), specialist in Mental Health from the Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP). Analyst member of the Instituto Junguiano de Santa Catarina (IJUSC), of the Associação Junguiana do Brasil (AJB) and the International Association for Analytical Psychology (IAAP). Experience in mental health care organizations (national and international), working in the management of services aimed at Children and Youth. Currently, patients in private practice.

patydamatta@gmail.com