

Contemporary crossings: From modernity to complexity

Walter Boechat

Article



Abstract

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

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

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

Ailton Krenak (2022, pp. 13-14)

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

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

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

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

The three major threats

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

Global warming

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

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

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

There is a drastic exhaustion of the hero myth in modernity

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

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

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

Proposing a potential model for an ego-self relationship

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

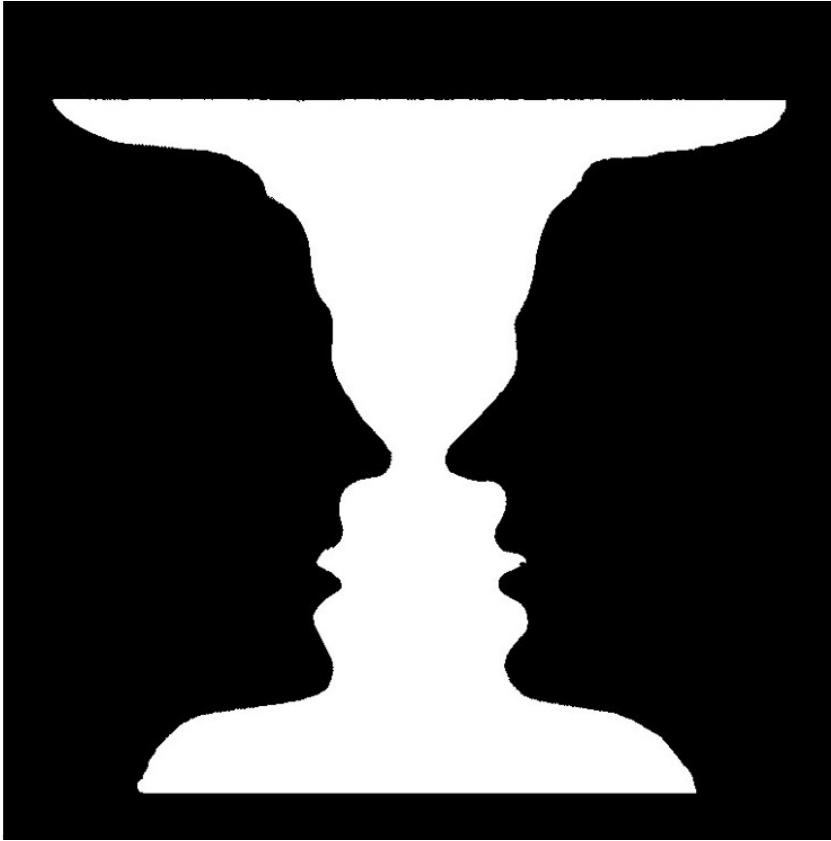


Figure 1. Proposal for a recreational model to display the dynamic relationship between the ego and the self.

Several pandemics appear associated with the growing deforestation process

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

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

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

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

The nuclear threat

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

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

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

The erosion of the man-machine boundary

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

The blurring of borders

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

¹ CNN BRASIL (2024).

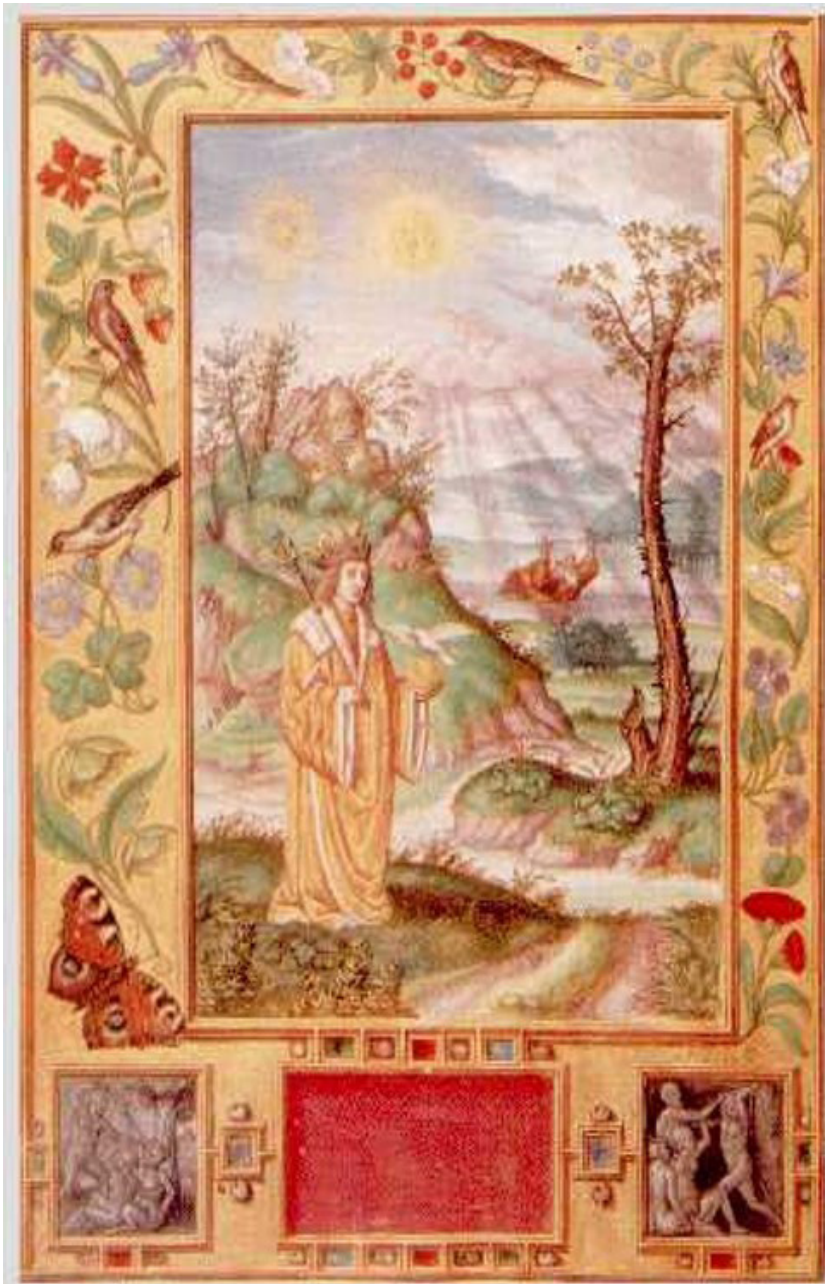


Figure 2. The panel “The Drowning King” from the alchemical treatise *Splendor Solis* (1520), attributed to Salomon Trismosin.

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

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

Blurred geographical borders

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

Gender and family boundaries

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

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

The changing phases of life

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

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

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

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

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

² Site de Internet: Taylor (2024).

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

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

Paradigm shifts in science

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

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

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

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

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

The great polarizations of modernity and the emerging paradigm of complexity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(JUNG, OC, vol. X, §163).

Jung developed a pre-modern epistemology based on medieval alchemy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

References

- Àries, P. **História social da criança e da família**. Barueri: Guanabara, 1981.
- Baumann, Z. **Modernidade líquida**. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2005.
- Harari, Y. **Sapiens. Uma breve história da humanidade**. 18. ed. Porto Alegre: LPM, 2016.
- HILLMAN, J. **A grande mãe, seu filho, seu herói e o Puer**. In: HILLMAN, J. O Livro do Puer: ensaios sobre o arquétipo do Puer Aeternus. São Paulo: Paulus, 1999. pp. 65-117.
- JAFFÉ, A. **From the life and work of C. G. Jung**. Tradução R. C. Hull. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1971.
- Jecupé, K. W. **A terra dos mil povos**. 2. ed. Peirópolis: Editora Peirópolis, 2020.
- Jung, C. G. **Adaptação, Individuação e coletividade**. OC, vol. XVIII/2. Petrópolis: Vozes [1916] 2011.
- Jung, C. G. **O Livro Vermelho**. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2013. Edição sem imagens. Organizado por Sonu Shamdasani.
- Jung, C. G. **O problema psicológico do homem moderno**. OC, vol. X. Petrópolis: Vozes [1928] 2011.
- Jung, C. G. **Tipos psicológicos**. OC, vol. VI. Petrópolis: Vozes [1921] 2011.
- Jung, C. G. **Wotan**. OC, vol. X. Petrópolis: Vozes, [1933] 2011.

- Khun, T. **A estrutura das revoluções científicas**. Editora Perspectiva, [1962] 2017.
- Kopenwa, D.; ALBERT, B. **A queda do céu**. Palavras de um xamã yanomami. Tradução de Beatriz Perrone-Moisés. Companhia das Letras, 2015. Introdução de Eduardo Viveiros de Castro.
- KRENAK, A. **Futuro ancestral**. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2022.
- LUZ, M. T. **Natural, racional, social: razão médica e racionalidade científica moderna**. Rio de Janeiro, 1988.
- MCGUIRE, W.; HULL, R. F. C. C. G. Jung: Entrevistas e Encontros. São Paulo: Cultrix, 1982.
- Morin, E. **Ciência com consciência**. Lisboa: Publicações Europa América, 1994.
- Shamdasani, S. **Jung e a construção da psicologia moderna: o sonho de uma ciência**. São Paulo: Ideias & Letras, 2011.
- Viveiros De Castro, E. **A inconstância da alma selvagem e outros ensaios de antropologia**. São Paulo: Cosac Naif, 2002.
- Wahba, L. Devouring and asphyxia: symptoms of a cultural complex in actual times. **The Journal of Analytical Psychology**, Oxford, v. 68, n. 2, p. 227-240, 2023. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5922.12906>. PMID:36994544.
- Winnicott, D. **Brincar e realidade**. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Zoja, L. **A história da arrogância**. São Paulo: Axis Mundi, 2000.

Consulted websites

- CNN BRASIL, 2024. Disponível em: www.cnnbrasil.com.br. Acesso em: 28 ago. 2024.
- TAYLOR, M. **‘Sephora Kids’ e o alarmante crescimento do mercado de produtos de beleza para crianças**. 2024. Disponível em: www.bbc.com/portuguese/articles/crg73zlw718o. Acesso em: 25 ago. 2024.

Graduated from the C. G. Jung Institute in Zurich, Switzerland.
Founding member of the Jungian Association of Brazil (AJB).
Former representative of the AJB on the Executive Committee of the IAAP (International Association of Analytical Psychology) from 2007 to 2013.
PhD in Collective Health from the Institute of Social Medicine at UERJ.
Author of books published by Editora Vozes, including *A Mitopoesia da Psique: Mito e individuação*. 5th reprint 2021 and *The Red Book of C.G. Jung: Journey to Unknown Depths*. 2014 (published by Routledge, London, 2017 and Letra Viva, Buenos Aires, 2019). Co-author and organizer of several works for Editora Vozes, such as *Alma Brasileira*, *Luzes e Sombra*, 2015, *Mitos e Arquétipos do Homem Contemporâneo*, 1995, *O Masculino em Questão*, 1997.
Technical advisor for the collection “Reflexões Junguianas” by Editora Vozes.
Technical reviewer of the translations of C. G. Jung’s books *The Red Book: Liber Novus* and *The Black Books: Notebooks of Transformation*, both published by Editora Vozes
walter.boechat@gmail.com