

The Smell of the Soul and the Smelling Soul

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Abstract

Starting from a oneiric representation with a strong emotional-olfactory content (miasma, fetid smells), is reported a narration linked to the author's early life, evoking poignant, painful and nostalgic memories. An exploration of an olfactory path to the unconscious emerges through a synchronistic and incubative relationship between the events related to the health emergency of the Coronavirus pandemic and the transpersonal dimension of the Anima mundi. In this imaginal space, memories and primordial images with a strong mythic content converge. From the image of a poet who reads her writings, the author found himself immersed in his uncanny restlessness, in his uneasiness. These emotional tones accompanied him on his return home and, during the night, in a particularly significant dream. He perceived and sensed its evocative potentiality, in turn capable of activating ancient domestic images moving forgotten sulphurous smells. Just as the complex structures its roots in the collective unconscious, so these sensory/olfactory images are combined with «Shadow stench». In a diaphanous, nebulous and protean interlayer, the images slowly transformed, giving back, as in an airy and clean room, a condition of well-being that the author was able to collect in a suggestive poem. The numinous experience deeply shaken the psyche and the reflective processes themselves towards moments of intense and courageous creativity. A short biography covered the entire writing, paying full homage to a differentiating ulteriority that was waiting for the path to exist. The emergence of meaning was synchronistically captured through a sort of perturbing emotional and collaborative intelligence between Covid-19 and adaptive self-organizing symbolic systems: hence the way to a poem that, in memory of distant times but not too much, emerged by giving itself to the contention between the two co-protagonists of the dream: the author and the Irish goddess Badb Catha (battle crow).

Key words: *corona-virus emergency; synchronicity; dream; individuation*

Corona virus emergency

We are facing a health emergency, to an economic emergency, to a political emergency, to a psychological emergency - the signals of which have been coming to us for some time from numerous requests - the media does not speak of this. Such is the insensitivity to the suffering of those with mental disorders or discomforts. The problem of mental health is too often seen as an argument between trivialization and marginalization.

The levels of social stigma associated with this unease remain high.

We PSY professionals are there and we offer our psychotherapy support and contribution in a dialogical confrontation, alongside those who need us. We are psychotherapists on the Coronavirus front line intending to question and reflect on the feelings of finitude, helplessness, existential anguish, «emotional and physical earthquake», which dramatically and, apparently suddenly, characterizes the particular moment of individual and collective life that we are experiencing. With an open look, we intend to proceed, on a path of awareness, in the search to give meaning to themes of painful relevance such as: complementarity of birth-death, beauty-horror, domination of the will to live and anguish of death, vulnerability and feeling of impotence. Through an appropriate and conscious approach, we wish to accompany the *mysterium* of living and dying, in the consideration that this natural process often remains prisoner in an eternal circle of fear that generates further fear. Promethean identification leads to false hopes of food immortality in particular by those entrusted with the power of living and dying (doctors, surgeons, scientists, legislators, politicians, etc.) which involves perceiving and living the world as an chthonic enemy of death. But if you do not want to risk giving up your life, you need to rely on your own emotional experience, on inner sacredness and, through greater self-centering, commit ourselves to weakening fear by measuring ourselves with

the demons of our time and letting them go with their effects of dehumanization.

Death and rebirth, dismemberment and recomposition are the great trials that every individual, who wants to acquire a new knowledge and a new knowledge must face in order to complete his mission of a life worth living and not risking, for an unsustainable position, the evil of living. What today man desperately tries to escape from more than from death, understood as the limit of his own existence, is from the recognition and comparison with his own, necessary transience. Denying it means wanting to be like the gods, it is perversion and betrayal, it is doing violence by declaring war against oneself and against others.

In order to be accepted and not feared, the theme of death requires a look to which, both individually and collectively, we are no longer accustomed, but the only possible one remains: it is an open look on myth and mythical imagination, where the psychic presence of death tends to be restored by the voice of the unconscious.

Looking the Gorgone in the eyes and revealing through its double face, the numinous inner and outer reality, offers the possibility to release blocked energy not recognized in its true essence and pacify the mind-body. Knowing how to welcome and integrate in the unpredictable dance of life the ghost of death kept in the mind and in the depths of each of us, revealing its horror and beauty, is configured as a fertile care for oneself and for the Other.

The profound call to change that the C-virus epidemic imposes, challenges and encourages us to descend to the Underworld and, having crossed the door of Dite, reach the hidden treasure and return, *Deo Concendente*, to see the stars again!

Jung (1958) writes: «The effect at which I aim is to produce a psychic state in which the patient begins to experience with his nature a state of fluidity, change and becoming, in which nothing is eternally fixed and petrified without hope» (*Opere*, p. 54).

What now unites us about *Anima Mundi* is her dark side, the *Umbra Mundi*. The Coronavirus, the bringer of death is the invisible enemy of unprecedented violence that moves among us, dragging us into its vortex. It is like indomitable fire that blazes and *burns* anyone it meets in its path. But how fire destroys and sheds light. It is everywhere, it is the *mysterium tremendum et fascinas* that invades and infects, moving death and terror, melancholy and individual and collective ghosts that swallowed and felt, expelled are in us, hidden inside a crypt, the primordial uterus of the Mother Goddess, the unconscious, the ring of conjunction between life and death. What do we tie the *Umbra mundi* to? Metaphorically to the pandemic, which in turn is linked to the air, to the breath that leads to the idea of the vital *breath*, the Soul of the Greeks, archetype of life itself.

'The Covid-19 pandemic has caught us off guard and left us speechless, petrified. The image that calls to mind is the primary Cry, the gaze of Medusa, the *scream* in the work of Edvard Munch, whose underlying archetype, is still that of life itself, to come to light: the birth of the Child, to whose cries the answer is not the gag, but the *Here I am*, the loving embrace of a mother or, at least, the welcoming gaze of a mother sufficiently present to share eye contact.

Only in this way, similarly, the horror of so much pain and death can presage the capacity of a response mediated by the archetypal defenses of the Self, which activated, enantiodynamically, solicit the complementary and inclusive incubation of a new sense of community and shared sociality. A few months after the appearance of the unexpected stranger, I see a small light. Together with anxiety, anguish, isolation and so much destruction, unexpected and timid, fragile reciprocity already emerges, heralding a new and broader sense of responsibility and belonging towards the rediscovery of that *high* and *other* otherness that is inherent in each of us. Making the most of the numinous pandemic experience can be a way to take and

find again, with a more harmonious and wiser step and breath, the meaning of one's life. It could also allow us to inhabit the present moment as a propitious time, *Kairos*, in which to grant us time and space for a more reflective and opportune look. A time no longer punctuated by rhythms pursued by the frenetic footsteps of victims and executioners of our time, who perpetuate, unaware, a perverse de-humanized and dehumanizing that brings loss of meaning, death and destruction.

We have deforested, polluted and defaced entire territories, wounded the earth, the sea and the sky, insulted and enslaved peoples, forgotten paternal figures and designated the evaporation of the Father; the old today is just an *old* whose physiological mental and physical diversity is often the subject of ridicule; *mortified our teachers, disqualified and humiliated the sacred values without building new ones. We have exiled from Olympus the gods who now, having become our symptoms and diseases, inhabit us. Hubris is rampant everywhere! Like a boundless Titan with feet of clay, our existence, a prisoner of itself, crumbles at our feet leaving us helpless to moan fear and anguish: we do not know how to recognize ourselves, nor we know who we are and where we are going.*

The blind urge of the psyche to maintain *status*, despite the worry of saying that «nothing will be the same», even when it is extremely painful for us, escapes our sight and awareness and deceives us, persuading us with the deception of be free and safe. In this way our psyche declares war on us and arms its / our borders and we make ourselves available to trade freedom for some security. How we fear the stranger, the different from us: a woman / man representative of the whole female/male gender, the homosexual, the disabled, the non-EU citizen, the Jew, the black, the yellow, etc., as well as the same way we are afraid of an inner change. But which is the foreigner? Before coming from outside the stranger lives in us. It is made up of those parts of extraneousness that belong to us and that we hide from ourselves and from

others because we do not understand and fear them. In each of us there is an Epimetheus, a Cain, a fratricidal *enemy*, a foreigner.

To live in health and harmony it becomes essential first of all to welcome, integrate and develop precisely the foreign-internal *one*. It is necessary to make this possible that our identity borders become permeable and plastic. It is the stranger who lives there, the person, the shadow, the complex, which can lead us to recover or maintain health by creating a breach in the rigid armor that, paranoically, we have erected as a reassuring element.

The Corona virus in this context can constitute a tragic resource, a way to try to recover from a decline in identity and regain the transgenerational heritage. If the fear of contamination in some way distances one from the other, having broken its wall, it can re-approach us by assigning each new identity and reciprocity.

New worlds will open up when our psychic boundaries, no longer defended and supported by *hubris* and omnipotence, will become plastic and permeable and a new dermis supported by an I originated and in dialogue with the Self, and therefore stronger, will surprise us capable of not to disperse ourselves merged into the insignificance and formlessness of the Titan, and to rejoice knowing how to welcome in reciprocity the stranger who is in us, that otherness that we are.

Dream Remembrance Reflection

Usually, we think about the *Anima Mundi* as a loving presence, as a Primordial Mother who acts in the psyche as a containing and helping generating force, capable of weaving the connection between people and between them and the world. We often neglect to consider the other aspects of its primordial character, in an ambivalent and transforming power. In addition to the aspect of a nurse she also possesses that of a devourer; it can nourish and save and at the same time destroy and generate. Equally neglected today is the category of Time, personification of the Primordial Father from which derives the sense of the I as an individual who over time has managed to separate from the Great Mother.

Ours is a Time ruled by the Titan¹ Chronos² (Saturn). It is a linear time that can be *numbered* by consciousness: Kronos/Senex, paternal law and finitude, but also a point of support and containment. It is the delimiting presence of the paternal function that allows the appearance of a cyclical time, *the propitious mixture*, for the construction of memory, *of due time* (Traverso, 1994), that of the child, of the Puer and not of Chaos : «Propitious contingency that gives rise to every identity, including the phenomenon of Mind or Consciousness» (Marramao, 1993), which offers the opportunity to re-actualize and re-elaborate an experience that had remained potential in the unconscious until then.

Zoppi (2006), revisiting Fissi (2000), remembers:

¹ The mythologem of the Titans, centered on the dismemberment of Dionysus and on the process of death and rebirth, constitutes a fundamental interpretative grid of the dynamics underlying many of today's pathologies, which we can think of as «diseases of borders».

² Cronus, when he was a son, I will castrate his father Uranus, precisely to allow the affirmation of a psychic dimension differentiated from the instinctual one «of the great cosmic night»: fusion with the maternal. Later, in the role of father, Cronus performing a symbolic act (he swallows his children),

will activate the paternal function, the law of the limit, which represents the first act of humanization of the individual and of the whole society as an effective and indelible antidote. to counteract the social involution towards a pre-human time dominated by the Titans. The destiny of man seems to be determined by the psychic balance of his dual nature, titanic and Dionysian, where the dominance of one and the banning of the other pole leads to a dangerous and destructive inflation and one-sidedness, that one-sidedness that, now creeping and subtle, it feeds on the liminal void, which the absence of myth has determined in the collective psyche.

«To consider the archetypes as *psychic organizers* that make possible the passage from the unknowable *noumenon* to the psychic experience. In other words, we can say that archetypes fulfill the fundamental function of *organizing the experience to make it thinkable* and for this reason they are placed in *the critical sphere of the interaction between body and psyche*, where the olfactory perceptions [...] visual, visceral, find the images, even before they find the words» (p. 78).

«Only occasionally in dreams we use hearing, touch, taste and, even more rarely, smell. Yet, as Heraclitus says even more rarely, smell. Yet, always as Heraclitus says» In Hades the souls they perceive by smelling »and, again, if all things became smoke, the nostrils would distinguish them from each other.

Smell, memory and interpretation

«Only occasionally in dreams we use hearing, touch, taste and, even more rarely, smell. Yet, as Heraclitus says even more rarely, the sense of smell. Yet, always as Heraclitus says, «In Hades the souls perceive by smelling» and, again, «If all things became smoke, the nostrils would distinguish them from one another» (Hillman, 1979).

In an interesting article the Jungian analyst Fred Plaut referred to our self-descriptive or autobiographical memory as a fundamental tool of our being-in-the-world, focusing on sensory perceptions and their role in interpretative processes. In particular, he addressed the study of the olfactory function in the analytic work by relating it to the intuitive functions and emerging interpretations. He emphasizes a constant and significant role in a daily life as the bearer of a real *mystical* character, probably unique among the senses. Analysts, perhaps even literally, don't sniff out their patients' secrets? «After all, we smell before we can interpret» (Plaut, 2009)

The smell can introduce an aura of mystery. We know that smell plays a crucial role in communication not only between animals trying to identify and recognize themselves by smell, but also between humans. A further object is to grasp the scope and meaning, underling the close relationship between memory, spontaneous associations and intuition. Interpretations not only come from audiovisual perceptions but extend to all other sensory perceptions: smell, more specifically. Intuition has often been commonly considered independent of sensory assumption. Plaut instead reiterates that sensory assumption precedes both intuition and memory, or memory.

The meaning of associative olfactory memories was recounted by Jung in an autobiographical anecdote. He noticed an unpleasant smell in the room where he was staying as a guest in an old farmhouse. He associated it with the stench coming from a patient with an open cancerous wound (Jung, 1950). But there was nothing in the room that could cause that smell. When he reported this sensation, he was told that the room was known to have been haunted by an unfortunate previous inhabitant.

The ability of smell to persist beyond the temporal dimension of the here and now has never been sufficiently explored in the psychoanalytic literature as an important factor of psychological impact. Writers can neglect to discuss it because often is associated with an adverse event. Generally, we welcome the scent of a rose and the other flowers, while the fecal odors, as well as other decomposition odors are considered repellents and then discarded or basically not considered as objects of interpretation. It is interesting and chemically proven that the biochemistry of many perfumes designed to cover or counteract unpleasant body odors actually resemble the same composition as the unwanted odor, albeit at lower concentrations.

The analytic process offers the opportunity not only to remember, but also to relive particularly significant events; the memory is

not only a discrete entity but, in all the circumstances that matter, is a fundamental aspect of the life of the whole person. In this regard we know that even the analyst's personal autobiographical memories sometimes sleep buried. It is a kind of knocking on the door, activating «a memory of a memory» (Plaut, 2009). It is a definite feeling that there, where there should be a clear memory, there may be an awareness of something that has been forgotten. Here the *flash* can appear as a recognition of a more relevant and significant meaning, which at the same time is also the most likely to remain in memory.

In less *lightning-fast* circumstances (i.e. the smell of the *mother's kitchen*), Plaut reminds us, smell is the relevant sense that can become the triggering factor when analogically similar circumstances are recreated. Therefore, the *meaning* seems to dwell in the sense of smell or taste itself and in the memory of taste or smell. Although memory is available to our consciousness it cannot always be transformed into words and repeated, yet it can be recalled. Plaut tried to open the door to new reflections on the complexity of the synaesthetic system as a gateway to memory and intuition. Smell and taste in particular are an integral part of the unconscious perceptions of the world and contribute to what is instinctive as openness to the imagination and the imaginal world. In fact, even the language we use supports the hypothesis that intuition comes from the unconscious perception of smell as well, like other more privileged sensations. This cannot fail to have important implications for analytic practice itself.

³ In Irish mythology *Badb* means *crow* or *vulture*. It was associated with war and death and appeared to herald mass deaths or to participate in battles, in which it created confusion among the soldiers and fed on the discord born of the conflict. She was a war goddess who took the form (also) of a raven, which is

With the night inside

This brief introduction to hint at how my wandering as a traveler in / of *my* life unfolded.

Over time, my experience, as an image of a karst river, had its underground points, emerging in dreams, images, sensations, perceptions and, for a long time, in profound inner silence. In this regard, a sentence by Verdi Vighetti is in tune with my feelings:

«*Karst time* is for me the expression of the hidden presence of the *tension* towards individuation, rooted in each individual or unconscious (Jung, 1946/1954, p. 219). It flows silently and parallel to the path of life and analysis and, from time to time, even in the absence of significant events, it emerges in the light of consciousness in the form of intuition, of sudden understanding of one's emotional state. Just like a spring of fresh water that gushes out of nowhere, at times assuming a negative, emotionally pregnant form that allows us to glimpse new glimmers of light and hope» (2012, p. 17).

One night at the time of Covid-19 something new happened.

In a dream, a fetid smell sprouted from a disturbing female figure. It was a pungent, sweet, sulphurous, putrid smell of decaying organic matter. Smell of death. That female figure I felt was a traitor, an affective manipulator, an instigator and a slanderer of souls, reported being *Badb Catha*³, Celtic goddess of death, personification of Hecate. No demonic figure from serpentine hair, but maybe through her, the smell with amazing ability and extreme nitid and ty has awakened a familiar memory. Memory led me back to 6-9 years of age. A putrid air floated, infecting the place where I grew up and in which I immersed myself every evening and from

why she was called *Badb Catha* (battle raven). He often caused fear and confusion among soldiers in order to shift the outcome of the battle in favor of his favorite (the positive counterpart), or to predict the death of some famous person.

which I was enveloped. Impregnating bones and flesh that smell reached up to the soul, becoming something not separated from me. It came from the bedside table that separated my bed, where I slept with my twin brother, from that of the *pater* grandmother. It was her stench, the stench of a wild female who doesn't ask, it is. The powerful image of *Badb Catha* in search of my soul with so much aggression or the stench moved by the fragile ancient grandmother, in the dream did not lose its energy on the contrary, it appeared a numinous reality. Abandoned the corporeal matter it was as if I perceived her pure form with the omnipotent faces of the Mother Goddess, who imposed, terrifying, her sacrificial tribute demanding a ransom, a recognition that only much later in the years I realize I had accepted by giving up a little selfishness. It was when Hecate rushed to Demeter's aid and heard her desperate cries for the kidnapping of her daughter from afar. Demeter, Mother, with blond ears, mistress of life and mistress of death, when she does not receive the right consideration, she manifests herself by hindering the normal flow of life at the level of individual and collective consciousness, determining consequences on the birth and especially on dying, making the earth sterile, arid, lifeless, unable to (re) welcome its fruit into its bosom.

The dream begins to activate me a timid indistinct awareness of existing that allowed to make contact with the reality surrounding myself, a depriving and constricting physical, psychic and social environment in which I felt thrown.

I perceived a desire to move away from the place of my origins inhabited by miasmas, pollutions, promiscuity of age, caused by the lack of physical and psychic space, by an inability, innocent of knowing how to grasp the significance of the needs for affection that for contingent social and cultural, could not have fully recognized and restored me. The priority was *survival*. The condition of lack, scarcity was what characterizes the time of each post war.

Of the five senses, olfaction, linked to the animal condition and primordial survival tool, is the one most connected to memory, the privileged builder of the building of remembrance⁴ of Proustian memory.

The smell activates the rhinencephalon circuit and helps to stay in the instinct, in the emotion that one feels, disconnecting, at least temporarily, the rational part.

The intense unpleasant olfactory perception announced an initial and dark sensation of presence in the world that over time would have allowed me to give meaning to events and could have turned into freedom to design. «A being for death» as Heidegger says, a reality from which, once overcome,

⁴ From the Latin the etymology of the verb to remember, *re-cordāre*, composed of the particle re-again, backwards, indicating the return, and cor-da *còrdis* -cuore, considered the seat of memory, recalls the fact that nature memory itself, its cause and purpose reside in the heart. A well-tuned memory is always moved by emotions. Mnemosine, the Memory, was the third wife of Zeus. With her he slept for nine nights to have children who protected the arts and sciences of men. Nine beautiful girls were born, the Muses, inspirers of the liberal arts, who governed poetic inspiration and all intellectual activities. They represented the supreme ideal of Art, understood as the truth of the whole, or the eternal magnificence of the divine. They symbolize not only the importance of poetry as a memory of tradition, but also - almost inversely - the importance of memory as a mnemonic learning as a guarantee of transmission of poetry. Mnemosine, goddess personification of memory, whose kingdom, opposite to the lethal one of oblivion, is the immaterial but vital space of memory that evokes the soul of things.

There are the treasures of the innumerable images of all sorts of things that sensations bring. There is the possibility for men to know and participate in the sacred and the divine, the sacred and the divine that he carries in his memory. Each gesture repeats a divine model and every moment flows from the silence of the origins. IT IS Mnemosine who chooses from the present what to transform from the past. It is memory, inscribed within each of us, which gives continuity to existence and which binds us to the origin and the future. To reach coveted goals and overcome moments of crisis, even today's man can make use of the gifts of Mnemosine, creativity, art, poetry.

Plato recalling the dialogue between Socrates and Menon argues that the soul must never be destroyed because it is immortal and, repeatedly reborn, has seen the world here and that of Hades, so he affirms that «knowing is remembering». Mengheri, citing Caramazza (2010, p. 55) reports that: «to know is to be born together with the known thing». It is a challenge. It is knowing and recognizing oneself, it is becoming aware again and in spite of everything (2016, p. 119; Mengheri 2018, pp. 108/1016).

the possibility of rebirth into a higher state of consciousness can filter. A key to understanding and living my life more deeply. If on the one hand the phenomenon, as a smell coming from the underworld, is synchronously capable to generate an irreversible change in the nature of things, producing an elevation, on the other hand, it can also diachronically become blindness or suffocation if we do not understand the nature of the thing. that we are smelling along with our limits. We know the devil used to manifest himself and recognize himself by smell.

«The unconscious is continually active, combining its material in ways which serve the future. It produces, no less than the conscious mind, subliminal combinations that are prospective⁵; only, they are markedly superior to the conscious combinations both in refinement and in scope. For these reasons the unconscious could serve man as a unique guide, provided that he can resist the lure of being misguided» (Jung, 1928, p. 117).

Thanks to the stench elicited by the dream and the female image in me, an important intuition sprouted and rose to the surface, like something that breaks the chains of sadness and anger that bound myself to my mother. Without knowing it, I lived that parallel time that flows imperceptibly to the conscience and marks (the times) of the psyche in tension towards an unknown goal to discover a more authentic self (Verdi Vighetti, 2012).

The constitution of an intermediate, imaginal space, the realm of oneiric, imaginative-creative activity and of thinkability had moved the limits of my boundaries, giving them a new form from which filtered a possible way towards differentiation, a potential *medium/re-medium*.

⁵ In epilepsy, in particular, frequent already an hour before the crisis, premonitory auras appear that can manifest themselves in many forms and affect one of the senses. The sense of smell is privileged. In this case it is a very characteristic and specific odor in each person who appears anticipating the seizure. It is

Regarding the review of what happened, Zoppi, recalling the thoughts of the Zurich master, writes:

«For Jung the memory traces undergo a selection process whereby only those connected to the main and significant experiences for the survival of the individual and the species are transmitted. So the archetype results from a typical form of an experience repeated over time, which led to the consolidation of memory traces, to the selection and integration of brain circuits and structures in affective patterns, central to the survival of the species, thus equipping the little one of man with a *facultas preformandi*, a possibility given a priori of the form of representation» (Jung, 1938-54, p. 81), necessary for the encounter with the world (2006, 77-78).

The *via regia* for the unconscious traveled thanks to the complexes brought the dream, the smell and the Goddess, making me cross a very rough and bumpy path until I touch the feeling of fear for the existence of something repugnant, source of anguish, psychic fragments buried in the archetypal structure of the psyche to be integrated into consciousness. Entering the imaginal and mythical territories of the relationship allows us to understand how much they, no less than reality, can be *real* and above all, can be experienced. In this regard, what Hillman asserts about the *certainty* of the myth *versus* the *truth* of the myth is significant.

Love can transform itself into a force that is not independent of the complexes, when Eros, already within them, is called to ignite Psyche and in some way to guide it, bringing love *to* the soul and *of* the soul. This is the true power of Eros. Psyche is highly flammable, evidence of this is the current epidemic of C-

a «specific individual» smell like an imprint of the psyche. An example would be the acrid and strong smell of a cat's urine. Aura which in this circumstance has a life-saving function.

virus which before being a viral epidemic is a psychic and sometimes emotional epidemic in the sense of Wilhelm Reich (*emotional plague*).

The Soul calls

The dimension of the soul, and everything that belongs to it is the home of the invisible. It all depends on what we trust. To believe *in* the invisible is to be *with* the invisible. The way to feel good is also to nourish the poetics of the mind and to root psychological action not so much in science as, *first of all*, but in aesthetics and imagination.

Today, the Corona virus pandemic has upset our daily lives and the psychological distress that affects everyone is serious. There are many patients who bear the most varied sufferings, archaic and ancient, personal and transpersonal. In this surreal and painful situation, dreams are more easily allowed to break through and manifest themselves. So, it was for me.

That image and olfactory perception, come back to visit me with their symbols and myths, have led me in the clearest possible way to grasp the sense of a reconciliation that has occurred in me and between me and the world.

By borrowing a lack with an image, I intended to trace a brief biography of the personal experiential path of my soul and of its sacrifice in search of an affectivity that could give myself and the other-from-me a bit of the full and serene emotional realization that today not only at work, but, above all thanks to my family, I feel I have achieved.

The soul, like nature, loves to hide herself. I believe that precisely that smell may have been the means to *smell* my soul and that of others, and at the same time move and encourage the desire and will towards the search for a renewed and restorative social and human redemption. I experienced a sort of emotional detachment from the place of origin dictated by an intimate need for change, which at the same time allowed me to

preserve, loving them, my grounded roots. My ability to mediate between the personal, family and social world made it possible to balance the opposite poles and to welcome not according to a disjunctive principle *or* that *or* those worlds, but *and* one *and* the others. This determined in the field of my conscience a sort of surrender and a feeling of freedom and pacification which, accompanying me through the impervious and karst territories of life, unraveled the knots of my personality, tracing my destiny and my goal.

The same dream reappeared in several nights and always following frustrating experiences such as the refusal to welcome in professional groups. The psychological differentiation of consciousness and the relative integration and growth of the assimilable portions of the unconscious must be able to evolve throughout the duration of our life. In a becoming that will be completed with a mutual influence of the parts and will continue to end and restart in «a reciprocal work of affective contamination, so to speak of *familiarization*, which on the symbolic level corresponds to the growth of the intrinsic feeling of the personality» (de Luca Comandini, 2019, p. 17). The crucial role of *feeling*, as a psychological function of orientation, is the trait that mainly distinguishes the relationship between consciousness and the collective unconscious. This function, then *inferior* in me, in the shadow, is now more present and has played a decisive role. He also moved with *Badb Catha*.

Again, de Luca Comandini: «The *sentiment* gives the measure of what is possible in the communication between the parties. As such, it is functionally connected to *Eros*, to the factor of cohesion and interchange between different people: what most needs to recover an adequate awareness for a humanity in disconnection, with respect to itself and its own context. [...] Familiarization between Man and his dreams is the cornerstone of this commitment of connection between *nature* and civilization, between the inner instinct disregarded by

contemporary humanity and the anxious compulsion that drives it, blindly, in an extroverted direction between omnipotence and impotence, feelings of guilt and irresponsibility» (*ibidem*, pp. 17-18).

A qualitative leap to symbolic awareness can take place with jungian active imagination a psychological- individuative vision which, using this imaginal process, has contributed to the thickness and breath of these few pages. Many and precious have been and will be the initiations that stud our fate in life, as many as there are wounds. I searched where love hides and therefore, I followed the path of the soul, of images, listened to the voice of the pagan goddess and of Demeter, which I already had within me, as an act of courage and not to withdraw from these appointments, to be - there.

When I woke up I took pen and paper to give shape to the dream and voice to *Badb Catha*, to allow her to exist, in me for me, a little more. Having overcome the lunar fascination of the secret Goddess, who at other times had prevailed and suspended my most ardent demands and the most tenacious resolutions to live, I understood and began to love her essential duplicity: contradictory and fullness of existence, trusting and welcoming. of the fruits of the world.

It was not I who guided the process but the image itself guided my hand in writing. Where was she taking me? What is its intentionality and purpose? The following poem is an amplification of the whole dream.

Here I am

You called me,
I'm here, in the middle of the night
barefoot in your hour
turned on you are dark and I reached you
A sheet of paper, a blue pencil,
a lot of you and me
You are sweet, oh how sweet you are!
Shadow and light, friend of heaven and earth
You ask me to be there
It is not a little thing, I do not know how to
escape.
Your black eyes,

blue drops, light, flaming in the night
What do you want, what are you looking
for? I softly ask
I am alone, alone in front of
our *soul, unus mundus*,
but you don't ask, you demand
You excuse your action with words:
«Let's talk about personal things».... «How I
didn't know...»
Do You give me protection? Or spell?
both live in you, both
the voice is blue, not the tones, the eyes, no
Not even the voice
Your mother knew,
my soul feels, sobs,
then she recovers and solemnly falls silent
silence
It is silence, deafening,
it gives no refreshment. I love silence
«Let's talk about personal things», you
repeat, or I repeat ... «How I didn't know»
How many years have I spent with and
among us.
The laughter, the fall, the thunderous
laughter of others,
which others? I don't remember them, yet a
hundred and more were,
no, not with us.
Even then clouds at the mercy of the wind,
others were not there
My soul, yours, the lock of hair that,
not with a novice manner did you correct,
you arranged, you did not welcome,
easier to fix,
speak, act,
block, destroy
Yet I have been knocking and, without rest
for years,
to your soul, far from appearing, closed,
locked
You have therefore sealed the heart. Since
that time? ... from before, from long before,
not center me in this closure.
A gift remains: the wait, a dream
Soul, bones, flesh and spirit
as an eternal stone.
He waits for his breath
I shell rosaries of burning sighs.
In the wind, a sound as friend
it is an odorous soul

you will know it.... we will know it.

Smell and the underworld

Hillman writes «Only the nose is not wrong» (1979, p. 176). If it is true that only the nose knows things, then I have not limited myself to imagining what I experienced in the dream simply as a vulgar event relating to instinct, or as an event from the past relating to ancient memory, but rather as something induced by entry. on stage of the intuitive function; «[...] I would consider the dream event as something essential, pneumatic, aesthetic, even ethereal. When we smell something, we are welcoming its spirit within us, so it is worth knowing what we are smelling. Ethereal can also mean otherworldly and arcane, in the diabolical sense; even the devil can be recognized by smell» (Hillman, 1979, p. 176).

It is interesting to remember how even in the epic of Gilgamesh, when Enkidu descends into the underworld, he is recognized alive by the souls because of his smell. Souls *feel* the smells of life. They gather around him, perhaps taken by the irresistible nostalgic call of life.

Thus, the phenomenon that occurred together with a smell came from the underworld. To discern the nature of which it was necessary to put myself, down in that world and question me and to sacrifice parts of myself. Commitment, fear and sacrifice are indispensable factors to propitiate the psychic movement and expand it to the awareness of one's soul.

I have developed the conviction that every form of literalization (be it word, phrase, speech, answer) is deadly, it opens the doors to darkness, to the shadow in its most tragic and sometimes paranoid ways.

Only the question gives depth to the possible meaning of existence. The Oedipal myth where the detachment from the Great devouring Mother is overcome by Oedipus only remembers this well. We humans, like the great problems of life, cannot be solved, but only overcome.

The struggle to free oneself from the Sphinx, the unconscious, requires a further and tenacious battle that is to be waged through life. Oedipus remained a prisoner of the only material expression of his person and has precluded the possibility of drawing on the *other* who is in himself and reaching the fullness of syzygy and adequately facing the challenge which his tragic existence imposed. In Jungian terms, it was a missed sacrifice, he did not listen to the voice of his heart. How powerful and meaningful Jung's words resound when he speaks of *Felix culpa*: «[...] He knows that one can miss not only one's happiness but also one's final guilt, without which a man will never reach his wholeness» (Jung, 1944, p. 33). Health is not just looking for the answers, but asking ourselves the right questions. The question must be able to wait for the unraveling of the thought it hides. The rejection of asking questions and probing the unknown proceeds parallel to the regime of psychological incest, to the one-sidedness of consciousness, in which contact with the unknown is rejected, the confrontation with the stranger in us, intimacy. with the different, the contamination and fertilization by the different.

The denial of symbolic thought suffocates the authentic value of all relationality. Respect for oneself and for the «other-than-itself» passes precisely through the relationship, it is an essential element, above all, for those who dedicate their lives to meeting, listening and welcoming others in the basic awareness that «we are the other».

Conclusions

Birth and death constitute the initiation processes that begin from infancy through the different stages of development up to maturity and old age to finish with death. Our health depends on psychically living each of these stages. The given soul, as every alchemist knows, asks to be worked, the material to be refined, the raw to be cooked, melted and coagulated many times. Passages after passages, from nigredo to albedo until

reaching the Great Work, the transmutation (principle of individuation) of the metal (I) into gold (Self) which manifests itself in the form. Thus, similarly, it happens with the interior initiatory work of each of us, aimed at discovering the full psychic potential that lies buried deep in the dross, to bring it to the light of consciousness. The Jungian *conjunctio* of matter and spirit is grafted into an *intermediate place* (*metaxù*), between the sensible and the real, where consciousness and psychic matter integrate interacting.

Metaphorically, birth and death are present and consubstantial in every real transformative experience, constituting the central nucleus, the very heart of the individual's realization process. Any progress towards greater awareness necessarily involves a real (change) and symbolic (sacrifice of the current identity) death, to which the individual opposes strenuous resistance. Even though it is a healthy transition that contains the promise of a truer and more authentic life, he may not turn to stoop towards the darkness from which he comes and listen to himself. Our mind is conservative, more inclined to security and certainty, sometimes to the point of rigidity and presumption. Very often a disjunctive, dichotomous vision makes us prisoners of one-sidedness. The omnipotence kingdom and the ego domain of consciousness tend to expand indefinitely towards the dissipation and death (entropy) and today we find ourselves totally unprepared to unconscious compensation (syntropy⁶) increasingly exposed to terrible psychic inflation and the risk of literally destroying the world we live in.

Covid19 has unexpectedly brought us closer to death, a *status* that affects everyone; and if

on the one hand, it seems to constitute an unacceptable existential check with respect to our omnipotent and narcissistic dimension, on the other it exposes us to a condition of greater receptivity and sensitivity in seeking the truths of the psyche. At the same time, the archetype of death seems to reopen and re-orient our gaze towards myth, towards a mythical imagination, listening to the voice of the soul.

In observing and revisit my dream experience I found full *synchronotopic* and *sychromorphic* adherence between self-regulation processes and psychic compensation during the evolution of my consciousness with the unconscious imagistic dimension and unpleasant olfactory (smell fetid miasma). At the same time, I perceived the subversive and disturbing nature of a terrifying and deadly collective shadow. The Great Mother/*Anima Mundi* and her suffocating and gloomy faces, of which the Corona virus, confronted the positive/negative sides of the evolution and historicization of my personality, became a weaver of this process in terms of protection/threat. Synchronistic events occurred as a result of simultaneous occurrences of two different mental states, one afferent to the inner world and the other to the outer world, both converging towards the same integrative and restitutive meaning. What had for some time been incubating in the depths of my soul had sprouted and which showed itself as awakening from a physical and psychic *sleep*, in the body-psyche, a unique matter where the somatic is already psychic even if it is fit for us unknown, which was incorrectly recognized as a separate existence.

⁶ Syntropic is the energy that governs every growth process in life, even healing. It implies the tendency to concentrate and absorb energy, the differentiation of complexity, the formation of structures and organizations. IT IS complementary energy to entropy, the second law of thermodynamics, also known as thermal death. The physical-material world is governed by the law of entropy, that is of causality, while the biological world is governed by the syntropic, teleological law of finality and attractors

where the law of attraction governs, to be understood as love that orients towards an end. , meaning. The physicist Fantappiè discovered, among other things, that entropic, causal energy is visible, while syntropic, retrocausal energy is invisible as it comes from the future. Our life lies between the visible (the past) and the invisible (the future). «And the invisible is perceived through the invisible, that is, by the psyche» (Hillman, 1996, 56).

The great renewals never come from above, but from below as trees do not grow from the sky, but from the earth although their seeds originally fall from above.

Only when we experience this vision in transparency, *through things*, is it possible for us to grasp the symbolic fullness of reality. Then we can truly become pearl

fishers and stone seekers and our soul will be able to guess what really moves the world.

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