

Anima, animus, Eros, and Psyche: a coniunctio-rescue of the soul

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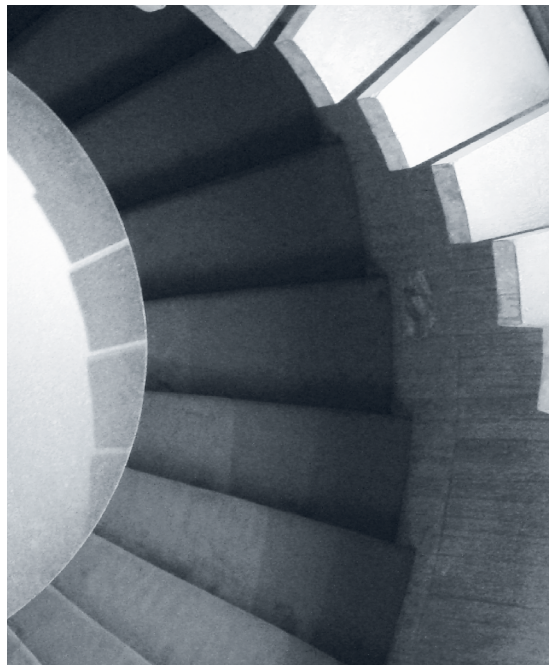
Abstract

Eros and Psyche are mythological images that influence various artistic expressions and philosophical knowledge. Eros, the god of love, representative of primal energy, and Psyche, a young woman of immeasurable beauty, intertwine in the writings of Apuleio (2009). Eros-Psyche can also be seen as one of the symbolic manifestations of the male-female syzygy, or *animus-anima*, interdependent psychic dimensions that connect in a potentiality in the encounter with oneself, with others, and with the world. This article aims to relate the myth of Eros and Psyche to the psychological development of the human being. Through an alchemical symbolic amplification, aspects of the myth are unfolded into symbols that structurally express archetypal experiences of encountering the soul. Finally, the article raises the need to consider the birth

of Eros and Psyche within us as necessary and complementary forces that can assist in the process of collective transformation amidst social, economic, and psychological crises. ■

Keywords

**Eros,
Psyche,
anima,
animus,
individuation.**



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Anima, animus, Eros, and Psique: an introduction

Jung (2015a, pp.90-96, § 300-328) brought us the concept of *anima* and *animus* as archetypes that constellate in relation to the other (men relate to their *anima* projected onto female figures, and women relate to their *animus* projected onto male figures). However, he himself has expanded his view beyond this theoretical hypothesis linked solely to counter-sexuality. *Anima* and *animus* were gradually liberated from genetic sexual literalness. Published in 1954 in Zurich, based on an initial writing from 1936, the essay “The archetype with special reference to the concept of anima,” written by Jung (2014, p. 74, § 134), challenges us to incorporate *anima* and *animus* as a synthesis of archetypal aspects linked to the union between both. He tells us that *anima* is found in various divine syzygies, or male-female divine pairs, which make masculine and feminine interdependent and simultaneous in the archetypal structure of the syzygy (Jung, 2014, p. 68, § 120). He complements the idea that an archetype not projected does not have a determinable form but reflects a possibility of manifesting itself in various forms. Jung conceptualizes *anima* as soul, which needs the world to fulfill itself. Hillman (2020) follows a direction coherent with such reverberation of *anima*, which reveals itself as a universal aspect of soul realization and of archetypal structure of the psyche. Byington (1983) considers such *anima-animus* archetype as the archetype of alterity. Alvarenga (2015) reflects on the *anima* and *animus* archetypes as existing in everyone, and the challenge of the encounter occurs in the dynamics between manifestations, projections, and integrations of polarities within oneself, through the experience with the other.

Supported by this conceptual breadth, in which the soul is psyche in individuation, and “soul-making” is humanizing *anima-animus*, I bring a reflection on the myth of Eros and Psyche as a mythical image of the relational development of human being with oneself, with others, and with the world.

It is not my intention to present details of the myth of Eros and Psyche. There are many works and articles that analyze it wisely (Kalsched, 2013; Von Franz, 2014; Brandão, 2015; Neumann, 2017). Instead, I will try to briefly outline key moments of this writing by Apuleio (2019), so that we can recognize interconnections between some aspects of human existence simultaneously with the description of the main events of the myth.

Myth is symbol, and it has structuring capacity, aggregating psychic energy, and redistributing it in a way that transforms unconscious processes into conscious ones, and *vice versa* (Byington, 1983). The individual himself (and all his psychic complexity) configures in their history a personal myth, from conception to his outcome (Jung, 2015). Immersed initially in the parental and collective ideational field, the myth embodies and, throughout its own historicity, takes shape related to the world (Alvarenga, 2009). There is no way to separate ourselves from this personal myth. Nevertheless, we often resist opening space for contact between the conscious and the unconscious within us. Eros and Psyche are also found there. Fortunately, just as in this myth, the existential field is drawn so that both inevitably experience each other and themselves. Life provides us with numerous unfoldings of the unconscious, archetypal aspects, and animic potentiality, through the most ordinary events, in the simplest of walks, and in the mere refuges of the very totality that we are.

The birth of Eros

There are several narratives in Greek mythology that report the birth of Eros. In the Orphic cosmogony, Eros (or Phanes, the creator god and androgynous) originates from the Primordial Egg, generated in the Aether through Chronos (Time) and Chaos (Primordial Void, immeasurable valley). In Hesiod's cosmogony, Eros, the force of desire, is said to have emerged with Gaia (Earth) and Tartarus (deep abyss), after Chaos. He is sometimes considered the son of Mercury (Hermes) and Chthonic Artemis, or of Mercury and Urania Aphrodite. Plato relates in *Symposium* that Eros was born from the union of Poros (Resource) and Penia (Poverty). However, throughout Greek mythical history, the two genealogies that have imposed themselves most on culture depict Eros as the son of Pandemic Aphrodite and Mercury, as well as of Aphrodite and Ares. He is winged and has been shaped by poets and sculptors, as seen in Antonio Canova's sculpture *Cupid and Psyche* (Brandão, 2015).

Symbolically, we can assimilate Eros as an imaging process that carries the unifying and mobilizing source of the world, as a reflection of a psychic energy that manifests from the "primordial chaos," passing through the embodiment of carnal desire for the other, until reaching the relational plenitude of the self with the other and with oneself. We could perhaps associate the image of Eros with psychic energy itself, which can also be named libido.

According to Neumann (2017), the primal relationship existing at the beginning of a being's life, between the newborn and the mother, has an Eros aspect, which manifests cosmically and transpersonally at first, before being differentiated through ego development. Neumann presents the Self as initially manifested in the mother-infant relationship, to later be differentiated within the individual. Fordham (2017) claims that in the early stage of life, the individual Self is already autonomous in relation to the mother. Despite the conceptual difference between the authors, the Self seems to be structured by Eros. There is

a relationship between Self and Eros, which intertwine as a sustaining, nurturing, regulating, and organizing background of the individuation of the being. When there is no Eros, the fulfillment of the Self is compromised, and thus we are called to mobilize Eros so that the flow of life itself continues possible.

Considering Eros as the son of the union between Poros (Resource) and Penia (Poverty), according to Plato (1991), we perceive an aspect of "lack" and another of "resource" (Brandão, 2015). Perhaps Plato recognized Eros's insatiable path in various scenarios, sometimes terrifying and self-destructive, but when directed, it would be shaped into a fullness of relationships.

In the beginning of the myth of Eros and Psyche, the mother-son relationship of Aphrodite-Eros is practically a *participation mystique*, in which the son lives indiscriminately immersed in the "great mother," remaining in a matriarchal dynamism (Byington, 1983). From an alchemical perspective, it is possible to relate such a state to *solutio*, an immersion and dissolution, which is driven by the principle of Eros, Venus, or Aphrodite, according to Edinger (2009). Eros lives in immediate desire through fleeting experiences, like a mischievous winged boy who has misconduct in the eyes of public morality, running through others' houses at night setting fires and causing scandals (Apuleio, 2019). Despite seemingly living for his own desires, he is driven by an experience not appropriate and integrated into the Self, being a slave to situations conditioned by a lack of fullness, as his own feelings are tied to Mother Aphrodite. She calls him and commands a task: to destroy the life of the beautiful maiden who would overshadow her own beauty. Here we see Eros still existing as an appendage of Aphrodite herself.

Hillman (1984) elucidates Eros as the impulse of individuation that propels personality out of its inertia and stimulates its development. Despite arguing that Eros itself does not transform, but rather we are transformed by it, it is possible to recognize in humanized Eros the initiatory mean-

ing for such development. When Eros encounters Psyche, a calling is established, and instead of blindly following maternal command, he finds himself turned on to deepen his relationship with the young woman. Hillman (1984) continues to relate Eros to fire (arrow) and air (wings), and Aphrodite to water. Jung, in *Psychology and Alchemy*, describing the hermetic vessel, the “womb” from which the “*filius philosophorum*,” the miraculous stone, must be born, tell us about the vessel as a symbol into which the *aqua permanens* is instilled, to initiate the *Opus*. However, in the *aqua permanens*, one would recognize the philosopher’s own Mercury, not only as water but also as its opposite, fire (Jung, 2012b, p. 254, § 338). Mercury can be represented as a projection of Eros himself, initially directed towards the corporified *aqua permanens* in Aphrodite, and, over the course of the myth, in Psyche.

Eros finds Psyche and proposes that a romantic relationship be established, in an ornate castle, full of servants to provide for the young woman’s needs and care, but with one condition: that they would only meet at night, and she would never be able to see him. She agrees, becoming increasingly involved with the presence of the man who should be her lifelong companion. Initially, it didn’t matter who was him. Infatuation has taken them over, not considering with the need, on Psyche’s part, to fully know the being lying with her there. In a first moment, the infatuation relationship is based on projections that occur in each of the parties, so that the connection with the other beyond the projected can take a back seat.

Consumed by jealousy at Psyche’s apparent happiness, her sisters find her and instill manipulative ideas for the young woman to discover her lover’s true identity. During the night, Psyche decides, with a lamp and a dagger, to illuminate her sleeping companion. Upon realizing who her lover was, almost simultaneously with the illumination of the god’s body, a drop of hot oil falls on Eros’s shoulder. Immediately, he flies away from Psyche.

In a symbolic view, a force (exogamous) is perceived that leads Eros beyond his maternal field when he encounters Psyche. Nonetheless, there is also a force (endogamous) that makes him return to Aphrodite’s presence when exposed by the lamp’s light and wounded by the oil—after being recognized not merely as a projection but as a being distinct from Psyche. There is also a contradictory family influence (represented by the sisters) because, while the sisters’ feelings would be aimed at destroying what Psyche was experiencing, she receives the “call” from a reality external to the castle, resulting in the end of the perfect and fanciful world in which Psyche was living with the unknown, thus helping her to free herself from the illusory state she had been experiencing until then (Kalsched, 2013). Only after the two sisters throw themselves off the cliff—a symbolic representation of the discrimination between Psyche and the sisters—and under the guidance of Pan, does Psyche decide to embark on the path to reunite with Eros (not before she herself attempts to throw herself into the waters of a river).

Paradoxically, Eros is born in Psyche at the moment he distances himself from her. After the separation experienced between them and Eros’s wound, the young woman’s path begins, and she is initiated to then rediscover her love. There is a sacrificial aspect that Psyche promoted to herself upon learning who would be by her side. The spirit of depth, according to Jung (2009, p. 112) in *The Red Book*, clarifies in his imaginative process that no one could or should prevent the sacrifice and that inevitably we should seek the interior “monasteries” as well as the deserts within us—“The desert calls you and pulls you back, and if you were iron-chained to the world of that time, the call of the desert breaks all chains.” Through sacrifice and the call of the inner desert, preparation for solitude would occur, just as Psyche is invited to experience.

Psyche: individuation towards the soul

Psyche means “breath” or “vital principle” (Brandão, 2015). In the myth, Psyche is described as the most beautiful young woman, in a way that many men, despite being attracted to her, could not ask for her hand in marriage. A captivating beauty emanated from her, who has begun to be revered as Aphrodite herself. What, after all, could this immeasurable beauty symbolize? How could such beauty be characterized in terms of psychic development? It is possible to imagine this aspect as the purity and paradisiacal perfection representative of the divine, of the *ouroboros* of the maternal unconscious, of the yet undifferentiated, of what has not been incarnated or even humanized. It would be an idea not materialized, whose innocence and fantasy do not demonstrate worldly life, though they outline an infinite potentiality that is on the verge of being realized.

Psyche’s father, fearing there might be some curse that keeps all men away from his daughter’s life, consults the Oracle of Apollo and receives the prediction:

On a craggy rock, sumptuously adorned, expose, O king, your daughter for a death nuptial. Then, O king, expect not for your son-in-law creatures sprung from mortal stock, but a cruel and viperine monster, who flies through the air. Fierce and evil, he spares no one. Everywhere he carries fire and sword, and makes even Jupiter (Zeus) tremble, and is the terror of all the gods, and appalls even the waters of Hades, and strikes terror to the shades of the Styx. (Apuleio, 2019, pp. 178-179)

Oracle, as destiny, so present in myths, carries within it the inevitability of transformation, of crossroads, of tragedy and surprise, of death and rebirth. It resonates here in Psyche’s departure from the familiar world and in directing of her steps towards the abyss on the rock, towards the unknown. Psyche, as a child newly liberat-

ed from paradise and abandoned by her family, mobilizes us to summon Jung when he speaks to us about the abandonment and risk to which the child is subject are aspects that configure the insignificant beginning, on the one hand, and the mysterious and miraculous birth on the other—arising from a seemingly hopeless painful conflict (Jung, 2014, § 287). “Child,” he adds, would mean something to be developed towards autonomy. Psyche could not become herself without disconnecting from the origin. “Abandonment is thus a necessary condition, not just a secondary phenomenon,” concludes Jung (2014, p. 170, § 287).

Psyche’s experience with her sisters shows us the ambivalence of family relationships in the process of psychic development. The sisters have instigated her to become aware of who accompanied her, at the risk of losing her beloved and somehow returning to the family circle. Conversely, Psyche has adopted a posture of taking the reins in pursuit of her individuation. Considering the incestuous and endogamous permanence in family psychic relationships, it is possible that the desidealization between parents and children may appear stunted and challenging, the genesis of various psychic symptoms in the individual’s growth towards adulthood—which can be considered as a moment when psychic-emotional, social, and material autonomy fulfill itself (Araújo, 2022). Archetypal autonomy would be added, symbolized by the withdrawal and self-appropriation of the maternal and paternal roles constellated by parents or caregivers in the ego-self axis throughout individuation. Likewise, primary caregivers are called to reclaim within themselves the role deposited in their children, so that creative potential is re-experienced in the individual processes of each one, as well as allowing themselves to be children of themselves (Galiás, 2003). When seen by Psyche, Eros becomes frightened and returns to the maternal environment. The wound occurs at the same time that the girl realizes that her lover is the god of love. What was once “blind,”

like infatuation between two beings, becomes awareness of the other's identity, mobilizing the appearance of the dark aspects accumulated in each one's experience. Psyche is born in Eros after symbolically touching him with the hot oil—Eros mobilizes in pain and vulnerability, by the awareness of being seen. From infatuation, the possibility of love arises. It is interesting noting that the element fire, at this moment, takes the front, and the alchemical operation *calcinatio* can be related, in which fire “burns” the hungry and instinctive desire, generating frustration in Psyche for not obtaining the object so egoistically desired (Edinger, 2009).

Fearful and desperate at Eros's departure, Psyche attempts to throw herself into the waters of the nearest river, which brings her back by fluvial movements, and she is welcomed by Pan, a wild deity, who recognizes the young woman's suffering: “This uncertain and wavering march, this extreme paleness, the continuous sighs, and, above all, those eyes brimming with tears, indicate that a great love is the cause of your sorrow.” (Apuleio, 2019, p. 209). Pan guides and directs her to seek Eros herself through prayers, and thus she embarks on a journey towards her lover. She learns that Aphrodite is searching for her, and, tired, she gives up fleeing and goes to encounter the mother / mother-in-law.

When Psyche arrives at Aphrodite's realm, she is taken by Fashion to meet the goddess. The servants Anxiety and Sorrow are called upon to cause distress and torment to the “poor child” (Apuleio, 2019). After cruelly hurting Psyche, tearing her clothes, pulling out her hair, she orders grains of wheat, barley, corn, peas, lentils, beans, and poppies to be brought, mixed, and thrown for Psyche to separate. Aphrodite's first task was given. It can be noted that, once again, the symbol of the great mother appears in the steps of the young woman. She needs to recognize the indiscriminate grains and create boundaries between each of them. “Arrange them in order,” demanded Aphrodite. Order, discrimination, boundaries can be seen as characteristics

to be developed through the patriarchal dynamics that take place from an established matriarchal dynamic, since birth (Byngton, 1983). Nutrition, immediate pleasure, receptivity, and passivity gradually share space with habit, discipline, order, limits, and directive consciousness. It is interesting to emphasize that the first task offered by the “great mother Aphrodite” is to create order within herself. Psyche receives help from ants—representatives of an organizing, persistent, and patient nature—and completes the challenge. The image of the alchemical operation *separatio* can be recognized, in which there is a division (of the grains) into two and consciousness of the opposites, between subject and object, between the ego and the non-ego. Edinger (2019) reminds us of the separation between the literal and concrete aspects of an experience and the inner symbolic meaning attached to it as something inevitable to human development and individuation.

The second task given by Aphrodite concerns collecting and bringing back some golden fleece from the sheep grazing in a nearby riverside area. For the second time, Psyche tries to take her own life, but she is saved by a green reed, which guides her on how to obtain the fleece: she should wait for the sheep to rest on the riverbanks, and as they pass by nearby trees, they would leave the fleece caught on the tips of the branches. The golden fleece can be seen as substances to be “coagulated” from the sheep and that shape other items that may derive from the fleece. In this visual image, the alchemical operation *coagulatio* is perceived. Ego formation demands that desire coagulates, incarnates. Corporeality is an important step in the unfolding of the individual's individuation. Psyche's experience of *coagulatio* begins with the materialization of desire with Eros himself, followed by the responsibility of having hurt the lover (and knowing him), culminating in the possible redemption from the completion of Aphrodite's tasks. The gold present in the fleece can be related to the treasure that potentially materializ-

es from patient work in consciously acting at the right moment to collect it—gold is also linked to the alchemical transformation of mercury, as a symbol of the integrated Self. The golden fleeces are thus delivered to the goddess.

Psyche needs to perform the third task demanded by Aphrodite: to go to the summit of a steep mountain and collect some water from a spring in the area. Reaching the top, she realized she could not reach the spring. In addition to the difficult terrain—a narrow channel—, dragons kept watch over the spring. In despair, she felt as if her body was present and her senses were far away (Apuleio, 2019). At this moment, Zeus's eagle appears, grabs the crystal vase, and collects the water, returning with the liquid. At this stage, dialogue with the operation *sublimatio* is engaged: an ascent that elevates us above the entanglement of existence, amplifying our perspectives, but sometimes distancing us from real life. The risk is the possibility of dissociation, which symbolically occurs in Psyche when feeling separates from the body itself.

After delivering the water from the spring to Aphrodite, Psyche, who is already gaining some respect from the goddess mother/mother-in-law, is summoned for the last task: to enter the underworld, fetch a part of Persephone's Beauty, and bring it back. Once again, Psyche decides to take her own life, and climbing a tower, she prepares for the end. However, the Tower assists her in surviving, guiding her on how to reach Hades. She should have coins to give to the ferryman Charon (round trip), two cakes for the three-headed dog Cerberus (round trip), and, during the journey, various distractions would arise—a dead old man and old weavers would ask for help, but these would be tricks from Aphrodite so that she would not be able to reach the goal. There was a primary warning: the young woman could not see inside the box what Persephone had left in it. Everything happened as the Tower predicted. However, at the end of the test, almost leaving the underworld, Psyche thought: "Am I so silly as to take divine beauty, without taking even a lit-

tle for myself and thus pleasing, who knows, my handsome lover?" (Apuleio, 2019, p. 239). So, she decides to open the box, but she noticed no sign of beauty. On the contrary, she was overtaken by an infernal sleep, which left her in a state of lethargy.

A consideration regarding the descent into Hades is necessary. Symbolically, Psyche had to confront her own hell to finally live her love. This psychic space can be seen as the realm of complexes existing in the personal shadow, through which we are invited to traverse, reaching the *anima-animus* dimension, the depth of the psyche through which more complete (and real) relationships with archetypal structures and the Self are allowed, as well as through which the fullness of encounter with the other can be established. Jung (2012, p. 130, § 454,) states that "the human being who does not connect with another does not have wholeness, for this is only achieved by the soul, and this, in turn, cannot exist without its other side, which is always found in the thou." The encounter with the other inevitably leads us to *mortificatio*—the blackness refers to the shadow, and there is a possibility of becoming aware of it. Edinger (2009) clarifies that outbursts of affection, resentment, pleasure, and power demands must submit to *mortificatio* so that the libido entangled in infantile and immature forms can transform. In *Symbols of Transformation*, written by Jung (2013, p. 483, § 646; p. 499, § 668), we recall the sacrificial aspect of holding the opposites and, consequently, making space for the Self. The ego, as Edinger (2009) asserts, when incarnated, when it dares to exist as an autonomous center of being, incorporates substantial reality, but at the same time becomes susceptible to corruption and death—the dead and worthless residue would be the imaginal aspect of the *nigredo*. However, in what appears to be emptiness, disdain, or worthlessness, there is the psyche. Psyche dies to find Eros, outside and within herself. Eros heals from his wound, and like the wounded healer, he goes toward

his Psyche, to heal her (and be healed), in the very underworld. Through the process of knowing one's own pain and blemish, Eros manages to save Psyche from her own shadow. The other of Eros is Psyche, and the other of Psyche is Eros. Thus, Eros and Psyche are reborn together, in the encounter between death and rebirth.

The encounter between Eros and Psyche

After recovering from his wound, Eros goes to meet Psyche. She was in a deep sleep near the exit of Hades. He moves aside the box containing what was offered by Persephone and gently awakens her with a discreet prick of one of his arrows. He instructs her to complete the task by taking what was requested to Aphrodite, while he himself goes to Zeus, pleading to be united with Psyche. Zeus reproaches him for the wounds that Eros had already inflicted on others but ultimately grants the request. He orders Mercury to summon all the gods. When they are gathered, Zeus speaks:

I have found it necessary to curb the impetuous passions of his youth. He has caused quite a stir with his daily scandals of adulteries and all sorts of foolishness. Let us remove the occasion and put an end to his teenage lust by binding him with the bonds of marriage. He has chosen a girl and taken her virginity. Let him keep her, let him guard her for himself, and, united with Psyche, may he forever enjoy his love. (Apuleio, 2019, p. 241)

Mercury takes Psyche to Heaven. She receives from Zeus a cup of ambrosia: "Take, Psyche, and be immortal" (Apuleio, p. 241, 2019). Everyone celebrates in a grand wedding feast. After some time, Psyche gives birth to a daughter named Hedone.

The encounter of Eros and Psyche represents the bond of two polarities that, before opposing each other, complement each other. Eros can be seen as the male consort in the myth, or a

figure of the *animus*. Psyche represents an image of the *anima*. Both are considered here from a concept beyond countersexuality. Eros-*anima* and Psyche-*animus* are forces present in every human being. Hillman (2020) argues for the *anima* as an archetype of the psyche. *Anima*, in a symbolic context, has its expression expanded from the *anima-animus* syzygy to a quality of *anima mundi*, as the soul of both man and the world itself. At this point in the myth, we have a convergence of aspects—in alchemy, Mercury would symbolize the hermaphroditic figure alongside the connection of Eros with Psyche: an intermediary between spirit and body. Jung tells us that the body is Venus and feminine, the spirit is Mercury and masculine; the soul, as hermaphrodite, would be a link between body and spirit (Jung, 2012a, p. 129, § 454). In the coded figures of the Rosarium Philosophorum, so well analyzed by Jung, it is possible to symbolically assimilate the union of the king and the queen in the various alchemical operations, culminating in the *coniunctio*. The queen would represent the body, and the king the spirit, but, as Jung reports, without the soul they would not be connected—soul as *anima*, represented by Psyche, on one side; soul as *animus*, manifested by Eros, on the other. "As long as there is no bond of love, the soul is not present in them," Jung concludes (2012a, p. 130, § 454). Considering individuation as animic development, Jung (2012a, p. 57, § 361) draws a parallel between four feminine images (of soul)—Eve, Helen of Troy, Mary, and Sophia—and four cultural stages of Eros (diversified manifestations of psychic energy based on the experienced *anima* dimension). An "Eros-Eve" relationship would be related to the personification of purely instinctual relationships; on another level of encounter, "Eros-Helen" would represent a predominantly sexual dimension; "Eros-Mary" would manifest as the utmost respect and religious devotion; "Eros-Sophia" would culminate in a relational image of extreme wisdom – *sapientia* (Hillman, 2020). The same transformative process de-

scribed by Jung, through relational layers across *anima* spectra, seems to symbolize the Kundalini energy in Hindu mythic culture, which, when released, promotes the inner cosmic encounter between the Shiva and Shakti syzygy, along with the awakening of chakras (psychic dimensions) by this energy, primarily “coiled” in the basic chakra.

Initially, Eros and Psyche experience an inferior *coniunctio* (simultaneously to the various psychic experiences mirrored by alchemical operations); *solutio*, in the passionate, fused, and blind encounter; *calcinatio*, after the exposure of Eros by fire; *separatio*, when one discovers they are not the other; *coagulatio*, when Psyche humanizes her desire through the loss of Eros and subsequently in her pursuit of him; *sublimatio*, when Psyche panoramically looks at the reality she would need to live to find her lover, which culminates in *mortificatio*, when Psyche reaches the Underworld and falls into a deep slumber. Upon meeting after intimate and epic transformations, they achieve the superior *coniunctio*, the ultimate goal of the alchemical *opus*, the final union of purified opposites and rectification of unilateralism, as elucidated by Edinger (2009) (the terms “inferior” and “superior” used here do not imply something “worse, less evolved” or “better, more evolved”; they merely illustrate a differential between interposed layers, without one being “more” or “less”—the superior and the inferior in this case are interdependent, and one does not happen without the other). Eros and Psyche incarnate and humanize themselves in the self-other relationship, in the context of collective self-world, but primarily in the experience of self with oneself. It is a human calling to sustain the dynamic between ego and Self as a stage for the relational potency between inner Eros and Psyche. The Eros-Psyche syzygy, like Shiva-Shakti, can symbolically illustrate an intermediate dimension for the conjunction between egoic, conscious aspects and the unconscious and archetypal framework channeled by the Self.

Conclusion: Eros and Psyche, an inexhaustible *coniunctio*

After all the reflections presented in this article, I meditate: *When do Eros and Psyche emerge within me?* Perceiving the amplitude of Eros’ energy encountering our psyche can be daunting. Firstly, because we are not aware of the totality of the psychic energy that we are. Secondly, because we often fear experiencing the fullness of this encounter. At times, love scares us, frightens us, and makes it difficult for us to act through it and to let it act within us. Edinger (2009) speaks to us of love as fundamental to the phenomenology of *coniunctio*. However, Eros’ energy in the psyche can be redemptive. Starting from a love as egoic desire, more intensely fixated on sexual experience and less elaborated feeling (inferior *coniunctio*), we can reach a transpersonal love (superior *coniunctio*). We have the potentiality to amplify our individuation through the many dimensions of the Eros-Psyche syzygy. The extroverted aspect of *coniunctio* mobilizes us toward the development of transpersonal love with humanity, which is so necessary nowadays; the introverted aspect of *coniunctio* provides us with a connection to the Self and the realization of who we can be, in our totality (Edinger, 2009).

Eros and Psyche express themselves throughout the process of human unfolding. Initially, after conception, the embryo (and soon after, the fetus) finds itself immersed in the pre-birth erotic cosmos, yet, from the very beginning, the Self seems to already coordinate all activities, a miracle of self-organization and order, a cradle for the psyche itself. We are continuously invited to expand our own soul before the world, embodying the Self through the ego that encompasses it, gradually creating a manifest Self-ego awareness, expanding without losing the primordial completeness. The soul is already present primordially; however, we perceive only a small beam of its action. Childhood, adolescence, adulthood, senescence, in each phase of existence, we seek the soul which, essentially, is what we are. With this quest, the soul can ful-

fill itself. This is the paradox of the *opus*: to seek outside what is already within.

There is an urgent need to recognize these forces within us, to fulfill ourselves from a dimension where soul-love can act – between the self and all the aspects that orbit within me, between the self-other, between the self-world, even (and especially) in the face of presented limitations and the fear of living out the embodiment of existence. To reclaim Eros is to daily rethink the ethical significance of our actions in the face of the Psyche presented to us, whether in familial, professional, social, political, or cosmic spheres. To embrace Psyche is to confront the call to develop towards love and to realize it as a structure and safe harbor in the tasks demanded of us by life. In the end, the question remains: *when do Eros and Psyche emerge within you?* I conclude with the image that Jung enlightened us regarding the encounter with the soul itself, as a stim-

ulus for our inner experience of “animating” and “soul-making” life.

My soul, where are you? Do you hear me? I speak, I call you – are you there? I have returned, I am here again. [...] I have found the right way, it led me to you, to my soul. I return rejuvenated and purified. Do you still know me? How long the separation lasted! Everything has become so different! And how did I find you? Wonderful was my journey. With what words shall I describe you? Give me your hand, my long-forgotten soul. What a warmth of joy to rediscover you, my soul long renounced! Life has led me back to you. With you, my journey must continue. With you, I want to walk and ascend to my solitude. (Jung, 2015, pp. 116-117) ■

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Resumen

Eros-animus y Psique-anima: una coniunctio-rescate del alma

Eros y Psique son imágenes mitológicas que influyen en diversas expresiones artísticas y en el conocimiento filosófico. Eros, el dios del amor, representante de la energía primordial, y Psique, una joven de belleza inmensurable, se entrelazan en los escritos de Apuleio (2009). Eros-Psique también puede verse como una de las manifestaciones simbólicas de la syzygia masculino-femenina, o animus-anima, dimensiones psíquicas interdependientes que se conectan en una potencialidad en el encuentro consigo mismo, con el otro y con el mundo. El presente artículo tiene

como objetivo relacionar el mito de Eros y Psique con el desarrollo psíquico del ser humano. A través de una amplificación simbólica alquímica, los aspectos del mito se despliegan en símbolos que expresan estructuralmente experiencias arquetípicas del encuentro con el alma. Por último, el artículo plantea la necesidad de reflexionar sobre el nacimiento de Eros y Psique en nosotros como fuerzas necesarias y complementarias que pueden ayudar en el proceso de transformación colectiva en medio de crisis sociales, económicas y psíquicas. ■

Palabras clave: Eros, Psique, anima, animus, individuación.

Resumo

Eros-animus e Psique-anima: uma coniunctio-resgate da alma

Eros e Psique são imagens mitológicas que influenciam diversas expressões artísticas e do conhecimento filosófico. Eros, deus do amor, representante da energia primordial, e Psique, jovem de beleza incomensurável, entrelaçam-se no escrito de Apuleio (2009). Eros-Psique também pode ser visto como uma das manifestações simbólicas da sizígia masculino-feminino, ou animus-anima, dimensões psíquicas interdependentes, as quais se conectam em uma potencialidade no encontro consigo mesmo, com o outro e com o mundo. O presente artigo

objetiva relacionar o mito de Eros e Psique ao desenvolvimento psíquico do ser humano. Através de uma amplificação simbólica alquímica, aspectos do mito são desdobrados em símbolos que expressam estruturalmente vivências arquetípicas do encontro com a alma. Por fim, o artigo levanta a necessidade de olharmos o nascimento de Eros e Psique em nós como forças necessárias e complementares que podem auxiliar no processo de transformação coletiva em meio a crises sociais, econômicas e psíquicas. ■

Palavras-chave: Eros, Psique, anima, animus, individuação.

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