

Traditional storytelling and analytical psychology: health, holding and reflection

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Abstract

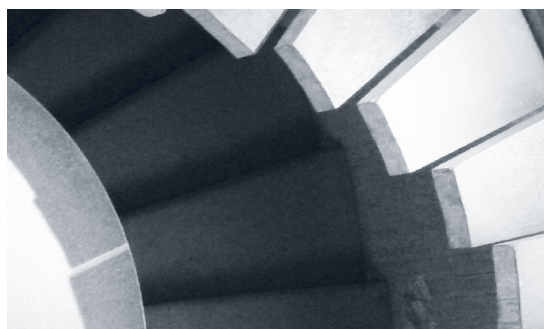
Based on the notions of holding, group Self and on four steps of reflection, we present the stages of work with traditional tales developed with a group of users of a CAPS II in a demedicalizing perspective. The group is composed of 27 individuals diagnosed with psychosis, 5 medical students, 3 psychology students and 1 phy-

sician. In this way, the group is considered as a totality and in its ritual character, presenting the following systematization: welcoming ritual, recitation of a traditional tale, reflections on the traditional tale, artistic experience, sharing of feelings and snack. The stages of our approach represent a series of activities that occur regularly and are distributed over time, creating a rhythm that favors autonomy. Among the dozens of tales recited, two are presented in this article: "The Old Man and the Girl" and "The Fairy of the Mill Dam", which address, respectively, the themes of the divine child and the motifs of curse and redemption. ■

Keywords
health,
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Introduction

In 2006, the Ministry of Health launched the National Policy on Integrative and Complementary Practices in the Brazilian Unified Health System (CPBUHS) (Brasil, 2006), as a way to expand access to models of treatments that were already used in some municipalities in the country: acupuncture, homeopathy, phytotherapy, crenotherapy and anthroposophic medicine. With regard to anthroposophic medicine, the document highlights the outpatient clinic of the Monte Azul Community Association (MACA) in São Paulo/SP, the service of non-allopathic practices in Belo Horizonte/MG and a family health team in São João del-Rei/MG. Since 2002, several practices of anthroposophic medicine take place in the municipality of São João del-Rei as a demedicalizing alternative for the human suffering (Vieira, 2004): creation of a vegetable garden with medicinal herbs, preparation of tinctures with herbs, creation of Threefold Therapy, elderly group, eurythmy, neurofunctional reorganization, nutritive baths in underweight children, etc. In 2008, these activities gave rise to the Reference Center for Anthroposophic Medicine (RCAM) (Vieira, 2018).

Anthroposophic medicine was idealized by Rudolf Steiner and the physician Ita Wegman in the 1920s. It is an integral conception of the human being, taking into account the physical, vital, emotional and spiritual aspects (Husemann & Wolff, 1978). In group work based on anthroposophy, various resources are used, including traditional tales. These tales serve as a stimulus for the development of imagination and for a possible expansion of consciousness. According to Steiner (2012), the images present in traditional tales fulfill the soul's need for an undefined atmosphere, different from the daily stimuli that bombard consciousness.

As a result of these actions by CRMA in São João del-Rei there was an interaction with those who attend the Center of Psychosocial Care (CAPS II) and, in some situations, psychiatric medications, such as anxiolytics and antidepressants, were replaced by non-allopathic medications (Vieira, 2018). In 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, another work of non-drug intervention took place: traditional tales with a group of people in severe psychic illness distress (psychoses), referred by CAPS II and other health assistance units, in addition to people who spontaneously seek the RCAM the place where the weekly meetings lasting three hours take place. The group consists of 37 people: 27 mental health service users, 5 medical students, 3 psychology students, 1 physician with 2 specializations: in anthroposophic medicine and in family and community medicine, and 1 medicine professor. The interns' work is supervised by this medicine professor and by a psychology professor with expertise in analytical psychology. The number of participants varies between 15 and 20 people, mostly women. The age range is from 30 to 79 years old. Although the members come from different social classes, the majority's family income is less than two minimum wages. Education ranges from first to third degrees, with one member claiming to be illiterate. Regarding the use of psychotropic drugs, we carried out a clinical assessment and, when deemed necessary, discussed the issue with the CAPS II team and the responsible psychiatrist. In this way, we reduced medication doses and, in three cases, were able to discontinue the use of psychotropic drugs.

The group has the following systematization: (a) welcome ritual, (b) recitation of a traditional tale, (c) reflections on the traditional tale, (d) artistic experience and sharing of feelings, and

(e) snack. The stages of our approach represent a series of activities that occur regularly and are distributed over time, creating a rhythm that favors autonomy, as we realized that, little by little, participants become authors of their processes, with the possibility of assuming the role of group facilitators.

In this article, the stages of the work with traditional tales, based on the notions of welcoming, meaning care (Merhy, 2007), Self-group (Freitas, 2005) as well as on the four steps of group reflection (Lameirão, 2018), and developed with a group that attends CAPS II will be detailed. This way, the organization of the group is considered as a whole and in its ritual character. The selected tales are part of European, Asian, African, Latin oral traditions and of original peoples from Brazilian territory traditions. Among the dozens of tales recited so far, we will take two as examples: “The old man and the girl” (Mello, 1989) and “The fairy of the mill dam” (Grimm & Grimm, 2008), also known as “The ondine of the lake”, as they present recurring themes in our meetings. The first presents the divine child as its theme (Jung & Kerényi, 2011; von Franz, 1992) and the second, the motives of curse and redemption (von Franz, 1990).

Welcome ritual

A group of CAPS II is welcomed at RCAM, which is a unit of São João del-Rei’s Municipal Department of Health. People arrive gradually and each one is warmly welcomed in a room especially prepared for the meeting. With participants sitting in circle, the group activity begins. The lights are turned off and a participant lights a beeswax candle, with a golden flame and a sweet smell. Another member of the group strums a kantele, an ancient Finnish string instrument. There is silence and then the recitation of a traditional tale begins.

The organization of the group has several ritualistic elements: the candle flame in the darkness, the sound of the musical instrument and the recited tale. Ritual consecrates space

and time apart from the usual concept, sanctifies the space and places us in a primordial time. The space gains importance and turns into a value. Time restarts itself and becomes a power (Eliade, 1996). The ritual created in a room of a health unit during a day of the week shows us that space and time are heterogeneous and discontinuous, the scenery and climate created refer to the center of the world and to origins, that is, the ritual transforms a profane space into sacred one and the everyday into a mythical time: “each consecrated space coincides with the center of the world, just as the time of any ritual coincides with the mythical moment of the ‘beginning’” (Eliade, 1992, pp. 28–29).

According to Merhy (2007), the object of the work in the field of health is to provide care, which means taking into account aspects directly related to the symptoms and the most evident demands, and also to the psychosocial phenomena and to the belonging to the territory. In our group, it is evident the strong bond that everyone has with various religions, following different creeds: Catholic, Evangelical, Afro-Brazilian religions or Spiritism. Thus, spontaneous manifestations often occur, such as thanks or requests for help for self or a group member. One day they felt the need to start with a supplication, Catarina’s prayer: “The first thing we need to do before going to sleep is to pray the rosary and take three sips of water. God! Put my mother’s soul in Your arms. In the name of the father, the son and the Holy Spirit, amen”. With this example, we want to emphasize that differences are welcomed by all, besides supporting the ritualistic character of the group.

For Eliade (1992), one of the importance of the ritual is to situate the individual in relation to the cosmos and its temporal manifestations. Even the operation of the watch as a chronological marking mechanism is based on the perception of the movement of the earth and the stars. According to Fierz (1997), time is a psychic phenomenon, a human need for orientation. Time is

often distorted in severe psychic illness, being perceived differently from the usual experience, becoming slower or faster: “To the melancholic, the minutes seem to drag on, the hours seem like an eternity. To the maniac, months pass in hours” (p. 49). In our group, the timelessness of the tales creates collective references and, invariably, we have to repeat a tale. Thus, sacred time (Eliade, 1992, 1996) is vivified weekly, in each meeting at the health facility. According to Steiner (2012), the timelessness of tales can be perceived everywhere, if only there is someone who can observe it.

Lighting a candle in the dark opens us up to a world of fantasies, as the flame “is one of the greatest image operators” (Bachelard, 1989, p. 9). The small candle flame does not make it possible to clearly distinguish objects from sensory images, and thus psychic images gain prominence. Here, the cosmic daydreams emerge as privileged images. Images that immediately make us dreamers of a world, of images of a world that is invigorated, as if we were around a bonfire (Bachelard, 1988).

The other elements that make up the welcoming atmosphere also participate in this revitalization process. Therefore, listening to the sound of the kantele puts us in a delicate rhythm, as the instrument can be played close to the body and the strings can be lightly caressed. Each listener can therefore feel comforted, producing feelings of integration with oneself and with the group, as if they were listening to the sound of a harmonious wind (Foster, 2013). The smoothness of the instrument fills the room and does not impose any predetermined soul image (Long-Breipohl, 2013). The instrument has a pentatonic scale not linked to aesthetic aspects in a primary way, but to the possibilities of significance (Wisnik, 1989). The musical scale has seven notes, while the pentatonic scale is composed of five notes. Therefore, when playing a pentatonic musical instrument, each person produces a unique and harmonious sound, capable of creating a relaxing

and meditative atmosphere. In addition to the kantele, there are pentatonic instruments: the pentatonic xylophone, the pentatonic harp and the kalimba.

In addition to the candle lit in the darkness and the sound of the kantele, there is the storytelling of the traditional tale. Listening to the tale’s storytelling brings us face to face with the structure of the psyche (von Franz, 1990, 2022; Jung, 2011a). This is inferred from different phenomena — dreams, daydreams, delusions, hallucinations, myths, works of art and religious themes — and is directly present in traditional tales and its therapeutic aspect is linked to the heterogeneity of time, that is, to the circular time that escapes everyday life and enables the symbolic recreation of the world:

The person for whom it is recited is magically projected in *illo tempore*, into the “beginning of the World”; they becomes contemporary with the cosmogony. What is involved is, in short, a return to the original time, the therapeutic purpose of which is to begin life once again, a symbolic rebirth. The conception underlying these curative rituals seems to be the following: life cannot be repaired, it can only be recreated through symbolic repetition of the cosmogony, for, as we have said, the cosmogony is the paradigmatic model for all creation (Eliade, 1987, p. 74).

Although we always try to maintain a rhythm during the group work, if any participant arrives in distress, the activity is interrupted, we take care of the person. The affection that permeates the group allows for the manifestation of feelings and attitudes in its various forms: crying, outburst of rage, fantasy soul experience, delusional report, hallucination, self-talking, laughing for no apparent reason, etc. On these days, the rhythm is altered and the experience of telling a tale does not take place without jeopardizing the group unity, since in our work there is no set time

for the conclusion of a tale. The name that the participants chose is a synthesis of these characteristics: "Warmth and Affection".

Telling a traditional tale

Steiner (2012) suggests that a tale could start as follows: "Once, it happened... Where did it happen? In fact, where it did not happen?" (p. 55). And end like this: "This is what I saw once. And, if what happened in the spiritual world did not extinguish, did not die, then it is still alive today" (p. 56). The timeless character appears, for example, in the themes of the divine child (Jung & Kerényi, 2011; von Franz, 1992) and in the motifs of curse and redemption (von Franz, 1990). The divine child is present in the tale "The old man and the girl", in which an austere old man sees a star that shines on top of a mountain, day and night. After contemplating it for a long time, the old man felt attracted to the mountain and the enigma. He decided that he would climb the mountain to meet the star and set out on his way. On leaving the village, a fragile and tiny girl asked to accompany him. As she did not give up insisting, the man agreed.

Jung (2011b, p. 41, § 24) points out that fantasy is extremely important for child development. If we observe a child playing, fantasy permeates all of their actions and, in this imaginary world, dolls and toys can be animated. It brings with it a free, life-giving, confident thought. Unlike directed thinking, which is characterized as an effort at logical communication with the other and as a means of adapting to tangible reality, fantasy thinking is continuous, governed by unconscious motives and does not require effort. Fantasy presents itself, therefore, as a compensatory aspect in relation to directed thinking and possible unilateral positions of consciousness (Jung, 2011c, p. 123, § 187). According to Neumann (2017), the development of the child's personality has the Self as a director center. The first manifestations presented by a child would therefore be expressions of the unconscious world, serving as a basis for the later

organization of the ego complex to assert itself as the center of consciousness.

Fantasies are, therefore, fundamental for the development of the child. We can say the same about adults, especially a set of fantasies with images of children. The divine child presents, like every archetypal image, aspects of duality, referring, on the one hand, to the phenomena that express "the unconscious state of earliest childhood" (Jung, 2011d, p. 180, § 299) and, on the other hand, "an anticipation of future developments" (p. 166, § 278).

There is a member of the group who, on some occasions, presents herself dressed as a child and, at other times, as an adult. When she arrives for the meeting, presenting herself as a happy child, she awakens the child in the members of the group. Joy is in the air. Everyone claps and hugs her. She dresses like a child, always in varied and well-chosen clothes. She adorns herself with school shoes, bows on her head, necklaces with pacifiers and, invariably, a toy in her hands, almost always a doll. She sings, tells fun stories and invites people to play with her. She is smiling and friendly and, like a child, demands attention at all times. When she wants a gift, she addresses the person as godfather, godmother, pappy. She also shows impatience and irritation when she has to go through all the stages of the meeting. Sometimes we prepare a bed and she lies down. Then, she gets up and participates in the activity going on. Other times, she wants to leave and quarrels, behaving like a child who throws tantrums. At other times, she introduces herself as a 59 years old adult. She is pleasant to talk to, brings up interesting topics that everyone likes, goes straight to the root of the problem, asks deep questions, shows herself to the world as a stylish dresser, shying away from conventions. She is a free thinking, confident and not very negative. She has a wide vocabulary and an awakened intelligence.

This duality is clearly expressed in the theoretical debate between Marie-Louise von Franz (1992) and James Hillman (1981) about the eter-

nal child (*puer aeternus*). While she defends the idea that it is a matter of the adult's close connection with the mother complex, creating dependence on the mother, who becomes an ideal, he argues that this conception restricts an archetypal image to the subjects of the incest taboo and to the search for the archetypal mother in the figure of the biological mother. This position would express a psychological materialism, considering the spirit as an appendix of maternal matter:

All these data belong to a series of mythical figures of young human demigods or divine youths and cannot be imagined only through the psychological language of the mother complex. It is preferable (...) to consider these data referring to the *puer* as belonging to the phenomenology of the spirit. If we do not become aware of this fact, as it manifests itself today in young men and women, and in the *puer aeternus* images of our dreams and fantasies, we are missing the epiphanies of the spirit archetype, judging them as things "too juvenile", too weak, morbid or injured, or not grown up yet. Thus, the perspective of the mother archetype blocks the possibilities of the spirit when it emerges in our lives. That's why we must be especially careful when consigning the wandering path and nostalgia to the mother archetype (Hillman, 1981, p. 67).

In our group, both perspectives are taken into consideration, as infant attachment points us towards objective parental relationships and the autonomous nature of the maternal complex, highlighting a reductive-causal approach, and the archetypal epiphanies open up new possibilities of understanding psychic dynamics, as well as creating new perspectives on life, characterizing the compensatory and teleological aspects of the psyche (Jung, 2011c, p. 92-101, §§ 121-140).

The tale "The Lake's Undine" presents, in turn, the themes of curse and redemption based on the story of a miller who is becoming financially impoverished and meets an undine that emerges from the waters of a lake. She promises the miller wealth, in exchange for his son's life. He accepts the deal, but doesn't keep his promise. The son grows up, marries and becomes a skilled hunter. One day the son is kidnapped by the undine and transported to the bottom of the lake. Helped by a kind old woman, the wife of the hunter works to recover him, offering three gifts to the undine: a golden comb, a flute and a golden spindle. When delivering the last gift, the husband manages to free himself and escapes with his wife. The undine becomes furious and throws all the water of the lake over them. The kind old woman turns the hunter into a toad and his wife into a frog. When the water subsides, they come back to normal, but they are kept apart, in mountainous and foreign lands. The two go to work as sheep herders. After many years, they meet again, but do not recognize each other. One day the husband plays the flute and the wife cries. Then, only at this moment, they recognize each other and get together.

Curse is presented in different ways in traditional tales: princesses are transformed into witches, knights into wild beasts, kings are stricken with incurable diseases, prosperous countries are devastated, upright people become unfaithful, inanimate objects indicate a bad destiny, gods of love are imagined as monsters, beautiful princesses are put to sleep, countless characters are transformed into animals... Bad luck, misfortune and the illnesses present in the tales characterize curse, the central theme that establishes the adventure and has redemption as a counterpoint. Curse confronts us with the problem of evil in people's lives (Zimmer, 1988) and redemption is the method (von Franz, 1990). After all, how to get out of the situation of misfortune?

Can the impoverished miller trade his son's life for wealth? At first, yes. Then, no, definitely

not. But the undine reappears in the story and precisely for his son, now grown up, a hunter and married. The undine seizes the hunter and takes him to the bottom of the lake. The same kind old woman helps the wife to get her husband back and then turns her into a frog and him into a toad. They stop being frogs and toads, meet again, but don't recognize each other. Until one day (and this moment always comes), he plays the flute and she recognizes him: "They hugged and kissed, and for sure no one will ask if, from then on, they were happy" (Grimm & Grimm, 2008, p. 589).

The animal condition might serve certain purposes for a certain time. Perhaps the batrachian form helps to live in the water. But the very idea that they are bewitched suggests that the metamorphosis must be overcome. However, in this specific case, redemption does not happen with a return to human features. The couple do not recognize each other. Until an event at a certain time causes everything to transform, as redemption is the "condition in which someone was cursed or bewitched and is redeemed through certain happenings or events" (von Franz, 1990, p. 7).

When an unconscious content invades consciousness and catches hold of a human being, his fate is set, maybe his bad fate: "The effect of these unconscious images has something fateful about it. Perhaps – who knows? – these eternal images are what men mean by fate" (Jung, 2011c, p. 122, § 183). The images of the unconscious take over the soul of the person (Silveira, 2022) who starts to live in a different temporal order from everyday life, with its tasks, obligations, agendas and the will power. Then certain conditions are necessary for the expression of these contents and conscious concentration on significant themes, since psychic reality is a product of the confrontation of consciousness with the contents of the unconscious (Jung, 2011e, p. 109, § 354). The ritualistic character of the activity developed in the health unit causes cyclic time to find anchor points, even though seeming fragile, as the blow of a flute.

Reflections on the traditional tale

Jung (2011f, p. 128-131, §§ 225–228) states that the level of consciousness tends to decrease when we are in groups and even more so in mass movements. In such cases, the phenomena of lowering the mental level, of identification and, in extreme cases, of true psychic epidemics would occur. This case is exemplified by the population of Germany during the Nazi regime. These considerations lead to the understanding that he would reject group work, which is undoubtedly the position he adopts in relation to analysis. This argument is emphasized by Marie-Louise von Franz (2021, p. 342), as group psychotherapy would have a theme or a goal, in short, a center external to individuals, with a purpose to be achieved, neglecting the possible effects of archetypal images. Consequently, the egoic attitudes would be affirmed and reaffirmed, not favoring the experience of the Self.

For Jung (2011f), however, in certain situations, the person needs to leave isolation and be part of the community. In these cases, the group can be fundamental:

Against this essentially negative assessment of mass psychology, there exists the objection that there are also positive experiences, such as, for example, a healthy enthusiasm that spurs the individual to noble actions, or an equally positive feeling of human solidarity. Facts of this kind should not be denied. Community can give the individual courage, decision, and dignity that he would easily lose in isolation. It can awaken in him the memory of being a man among men (p. 131, § 228).

Such kind of remarks have contributed for Jung to become "indirectly responsible for the foundation of Alcoholics Anonymous" (Bair, 2006, p. 33). The association was founded in 1934 by Bob S. (Robert Holbrook Smith) and Bill W. (William Griffith Wilson). On January 23, 1961, Bill W. sent a letter to Jung, reporting the

case of Roland H., who the Swiss doctor met in 1930. After a year of treatment, the patient abandoned the intake of alcoholic beverages. The following year, however, he had a relapse and sought out Jung again. In the early 1960s, Jung (2003) still remembered the case and, seven days later, replied to Bill W. that “anxiety for alcohol corresponds, at a very low level, to the spiritual thirst of human beings for totality” (p. 315) and added: “I am strongly convinced that the principle of evil that prevails in this world drives the unacknowledged spiritual need to perdition, if it does not have the counter-reaction of a truly religious attitude or the protective wall of the human community” (p. 316).

Jung’s reflections are extremely relevant in cases of people with severe psychic suffering, such as the members of our group, who are often stigmatized and discriminated by society. Marginalization and social rejection make it difficult for these people to adapt and become an integral part of the community, and social isolation is a daily reality for them. Our group work represents an affective support for social adaptation to occur, and this is one of the main objectives of group work with traditional tales. In this sense, the results of our work are based on seven aspects: (1) emotional support; (2) learning space; (3) bond creation; (4) guarantee of quality of life; (5) importance of artistic activity; (6) depathologization; (7) amplification method at all stages of group work. Thus, the group represents a space for coexistence among equals, an exercise of existence based on affective ties that drive people to live together in the social environment, with important reverberations in the family and community.

It is, therefore, a learning space, in which other people’s experiences serve as parameters for the creation of coping strategies so that everyone can deal with the challenges that arise in everyday life, favoring integration into the community in which they live. In this sense, creating bonds among group members fosters a change in quality of life, with some participants improving fam-

ily relationships, starting romantic relationships, reducing the use of psychotropic medications, and returning to the work field.

Based on Jung’s remarks — the need to get out of isolation, of belonging to the human community, of experiencing totality and protection by the community — we sought for the foundations of analytical psychology for group work. A bibliometric study, of a documentary and quantitative nature, collected data from the analysis of theses and dissertations, from 1997 to 2019, from several Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Brazil on group work, with an approach from the Jungian Classical School and from Hillman’s Archetypal School. The research corpus consisted of 29 papers. The conclusion is that there is a need for empirical studies on group work based on analytical psychology (Sei, Nascimento, & Souza, 2021).

The works developed by the group supervised by Professor Laura Villares de Freitas, from the University of São Paulo (USP), make up 20.68% of the sample, characterizing an important research impulse in group work based on analytical psychology (Sei et al., 2021, p. 110). Our approach is based, therefore, on studies of the group Self (Freitas, 2005), notably “the creative potential of using myths and tales in experiential groups that make use of expressive resources” (Freitas, 2007, p. 64). In our group, the characteristics that form the center and the whole are the following: socio cultural diversity, variety of points of view, emotional support among all members, sense of belonging and connection with others, non-judgmental acceptance and understanding, learning mutual support for coping with difficulties and strategies for social inclusion.

These characteristics are present in all stages of the group’s development, being even more evident in the moment of reflection, which is organized in four steps, linked to the elements of nature: earth, water, air and fire (Lameirão, 2018). The earth step is characterized by the observation of objects, characters and landscapes

that appear in the tale. In the water step, there is a question about the reasons that led the characters to take certain actions. The air step is that of experiencing the tale in its entirety, from the end to the beginning. Finally, in the fire step, participants are invited to carry out an artistic activity that summarizes the meaning of the storytelling.

Each step can take several weeks. The same tale is, therefore, told more than once, involving the participants in its timeless character, in addition to enabling a gradual expansion of its possible meanings. The steps allow unveiling different and profound aspects of the tale, revealing symbolic (archetypal) structures in every detail of the narrative (Lameirão, 2018).

In the first stage of reflection, we come into contact with the earthly aspects of the tale, requesting that the components — objects, characters and elements of nature — be observed in detail, including how they are organized in space: “At this stage, right after reading or listening to the tale, I list the characters, objects and places from memory. This careful picking brings me to the description; the more meticulous the observation of the details, the greater the fidelity with which I appropriate myself of the tale” (Lameirão, 2018, p. 96). The second step is related to the water element, being essential to observe the flow of the narrative, that is, how time moves like a current. If, before, we had the collection of the different elements of the tale located spatially, now, “attention turns to what moves the scenes of the tale and gives unity to all the details collected in the first step” (p. 96). As such, the flow of the narrative can be sustained and we become authentic narrators. The third step begins with the storytelling by a member of the group. The storytelling is interrupted and, then, we tell the tale backwards, favoring group cohesion: “This path back to the origin is very demanding and attentive to different ways of going through it” (p. 97). The retrospective of the tale is characterized by the search for archetypal bases, favoring changes in attitude and, therefore, future transformations.

Thus, there is the possibility of establishing a dynamic balance and even the connection between past and future, symbolized by the lemniscate, a geometric curve similar to the number eight in the horizontal position, indicating the eternal movement of recreation in time (∞).

There is a strong connection among the four steps of the reflection moment. The meticulous observation and organization of all the elements that make up a traditional tale are indicators of the need to observe these elements in a flow in time, valuing the listening and the telling actions by each member of the group. Then, this flow is done in reverse, searching for the origin, because “some trouble always comes at the beginning of the story for otherwise there would be no story. So, you define the trouble psychologically as well as you can and try to understand what it is” (von Franz, 2022, p. 59). Consequently, the fourth step establishes a synthesis, in which the archetypal contents become meaningful for the group (Freitas, 2007) and, more significantly, for each individual (Lameirão, 2018).

Artistic experience and sharing of feelings

In our group the fantasy elements of traditional tales are linked, in different ways, to the fantasies of each participant, favoring psychic integration and group cohesion. The tales reveal the structures of the collective psyche (von Franz, 1990, 2022) and, through reflection, artistic experience and sharing of feelings, it is possible to link the archetypal contents belonging to the collective unconscious to the contents of the personal unconscious, integrating them, partially, to consciousness (Jung, 2011c, p. 92-101, §§ 121–140).

In all meetings, we carry out an artistic experience and the sharing of feelings. First, however, each member must ask himself how he is linked to the contents of the tale and, from there, express himself through shapes and colors (Lameirão, 2018). Over the years, we have used a variety of work techniques: in 2021, felting; in

2022, initially, drawing on dark paper with colored pastel chalk and, progressively, on white paper with pastel chalk; and, in 2023, painting on white paper with gouache paint, with freedom to use other techniques, such as drawing with colored pencils or pastel chalk.

The work developed with the millennial technique of felting, which uses exclusively sheep's wool, consists of modeling the carded and colored wool on a rectangular base of navy blue felt. Thus, we started the artistic activity on a darker colored support and the light is introduced as each participant develops their work. Each one shapes the tale passage that most caught their attention and, little by little, partner scenes are created with other paintings. This means that each member has the opportunity to talk about the symbolic images that emerged in their felting and create dialogues with other members from the exchange of observations, favoring the integration between conscious perception and images of the unconscious (Furth, 2004).

When we started drawing and painting activities, we assumed that only free expression would bring out unconscious contents. Gradually, however, we merged the way of organizing these activities. Thus, we suggested that each member made one or more images of the tale passage that most attracted their attention at that meeting, also making it possible to produce images that do not refer directly to the tale. We found support for this work methodology in the observations of the Jungian therapist Gregg M. Furth (2004):

In the course of the continuous work of deciphering the drawings, I discovered that even pictorial elements and themes directly suggested by the therapist reveal the patient's unconscious and, therefore, that spontaneous drawings are not the only method by which the unconscious reveals itself. The unconscious develops its own and unique path, where its contents are manifested in the external world (p. 63).

As in the work with felting, the drawings and paintings of each member are articulated with other images produced, thus creating partner scenes. As a result, we highlight three functions of working with images: images have conscious and unconscious aspects (Furth, 2004); these aspects are interconnected and affect each other in a mutual and compensatory way (Jung, 2011c, p. 123, § 187); and the dialogue established from the partner scenes integrates the participants, forming a totality, a group Self (Freitas, 2005).

The ritualistic and cyclic character of the activity is emphasized at all stages, favoring a warm welcome, the establishment of affective relationships, the expression of emotions, thoughts and feelings, the integration among participants and the gradual social inclusion. We ended the day's activities with a question that everyone should ask themselves: What am I taking from today's meeting? So, the images in the tale evoke memories — of good or bad events — and indications of how to go on in life. Through the images in the tale, we can bring the hope present in the divine image of a child to the people who have intense psychological suffering, even though they are often ignored, stigmatized and excluded, and each one can find their reason for redemption.

Conclusion

Our experience with traditional tales in a group for people with psychic suffering encourages the discussion about the Unified Health System's (UHS) mental health care of the Brazilian population. The meetings take place in a primary health care unit, thus ensuring the priority of care provided by Family Health Strategy (FHS) teams for the population of a given territory. Although the proposal is to redefine the health care model, the provision of care in a multidisciplinary team focuses on the prevention, the diagnosis and the treatment of infectious-contagious and chronic degenerative diseases, with a focus on guidance and health surveillance. Therefore, care for people with psychological distress lacks effective interventions.

This scenario shows the need to discuss and develop new health care strategies. Among the difficulties encountered, we have the recurrent problem of the shortage of mental health professionals in the FHS, making it difficult to provide care and longitudinal monitoring of people with psychological distress. Interventions are specific and are generally restricted to drug prescriptions. In order to insert mental health professionals in primary care, it is necessary adequate training to deal with severe suffering, group processes, dialogue with the community, psychosocial care, networking and psychodynamic processes.

Our group has adequate space and materials giving priority to affective relationships among all members, emphasizing the notions of warm

welcome and group Self, ensuring moments of personal care and group integration. The ritualistic nature of the activities developed and the organization of each stage of work (steps) consecrates space and time to carry out health actions based on aspects of social integration and also on the reflection on fantasies and symbols that arise at the same time, both spontaneous and stimulated by the themes of traditional tales. Therefore, the proposal presented is inserted in the context of integrative and complementary practices, which also brings an innovation of clinical attention to psychic suffering, through group work based on analytical psychology. ■

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Resumo

Conto tradicional e psicologia analítica: saúde, acolhimento e reflexão

A partir das noções de acolhimento, Self grupal e quatro passos de reflexão, apresentamos as etapas de um trabalho com os contos tradicionais desenvolvido com um grupo de usuários de um CAPS II em uma perspectiva desmedicalizante. O grupo é composto por 27 pessoas com diagnóstico de psicose, 5 estudantes de medicina, 3 de psicologia e 1 médico. Dessa maneira, o grupo é considerada como uma totalidade e em seu caráter ritual, apresentando a seguinte sistematização: ritual de acolhida, recitação de

um conto tradicional, reflexões sobre o conto tradicional, vivência artística e partilha dos sentimentos e lanche. As etapas da nossa abordagem representam uma sucessão de atividades que ocorrem regularmente e são distribuídas no tempo, criando um ritmo que favorece a autonomia. Dentre as dezenas de contos recitados, dois são apresentados neste artigo: “O velho e a menina” e “A fada da represa do moinho”, que abordam, respectivamente, os temas da criança divina e dos motivos de maldição e de redenção. ■

Palavras-chave: saúde, acolhimento, Carl Gustav Jung, contos tradicionais, psicologia analítica.

Resumen

Cuento tradicional y psicología analítica: salud, acogida y reflexión

A partir de las nociones de acogida, Self grupal y cuatro pasos de reflexión, presentamos las etapas de trabajo con cuentos tradicionales desarrollados con un grupo de usuarios de un CAPS II desde la perspectiva de la desmedicalización. El grupo está formado por 27 personas con psicosis, 5 estudiantes de medicina, 3 estudiantes de psicología y 1 médico. De esta manera, se considera al grupo como totalidad y en su carácter ritual, presentando la siguiente sistematización: ritual de bienvenida, recitación de un

cuento, reflexiones sobre el cuento, experiencia artística, intercambio de sentimientos y merienda. Las etapas de nuestro enfoque representan una sucesión de actividades que ocurren regularmente y se distribuyen en el tiempo, creando un ritmo que favorece la autonomía. Entre las decenas de cuentos recitados, se presentan dos en este artículo: “El viejo y la niña” y “El hada del molino”, que abordan, respectivamente, los temas del niño divino y los motivos de la maldición y la redención. ■

Palabras clave: salud, acogida, Carl Gustav Jung, cuentos tradicionales, psicología analítica.

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