

R. L. Stevenson – The storyteller and the harvest of dreams

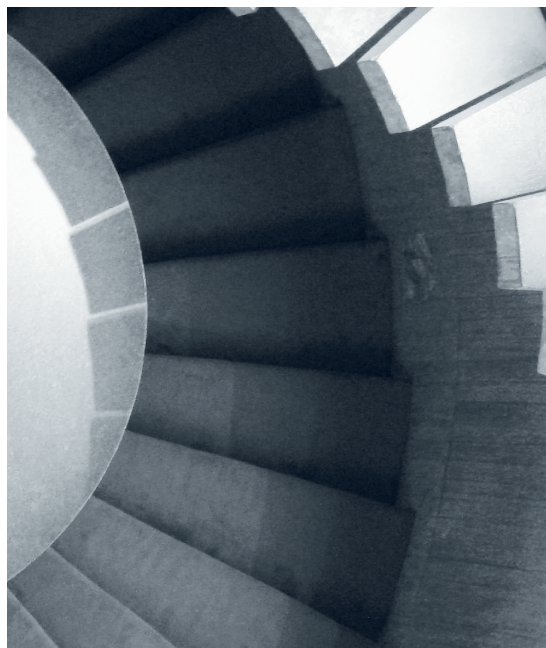
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Resumo

Starting from the essay “A Chapter on Dreams” by the Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson, the article analyses the thoughts of the author about dreams and the creative literary process and weaves correlations between Stevenson’s ideas and Jung’s ideas about the work with dreams, psyche, and creativity. The relationship of conscience with dream life, reflections on the duality of conscience, identity, and its creative literary process are themes addressed by Stevenson in the aforementioned essay. These are precursor ideas of comprehension about dreams and the creative process and are similar to conceptions later developed by Jung about creative autonomous complexes of the psyche, creativity, and work with dreams. In this interlace of literary and psychological perspec-

tives, having the Jungian theory as a reference, I intend to make clear the approximations that the Jungian method of comprehension and work with the psyche have with the creative writing process described by Stevenson. ■

Palavras-chave
Dream,
complex,
creative
process,
literature,
Robert Louis
Stevenson.



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R. L. Stevenson – The storyteller and the harvest of dreams

And among the treasures of memory that all men review for their amusement, these count in no second place the harvests of their dreams (STEVENSON, 2011, p.110).

A short account of a man and his relationship with dreams could be usual if it were not signed by Robert Louis Stevenson, the famous Scottish writer, author of adventures, travel narratives, and fantastic short stories, some of which are considered classics, such as *Treasure Island* and “Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde”. The latter, published in 1886 had its dream inspiration broadly disseminated at the time, not only because of the book’s immediate success but also because of the frenetic production of the author, who wrote it a couple of days after a dream, even though he was suffering from tuberculosis. The essay “A Chapter on Dreams”, published in 1892, is a delicious account of his experiences with dreams and his comprehension of the influence of dreams on the creative process. R. L. Stevenson says that he is visited by brownies, a kind of elf goblin, household spirits from Scottish folklore during his sleep. During those night visits, his brownies work and produce brilliant ideas that the author turns into stories when he is awake.

How is that? A theory about dreams and the creative process that states that elves work in the writing creativity? Yes, the author tries to comprehend his experiences with the creative and literary resources he had, during a time that precedes the formulation of the concept of unconsciousness. He also follows a cultural tradition that tied the production of dreams, more specifically nightmares, to the action and presence of creatures and spirits such as demons, incubi, witches, and elves (ROSCHEER, 2015). The British writer and literary critic A. Alvarez states

that in the absence of a formal concept for his experiences with the unconsciousness, Stevenson did what he knew best, and turned the unconsciousness into fiction (ALVAREZ, 1996, p. 187).

It is possible to find meaning and psychological resonances in Stevenson’s thesis and parallels with Jung’s ideas about dreams, literary creativity, and the action of psychic complexes as we will see later.

Stevenson and dreams

Stevenson was fascinated by dreams since childhood, which was plagued by respiratory diseases and nights loaded with nightmares and night terrors. In “A Chapter on Dreams” he recognizes his experience with dreams as fundamental throughout his life, having a key role in his literary production. The fortunate talent of the author for writing along with his inventiveness results in a creative and insightful essay that, even after over a century, is still powerful in its investigation of the role of dreams in literary creation. Between dreams and literature, the author weaves comments on identity, dreams, and memory, especially about the relationship between conscience and dream, before the raw material of his text, where fiction, dream, truth, and memory are mixed in a web of illusions that undermines the convictions of an established identity.

The theme of identity and duality of consciousness was dear to the author resulting in his most known work “Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde”. It is possible to find records of this interest in the meticulous Brazilian edition of “Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” published by Editora Hedra, translated and organized by Bráulio Tavares, which includes an annex with precious texts for those who are interested in psychology, literature, dreams and

the multiple possibilities of the consciousness¹. This little compilation of texts allows us to know a bit about the historical context and the creative process of R. L. Stevenson. Besides the essay “A Chapter on Dreams”, it contains a letter from Stevenson to his friend, a poet and amateur psychologist, Frederic W. H. Myers with reports of his experiences with consciousness unfolding, titled “This Other Self, my Fellow...” and an article of Frederic Myers himself titled “Multiplex Personality”; a text of the then renowned psychiatrist Henry Maudsley, titled “The Disintegrations of the ‘Ego’”. There is also the account of the widow and the stepson of the writer, Fanny Van de Grift-Stevenson, and her son, Lloyd Osborne, about the conditions and details of the writing of “Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde”, including details about the nightmare that originated the story, written during impressive three days, the first draft being thrown in the fireplace after his wife criticized it, and rewritten in another three days – around sixty thousand words in six days. An astonishing creative process, considering Stevenson’s physical conditions, at the time he was down with fevers and bleedings resulting from tuberculosis.

In this interlace of literary perspective and psychological perspective, having the Jungian theory as a reference, I weave approximations and correlations with the comprehension and work with the psyche. The dream life of Stevenson is treated by him as a stage of a “small mental theatre” that is only “brightly lighted during the night”. As a writer who is committed to his creation, he paid attention to the themes that interested him, be it permeating talks, discussions with his fellows, be it in dreams, his brightly

lighted stage. As if a fundamental part of his literary creation was in this spontaneous dream harvest, he paid attention to what made sense in his search that, even when it was not intended, occurred in a circular exchange, between daytime and nighttime, not related to the conscious will.

It is with themes of the organization of memory, identity, and dream inventiveness that Stevenson begins his essay:

The past is all of one texture—whether feigned or suffered—whether acted out in three dimensions, or only witnessed in that small theatre of the brain which we keep brightly lighted all night long, after the jets are down, and darkness and sleep reign undisturbed in the remainder of the body. There is no distinction on the face of our experiences; one is vivid indeed, and one dull, and one pleasant, and another agonising to remember; but which of them is what we call true, and which a dream, there is not one hair to prove (2011, p. 109).

For Stevenson, this texture of the past is made of the conscious awake experience mixed with the dream experience, to the point where both are diluted without clear distinction until the past becomes “a thread of memory” which is essential to sew the identity: “for we only guide ourselves, and only know ourselves, by these air-painted pictures of the past” (p. 110). The author raises questions, letting them open, deploying reflections and inquires that are as relevant as they are unsettling: In this “thread of memory”, where the memory is real, where it is fake? And when what is lived in the dream has a quality of higher authenticity? Who are we in this thread of memory made of mist and dreamlike phantasmagoria?

R. L. Stevenson later narrates the dream experiences of a supposed acquaintance, who he later reveals to be himself. Although he begins praising the richness of the dream experience, he describes his first dream experiences as frightening, following his account with the evolution

¹ The texts in the annex of Editora Hedra’s edition were translated from “The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales” edited by Roger Luckhurst (Oxford, 2006, Oxford World Classics). The texts are: “A Chapter on Dreams” (1888) by Stevenson, “The Disintegrations of the ‘Ego’” (1883) by H. Maudsley and “The Multiplex Personality” (1885) by Frederic Myers. The letter from Stevenson to F. Myers titled “This Other Self, my Fellow...” in this Brazilian edition, and accounts of Fanny Van de Grift-Stevenson and Lloyd Osborne that were extracted from the book “Essais sur l’Art de la Fiction”, by R. L. Stevenson, edited by Michel LeBris (Payot, Paris, 1992).

of the relationship between dreamer and dream. He confirms that the consciousness in his path to maturity simultaneously gives more support to the dream experiences, even the more terrifying ones: “his visions were still for the most part miserable, but they were more constantly supported” (p. 111). In the transition from childhood to youth and college times, the author reports dreams that appear and sequence and intensity, as if a double life, daytime and night, troubled him again. But the interest in the dream experience did not disappear when he wrote and published his stories, what used to be an amusing or horrifying experience became the dreamer’s profession.

Stevenson’s dream brownies

A rich collaboration between the dream world and the awake consciousness is narrated by Stevenson, who with good spirits, tenderness, and a fertile imagination named the brownies as his dream little people, “the little people who manage man’s internal theatre” (p. 115) that never get tired of creating stories and sending him ideas during their busy nights:

The stories must now be trimmed and pared and set upon all fours, they must run from a beginning to an end and fit (after a manner) with the laws of life; the pleasure, in one word, had become a business; and that not only for the dreamer, but for the little people of his theatre. These understood the change as well as he. When he lay down to prepare himself for sleep, he no longer sought amusement, but printable and profitable tales; and after he had dozed off in his box-seat, his little people continued their evolutions with the same mercantile designs (p. 115).

Questioning himself about said creatures, he concludes that they maintain a close relationship with the dreamer, taking part in the same financial worries, sharing their education, their ability

to create stories, and dosing emotions, but he recognizes the greatest talent of these dream beings:

And for the Little People, what shall I say they are but just my Brownies, God bless them! who do one-half my work for me while I am fast asleep, and in all human likelihood, do the rest for me as well, when I am wide awake and fondly suppose I do it for myself (p. 121).

And Stevenson continues the account of this unusual collaboration recognizing his conscious, active participation in the work:

[...] by that account, the whole of my published fiction should be the single-handed product of some Brownie, some Familiar, some unseen collaborator, whom I keep locked in a back garret, while I get all the praise and he but a share (which I cannot prevent him getting) of the pudding. I am an excellent adviser, [...] I pull back and I cut down; and I dress the whole in the best words and sentences that I can find and make; I hold the pen, too; and I do the sitting at the table, which is about the worst of it; and when all is done, I make up the manuscript and pay for the registration; so that, on the whole, I have some claim to share, though not so largely as I do, in the profits of our common enterprise (p.121-122).

The name chosen by the author to personify his dream life reveals a childlike, receptive posture with dreams and a great affinity with the oral tradition of stories, legends, and myths. In Scottish folklore, brownies are little beings, benevolent spirits such as elves or goblins, that live in the house and are active at night, helping with household chores, especially when they are welcomed and well treated, given milk and other types of food. They are also described as sensitive, prone to mischief, and easy to upset and when they’re

extremely hurt and mistreated, they can rebel and become dangerous for their human owners, or even abandon them (BROWNIE, 2023).

When talking about the brownies, “the little dream people”, Stevenson expresses a friendly attitude towards the unconscious dream world, which provides a fertile and creative conscious and unconscious communication flow. It is worth noting the jokingly and self-ironic manner in that the writer talks about doubting his authorship, but also the relationship of humbleness and surprise in face of the experience with the mysteries of creativity and psyche. A relationship of collaboration is cultivated between the writer’s consciousness and unconscious dream creations, named by him as “Familiar,” “unseen collaborator”, his brownies. With his curiosity sharpened by the creative process itself, he allows himself to question the authorship of his stories, recognizing in the brownies the responsibility for the more original ideas, him being only an executor. But he also recognizes his credits in the necessary collaboration with those familiar and creative beings that live inside him, his unconscious production, and his conscious self that observes, cultivates, collects, and works literarily with his harvest.

Stevenson, Myers, and the multiplicity of the consciousness

Stevenson was immersed in the cultural field of discussions about dreams and experiences consciousness unfolding that was boiling at the end of the 19th century, with research and publications that were part and gave substrate for the future theoretical developments of Freud and Jung, as broadly detailed by Henri F. Ellenberger in “The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry” and by Sonu Shandasani in “Jung and the Making of Modern Psychology: The Dream of a Science”.

Frederic Willian Henry Myers (1843-1901) was a special correspondent for Stevenson, they shared interests and exchanged letters since the publication of “Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde”. Essayist, literary critic, and poet, one

of the founders of the Society of Psychical Research, Myers became an important scholar and researcher of psychology, especially in the association of research of dream phenomena with spirituality, consciousness field, and telepathy. He understood the dream as a capable source of bigger veracity in the representations and revelations of the psyche and as a phenomenon that occurred day and night in a continuum, a “subliminal consciousness” that existed simultaneously to the supraliminal consciousness, the vigil one (SHANDASANI, 2005). Jung refers to Myers in some of his texts², and the concept of subliminal consciousness is indirectly cited twice in the text “On the nature of the psyche”: a footnote brings an extensive citation of W. James, who values a great discovery of 1886 (the concept of subliminal consciousness of Myers)³; in another part of the same text, when weaving considerations about the fluidity in the relationship between consciousness and unconsciousness, Jung cites the denomination of W. James in the unconsciousness as a “fringe of consciousness” and, in another footnote, Myers is cited by W. James, who identified similarities in his concept with the notion of subliminal consciousness of Myers.

Sonu Shandasani highlights Myer’s work in the historical context, to him it was significant enough to reformulate “the task of psychology as the exploration of the subliminal; the psychology of consciousness was to be upbuilt from this basis” (SHANDASANI, 2005, p. 138). In another essay, Myers overcomes the perspective of duality to a multiplicity of consciousness. which he names “multiplex personality” and, in a perspective that is very close to what Jung later de-

² In the text “Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle” Jung cites twice the publication *Phantasms of the living*, by Gurney, Myers and Pomore. §830 and 862. In the chapter “The Psychological Foundations of Belief in Spirits”, Myers is cited as one of the prominent authors that renewed the scientific studies about the belief in spirits. § 571 And in the text “On the Nature of the Psyche”, Myers is cited on notes along with citations of W. James and about his concept of subliminal consciousness.

³ §356 p. 21 “On the nature of the psyche”, Myers is cited on notes along with citations of W. James and about his concept of subliminal consciousness.

veloped, he defends the idea that said states of dissolution of the self did not always result in a worsening of serious diseases, but could also cause improvements: “the shifting sand-heap of our being will sometimes suddenly settle itself into a new attitude of more assure equilibrium” (MYERS, 2011).

Certainly, there was a caldron of ideas boiling at the end of the 19th century: 1886 was a fertile year for both Myers and Stevenson, both released important works, in their respective areas, addressing the mutable character of the human personality. Stevenson published “Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” and Myers published the chapter “Notes on the suggested mode of psychical interaction”, evaluated by Sonu Shandasani as an important annex of the book “Phantasms of the Living”, published by the British researchers Frederic Myers, Edmund Gurney, and Frank Podmore.

It is possible to imagine the lively meeting between Myers and Stevenson, warmed by the likeness of interests and trust manifested in the sharing of personal experiences that Stevenson details in his letter to Myers titled “This other Self, my Fellow...”⁴ and in the ideas developed in the essay “A Chapter on Dreams”. It comes to my mind another curious fact that ties them both together, a significative occurrence: the connection between Stevenson and Myers and the brothers William and Henry James. As referred to above in the citations of Jung, William James, the renowned philosopher, and psychologist has demonstrated publicly a huge appreciation for Myers’ works. His brother, the writer Henry James, author of short stories and novels such as “The Beast in the Jungle”, “The Friends of the Friends”, “What Maisie Knew”, “The Bostonians, and the Turn of the Screw”, among others, was himself a great friend and admirer of Stevenson. In Brazil, Editora Rocco published the book “The Style’s Adventure: Essays and Correspondence between Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson”. The essays and the delicious letter ex-

change highlight the great regard that both had for each other and a common passion for their profession in literature.

Dreams and the creative process

As old as the fascination for the dream experience may be the expression of said experience in the form of art, and the relationship between art and dreams instigates researchers, artists, and curious minds alike, resulting in a vast material on the theme.

Stevenson reveals in the essay “A Chapter on Dreams” some details about the inspiring dream and his partnership with the dream imagination. He states that he had been working for a long time on a story about the theme and he tried to find a way: “a body, a vehicle, for that strong sense of man’s double being which must at times come in upon and overwhelm the mind of every thinking creature” (STEVENSON, 2011, p. 122). During a moment when he faced financial hardships, in which the pressure to write became even bigger, he had the dream that generated the book, in a few scenes, as he describes:

For two days I went about racking my brains for a plot of any sort; and on the second night I dreamed the scene at the window, and a scene afterward split in two, in which Hyde, pursued for some crime, took the powder and underwent the change in the presence of his pursuers. All the rest was made awake, and consciously, although I think I can trace in much of it the manner of my Brownies. he meaning of the tale is therefore mine, [...], I do most of the morality. [...] Mine, too, is the setting, mine the characters. All that was given me was the matter of three scenes, and the central idea of a voluntary change becoming involuntary (p.122).

As the author states, the creation of stories was also a vehicle for expressing themes and human issues that puzzled him and the literary

⁴ The letter from Stevenson to F. Myers is from July 14th, 1892.

creation was his focus on working with dreams. The drama of human duality meets “body and vehicle” in the story of Dr. Jekyll and his dark double Mr. Hyde, narrated by the author in narrative fragments with multiple points of view and in the final chapter, titled “Henry Jekyll’s Full Statement of The Case”, the intimate drama of Dr. Jekyll is revealed through a merciless self-examination in face of his defeat and final surrender. A typical Victorian citizen, apparently reputable and kind, Dr. Jekyll recognizes in humanity and himself the curse of two opposed natures and risks the prediction that there will be more than two because in the future “that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens” (p. 86). In his ambitious and arrogant try of separating good from evil, fair from unfair, aiming at enjoying both and running away from the moral conflict and the torture that would be to bear this tension of opposites, he creates a dye that ends up liberating and transforming him in the evil and perverse Mr. Hyde. With the dominance of Mr. Hyde and the resulting loss of control of Dr. Jekyll, the latter sees himself as an “old Henry Jekyll, that incongruous compound of whose reformation and improvement I had already learned to despair” (p. 90). It is only then that he accepts that his arrogance and excessive aspirations were agents that triggered the monstrosity that generated in himself “with even a deeper trench than in the majority of men, severed in me those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man’s dual nature” (p. 85).

The dream scene of the window revealed by Stevenson in the essay was written as a short chapter of the book, in which Mr. Utterson, a lawyer, and friend of Dr. Jekyll, on a walk of Mr. Enfield, go through the back door of Dr. Jekyll’s house, and when seeing the doctor sit by the ajar window, they stop by to talk to him. The doctor is described as “air with an infinite sadness of mien, like some disconsolate prisoner” and the conversation does not last long, be-

cause the friendly smile of the doctor is taken by an expression of horror and despair, and the window is violently shut and both gentlemen go away astonished, without saying a word. Titled “Incident at the window”, the chapter brings a movement that precedes the final fall, with Dr. Jekyll imprisoned and hopeless, still allowing himself to look through the ajar window and making some kind of contact with his previous condition, but being violently dominated by Mr. Hyde, in a terrifying transformation for himself and for the ones who see him.

I was held by the scene by the window, in the drama of Dr. Jekyll being imprisoned by the fear of revealing his criminal double and dominated by the involuntary transformation. The chapter is similar to a nightmare and conveys the content along with a mood that is proper to horror and strangeness. We have, through the author’s essay, the confirmation that the scene came from a dream, and from the dream, to the text we have a short narrative, only two pages long, a scene that is initially mundane, with an abrupt ending and a cold mood of silence and horror that involves the characters, leaks through the pages and goes on to the readers, as a nightmare that escapes the dream reaching the vigil. And in this case, the dream mood impregnates the aesthetics and form of the work, provoking an effect that also communicates and expresses the drama. The other dream scenes bring the idea of persecution for the crime, the potion as a way of transforming, and the secret of the transformation being revealed. The main ideal, as Stevenson recognizes – is the transformation that used to be voluntary becomes involuntary.

Stevenson’s literary work along with his brownies, since the plot, scenery, style, and mood, brings the issue of human conflict in its double and multiple nature, point that this conflict will emerge, insinuating forces that go beyond the conscious will, a visionary aspect of the author who anticipates important issues in the reflections about the human condition. Some readings about Jekyll and Hyde point out,

in the Jungian interpretative key, the tension between opposites and the archetype of the shadow and evil (SANFORD, 2005). Since the symbolic reading of “Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” goes beyond this article’s field of attention, I highlight in the work its focus on the drama of identity in double or multiple expressions, the tension between light and shadow as one of the aspects of this field, the horror and destruction of the ego’s arrogance and excessive rationalism of Dr. Jekyll may impose to himself and society, be it by the extreme repression or by the division.

I go back to the essay “A Chapter on Dreams” and the theme of identity present on the essay as an interest of the author, with his questions about the “thread of memory” composed by lived images and dreamed images that sews our identity. In the author, there is a recognition of an identity under construction, open to mysteries and tensions. I think about the importance of this more flexible attitude and that a receptive consciousness that is capable of inquiring, talking to itself and negotiation is an important base to support conflict and tensions. In a spontaneous, maybe even intuitive, way, Stevenson has an attitude that is opposite to his character’s Dr. Jekyll, he does not repress nor exile his brownies, on the contrary, he calls them for a diligent collaboration

The imaginative “theory” proposed by Stevenson in “A Chapter on Dreams”, that his stories are created by brownies, folkloric beings that live in his nights in a theatre of the mind, has a significant relationship with the Jungian comprehension of literary and poetic creativity and with his conception of the complex and with the comprehension of the dream as a narrative, a dream drama.

The performance of the dream brownies described by Stevenson illustrates what Jung called the creative autonomous complex of

the psyche and of a visionary way of creating, closer to the collective unconsciousness. Said visionary experiences of creation impose themselves on the artist, eliciting night anguishes, dreams, concerns that awaken in “the dark, uncanny recesses of the human mind” (JUNG, 1991, p. 89, par. 143). For Jung, the moment of conception of a work of art is similar to something with a life of its own, “as a tree growing out of the nourishing soil” (JUNG, 1991, p. 67, par. 122), a part of the psyche, that is unconscious until then, that is activated, reanimated and develops itself, unsubmitive to the control of the consciousness. It is what is called the creative autonomous complex. In the same text, Jung weaves considerations that are still relevant about the closeness between art and madness. To him, said creative processes can be similar to diseases, but he considered that the existence of autonomous complexes was normal to the psyche and that only in frequent, intense, and uncomfortable manifestations it could indicate suffering and disease.

The text “On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry” was created from a talk given by Jung at the Society of German Language and Literature in May of 1922, in Zurich. In this text, he makes it clear that his field of interest and psychological observation is the psychic dynamic of artistic creation and not the author’s personal psychology. This text along with the essay “Psychology and Literature” gathers important ideas of Jung about literary creation. Both are short texts, and the main focus is the poetic creation, but Jung also makes considerations about creativity and art, creativity and madness, and the social and therapeutical role of art, maintaining his broad perspective of comprehension of the human psyche.

In “A Chapter on Dreams”, Stevenson states that his unconscious dream creation was not only recognized by the consciousness but also occurred in a happy union with the more conscious way of creating or in Jungian terms, a union between the psychological mode and

the visionary mode of creation. His works are a product of a joint effort between the daytime and night-time worlds, demonstrating that the author had full availability and compromise with his art and the mysteries of the unconscious.

Curiously, Jung also alluded to folkloric beings and talked about his little people, the “lares and penates”, when he referred to the complexes and their effects on dreams and their presence in literary classics:

Complexes are objects of inner experience and are not to be met in the street and in public places. [...] they are the lares and penates who await us at the fireside and whose peaceableness it is dangerous to extol. they are the “little people” whose pranks disturb our nights. [...] complexes are not entirely morbid by nature but are characteristic expressions of the psyche, irrespective of whether this psyche is differentiated or primitive. Consequently we find unmistakable traces of them in all peoples and in all epochs. The oldest literary records bear witness to them (JUNG, 1984, p. 103, par. 209).

When treating emotional complexes as “entities” that work autonomously in the psyche, Jung introduces the idea of personification in the field of depth psychology, innovating in the comprehension of the dynamic and autonomy of these unconscious contents as well as the access and approach in the clinic. The active imagination method proposed by Jung implicates the recognition, personification, and dialogue with the images that appear in the unconscious, bringing a creative method to psychology, that was probably common to Stevenson, and other writers and artists, but at the time it was innovative in the field of clinical psychology. Both in literary creation and other forms of artistic creation, as in the psychological clinic, we can state that some consciousness-unconsciousness collaboration is fundamental.

Communication between worlds

In a sense, we are talking about communication and collaboration between diverse worlds: the awake world of humans and the night-time world of elves of the dream theory of Stevenson, the consciousness world, and the collective unconsciousness of Jung’s theory. In this thread of memories, from dreams or not, the real and the fake get another dimension, the intermediary dimension of the psychic reality, the soul’s reality. In this state, in which we know that what was lived in the dream gains life inside of us, we dream and are dreamed of. Something similar happens when a child plays and knows that that created universe is and is not at the same time. It is also similar to what happens when we read a novel or watch a movie, we live and suffer with the characters and we live in that world, even though we know it is fiction.

The quality of autonomy and insubordination to the conscious criteria is a lot of times a factor of rejection, fear, or criticism by the consciousness. The annoying sensation of not being the actual author of the creation is also frequent, a common experience that can be found in testimonies or essays of great writers. The writer Julio Cortázar, for instance, felt like a “medium” when writing his short stories (COELHO, 2020) and supported a receptive attitude, available for the game, understanding the ludic as a way of human conduction throughout life and that living in a ludic world meant being “put inside a combinatory world, of combinatory invention, that is currently creating new forms” (apud PREGO, 1991, p.126). Stevenson expresses this ludic aspect in his essay and describes those small dream creatures “like children who should have slipped into the house and found it empty rather than like drilled actors performing a set piece to a huge hall of faces” (STEVENSON, 2011, p. 115).

Creating narratives, an act unique to the literary work is a point of convergence between literature and depth psychology if we think that the conception of unconsciousness happens

when Freud abandons the trauma theory with its factual objective connections and privileges the capacity of fantasizing. Regardless of being an objective reality, the reality of the psyche is worked with, recognizing the power of fantasy and imagination. Under this context, Jung comprehends the dream as a narrative with a dramatic structure and considers these phases of the narrative structure as a form of approximation and expansion of the dream's comprehension, dividing the dream drama into phases: 1st phase - exposition (place, characters, initial situation); 2nd phase – action development; 3rd phase – the culmination of the incident; and 4th phase, that may be absent – lysis, solution, or result (JUNG, 1984). Jung develops the idea that this same power that creates dreams and creates unhealthy stories can also create sanity. The reality of the psyche is, therefore, a raw material in the work with the psyche and dreams are a privileged space of experiences of the human ability to fantasize, producing images, narrations, and living in “other worlds”.

If, for the writer, this creative process triggers the creation of a literary work, how does it work in the life of people who are not committed to the artistic proposal? The goal of the psychological work is of finding itself, creating itself, what Jung called individuation held through a dialogue mediated by figures of the imagination, be it with emotions, suffering, and anguishes, be it with dream experiences, images of memory, or daydreams. I understand that the analytical clinic as a creative work in itself, in which the individuation is made in the combination of bonds and pieces that were dreamed, remembered, relived, reinvented, and re-edited for the present moment, recycling the texture of existence with a deep sense of soul.

It is the rescue of a symbolic attitude in face of life and experiences. Living the symbol and inhabiting a symbolic world brings a connection and intimacy with the unconscious life, by creative nature. Our double life, night and daytime, dream and awake, is and can be the mediator of

an extremely valuable creative process, be it as inspiration for life, be it for literary creation, as in the case of Robert Louis Stevenson, or Tusiata, the story-teller, a name he received from the natives of Samoa, where he lived his last years and was buried.

Final considerations

The passion and dedication of Stevenson to his literary work resonate in his books, which are now considered classics. It is possible that this passion was a great influence in the paths of his life and identity, as a man of frail health that did not avoid the challenges of literary creation.

The huge success of “Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” certifies the author's literary dimension. The story was quickly adapted for theater and cinema, with multiple film versions ever since the beginning of cinema. The huge popularity considers the archetypal dimension of the work that became a literary myth, with the story of the doctor and the monster partially known by a lot of people who did not read the book. Jung considers that the secret of the art of action is in the activation and update of archetypal images and in the preparation of the work of art that accomplishes a social meaning in the continuous education of the spirit at the time (JUNG, 1991, par. 130). When he created the drama of Jekyll and Hyde a story that is still alive, being read and adapted to this day in multiple forms of artistic expression, Stevenson is still contributing to the collective consciousness, reminding us of our divided, mixed, fallible, flawed, and always under construction condition.

Robert Louis Stevenson is one of the rare writers who, apart from the public success in the sale, to this day gathers great names of literature as his admirers.⁵ Among the literates who are fond of Stevenson, we have the above-men-

⁵ The Brazilian edition of “The Suicide Club and Other Stories: Robert Louis Stevenson”; Cosac Naify, 2011, SP with selection and preface by Davi Arrigucci Júnior contains in the annex texts and essays of Henry James and Vladimir Nabokov about Stevenson and his works.

tioned Henry James, who did not spare compliments to the writer; Vladimir Nabokov who gave classes about “Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde”, with drawings and schemes made by him to illustrate what he considered a “stylistic phenomenon” that you read “like someone who drinks a good wine” (NABOKOV, 2011, p. 196) and Jorge Luis Borges, who used to say that reading Stevenson is a form of happiness.

I share this impression, Stevenson’s texts irradiate something magic and pleasurable. Happy are his readers, which includes me, that can taste his books, the fruits of the work of his dream harvest. ■

Received: 02/22/2023

Revised: 06/24/2023

Resumo

R. L. Stevenson – o contador de histórias e a colheita dos sonhos

A partir do ensaio “Um Capítulo sobre o Sono” do escritor escocês Robert Louis Stevenson, o artigo analisa as reflexões do autor sobre o mundo onírico e o processo criativo literário contidas no ensaio e tece correlações entre as ideias de Stevenson e as ideias de Jung sobre trabalho com sonhos, psique e criatividade. A relação da consciência com a vida onírica, as reflexões sobre a dualidade da consciência e a identidade e criação literária são temas abordados por Stevenson no referido ensaio. São ideias precu-

soras de uma compreensão sobre a influência onírica na criatividade análogas a concepções posteriormente desenvolvidas por Jung, sobre complexos autônomos criativos da psique, imaginação e trabalho com sonhos. Nesse entrelace de perspectiva literária e perspectiva psicológica, tendo a teoria junguiana como referência, pretendo evidenciar aproximações que o método junguiano de compreensão e trabalho com a psique têm com a imaginação literária como descrita por Stevenson. ■

Palavras-chave: sonho, complexo, processo criativo, literatura, Robert Louis Stevenson.

Resumen

R. L. Stevenson – el cuentacuentos y la cosecha de los sueños

Basado en el ensayo “Un Capítulo sobre el Sueño” del escritor escocés Robert Louis Stevenson, el artículo analiza las reflexiones del autor sobre el mundo onírico y el proceso creativo literario contenido en el ensayo y teje correlaciones entre las ideas de Stevenson y las ideas de Jung sobre el trabajo con sueños, psique y creatividad. La relación de la conciencia con la vida onírica, las reflexiones sobre la dualidad de la conciencia, la identidad y la creación literaria son temas abordados por Stevenson en el mencionado ensayo.

Son ideas precursoras de una comprensión de la influencia onírica en la creatividad análogas a las concepciones desarrolladas posteriormente por Jung, sobre complejos creativos de la psique, la imaginación y el trabajo con los sueños. En este entrelazamiento de la perspectiva literaria y la perspectiva psicológica, con la teoría junguiana como referencia, tengo la intención de destacar las aproximaciones que el método junguiano de comprender y trabajar con la psique tiene con la imaginación literaria como se describe por Stevenson. ■

Palabras clave: sueño, complejo, proceso creativo, literatura, Robert Louis Stevenson

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