

# IN SEARCH FOR SOUL: THE CONTRIBUTION OF ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY TO HEAL HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

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*Humanity continues to experience serious violations of human rights, and the recent critical events, like the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, seem to have directly or indirectly intensified the occurrence of violations of human rights like torture, enforced disappearances, human trafficking, gender-based violence and war crimes. Can analytical psychology make a significant contribution to the prevention, treatment, remedying such violations, from the individual level to the most macro level of socio-political systems? I will support the thesis that the Jungian concept of soul has a special role in such an endeavour. My proposal is that when a social terrifying threat, like in the case of widespread social violence, is perceived at the social level, the functioning of the individual Self and society may change dramatically. In particular, both lose their containing function and are subjected to an unconscious massive collective pressure to align themselves to a specific kind of functioning that I call monolithic functioning. It is the splintering of what I call the reflective triangle, which is illustrated here, and has an effect on societal, groupal, interpersonal and intrapsychic levels. Some vignettes from a clinical case of a patient who suffered torture and gender-based violence are presented to illustrate how these human rights violations affect the three levels mentioned.*

**KEYWORDS:** SOUL, HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY, REFLECTIVE TRIANGLE, MONOLITHIC SELF STATES, PARADOXICAL MULTIPLE SELF STATES, TORTURE, GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

## INTRODUCTION

Human rights refer to a wide range of political and social rights recognized by international law. They are rights we have simply because we exist as human beings. They are universal and inherent to us all, regardless of nationality, sex,

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national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language or any other status, and range from the most fundamental—the right to life—to those that make life worth living, such as the rights to food, education, work, health and liberty. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, was the first legal document to set out the fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

Human rights violations can happen and even worsen in times of crisis. For example, an emergency like the COVID-19 pandemic could be used as a pretext in some countries to deploy heavy-handed security responses and emergency measures to crush dissent, criminalize basic freedoms, silence independent reporting and restrict the activities of citizens or non-governmental organizations. Some studies are investigating the possibility that this happened and some have already found supporting evidence (Chad Clay *et al.*, 2022; Chiozza & King, 2022). Recent global events, including the Russian attack on Ukraine with the threat of a nuclear war, seem to have some relation with the intensifying of human rights violations like torture, mass killings, rapes and disappearing children in the area.

Can analytical psychology make a significant contribution to the prevention, treatment and remedying of such violations, from the individual level to the macro level of socio-political systems? I will support the thesis that the Jungian concept of the *soul* may have a central role in such an endeavour.

In what follows, I will attempt to clarify how Jung's concept of the soul succinctly depicts an imaginative possibility of the mind that emerges from its capacity to relate. After a brief analysis of the concept of soul, I will relate this Jungian idea to my concept of *paradoxical multiple self and societal states* and their opposite, the *monolithic self and societal states*, that together offer a framework of understanding of what happens in the case of powerful social threat and widespread terror at intrapsychic, interpersonal and societal levels. I will illustrate some aspects of this with a clinical case. My conclusions offer some additional reflections on and examples of possible ways of *soul-making* in society.

#### THE SOUL IN JUNG'S PSYCHOLOGY

The *soul* in Jungian psychology is a complex and not-so-crystal-clear topic. The concept has its development in Jung's works, which for reasons of space and scope of the article I will not be able to go through exhaustively here. As Pieri suggests (1998, pp. 48–50), we find the term 'soul' as (1) synonymous with the psyche, (2) a personification of the mind, (3) the attitude of consciousness towards the unconscious, and (4) a specific functional complex of the psyche that deals with the relationship between consciousness and unconscious. The third and fourth meanings become more and more salient and detailed in the *Collected Works* (CWs) with time. In this article, the focus will be on those meanings, hinting only slightly at the subsequent and related gendered notions of anima/animus.

In his *Definitions*, Jung writes:

I have been compelled, in my investigations into the structure of the unconscious, to make a conceptual distinction between soul and psyche. By psyche,

I understand the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious. By soul, on the other hand, I understand a demarcated functional complex that can best be described as a 'personality'. (Jung, 1921, para. 797)

As personality, Jung means an inner attitude:

The inner personality is the way one behaves in relation to one's inner psychic processes; it is the inner attitudes, the characteristic face, that is turned towards the unconscious. I call the outer attitude, the outward face, the *persona*; the inner attitude, the inward face, I call the *anima*.<sup>1</sup> (Jung, 1921, para. 803)

Thus, the natural function of the anima consists in establishing a relation between consciousness and the unconscious: the soul function. Precisely as a typical and habitual way of dealing with the motions of the unconscious, the attitude would correspond to a specific functional complex and would assume the character of 'an inner personality' (*ibid.*, para. 419).

In this sense of a complex with a relational function between consciousness and unconscious, it has the important function of differentiation and integration among fundamental parts of the psyche. Hillman's writings frequently sing the praises of the poets and the ancients for their exquisite understanding of the soul. However, in turning to them, we don't find much clarity, also because 'the soul is a deliberately ambiguous concept' (Hillman, 1976, p. 46)', it is more a symbol than a clear-cut idea. Thomas Moore, who worked on the legacy of Hillman, writes:

It is impossible to define precisely what the soul is. Definition is an intellectual enterprise anyway: the soul prefers to imagine. We know intuitively that soul has to do with genuineness and depth, as when we say certain music has soul or a remarkable person is soulful. (Moore, 1992, pp. xi–xii)

Therefore, the very nature of soul seems to resist definition, requiring a gentler, more imaginative approach. For this reason, the soul in Jung's personal account and psychological theory is encountered through imaginal figures, or *soul images*. These personifications of soul mediate and facilitate our contact with both the personal soul and the even more vast collective unconscious.

We are repeatedly reminded by Jung that the soul journey is a solitary one that must be approached anew by each of us, and his personal explorations of his soul can be retraced in *The Red Book: Liber Novus*<sup>2</sup> (2009). Early in this book, we witness the utter humility and the dissolution of prior understanding that was required to initiate this dialogue:

'I still laboured misguidedly under the spirit of this time, and thought differently about the human soul. I thought and spoke much of the soul. I knew many learned words for her, I had judged her and turned her into a scientific object. I did not consider that my soul cannot be the object of my judgment and knowledge; much more are my judgment and knowledge the objects of my soul'. (Jung, 2009, pp. 128–129)

Before Jung could return to his soul, he had to realize the limits of his ability to intellectually know this dimension of himself. Yet, during this time, Jung realized the centrality of the soul and ‘dedicated [himself] to the service of psyche’, knowing it was ‘the only way [he] could endure [his] existence and live it as fully as possible’ (1989, p. 192).

Although throughout *The Red Book* Jung referred to his soul in the general sense, he later realised this figure that he had originally called ‘soul’ had a more specific nature. He Latinized and genderized this idea. In his later writing on the transference, informed by his study of the alchemical opus—which Jung understood as psychologically analogous to the individuation<sup>3</sup> process—he was more specific:

The ‘soul’ which accrues to ego-consciousness during the opus has a feminine character in the man and a masculine character in the woman. His anima wants to reconcile and unite; her animus tries to discern and discriminate. (Jung, 1946, para. 522)

In *Aion*, Jung (1951) clarified, ‘I have suggested ... the term “anima,” as indicating something specific, for which the expression “soul” is too general and too vague’ (para. 25). While the original link between the two remains, this differentiation of the ‘anima’ from the general ‘soul’ is important. Reflecting on the evolution of his conceptualization of the ‘soul’, Jung explained:

I was greatly intrigued by the fact that a woman should interfere with me from within. My conclusion was that she must be the ‘soul’, in the primitive sense, and I began to speculate on the reasons why the name anima was given to the soul. Why was it thought of as feminine? Later I came to see that this inner feminine figure plays a typical, or archetypal, role in the unconscious of a man, and I called her the ‘anima.’ The corresponding figure in the unconscious of a woman I called the ‘animus’. (Jung, 1989, p. 186)

Jung (1989) elaborated on the primary value of his interactions with the anima offered him:

It is she who communicates the images of the unconscious to the conscious mind, and that is what I chiefly valued her for. For decades I always turned to the anima when I felt that my emotional behaviour was disturbed, and that something had been constellated in the unconscious. I would then ask the anima: ‘Now what are you up to? What do you see? I should like to know.’ After some resistance she regularly produced an image. As soon as the image was there, the unrest or the sense of oppression vanished. (1989, pp. 187–8)

Not only did the anima provide insights from the unconscious, but Jung reported feeling relieved by the images she revealed. In this sense, it has a restorative or healing faculty. This goes in the direction of those differentiation and integration functions that the soul is carrying out expanding the self:

The union of the conscious mind or ego-personality with the unconscious personified as anima produces a new personality compounded of both ... Not that

the new personality is a third thing midway between conscious and unconscious, it is both together. Since it transcends consciousness it can no longer be called 'ego' but must be given the name of 'self'... the self too is both ego and non-ego, subjective and objective, individual and collective. It the 'uniting symbol' which epitomizes the total union of opposites. (1946, para. 474)

#### SOCIAL VIOLENCE AND THE DESTINIES OF THE REFLECTIVE TRIANGLE

Jung's complex and laboured conceptualization of the soul can rightfully fit into the model of understanding that I created to understand torture as a psychosocial and political phenomenon (Luci, 2017). In that work, based on extensive research that drew on sociological studies, social psychology, psychoanalysis, analytical psychology, philosophy and international law, I arrived at a model of the functioning of self and society that is isomorphic and takes the form of what I called the *paradoxical multiple self and societal states* or the *monolithic self and societal states* according to certain conditions.

I propose that when a terrifying threat, like in the case of widespread violence, is perceived at the social level, the functioning of the individual self may change dramatically. The consequence of this dramatic change is the disruption of what I call the *reflective triangle* (see Fig. 1), which can also be understood as the 'soul function' within the self. In particular, the self loses its containing capacity and is subjected to an unconscious collective pressure to align itself to a specific kind of functioning. This splintering of the reflective triangle has an effect on societal, group, interpersonal and intrapsychic levels (Luci, 2017, pp. 125–7) and can be understood as failure of soul-making.

The image of the triangle is here used to represent a 'golden standard' state of mind that connect three (real or phantasized) poles, that is, Me, You and Other, to process emotions and thinking (Figure 1). The mode of using these three poles is critical to the way identity and difference are processed intrapsychically, interpersonally and within groups, which, in turn, crucially affects the possibility of reflectivity and symbolization and the style of relating and social bonding.

I assume here that the *reflective triangle* (Fig. 1) is the underlying pattern in which a mind is able to process at the same time identity and difference in relation to other minds. Reflectivity arises in the space of this triangle because it derives

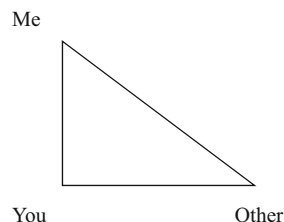


Figure 1: *The Reflective Triangle*

from the ability of keeping simultaneous connections between these three poles. The segment Me–You (and You–Me) represents the processing of identity issues (the consciousness), the segments Me–Other and You–Other represent the processing of issues of difference in relation to oneself and others (the unconscious). If this triangle holds, there is space for thinking and symbolization. This state of mind is called in some psychoanalytic literature *states of thirdness* or *in-between states* and we might compare these states to the soul work that keeps psychic parts in mutual relation and tension.

On the contrary, when this triangle splinters, we are in the grip of *states of twoness* in different situations, or in sequence we are aware of identity and not of differences (segment Me–You and You–Me, and identification with the ego complex) or we are aware of differences and not of identity (segment Me–Other and You–Other, a complementary state of possession by the unconscious forces of self), and this enables only a very partial view on reality (Figures 2 and 3).

Several authors from British object relation theory, American relational psychoanalysis, and analytical psychology describe the development of mind and its functioning in terms of a quality leap in mental and relational capacities, in this passage from *states of twoness* to *states of thirdness* (for an extensive analysis of this topic, see Luci 2017, chapter 4). This passage marks a change in the use of different intrapsychic mechanisms, styles of feeling, thinking, relating to internal objects (intrapsychically) and external subjects (interpersonally).

These observations are well suited to a conceptualization of the self, like the Jungian one, which is a paradoxical multiplicity whose functioning is based on dissociation.<sup>4</sup> The idea of a different quality of dissociation corresponding to a different style of processing experiences in the self prompted here the hypothesis of a self able to function in different modes. I call here a *monolithic self state* a self that is working predominantly in *states of twoness*, and *paradoxical multiple self states*, a self in which *states of thirdness* are prevailing. In doing so, I suppose that to process the experience flexibly a self needs to keep open and available for potentially linking the *in-between spaces* among its different parts. And the functional complex that takes care of this may be understood in Jungian terms as a work by the *soul* that has a relational function within our psyche. In these conditions, the experience can be processed in a relatively creative way since many elements and centres of experience of the Self are available for meaning-making activity. The multiplicity and flexibility of a state of self not heavily dissociated, but dissociable flexibly and adaptively, enables self-reflection about ‘internal objects’ and ‘external subjects’, soul-making and the consequent emerging of images. *Paradoxical multiple self states* are characterized by a sense of centre and wholeness, a sense of agency and shared power, responsibility, in a word, a sense of being endowed with subjectivity, what Jung calls ‘feeling a self’. This structure of the self allows keeping in tension

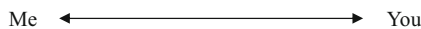


Figure 2: *The Segment of Identity of the Splintered Reflective Triangle*



Figure 3: *The Segment of Difference of the Splintered Reflective Triangle*

unity and multiplicity (ego and self in Jungian terms), to keep open potential in-between spaces, which makes workable temporary symbolization, mentalization, sense of time, memory, sense of continuity despite inconsistencies, recognition of the separateness of the other, and responsibility for one's actions.

I hypothesize that dreadful emotions stimulate a contraction of these *in-between spaces* producing *monolithic self states*, in which the simultaneous processing of identity and difference is impossible, and the fragments of self are cemented through dissociation: a fragmentation and freezing of the soul.

These phenomena pertain not only to individuals but can be observed in group relationships as well. For example, when intense dread or terror spreads, as a consequence, in group relations, identity is emphasized as a base for togetherness among those who are perceived as in-group (Me and You, You and Me are together based on our similarity and our 'togetherness' that cannot be disturbed by possible difference) (Fig. 2); and the difference is overstated for out-group people (Me and Other, You and Other are separate on the basis of our difference so that we are not disturbed and/or contaminated by difference) (Fig. 3). This *monolithic societal state* is characterized by a sense of fusion with peers (horizontal bonding) through a unifying principle providing a sense of purity/identity/oneness within the majority group, merging with the latter and its leaders together with a sense of triumphal superiority, and separateness from the powerless (vertical separation). This splitting guarantees some degree of relief from dread and a sense of vulnerability due to the extreme fragmentation the impact of the terror produced. However, the result is a spreading of *monolithic societal states* as patterns to organize group functioning that favours the use of paranoid-schizoid mechanisms, like denial, splitting, omnipotence, search for purity, and quality of 'adhesiveness' in relationships. Of course, socio-political reasons for this situation may vary according to historical conditions and cannot be established once and for all.

In the beginning, a *monolithic societal state* seems an appropriate way to approach existential and social tasks: it provides mastery over the difficulty, a sense of agency and control, defence from threats, illusion, avoidance of reality, the possibility to rewrite the past so avoiding painful memories, and so forth. However, this is a mental state in which the mind loses the ability to symbolize, to manage those signs which enable a correct perception of threats and discriminate imagination from reality.

Whatever is the way for terror and fragmentation to enter society, when they are widespread and powerful enough, complex social systems collapse and this collapse

is experienced as a loss of large group boundaries. In this context, gruesome violence with related violations of human rights may happen.

Fear and terror can be seen as different levels of intensity of the same emotion, with different sequelae of psychic and somatic reactions. Terror (or dread) is a powerful basic affect that is not easily described; it is by definition 'nameless', as Bion suggests (1962, p. 116). In Jungian terms, the feeling of dread is an archetypal state, and for this reason, it is automatic, reflexive, immediate. As Papadopoulos (2006) suggests, the etymological origin of terror, the Greek *tromos*, which means trembling, quacking, quivering, especially out of fear, is an onomatopoeic word coming from the *trrr*, the sound of a shivering person: a very basic emotion with a direct somatic and universal base.

It might be described as a sudden oneness with unbearable otherness; an experience of invasion, violated borders and defilement. Thus formless dread is a threatening assault to one's integrity and generates an instinctive move of distinguishing oneself from it, of raising one's boundaries, delimiting one's own 'clear cut' identity. As in the most physical experience of pain, we reflexively feel the urge to keep a distance from the source of pain, similarly in terror we automatically need to extrude something supposed to be the source of dread. In other more bearable encounters with the Other, there is a negotiation of boundaries and an expansion of Self that tends toward the integration of the Other. When the 'other within' cannot not even partially be recognized as belonging to me, it is extruded and evacuated into someone else who becomes the bearer of these 'alienated' contents that now become detectable, endowed a shape. The processing of this dread in a collective context is experienced at the most primitive level of experience, as bodily experience, what Ogden calls the 'autistic-contiguous mode' of experience—two skins or surfaces touching one another, one that is two, two surfaces whose contact creates one reality (Ogden, 1992). Since the primary effect of terror is processed at the primitive level of experience, the urge to contain this invading basic effect shapes narratives of biological/physical contamination and loosens boundaries. It is not a coincidence that in many social and historical contexts where human rights violations are perpetrated, we can find a recurrence of racist accounts (pointing to the skin) reflecting this preoccupation about distinctions, a feeling of being threatened in bodily boundaries, skin contact, pollution, infections, and so forth (Luci, 2017, 2021).

A powerful social process is at work here. Powerful because it works in an instant and because it extends its effects from the individual self, our most private and intimate centre of experience, to the large social and cultural group we belong to.

#### A CASE FOR GBV—THE MERGING OF MONOLITHIC SOCIETAL STATE AND MONOLITHIC SELF STATE

I now briefly describe a case (for a more in-depth analysis, see Luci 2022, ch. 3) that illustrates what happens to those considered out-group members in the case of widespread social terror with a case of gender-based violence (GBV). The terms GBV and 'violence against women' are often used interchangeably. Technically, the



first term refers to violence directed against a person because of his or her gender and expectations of his or her role in a society or culture (Merry, 2011), but it is most often used when describing violence against women because women are far more likely to experience discrimination or abuse.

Violence against women can take many forms: honour killing; spousal violence; harassment of women and girls in public, schools or the workplace; trafficking of women and girls; genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices, such as child marriage; sexual violence, including sexual harassment and rape, and rape as war weapon; emotional abuse, including being shouted at, insulted, and restricted from visiting family and friends; economic abuse, including being forced to work, to give income to the husband, or to borrow money. The person presented in this case experienced both GBV and torture.

Afrah is a 41-year-old Egyptian woman, journalist and poet. She arrives at my office with an unkempt appearance, enveloped in poor and threadbare clothes, and with dishevelled hair. She was referred to me by a social assistant who found her living in poverty and a state of deep depression. The loss of a job caring for an elderly man and the birth of a grandson in Egypt some months earlier seem to have thrown her into utter despair. She has a blank look and constantly refers to feeling in a state of 'absence'. She seems to suffer from severe dissociation as part of complex post-traumatic stress disorder, with frequent headaches, states of depersonalization and derealization, depressed mood, somatizations, and alterations in the perception of others and herself. She is convinced that she lives in a world of selfish people who generally exploit others. Sometimes, she uses food for gratification and has binge-eating episodes as an illusory exit strategy from depression, which has made her overweight and aggravates her joint pain and high blood pressure.

Afrah arrived in Italy 5 years before our first meeting, and due to her story of persecution and torture in Egypt, she obtained an asylum permit. In Egypt, she left her family: her 60-year-old mother, her 20-year-old daughter, and her son, aged 18, who grew up with her grandmother. The daughter is married and recently had a baby.

Afrah divorced from her husband many years ago because of domestic violence. She used to work for a newspaper in Egypt, and because of her commitment to a movement for women's rights and their struggle against widespread violence and rape against women in the country, she was assaulted and raped during a demonstration, arrested and tortured in jail. She was detained for 4 months and then released on bail. She immediately fled the country with a false passport.

Afrah's story brings together her private suffering through spousal violence and her political persecution for her activity as a journalist. At a psychological level, her personal struggle with an authoritarian absent father became her destiny and informed her struggle against political and social authoritarianism and patriarchy. At the beginning of therapy, she feels unable to write, depriving her of her most valuable abilities and agency.

At the initial stage of therapy, Afrah is completely absorbed by her inner struggle against her father, in a constant fight to define a gender identity that could be conjugated with dignity, freedom and possibility.

Afrah's mother insisted that she followed her example, sticking to the Egyptian cultural and religious traditions, indicating such a model as protective for her. However, Afrah always cultivated a very intense anger towards her father, who was mostly imagined rather than experienced, but whose image was correctly connoted as authoritarian and abusive. The meeting with him was something she had always dreamt about, with the secret hope of discovering someone completely different from the one she had feared and fought. She met with him during her adolescence and knew an authoritarian military man who threatened to harm her if she continued to be rebellious to her mother and his 'orders', dashing her secret hope for a different and more tender father–daughter relationship. These characteristics, together with his social position of privilege and wealth, made his indifference and cruelty even more hateful in Afrah's eyes. Impositions reached the extent of making her marry a man she did not want for a husband, and with whom he was in business. This imposition, which was culturally syntonetic, confined Afrah to a situation of private violence within an unwanted, unhappy and abusive marriage.

At the time of her wedding, she had already started studying literature at university, something she perceived as the only opportunity she received by her father, more as a status symbol of a wealthy family than demonstration of love and care. The following year, the couple had their daughter, and two years later, their son. However, Afrah was not in love with her husband, and their marriage was very conflictual. They always fought about economic issues, and her husband started losing control, insulting her and abusing her physically and sexually.

Immediately after the birth of the second child, and after being beaten during pregnancy, she left their home, returning to her mother. Afrah completed her studies and started a career as a journalist and writer.

In the following years, while recovering from her depression, Afrah entered some feminist circles and women's human rights associations and started collecting testimonies about domestic violence and rape used as a form of political violence and intimidation. She felt she had left behind all the pain of those really dark years of her spousal life, and had found her way, working, writing, being politically committed to the cause of the many Egyptian women suffering from domestic violence.

Afrah underwent a slow and strenuous conquering of herself as a gendered subject. She realized that the struggle for her psychic survival coincided with the struggle for her gender identity and gender role in society as a woman, as a subject endowed of civil and political rights. She made her private story a reason for political commitment to Egyptian women who suffered the same widespread social and familial violence she suffered. The wave of revolutions that in those years swept the Arab world resulted in the opening of the political sphere in an unprecedented manner. Women's rights activists rose to the challenge, and more and more women were active participants in the movement for democratic change. They played a prominent role in marches for political and social freedoms, among which a key point was women's rights.

In this context, Afrah's political engagement ran parallel to her struggle for recovery from her psychic suffering after an unhappy marriage, domestic violence, and

several other forms of abuse by male figures in her life. During therapy we came to understand that her family story - i.e. the struggle with her absent and authoritarian father, and her mother's cultural rigidity concerning gender roles, as well as the sexual harassment by her stepfather, her forced marriage and the consequent domestic violence - resonated with her political activity, for Egyptian women and with the torture experienced in detention, feeding a trauma that insisted on the same dynamics with incredible precision. However, Afrah had been extremely resilient until the last episode of arrest and torture by the police in jail, after which she started suffering from the symptoms of a complex trauma.

#### A GLIMPSE INTO AFRAH'S THERAPY

Afrah's therapy can be recounted as a journey in search of her soul, and of a possible gender and cultural identity that would make her feel authentic, identified with her cultural group, but also a woman with agency. Unfortunately, in her story, as in that of many torture survivors, personal trauma and social trauma run along the same fracture lines.

Here one can clearly observe the merging of what I have called *monolithic self and societal states*. Bentham's Panopticon, as described by Michel Foucault in his analysis of the technology of power (1975), provides an interesting and poignant picture outlining the structure of group power relations, organizational culture and the ideology of a *monolithic societal state*, here articulated along gender lines.

It is an architectural figure used by Foucault (1975, p. 200) that illustrates how discipline works: at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the periphery building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. The Panopticon geometry of relations and distributions perfectly describes *monolithic societal states* and their power to link individuals in *monolithic self states* through the web of towers, all controlled by a central tower. This illustrates how individuals can be controlled within groups or institutions, and how groups and institutions, in turn, can be controlled by a central power. It also shows how human rights violations can happen without individuals feeling responsible for them; since the guardian in the tower can be anyone, the control is exercised by the geometry and not by a specific person.

Ogden's paranoid schizoid mode (1986, 1992) can describe many features of these states of mind related to ideology and *monolithic societal and self states*. Here thinking is constrained and organized by affective intolerance of ambivalence (love and hate, positive and negative emotions cannot be modulated), consequently there is a massive use of splitting, denial, projection, projecting identification that creates a binary representation of the world divided into 'good' and 'bad', 'us' and 'them'. The Panopticon geometry of *monolithic states* installs itself within the self and binds relational actors in fixed reciprocal positions through projective identifications that

makes it difficult to understand who is the initiator of an action or decision (Figure 4). The paranoid-schizoid mode is a state relatively devoid of an interpreting subject, and this is probably what favours the uncritical link to a prescriptive central power that can dictate even incoherent meanings, but still is able to provide a perspective on reality since it is founded on a compartmentalized system. Being in this state of mind resulting from fragmentation, individuals need to be connected to a larger system (a group, an institution, society at large) in order to find meanings and a sense of self cohesion.

Individuals find themselves in a groupal 'field of forces' operating a pressure to orientate their feelings and thinking. The soul here is absent or powerless, with no possibility of relating, connecting, linking, creating. Since the soul is so helpless, unable to create meanings out of experience, doubts and uncertainties are replaced by group beliefs, group support and validation, and the idea that they are the only guardians of the truth.

Multiplicity is sacrificed to a false idea of ideological unity based on binary thinking of 'good/bad', 'us/them' which mark the exclusion of the Other. What is searched through these states is the grandiosity of certainty, which secures the self in an *i-identity* and *identi-fication* with the good leader/party/nation/ethnicity/gender and so forth, while persecuting, denigrating and discarding the bad/devaluated/dehumanized Other. This status of knowledge implies an *adhesive* fidelity to the power that claims the need for unwearingly moment-to-moment flexibility in the treatment of facts. For this purpose, a real individual memory does not exist, but just 'official truths' that can change on a moment-to-moment basis. This fidelity to the power is based on partitions, the contraction of reflective in-between social spaces:

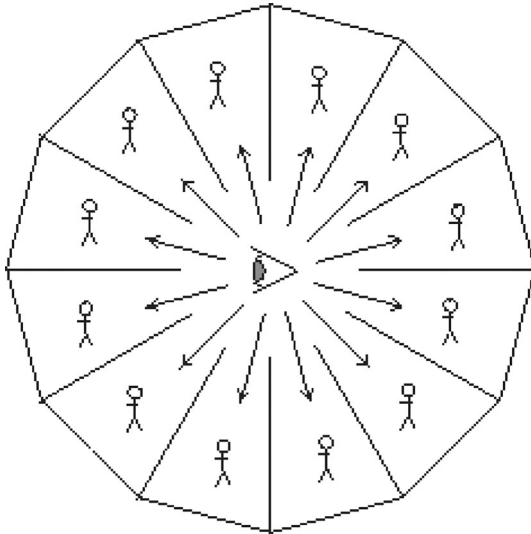


Figure 4: *The Political Geometry of the Panopticon*

the isolation of individuals (the cells of the Panopticon) through different levels of separations in society, which in turn produce a state of knowledge characterized by closure and massive use of splitting and denial.

Afrah's inner world seems characterized by a pervading feeling of struggle against a dominating master, a sense of being colonized and subjected to a male oppressive power which does not recognize her as a subject endowed with legitimate and equivalent existence. In such states, the ego complex, which is the centre of decision, will and direction, is perceived as left to someone else in a more powerful position (the controller in the tower), which is the basis for a special type of relationship and social ties where recognition of the other and responsibility and reflective thinking are not possible. In Afrah's relational contexts (in family and society), difference can be processed only according to this vertical line of power, where positions are polarized up-down according to gender.

One day, in a somewhat provocative manner, and somewhat carelessly, I asked Afrah why she did not follow her mother's advice to adhere to the prescribed social and cultural role. Immediately I caught in Afrah's fiery gaze the unexpressed anger and deep disappointment at this comment. After a long long silence, feeling myself suddenly in the shoes of an oppressive authority, I justified my question as being designed only to gain a better understanding, and not to suggest that she should have done so. After several sessions of struggle around our enactment of her core conflictual dynamic with an authoritarian power, Afrah decided to trust that my curiosity was sincere. Strangely she went on to explain that although her father was not there, the fact that he supported them financially made a difference. They could live well thanks to him recognizing some merit and power—'At least he took that financial responsibility, despite that being easy for him'. This and other moments of enactment made the traumatic material more accessible.

Afrah's few narrative accounts of the rape she suffered during the demonstration, and the torture she underwent in prison, brought overwhelming feelings of dealing with an enormous amount of unprocessed terror and intense aggression frozen by dissociation. During sessions, I started suffering from nausea and a sense of a void in the stomach, accompanied by disturbing images of blood and excrement and sometimes I sensed nauseating smells, so that we had to take a break, open the window, and have tea. After some time, I understood the meaning of those images and countertransference bodily sensations in Afrah's narrative of her experience of torture in prison. Afrah was very ashamed and reluctant to reveal details of that horrible and humiliating situation. Being violated, beaten up, insulted, blindfolded in inhuman conditions and with no official in charge, and subjected to death threats and blackmail if she did not reveal names of other women connected to her human rights activity, was a dehumanizing experience. She felt swept away by that degrading experience, which echoed and intensified the pain of other similar wounds in her life. She felt reduced to a container of all the rejected material of a male chauvinist and dominating society. For months, the therapy was an attempt to enter that horrific experience and endure it together, later looking for some calming

remedy, often sensory in nature—to drink, eat, breathe and walk. Hunger and nausea, I think, are linked to the need for nurturing and the expulsion of something toxic, and I am reminded of what Afrah said in our early sessions in reference to relations between genders in Egypt: ‘a form of social cannibalism’. An image came to my mind, that of Chronus eating his children.

This meaning has some assonance with the mythical theme of the ‘devouring’ father, which represents the wish for omnipotent control. He attempts to control the world by swallowing and incorporating it. Millet writes: ‘Torture is based upon traditional ideas of domination: patriarchal order and masculine rank ... Torture is all hierarchy intensified, magnified brought back to its archetypal and most brutal level’ (1994, p. 35). Colman (2000) recognizes in the theme of tyranny the mythological figure of Chronos/Saturn, who, persuaded by his mother, Gaia, to overthrow his father, attempts to prevent the same fate by eating all his children as soon as they are born. Chronos is the archetype of the *senex* (Jung, 1963, para. 298), and subsequent writers have elaborated on the devouring aspect of the Saturnine *senex* as ‘the sick father’, an archetypal metaphor for a situation of stagnation and decay in the psyche and its need for rejuvenation and rebirth by its archetypal opposites, the *puer*. In this sense, it seems significant that the endemic violence against women started systematically with the so-called 2011 Arab Spring.

Colman (2000) suggests that this is the archetypal situation operating under a totalitarian power: a state of total projective identification between father and son, like living inside the stomach of Chronos with no access to the maternal female and no possibility to escape. The omnipotent dictator, whether internal or external, seeks to crush all opposition, especially any possibility of creativity. The children are consumed by the father, kept under his control by remaining a part of himself, inside him, denied any life of their own. This is valid for tortured and torturers—respectively, women and men in Egyptian society of the described historical period. Neumann distinguishes between those children who are captives of the father and those who are possessed by him (1949, p. 187). If the former can be recognized in the women who were victims of gender-based violence and victims of torture, the latter are the perpetrators; that is, Egyptian men in private and public spheres. In this split, there is also an essential enmity between the controlling *senex* and the rebellious *puer* or *puella* in this case, with each seeking to destroy the other, failing to recognize the common bond. The relation function of the soul which guarantees the connections of the reflective triangle for a flexible playing between multiple states in the self and within society is out of the question in this stagnating situation. As Wirtz neatly describes the soul work in recovering from trauma:

In dealing with trauma ... we are involved in a process of purification from blockages, a process of working through and integration, a process of remembering, imagining, ordering, and revaluing, which leads to the creation of meaning and a consciousness of solidarity and new relationships in the social network. Following the deconstruction and fragmentation of a traumatic

experience, trauma therapy attempts to envision and reconstruct a new life pattern, one in which the victim's consciousness of his or her identity and his or her trust in other people and the world as whole can be created afresh and the plurality of the everyday world can be experienced as an overarching unity. (2020, p. XX)

#### THE MANY WAYS OF SOUL-MAKING

Human rights violations are betrayals of soul-making in society. The challenge is to understand the processes that pose obstacles to such a soul-making and that sustain so many forms of social violence, and how to reverse the course. This should be the subject of interdisciplinary studies and rigorous research.

From the perspective of what I have described so far, one can deductively think that every activity that provides a containment to deep terrors may offer potential for their transformation and has some protective meaning with respect to the development of *monolithic societal states*. The goal is to preserve *in between spaces* within the self, from an intrapsychic perspective, and within society from a social perspective; that is, parts available for connection with other parts to create meaning in a flexible and ever-changing and flowing way in order to keep the soul of an individual and the soul of a group alive, with related access to reflectivity and symbolization. The crystallization and petrification of social bonds is always defensive and tends to consolidate fragments as a way to avoid awareness, responsibility, subjectivity and knowledge, through relationships based on power, on hierarchy, on the denial of awareness, on the objectification of the other. We are all vulnerable to this mindset, and cultivating self-doubt and self-awareness to the extent that we are moved by group dynamics and needs, and by individual drives for survival, may be some antidote to such a potential poison.

Thomas Moore (1992) in *Care of the Soul* writes: 'The "Soul" is not a thing, but a quality or a dimension of experiencing life and ourselves. It has to do with depth, value, relatedness, heart, and personal substance' (p. 5). And similarly, James Hillman, in *Re-visioning Psychology* (1976), writes that the soul is:

... a perspective rather than a substance, a viewpoint toward things rather than a thing itself. This perspective is reflective; it mediates events and makes differences between ourselves and everything that happens. Between us and events, between the doer and the deed, there is a reflective moment—and soul-making means differentiating this *middle ground*. It is as if consciousness rests upon a self-sustaining and imagining substrate—an inner place or deeper person or ongoing presence—that is simply there even when all our subjectivity, ego and consciousness go into eclipse. Soul appears as a factor independent of the events in which we are immersed. Though I cannot identify soul with anything else, I also can never grasp it by itself apart from other things, perhaps because it is like a reflection in a flowing mirror, or like the moon which mediates only borrowed light' (p. xvi)

In Jung's reflections on his encounters with soul figures, he articulates the primacy of consciousness and embodied human life. He explained: 'The figures from the unconscious are uninformed too, and need man, or contact with consciousness, in order to attain to knowledge' (Jung, 1989, p. 306). From this vantage, the human being bears the responsibility to maintain contact with and incarnate the soul, each in their own role and position in the world. Informing social and political action with the self-awareness that analytical psychology can help to reach may be a way towards soul-making. Engaging interdisciplinary dialogue offering the insights of psychoanalysis to other disciplines and receiving their contributions and knowledge on the complex problems connected with human rights violations is another way to cultivate the soul, expanding our knowledge and recognising that we are working, from different perspectives, at the same *opus*. Witnessing the experience of a patient that suffered a human rights violation through careful listening is another fundamental element of soul-making.

Engaging the other in a way that creates space for the soul, not just for the 'healing' of a patient, but also for a moral reparation of a wound to the shared humanity of therapist and patient. In front of human rights violations both need reparation of their trust in humanity and a 'just world'; both need to believe that is a possible and achievable task, restoring a *shared souls*.

#### NOTES

1. There are terminological issues in Jung's work with respect to this concept. Jung uses the Latin *anima* in this quote, but seems to mean the same as 'soul'. He would later use the Latin *anima* to indicate a female soul in the male psyche.
2. *Liber Novus: The Red Book* was published posthumously and collects Jung's material of what he considered his years of confrontation with his unconscious after having broken up with his mentor Sigmund Freud. In the winter of 1913, Jung deliberately gave free rein to his fantasy thinking and carefully noted what ensued. He later called this process active imagination. It was through this that he developed his theoretical ideas about the archetypes, the collective unconscious, and the process of individuation, and transformed psychotherapy from a practice predominately concerned with the treatment of the sick into a means for the higher development of the personality.
3. Jung conceptualizes individuation as the process through which the individual's personality is formed and differentiated from the collective psychology in the development throughout life (see Jung 1921, para. 757) becoming who they really are.
4. For Jung the psyche is 'dissociable' by its nature. For this reason dissociation can be understood as both normal functioning and defense mechanism, depending on circumstances.

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